

Keene Township Board Meeting

Minutes March 12, 2025

Wojcik called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance at 7:02 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Nate Wolff, Christine Hendrick, Corey Wojcik, Sandy Smiley, Holli Melton.

Recognition of Visitors :

There were nine members of the community present, along with Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot.

Approval or changes to the Agenda: Changes - Old Business Planning Commission Structure. New Business, Discuss Assessor contract, equipment maintenance record sheet & Capital asset Manager. **Motion** by Hendrick to approve Agenda as amended, 2nd by Smiley motion carried 5-0

Approval of Feb 11 board meeting minutes: Motion to approve by Hendrick, 2nd by Smiley Motion carried 5-0

Approval of Feb 26th Special Board meeting minutes : Motion to approve by Melton, 2nd by Wolff Motion carried 5-0

Approval of March 6th Budget Workshop minutes : Motion to approve by Hendrick, 2nd by Smiley, Motion carried 5-0

Public Comment on items related to the Agenda No Comments from attendants

Treasurers report: The treasurer thanked Corey Wilber and Wendy Wolf for their assistance during tax collection. The county owes Keene funds for delinquent real properties. The fiscal year ends March 31st, and preparations for the auditor are underway. The BS&A project is progressing, with a goal to have the financial system operational by August 4th. With system training for board members the week of August 4th. She reinvested our expired CDs into 2 new ones, a 6 and a 12 month. Transferred W.B., Cemetery and Fire funds into CLASS. Discussed getting an estimate for the fence at Hall for MML. Discussed Cyber coverage and filing a claim with existing insurance for scam domain bill around \$300 and that alcohol use while renting Hall should be covered in the liability release.

Clerks Report: The clerk completed training on the Qualified Voter List website and ordered the new ballot box. Efforts are underway to streamline billing and accounts payable processes. The clerk also handled various resident inquiries and updated officer information with the county.

AP Register reviewed in full. **Motion** by Wolff to approve payment of items on Register \$64,241.73, 2nd by Smiley, Motion carried 5-0

Planning Commission Nate Wolff - update on actions & meetings: The Planning Commission has been working on amendments to the wind energy ordinance and is preparing for a public hearing on March 25th. Progress is being made on the battery storage ordinance, with plans to finalize it in the next meeting.

Zoning Administrator: New applications and enforcements: The Zoning Administrator reported on the progress of ordinance amendments and variance requests. Work is ongoing with residents on land divisions and property line research.

Old Business

Renewal of Belding FD Contract (Corey Wojcik) The renewal of the Belding Fire Department contract was discussed. The contract includes a 2% annual increase, and a motion was made and passed to continue the contract.

Motion to approve by Melton, 2nd by Smiley - All in Favor, motion carried 5-0

Meeting with Saranac FD (Corey Wojcik) The board discussed the renegotiation of the emergency medical service and fire protection agreement with the Saranac Fire Department. Corey Wojcik sent a letter to initiate the process. Tony Koster reached out to set up a meeting. The board needs to decide on representation (Foster Swift) and research what other Twps have in place. Corey will coordinate dates with FD and board members. The meeting will be held at Keene twp. hall.

Township Clean-up Day - lock-in Date (Corey Wojcik): The board discussed potential dates for the township cleanup, with April 26th being the preferred date. They also discussed coordinating help for a neighbor with cleanup needs, including the use of trailers and equipment.

Website Preview (Sandy Smiley): Sandy presented a preview of the new website, highlighting features like quick links, interactive elements, and resources for taxes, zoning, and public notices. The website aims to be user-friendly, with easy navigation and comprehensive information. Discussion on adding historical information about Keene Township to the website. Suggestions included contacting local historical societies for information

Auditor for Keene Twp (Christine Hendrick) Christine discussed the need for a new auditor after Walker Fluke's withdrawal. A proposal from Riedfeld-Haffner was presented, recommending annual audits for better financial oversight.

Motion to approve by Smiley, 2nd by Melton - All in Favor, motion carried 5-0

Planning Commission Structure (Holli Melton): Discussion on reducing the Planning Commission to five members and creating a planning section in the ordinance. The commission's establishment history was reviewed, and a motion was made to have our attorney

draft a resolution to terminate the two open positions and certify that our planning commission will comprise five members.

Motion to approve by Hendrick, 2nd by Melton - Roll Call Vote 4-1 Hendrick, Wolff, Smiley Melton - yea, Wojcik - nay

New Business

Wage Increases for the Secretary of the Planning Commission and any member who fills in if the appointed secretary is absent (Corey Wojcik): Proposal to increase the wage for the Planning Commission secretary from \$50 to \$55 per meeting, matching the chair's wage. The resolution includes provisions for substitutes to receive the same wage. A Resolution was drafted to implement the wage increase beginning the start of the new fiscal year.

Motion to approve by Smiley, 2nd by Hendrick - All in Favor, motion carried 5-0

Comcast Government Affairs Team (Corey Wojcik): Discussion on writing a support letter for Comcast's grant application for broadband expansion. No motion was needed.

