

EDWARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

September 14, 2026 7:30pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Rob Kowalski, Clerk Korey Kripli, Treasurer Eileen Fournier, Trustee George Bodin, and Trustee Dan Zettel .

ATTENDANCE: County Commissioner Mark Surbrook, Zoning Administrator Bob Clayton, and Deputy Treasurer Sydney Lademan (absent). Several residents of Edwards Township.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 10, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion by George Bodin, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve the August 10, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 20, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes

Motion by Eileen Fournier, supported by Robert Kowalski to approve the August 20, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion by Eileen Fournier, supported by Dan Zettel to approve the agenda with the additions of 14A Dale Sheltroun and 14B Propane Price. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE AGENDA: N/A

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: N/A

SEXTON REPORT:

Mike Laier stated that he installed a foundation. He had a customer call about a cremation burial. A lady reached out to Mike in order to find her family's grave plots.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER: N/A

LIBRARY UPDATE:

Korey Kripli stated the new Library Director is doing well and is settling in.

PLANNING UPDATE:

Larry Kartes didn't have an update, but wanted his planning members to read the update about data centers.

TREASURER REPORT:

Eileen Fournier presented the Treasurer's Report. Motion by Dan Zettel, supported by Korey Kripli to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion by Eileen Fournier, supported by Dan Zettel to approve bills with Payroll Checks 10477 - 10494, Road Fund Checks 1007-1008, and Payable Checks 775 - 7793. Total is \$32,074.56.

Roll Call: Kowalski Y Kripli Y Fournier Y Bodin Y Zettel Y

Motion approved.

HALL DEPOSIT RETURNS:

There was one hall return to Ogemaw County Conservation District for \$162.50. Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Korey Kripli to approve the hall return. Motion carried.

ASSESSING UPDATE:

Robert Kowalski helped Allison Thompson assess properties for a couple days in August. Mostly everyone was very welcoming. If there was a trespassing sign, the assessor took a picture and then left. If someone asked them to leave, they took a picture and left. There are currently two pending lawsuits in Midland and in Gladwin that the assessor does not have a legal right to be on a person's property.

Allison spent 54 hours working on Edwards Township the week prior to the September 14th board meeting. Rob Kowalski stated that the board did not hire Allison to fix Zach's problems, the board hired her to move forward.

Allison processed her first 154 form last week and it took her a day. The subsequent 154 form, it took her 4 hours. Will Gast told Allison that as long as she submits the 154 forms by the end of the year everything will be good to go.

Dan Zettel asked Robert Kowalski if the 154 forms can go back this year and two previous years. Rob confirmed that they go back three years, current and past due. The 154 forms have to be for everyone and that those individuals have three years worth of property tax cards. Dan has asked multiple times if he has cards on file for the previous three years for his property and he stated that he was told they do not. Rob stated that he had received an update from Randy from Equalization with the information he had. He believes that we are only missing 2021 and 2022.

Rob stated that every resident can come into the office and ask for a property card at any time. They are handed out every March which is when tax questions should be asked. A Township Board has no authority over taxes. If you have any questions about your taxes, it is directed at the Board of Review in March only. There are no hearings in July and December. The only thing they do in July and December is fix clerical errors. The Township BOR is only here for clerical errors brought from Allison to the BOR in July and December.

Dan Zettel stated that there was a group of people that stopped by his property and asked if they are going to be assessed penalties on the taxes that they were not assessed for structures that they pulled building permits for, they believe the township should pay the penalties on the taxes that were past due because the township assessor (Van Wormer & Associates) failed to do their job. If the General Account has \$745k in it, I believe the township should pay the fees and Van Wormer & Associates should be sued for the penalties. Dan stated that he would like to make a motion that Edwards Township should pay any penalties associated with the 154 forms. He stated that he was not concerned with his taxes and that he would handle his own. He is more worried about other people that can't afford to pay fees. If the resident didn't do anything wrong, why should they pay penalties for the last three years since the assessor failed to do their job?

Eileen Fournier asked if there will be penalties. Rob Kowalski stated that when he talked with Will Gast at training, Will did not have an answer whether or not residents would be assessed penalties. Richard Stillwagon asked who would know that answer. Rob stated that Will doesn't run the 154 Department, he does the training. The other question Rob had was will Allison receive any updates? Rob stated that Allison felt that she wouldn't receive updates since none of this concerns her.

Brent Illig asked what would happen if the 154 Forms were not done by December 31st. Rob Kowalski stated he did not have an answer.

Brent Illig asked why we are doing the 154 Forms? Robert Kowalski stated that Allison spoke to Will Gast and asked him if she can fix these errors in the July Board of Review. Will stated that if you fix them in the July BOR, the township residents can't appeal it. If you send a 154 Form, they can appeal it to the tax tribunal. The tax tribunal will then make the final adjustment. Rob stated that he had asked Will Gast if the entire township could be reassessed and Will stated that you can, but good luck finding anyone to do that. The township is doing 154 Forms because Lansing, the Department of Treasury, stated that this is the correct way to do it.

Brent Illig asked who in Lansing stated that the township had to do the 154 Forms. Robert Kowalski stated Will Gast. A resident asked if the township has it in writing from Will Gast that we must do the 154 Forms. Rob stated that we are working on that information.

