

**KEELER TOWNSHIP  
VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
64151 TERRITORIAL RD. W.  
HARTFORD, MI 49057**

**MINUTES OF THE TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025**

The Keeler Township Board Meeting called to order by Supervisor, Don Blackmond at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call of members present: Trustee Carl Davis, Treasurer Sharon Clupper, Supervisor Don Blackmond, Clerk Angie Sexton, and Trustee Matthew Sexton. Five members were present constituting a quorum.

Angie Sexton moved to approve the agenda as amended with the addition of the Memorial Day service. Sharon Clupper seconded, and all were in favor.

Public comment opened at 7:02 p.m. Upon hearing no public comments, the public comments closed at 7:02 p.m.

Matt Sexton moved to approve April 8, 2025, Township Board meeting minutes as presented. Don Blackmond seconded, and all were in favor.

Matt Sexton moved to approve April 15, 2025, Special Meeting (Zoning Ordinance) minutes as presented. Carl Davis seconded, and all were in favor.

Matt Sexton moved to approve May 1, 2025, Special Meeting (Zoning Ordinance) minutes as presented. Sharon Clupper seconded, and all were in favor.

Guests of Board:

Tina Leary, Van Buren County Commissioner, was not present.

Rick Boze, Van Buren County Road Commission. VCRC has begun roadside mowing and noted that the county is saving enough by doing the mowing themselves to have the mowers paid off in three years. Residents were asked to submit a repair ticket on SeeClickFix for any potholes that need addressed.

Bret Witkowski, Van Buren County Commission Managing Director went over road commission information and heard issues that residents would like to see addressed on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave. in the township.

Sheriff's Deputy John Horton was present. Deputy Horton read the April 2025 incident report. There were 44 calls for service in April; two alarms, one ambulance call, one animal bite, two animal problems, three assault, one burglary, two dead bodies, one domestic, three EMS assists, one vehicle fire, one fraud, two general assists, one non-EMS call, three PD accident, one property damage, and one automobile theft, two threats, fifteen traffic stops, one welfare check.

Fire & Ambulance reports:

The Sister Lakes Fire Department- The month of April consisted of eight calls for service, consisting of two calls within Keeler Township. 3/31/25 for a motor vehicle accident with injury and 4/23/25 for a gas odor that was a RV fuel leak. The month's average response time was twelve minutes and twenty-eight seconds, with an average of nine responders.

Keeler Township Fire Department & Rescue- Fire Chief Don Bogart spoke on behalf of the fire department. The department had sixteen total calls for April, consisting of fourteen EMS calls and two fire calls. Fire training for the month was postponed. EMS training was on back boarding and lifting procedures. 1635 replacement intake valve for the leak came in incorrectly and Moses is working on getting the correct replacement. 1635 is still in service with a temporary fix. The department had C-Comm look at the former siren on top of the station to get an estimate for repair. Chief Bogart let the board know that the department needs a working siren for weather alerts. He received a verbal quote of \$1500.00 to get the siren in working order and will get it in writing to submit to the board.

VBEMS did not submit a report for April.

Treasurer's report - The beginning balance in the general fund for the month was \$372,430.90, deposits of \$295,069.50, interest of \$75.05, bills paid \$371,444.96, ending balance of \$296,130.49. The townships Michigan Class Investments balance is \$245,515.21. Matthew Sexton moved to pay all bills and claims as presented. Sharon Clupper seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Blackmond- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support, Clupper- support, Davis- support. All were in favor.

Zoning Administrator Allyn Anthony wrote five zoning permits in April for a porch, two outbuildings, a garage, and a floating sales permit for Jake's Fireworks.

Trustee Carl Davis reported that the Planning Commission did not have a meeting in April.

Trustee Matt Sexton reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not have a meeting in April.

Old business:

ARPA Funding and Project Use - Midwest Energy Communications is still completing the project and it will submit the bill to the township for the agreed upon \$58,500 after project completion, and residents are all connected. All unserved residents will have the availability of internet service before the project's completion.

SLFRF Reporting- The last annual SLFRF report for the ARPA funds received by the township was submitted.

Recreation Plan- Still on hold.

Pedestrian Signs on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave.- The board had previously received a cost proposal from the Van Buren County Road Commission on the cost to place two solar powered lighted signs, six non-powered signs and their maintenance on behalf of the Crooked Lake Association. It was brought to the attention of the board that it was not the association seeking signs and it would not cover any cost of a project. Supervisor Blackmond spoke with the VBCRC, and they are willing to place two high visibility, non-solar signs on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave at their cost. Don Blackmond proposed the township cover the cost of placing an additional sign at the bend on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave for the cost of \$180.00 from the township road fund. The board must also agree to a 10-year maintenance contract for the three signs. Blackmond also informed the board that the sharrow symbols should be painted before Memorial Day on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave. as well. Don Blackmond moved to approve the two high visibility signs and pay \$180.00 out of the township road fund for one additional sign and agree to their 10-year maintenance with the VBCRC. Matt Sexton seconded and a roll call of M. Sexton- support, Clupper- support, Davis- support, A. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support. All were in favor.