Equipment/maintenance record sheet (Corey Wojcik): Discussion on tracking equipment maintenance and capital assets. Suggestions included using existing financial reports and possibly finding a free asset management program.

Tech Department wages (Corey Wojcik): Discussion on compensating Cori Wilber for her IT support, suggesting \$20 per hour with a \$2,000 annual budget.

Motion to approve by Hendrick, 2nd by Melton - All in Favor, motion carried 5-0

Township road mowing contract (Corey Wojcik): Approval of the road mowing agreement with J. Jablowski and Sons for \$80 per centerline mile, totaling \$6,880 for two mowings. **Motion to approve** by Melton, 2nd by Wolff - All in Favor, motion carried 5-0

Assessor Contract and Software Costs: Discussion on the assessor's contract and additional software costs. Concerns were raised about paying for software and equipment for an outside contractor. **Corey Wojcik will inquire with our Assessor regarding an existing contract agreement.**

Supervisors Report: The supervisor reported on the budget hearing and Board of Review that took place on March 11, 2025, with minimal public attendance. The road commission is addressing pothole complaints, and changes are being made to improve road conditions.

Saranac Fire Department Budget: The Saranac Fire Department ended the 2024-2025 fiscal year with a cash surplus, resulting in a budget credit and interest earned credit totaling approximately \$1,700 for the township.

Public Comment:

Polly Wolff: Why is the Planning Commission talking about a second overlay area for battery storage? I thought we were only going to have one overlay district. **Corey Wojcik:** I am not on the planning commission to know. That's what they're just discussing. I don't know if Nate wants to talk about that. **Nate Wolff:** The PC brought up a couple of possible areas for another zone. As far as I know, we're not planning on adding another zone to the overlay district. As far as I know we've just been talking about district 3. **Polly Wolff:** If you're not going to add it, then why talk about it? It seems like a waste of time. **Jeanne:** They are looking at other areas that may be more suitable.

Brad Potter: When you're talking with insurance people, make sure that anybody that's doing work for the township is covered by our insurance. Like, say Corey's running a tractor out there or something. He runs over somebody. If we don't cover him, they're going to come after him. They're going to take his dog and his favorite gun and everything else. The same way with our maintenance guy for our cemetery. If he's mowing the grass down there, hits a rock and hits somebody, they have to be covered. They should be covered by our insurance. **Christine Hendrick:** So they're not covered by our insurance. They're outside contractors. So they have to provide the township a certificate of liability listing the township as a certificate holder on their policy. So it's a condition of doing business with the township that our outside contractors provide us with that document. **Brad Potter:** What about Corey running this tractor out there and stuff? **Corey Wojcik:** Cory's covered under our workers' comp. Cory's covered because he's on our policy. He's an employee. He's not an outside contractor. He's an actual employee. So he's covered under our workers' comp. certificate. **Brad Potter:** the volunteers that are working out here on the trash pickup and stuff, they should be covered some way or another through our township's policy. Say I'm out there and I pick up something and it's sharp, I turn around and jab it right into someone else there. **Corey Wojcik:** I think (insurance) they do daily things. **Christine Hendrick:** you said we've never had one but I can get one, yeah it's just a phone call and it's just a rider for the event. I just need the date in order to do that. **Corey Wojcik:** I will let you know as soon as I talk to them.

Budget Proposal Discussion

The budget proposal for the upcoming year was discussed, detailing expected revenue and expenditures, including salaries, insurance, and maintenance costs. Adjustments may be needed in the first quarter.

Fire Fund and Income - The fire fund income was discussed, with the fire millage bringing in \$44,000 and interest of \$500, totaling \$109,500 in the account.

The township received a budget credit and interest-earned credit totaling approximately \$1,700.

The meeting discussed the budget, including payments to the fire department and capital purchases. Concerns were raised about insufficient funds due to reduced fire millage now at .4 mils. The possibility of addressing this in an upcoming election was mentioned.

White's Bridge Funds: There was a discussion about the funds for White's Bridge, which have been stagnant. The original plan was to create a park with video cameras, but it has not

progressed. The interest from the funds is being accumulated. Maintenance issues were discussed, including the condition of areas where kayaks are launched. There were plans for repairs, but they have not materialized. The DEQ and BNR were involved, but the project fell through.

Tribute to Harvey Noon: The meeting acknowledged the passing of Harvey Noon, a long-time Township Board member. A family ceremony is planned for March 14, 2025, and a memorial in May at Bertha Brock Park.

Public Comment:

Kim Newell asked if the ICRD was going to put limestone in the transition areas. Wojcik responded that most are county roads and there is some ditching that needs to be done. The township can pay for limestone after that.

Jeanne brought up MTA training for planning and zoning.

Motion to Adjourn: Smiley, Hendrick 2nd. All in favor motion carried 5-0
Meeting Adjourned at 9:20 PM