DALE SHELROWN:

Dale Sheltroun stated that the easy solution to solve this whole problem is that Allison should take all the information from the 154 Forms and put them on the 2027 tax roll. Dale stated that there is a Michigan law that states that the Assessor must visit 20% of the unit for assessing per year and that Will Gast did not state that 4154 form must be filed from the assessor. Dan Zettel stated when Will Gast was here for the training that Will stated the 154 Forms should be applied equally across all residents. If there are 100 154 Forms then all 100 of the 154 Forms should be filed.

Korey Kripli asked if the best case scenario is for Allison to file the 154 Forms for the 80 parcels on the 2027 Tax Roll and for no one to have back taxes for the last three years. Rob Kowalskis stated that he has not been told that is an option.

Rob Kowalski stated that Allison is sending out a notice to everyone that is receiving a 154 Form. There will be a meeting on November 2nd where residents can come in and speak to Allison to try and correct any misinformation before those forms are sent in. This is a meeting for only the people affected by this situation. Dan Zettel said he received his 154 notice about this meeting and that it was a violation of the open meetings act. He said that it stated that it is only for people with 154 Forms.

Rob Kowalski stated that the letter did not come from the township and he stated that anyone can come to an open meeting, but to talk to Allison you must have a 154 Form.

Dennis Stephens stated that he was reading the assessment manual from the assessment training. Under the General Property Tax Act, section 211.14 subsection 6, assessments are made on an annual basis which are determined on December 31st which is tax day. Failure to receive a notice of assessment change does not invalidate the assessment. Dennis stated that even if you never received an assessment and you were supposed to, the law still applies and that is something that Will Gast answered at the training.

A resident asked what would the state do if we didn't file the 154 Forms.

Eileen Fournier stated that she just looked up that question and that a township does not face a financial penalty or a statutory fine for failing to file a 154 Form, however the township faces a significant administration consequence: a complete loss of jurisdiction to recover uncollected taxes. If a township assessor discovers the property was omitted or incorrectly reported and fails to file, the state tax commission loses its legal authority to correct the assessment roll.

Robert Kowalski stated that by next month, the board will have an answer on 154 Forms and if there will be penalties.

PROPANE PRICE:

Robert Kowalski reached out to Webster Garner and they will provide service for propane to the township hall for \$1.349 which is the same as last year. Motion by Korey Kripli, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve the propane price from Webster Garner at \$1.349 per gallon.

Roll Call: Bodin Y Zettel Y Kowalski Y Kripli Y Fournier Y

Motion carried.

DTE SURVEY:

The Planning Committee put out questionnaires at the August Election for DTE Natural Gas to be installed in Edwards Township. There were 35 responses and only one said no that they were not interested. George Bodin also received 15 responses via email.

The Planning Committee will be reaching out to DTE to see what the next steps are for this issue.

WATER LINES:

Kopec Heating, Cooling, Air Conditioning installed water lines with a shut off valve for a total of \$1,500.

COLVINS REPAIR:

Colvins fixed the generator and then told us that we had a problem with the regulator. The regulator is now fixed and the generator has been working great since then.

DATA CENTER UPDATE:

The ordinance for the data center cost \$1,700. This will be discussed at the Planning Meeting in October. A public hearing will be scheduled if approved.

CEMETERY INTERNET:

Internet was installed by Up North Security at the cemetery. Cameras will be up soon. The cost is \$50 per month with 100% coverage.

COLUMBARIUM:

Robert Kowalski presented a Columbarium to the board for the cemetery. This columbarium has 96 doors and each door holds two urns. The cost is around \$30k to \$40k. The township would earn around \$21k by charging \$600 per door which is cheaper than a normal burial. Especially with the increase in cremations, the columbarium would be a nice space saving option for the cemetery since the township is not able to increase the land at the cemetery. Eileen Fournier stated that she would reach out to Steuernol McLaren in order to learn more about the columbarium. Dennis Stephens stated that this was a big issue in the 2013 Cemetery Ordinance. He believes that the columbarium is extremely intelligent and a great financial decision for Edwards Township and their residents.

SCRAP TIRE DRIVE:

Scrap Tire Drive will be held at the Edwards Township Hall on September 26th from 9am to 5pm and September 27th from 10am to 2pm.

SUPERVISOR COMMENTS:

Supervisor comments were covered in the above minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jane Illig from the Ogemaw County Conservation District talked about different events that were coming up. An Outdoor Extravaganza at Camp Timbers will take place on Saturday, September 19th from 12pm to 4pm. They will be having a Tire Recycle Program at Logan Township Hall on September 26th and this will be a fundraiser for the Whittemore Prescott School District.

A resident asked if Robert Kowalski could inform the public about the County Commissioners meeting last month since they do not have an IT person anymore and the meetings have not been shared online currently. Rob Kowalski stated that the commissioners approved the purchase of 25 computers and then let their IT person go. That is all he had heard.

Rob Kowalski stated that George Olsen has not attended the last two Planning Meetings. Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by George Bodin to remove George Olsen from the Planning Committee. Motion carried.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Scrap Tire Drive: September 26th 9am to 5pm and September 27th 9am to 5pm at the Edwards Township Hall
- Special Meeting: October 12, 2026 7:15pm
- Township Board Meeting: October 12, 2026 7:30pm

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to adjourn at 9:37pm. Motion carried.

Rob Kowalski, Supervisor

Korey Kripli, Clerk