

BENZONIA TOWNSHIP BOARD

Approved

REGULAR MEETING

November 12th, 2025

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Barnard at 3:00 PM.

Present: Barnard, Rose, Orr, Heller and Burns

Staff: Haase, Adams, Nye, Pitcher

Absent: Hall

Guests: 5

Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Burns to approve the agenda, Rose seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Burns to approve the minutes as amended for the regular meeting October 8th, and as presented for the October 16th special meeting. Rose second, discussion had, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion carried.

TREASURERS REPORT: The treasurer presented the report for October 2025. She also updated the board that the delinquent Personal Property Taxes have been removed from the tax rolls. The cost was shared with neighboring townships that had the same issue.

CLERKS'S REPORT: The Clerk presented the Profit and Loss statement for the General, new building and Fire Department accounts along with a list of the payables for October 2025. Discussion was held. Roll call vote taken to approve the bills. Orr-N, Burns-Y, Barnard-Y, Heller-Y, Rose-Y, motion carried 4:1.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: Barnard received a request from the Crystal Lake Church to use the old building for their church activities after their loss due to a fire. **Burns made a motion to allow Crystal Lake Church to use the location free of charge, Rose seconded**, discussion had regarding septic and cleaning. **Roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion passed.** Orr stated her concerns with liability, cleaning, utilities, septic and showings. Barnard will draft a contract to be signed. Jason has spoken with a couple snow removal contractors regarding plowing here at the building. He received a bid from Hospenthal which included a brining option and DMB Lawn Care which is plow and salt. **Rose made a motion to hire Hospenthal for the new building.**

More discussion including Orr asking if can be put in paper to try to get more bids. **Motion failed for lack of second. Orr made a motion to put ad for bids in the paper. Bids to be received by end of Nov. for review before next meeting. Burns supported, all ayes, motion carried.**

Discussions turned to the clearing of the sidewalks in the event it snows prior to contract for plowing. Barnard has looked at several snowblower options. Rose made a motion to purchase snowblower not exceeding \$3000. Burns supported, roll call vote taken, Rose-Y, Barnard-Y, Burns-Y, Orr-N. Motion carried 4:1.

STAFF REPORTS:

1. FIRE CHIEF: Chief Adams stated for October there were 9 Fire and 31 Medical calls for a total of 40. YTD total of 544. Chief attended the career fair at Crystal Mountain for the Benzie and Frankfort Senior High schoolers. FF 1 & 2 academy is schedule Jan 10th thru June 6th 2026. Cost split between Benzie and Manistee County with Benzonia, Manistee and Frankfort sharing the hosting duties. Trunk-or-treat was held with a great turn out, over 400 hot dogs were served. Hose testing complete 3 sections were not approved. Chief is working on the INFIRS which will have to switch to the National Incident Response system, with a deadline of January 31st 2026. Chief will be on vacation Nov 13-19 and Nov 26-30th 2025.
2. Commissioners Report: Nye reported that the Equalization director had resigned, the county was deciding whether to contract the service out or keep in house when they received a last-minute application. The candidate fit the criteria, is experienced and has accepted the position. Michael Beach is the new Equalization director as of November 12, 2025. Nye spoke on the Headlee rollback and the statute that regulates it and the tax advisory committee. There are currently talks of a net .8 increase for next request of the taxpayers. Village of Beulah received a grant for the stormwater project. It requires a \$170,000 matching funds portion. The county approved a request for \$30k contribution from Beulah for the stormwater project. Nov 21st from 1-3, Kim Nowak Probate register and court administrator and will be retiring after over 35 years of service. Crystal Lake outlet project moves forward.
3. Zoning Administrator: A written report was received from Bob Hall.
4. WBJPC: Pitcher is asking for approval to apply for the GTB 2% grant again for the ordinance rewrite project. The planning commission is looking into a data mining ordinance at their next meeting on Thursday the 13th 6pm. They are energy intense, use lots of water and are really loud. **Heller made motion for Pitcher to apply for the 2% grant for the zoning rewrite. Orr second. Discussion held. All ayes, motion passed.**

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT: 1 resident made public comments.

COMMUNICATION: None

PENDING BUSINESS: A/V for new building- Orr spoke with Anavon and Smarthomes from Mideal and asked for more comparative quotes. She also spoke with Garrison. They need a floor plan and they will provide a bid. Website update – most docs are updated. Barnard says should be

ready anytime. Rick with Garrison reminded us that their monthly maintenance fee can be used for uploading docs, audio etc. Zoning may be the last document needed for website. Legal fees – Burns presented what she currently has for totals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Cemetery: No report.
- Parks: Tried to meet last week but didn't happen. Still discussing disc golf tee boxes to be moved, getting bids to make ramps at the restroom entrances making them more wheelchair accessible, 1 ballfield finished and the other spread, roofs are done on the restrooms, one of the dugout roofs possible this fall yet.
- Building and Grounds: The conservation district decided not to move forward with the purchase of the building. There have been 2 other showings should get feedback soon.
- Fire Department: No report.
- Township Roads: There will be a meeting soon.
- Community Activities: No report.
- Finance: Burns presented her budget amendments for the first half of the year. Discussion was had. **Burns made a motion to accept the budget amendments for General, Fire and WBJPC as presented. Rose second, more discussion held, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion carried.**
- Personnel: No report
- Policy: Policy book and conflict of interest policy to be reviewed and updated with the policy committee. Policy committee confirmed to be Heller and Orr.
- ZBA: 1 ZBA hearing coming up.
- Blight: Pitcher gave update on the 3 current cases; 1) The Bolton case, the dangerous buildings hearing was held October 28th, no parties of interest showed up. The hearing officer confirmed that per our ordinance it is a dangerous building and needs to be demolished. More info will be available next month. 2) Eric Hunt made great progress on Narrow Gauge, plans to be done in next 2 weeks. 3) Eldridge Rd has had more progress as of recent.

NEW BUSINESS: None

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: 3 residents made public comment.

Supervisor adjourned the meeting at 5:09 P.M.

Submitted by:

Diana L. Heller, Clerk

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ Motion passed to allow Crystal Lake Church to utilize the old building.
- ❖ Motion failed for hiring Hospenthal to plowing new building.
- ❖ Motion passed to place an ad for snowplowing bids in the newspaper.
- ❖ Motion passed to purchase a snowblower not to exceed \$3000.
- ❖ Motion passed for Pitcher to apply for GTB 2% grant for zoning rewrite.
- ❖ Motion passed to approve budget amendments.