

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

February 10, 2025

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, February 10, 2025.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Brandon Scholie at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call:

In attendance were Supervisor Brandon Scholie, Clerk Amy Skewes, Treasurer Betsy Smith, and Trustees Dale Belanger, Janelle Datto, and Amber Voght as stated by roll call. **Absent:** Trustee Nick Lanctot.

Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:

New Business – Green Acres Road Sewer Project - draw and change order

A motion was made by Belanger and seconded by Voght to approve the meeting agenda. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Approval of the Board of Trustees Previous Minutes:

A motion was made by Smith and seconded by Belanger to approve the meeting minutes from last month's Regular Board of Trustees Meeting, held January 13, 2025. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Approval of the Bills:

A motion was made by Datto and seconded by Voght to approve the bills as audited. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None

Review Clerk's Report:

- Working on end of year stuff/adjustments.
- Mailed out W-2s and 1099s.

Review Treasurer's Report:

- Audit: Working on end of year wrap up in preparation for our audit; we have our meetings in April, and the final audit is due at the latest by June 30, 2025. The audit will be more challenging this year due to the new software we implemented after the first quarter.
- Rural development final numbers for 2024 are included, the account balances are in the positive, but the income/expense is negative, we may have to submit additional reports to the state for these after the audit
- Rural Development 2025 chart with new minimum balances.
 - Four payments (interest only) have gone through, more will go through on payment due dates listed on the right.

- Estimated payments for the rest of the year are like those in the 2024 chart.
- Income - *should* - help, the January payments are the first with the new fees included so we need to watch these balances and do another rate increase by mid-year (approve at the May meeting) if they are not gaining enough to be in the positive this year.
- Tax Deadline: February 14, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Treasurer/Deputy will be in the office.
 - After this date, there are penalties for taxes collected through February 28.
 - After February 28, taxes for Summer and Winter 2024 go to Houghton County (not Personal Property).
 - February 28, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Treasurer/Deputy will be in the office for final tax collection.

Review Zoning Administrator’s Report for January 2025

ZONING APPLICATIONS:

- No zoning applications this month, which is typical for December, January, and February.
- I was copied on a reasonably accurate fact sheet generated by the Houghton County Building Department, some interesting info: in Portage Township for the year 2024, there were 19 new single-family homes, 4 new duplexes, and a total of 31 new pole barns, garages, additions to existing homes, and storage sheds. For comparison, the City of Houghton had 2 new homes permitted.

INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

- 01/02 – What are setbacks for lots with double frontage
- 01/06 – Second complaint about barking dog in Hurontown
- 01/07 – Steadily barking dog again, referred to Sheriff animal control
- 01/07 – Width of county right of way on Pilgrim Road
- 01/09 – Rental questions about vacant home in Hurontown,
- 01/13 – Does historic easement in Hurontown which would extend Horatio Street from Manitou through to Madeline still exist.

OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

Continuing conversations with MTA for guidance about inconsistencies in the Zoning Ordinance. Met with assessor, reviewed maps, and resolved the tax classification of property near the junction of Paradise Road and Superior Road which had been incompatible with zoning. Also assisted assessor with background information on a requested split.

Double frontage lot in #2 Location – the ZO states that setbacks “shall comply with front yard requirements on both streets where practical.” The ZO does allow structures to line up with previously built buildings which do not meet the current code. Therefore, the owner will be permitted to build a garage as long as the new building is not closer to the road than the two existing structures on other nearby property.

Multiple phone calls with County Drain Commissioner, EGLE wetlands, and WUPPDR to help prospective buyer determine if land on Askel Road near the upper end of Otter Lake is suitable for a house.

Have continued to compile a list of current information to assist the PC in the Master Plan update.

Review Fire Departments:

- Otter Lake Fire Department (OLFD) – 2 EMS
- Hurontown Fire Department (HTFD) – no report

Review Assessor's Report:

Distributed

Trustee Reports:

Belanger commented that LED lights for the office would be about \$230.00; Scholie will order them.

DPW Report:

Kody Maki updated the board:

- There was a frozen line in the water tank, we lost about 500,000 gallons.
- Home on Dodge Street had a broken line.
- Section of water line on Frederick and Gundlach is broken.

A motion was made by Smith to approve the quote for the new valve from Dorner for Dakota Water in the amount of \$36,595.00 and seconded by Datto. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght Nay: None.

Public Comments:

- Ted: Snow removal going well in Tapiola.

Old Business:

- B.O.R. member needed – Scholie appointed Karen Jackovic to the Board of Review.
- Moving meter on Douglass/Edwards – A motion was made by Smith to approve the resolution to move the sewer meter to the City of Houghton and seconded by Datto. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght Nay: None.

New Business:

- Planning Commission (PC) update – Voght updated the board on the previous PC meeting which was held Thursday, February 6. The PC voted on an amendment on the zoning ordinance for including a compatible renewable energy ordinance (CREO). They are also working on updating the Master Plan.
 - A motion was made by Smith to approve the amendment to the zoning ordinance regarding CREO and seconded by Scholie. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght Nay: None
- Perpetual Care Interest Transfer – will get these amounts next month.
- Appoint a WUPPDR Representative – Scholie is going to check with WUPPDR on roles/responsibilities of being on the board; will decide next month.

- Poverty exemption resolution – A motion was made by Smith to accept the poverty exemption resolution and seconded by Skewes. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.
- Green Acres Rd. Sewer Project
 - A motion was made by Skewes to approve the 22nd draw in the amount of \$3,927.95 and seconded by Smith. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.
 - A motion was made by Scholie to approve the change order for the Sewer Project, seconded by Skewes. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Datto, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.
- New Per Diem/Lodging Worksheet – Scholie updated the form and passed out to the board.

Public Comment:

- A resident asked about the school millage and the impact of it.
- A resident asked why there is never representation from the Hurontown Fire Department at the Township Board meetings.
- A question was asked about the plan to pave Denton Road. Scholie stated he has spoken with them and it is planned to be done this year.

Meetings:

- February 12 – Planning Commission special meeting at 6:00 pm to work on Master Plan.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 pm.

Public Attendance:

- Chris Holmes - UPEA
- Jason Colombe
- Ted Soldan
- Tony Laux
- Kody Maki

X

Brandon Scholie
Supervisor

X

Amy Skewes
Clerk