Dangerous Building on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave. Update- The township held a Special Board meeting on March 19, 2025, at 6:00 pm to begin the formal process of demolition after the owner failed to comply with the order by the March 1, 2025, deadline. The township approved an order to demolish the property. The township was informed that the owner has filed an appeal. If the appeal was properly filed and is approved, it may go back to litigation. If the appeal is not proper, the process may proceed after June 10, 2025.

New Business:

Corridor Improvement Authority - The C.I.A is supposed to have nine members made up of business owners or property owners living within the corridor. There are currently six filled seats and three vacant seats. Members are needed, and if anyone is interested, please contact the township.

Don Blackmond recommended Tom Neary to be appointed to the authority. Matthew Sexton moved to appoint Tom Neary to the authority. Carl Davis seconded, and a roll call vote taken of A. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Clupper- support, Blackmond- support, and M. Sexton- support. The motion carried.

Planning Commission- Two Planning Commission members' terms are ending, and they have agreed to serve another term.

Don Blackmond recommended Bill Zuhl to be appointed to another term on the commission. Carl Davis moved to appoint Bill Zuhl to the commission for another term. Matthew Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Blackmond- support, Clupper- support, A. Sexton- support, M. Sexton- support, and Davis- support. The motion carried. Don Blackmond recommended Richard Hutchinson to be appointed to another term on the commission. Carl Davis moved to appoint Richard Hutchinson to the commission for another term. Matthew Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Davis- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, and Clupper- support. The motion carried.

Zoning Board of Appeals- Two Zoning Board of Appeals members' terms are ending, and they have agreed to serve another term.

Don Blackmond recommended Matthew Sexton to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to appoint Matthew Sexton to the board for another term. Sharon Clupper seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Blackmond- support, M. Sexton- abstain, Clupper- support, Davis- support, and A. Sexton- support. The motion carried.

Don Blackmond recommended Richard Hutchinson to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to appoint Richard Hutchinson to the board for another term. Angie Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of A. Sexton- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, and Davis- support. The motion carried.

Board of Review- Board of Review members' terms are ending, and they have all agreed to serve.

Don Blackmond recommended Bill Kays to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to appoint Bill Kays to the board for another term. Angie Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Davis- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, and Clupper- support. The motion carried.

Don Blackmond recommended Mark Pajakowski to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to appoint Mark Pajakowski to the board for another term. Matt Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Clupper- support, Blackmond- support, A. Sexton- support, M. Sexton- support, and Davis- support. The motion carried.

Don Blackmond recommended Richard Hutchinson to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to appoint Richard Hutchinson to the board for another term. Sharon Clupper seconded, and a roll call vote taken of A. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, and Blackmond- support. The motion carried.

Don Blackmond recommended Allyn Anthony to be appointed to another term. Carl Davis moved to Allyn Anthony to the board for another term. Matt Sexton seconded, and a roll call vote taken of Blackmond- support, M. Sexton- support, Clupper- support, Davis- support, and A. Sexton- support. The motion carried.

Memorial Day Service- Sharon Clupper would like to have the township fund the annual Memorial Day Service at the cemetery.

Matthew Sexton moved to fund a total of \$500.00 for \$200 donation to the American Legion, \$200 to the Hartford High School Band and \$100 for a speaker for the Monday, May 26, 2025, Memorial Day Service to be held at the Keeler Township Cemetery after the Memorial Day parade that begins at noon. Carl Davis seconded and a roll call vote of Davis- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, and A. Sexton- support. The motion carried.

The floor opened to public comment at 8:13 p.m. Jim Meersman asked why the Crooked Lake Association backed out. He also requested signs to be placed around all the lakes to warn drivers for pedestrians' safety, not just on 95<sup>th</sup>. Tom Landis wanted to thank Mark Pajakowski for all his hard work and countless hours working on the Planning Commission. A resident wanted to know if it was possible to deny the floating sales permit for the firework stand due to residents shooting fireworks off at all days and times and in the road. She was notified that it is an allowable permit. She also inquired about some problems with another property close to hers. She will meet with the supervisor to discuss. Vernon Wilkenson wanted to thank whoever the vendor was that cleaned up the felled tree at the cemetery and let the board know how nice it looked. It was Total Tree Care, LLC. that was contracted to perform the work. Upon hearing no other comments, public comments closed at 8:20 p.m.

Correspondence: Supervisor Don Blackmond received correspondence from Clare Boehmer, the vice president of the Crooked Lakes Association requesting that the November 12, 2024, Keeler Township Board minutes be corrected to show that the former president of the association was seeking pedestrian signs, not the current president. As the minutes have already been approved and therefore cannot be changed. The request for the change will be memorialized in the minutes.

Motion by Matthew Sexton to adjourn and seconded by Angie Sexton. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Submitted by,

Angie Sexton, Clerk