

Mastodon Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

A regular meeting of the Mastodon Township Board was called to order at 5:30 pm by Supervisor Skinner. Pledge of Allegiance was said.

PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Mike Bjork, Karen Mallon, Chad Skinner, Stacey Watters, Dave Smith.

Department members present: Dan Kurtz, Paul Mallon PC Chair, Tammy Hendrickson, Stu Creel

Public in attendance: Rick Herman, Ted Pineau, Mikayla Pineau, Sherie Courchaine

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Mallon to approve agenda with the correction of the date from January 14 to January 13, and the addition of 2026 Goals added to Board Discussion. Support: Bjork. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Watters to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2025 Board meeting with the correction of the spelling of the Village of Alpha under Unfinished Business. Support: Smith. All ayes; no nays. Motion Carried.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL REVIEW: Bjork reviewed payables and payroll for checks numbers 32805 to 32808 for General fund in the amount of \$1,297.84. Payroll review included checks 32795 to 32804 and direct deposits 1319-1333 totaling \$12,53248. Invoices for review include 145250-14296 in the amount of \$9,058.33 for General Fund and \$38.03 for the Water account. Check number 32677 i/a/o \$1,324.60 to UP Propane was approved for reissue. Motion by Bjork to approve payables, invoices and payroll as submitted. Support: Skinner. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Written and submitted.

Clerk: Written and submitted.

Supervisor: Reported that Elinor Niemi is the new FAP Forester for the Iron-Baraga Conservation District. He received an email from a resident regarding the fencing in place at Stager Lake that impedes snowmobile traffic onto Stager Lake. Skinner requested that the Recreation Committee look into options about access for snowmobiles onto the Stager Lake Property. Discussion on the liability to township was brought up by Smith. Mallon offered that the parks should have a sign disclosing use is at the sole risk of the user. Kurtz advised that signage is posting advising that no motorized vehicles are permitted on park property, which would include snowmobiles.

Road Commission Report: Smith reported that CR424 will be completed in 2027. Fiber Optics installation is on hold. Smith reported there was discussion about the snow/ice removal in the county. Road Commission reported equipment breakdowns is the main reason snow/ice removal is poor. Township roads are scheduled for graveling in 2026 and pavement work in 2027. Discussion was held regarding road work on township local roads. Board decision was made that work will be requested to be done on the first mile of Upper Dam Road. No work will be done on Kalla Wall for 2026.

Assessor: Written and submitted.

Fire Chief: Written and submitted. Dave Smith reported that the Fire Department is in need of volunteer firemen at the Camp 5 location and requested that the Board make the public aware.

Planning Commission: Paul Mallon, Chair of the Planning Commission made report as Bjork was absent due to illness at the last Planning Commission meeting. Mallon reported that the January 7, 2026 Planning Commission meeting was quite contentious due to an individual disrupting the meeting regarding past revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. Mallon reported that there are no minutes, no reports, no public posting in the newspaper and no evidence of disclosure of proposed changes to be made to the 2018 Zoning Ordinance to local units of government or individuals as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. He reported that the Planning Commission has been tasked by the Board to review and update the Master Plan then work on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Mallon requested the Board seek a professional firm to assist in updating the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Mallon resigned from the Planning Commission.

Zoning Administrator: Written report submitted. ZA had no information on the status of the two Jacobs' lawsuits. ZA requested that the Board provide a timeline to the Planning Commission for completion of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Recreation Committee: Kurtz reported that he presented a request for approval the purchase of park benches to the Board. Discussion was held on park signage. Kurtz reported outsourcing the work is very costly and would like the Board to consider purchasing the equipment, a router, that would enable the township to make its own signs.

Maintenance: Written and submitted. Kurtz requested to purchase sodium chloride for ice and snow removal for the township. Motion by Skinner to purchase a pallet of sodium chloride in the amount of \$1,365.00. Support: Bjork. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Agenda Items.

- Rick Herman reported to the Board that Courtney Franz resigned from the Planning Commission due to the inability of the Planning Commission to complete work on the Zoning Ordinance.
- Ted Pineau stated that he and his neighbors are upset about the fencing at Stager Lake that does not allow snowmobile access onto the Stager Lake Park property.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Budget Amendments and/or Adjustment:** Mallon reported that Skinner is reviewing adjustments to line items in the budget that do not affect the 2025-2026 overall budget. Once approved, she will make the entries.
- **AT&T Update:** Mallon reported that she met with AT&T regarding phone coverage. A proposal will be presented by AT&T once they can confirm that our internet is reliable to use such equipment. Discussion was held about Spectrum and Starlink as alternative. Clerk will look into alternatives to AT&T.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Planning Commission Resignation:** Courtney Franz's resignation to the Planning Commission was accepted
- **Park Bench Purchase:** Motion by Bjork to purchase 4 park benches and concrete for foundation in the amount of \$1,780.00. Support: Smith. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion Carried.
- **DTE Franchise Agreement:** Ordinance to allow DTE to use to install natural gasline to the Village of Alpha. Motion by Mallon to adopt Ordinance number 2026-0113001 DTE Franchise Agreement. Support: Smith. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion Carried.
- **2026-2027 Budget Discussion:** A budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 9:00 am at the Mastodon Township Hall to discuss and accept the 2026-2027 Budget.
- **Website ADA Compliance:** Information was presented to the Board by Mallon regarding website ADA compliance. The township will have to be compliant by April 2027.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- **Recycling Materials Consideration:** By State Law, local municipalities will have to offer recycling to residents by 2032.
- **Commercial Rehabilitation District Information:** ZA presented information and resolution for consideration of adoption by the Board. Mallon advised the Board that this material has been presented to legal for review.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kurtz advised that the park bench at Patala Park is missing. Bjork advised him to contact the 4th of July committee.

BOARD COMMENTS: 2026 Goals:

- Mallon advised 2026 goals is to organize record management in the Clerk's Office to ensure that documentation regarding policy and ordinance changes can be readily found and available.
- Smith advised he would like the Greenbelt requirement in the Zoning Ordinance removed. He would also like the policy regarding purchasing within the departments to be reviewed and revised along with the Fire Hydrant agreement with the Village of Alpha.
- Watters also would like to see improvements to record keeping.
- Skinner advised Board that he will be focusing on the Policy Manual to ensure that it compliant with state and federal laws.
- Bjork reminded all that according to the Open Meetings Act, if it isn't recorded, then it didn't happen.

DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING: January 13, 2026 at 5:30 pm at the Township Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Bjork to adjourn the meeting at 6:16pm. Support: Smith. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

I hereby certify that the minutes contained herein are the draft minutes of the January 13, 2026, Regular Board meeting. Signed herein by the Mastodon Township Clerk, Karen Mallon on this the 14th day of January, 2026.

 Karen Mallon, Karen Mallon, Clerk

DRAFT