

**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, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Don Blackmond opened the hearing on the Round Lake Aquatic Weed Control Special Assessment District 2025-2029 at 7:02 pm to public comments. Jerry Morin let the board know that he and the special assessor, Bill Kays, went through and verified every parcel on the tax roll in the weed district. Mr. Morin also informed the public that the Round Lake Association received signed petitions in favor of the special assessment district from 84% of the residents on Round Lake. Upon hearing no other comments, Don Blackmond closed the public comments at 7:06 pm. Don Blackmond read the resolution for the Round Lake Aquatic Weed Control Special Assessment District for 2025-2029. Don Blackmond moved to adopt the resolution regarding the assessment role for the 2025-2029 Round Lake Aquatic Weed Control Special Assessment District. Carl Davis seconded the motion. Roll call vote of M. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Clupper- support, Blackmond- support, A. Sexton- support. All were in favor. Don Blackmond moved to close the hearing on the Round Lake Aquatic Weed Control Special Assessment District. Matthew Sexton seconded, all were in favor and the hearing closed at 7:12 pm.

Angie Sexton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Carl Davis seconded, and all were in favor.

The floor opened for public comments at 7:13 pm. Upon hearing no public comments, the public comments closed at 7:13 pm.

Don Blackmond moved to approve August 5, 2025, Regular Board meeting 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. The road commission is doing the second round of mowing. Six townships have already been completed. Fog Seal is complete, and the company will be around in the next couple of weeks to do striping. Tree work will begin in the next few weeks and continue until October. Let the road commission know of any trees that may need addressed. VBCRC will begin subcontract chip seal work for Cass County. VBCRC is looking into purchasing another mower to use. The public addressed a large amount of cut grass debris that was left in the roadway during the second round of roadside mowing. It was reported on SeeClickFix.

Sheriff Deputy John Horton was present and went over the August report of 10 alarm calls, 4 ambulance calls, 4 animal problems, 2 assaults, 1 burglary, 7 domestic violence call, 3 EMS calls, 1 fraud, 1 general assist, 1 mental non-EMS call, 2 personal injury accidents, 2 property damage accidents, 1 sex offense, 1 theft, , 1 theft of automobile, 3 threats, 23 traffic stops, 2 trespassing, 1 vin inspection. Bringing the total for August to 70 calls of service.

Fire & Ambulance reports:

The Sister Lakes Fire Department – Did not submit a report for the month.

Keeler Township Fire & Rescue- The department had 16 total calls for August, consisting of 13 EMS calls and 3 fire calls: 1 UTV accident, 1 illegal burn and a fire alarm. Fire training for the month was on ladder training and scene safety for medical training. 1660 passenger side window parts were procured and it was fixed. The department is still waiting for parts for 1620 from Moses. The siren can now be set off by handheld radios for severe weather. Chief Bogart wants to give the clerk an older handheld radio to set off the siren from the township hall. Natalie Light submitted her resignation letter to the department. An employee hearing was set for the meeting but is no longer needed with the resignation letter. Don Blackmond moved to accept Natalie Light's resignation and remove her from

the employment role. Matthew Sexton seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken of Davis- support, Blackmond- support, Clupper- support, A. Sexton- support, and M. Sexton- support. All were in favor and the motion carried. The board thanked Natalie Light for her service at the department. Zachary Poole, a member of the Keeler Township Fire Department off and on for the last 12 years passed away due to motorcycle accident. The board held a moment of silence in honor of Zach Poole. The fire department will also hold a fish fry on September 28, 2025. Proceeds from the event will go towards Zach's two young daughters.

VBEMS- VBEMS did not submit a report for August.

Treasurer's report - The beginning balance in the general fund for the month was \$245,769.91, deposits of \$114,038.99, interest of \$53.64, bills paid \$82,361.54, ending balance of \$277,501.00. The township has not received the statement from Michigan Class Investments yet, so the balance is still \$248,235.48.

Matthew Sexton moved to pay all bills and claims as presented. Sharon Clupper seconded, and a roll call vote taken of A. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, Davis- support, M. Sexton- support, Clupper- support. All were in favor.

Zoning Administrator- Ryan Laylin wrote zoning permits in August to demolish a house and put a new one up on Hillside Dr., a fence permit on west Territorial, a seawall permit on CR 690, and a new garage on 84th Ave. September is looking like it may be even busier.

Trustee Carl Davis reported that the Planning Commission meeting for August 26th was cancelled and pushed to September 9th.

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

Old business:

Recreation Plan- Still on hold.

Dangerous Building on 95. Ave. Update- The structure has been removed and the property restored to its original grade. The bill for the work is \$19,794. The township will request reimbursement from the property owner for the work. If it is not repaid, then the amount will be placed as delinquent property taxes.

Parcel No's & 80-12-170-067-10 update- There is no update for parcel #80-12-031-045-00. Parcel #80-12-170-067-10 is the only parcel with an update. The township supervisor met with legal counsel and drafted a letter sent to both adjoining property owners of that parcel. The property owner to the west, John LaFaire, is not interested in the parcel. The property owner to the east, Michael Conrad, is interested in the parcel. The township had offered to split the parcel with both adjoining landowners. The assessor deemed the property worth \$5,850 per linear foot of lake frontage. There are conflicting frontage amounts from the county and a survey. Mr. Conrad wants to have the property surveyed prior to purchase and agrees to pay the price per foot for the surveyed frontage amount. The sale would take place at a title office, and the township would pay the closing costs. The township attorney has provided a sales agreement, quick claim deed, and a resolution for the sale of the property. Legal counsel has let the board know there is no justifiable reason to keep the parcel. It costs the township more each year and is a liability. Don Blackmond read the resolution for disposal of real property not needed for township purposes. Don Blackmond moved to approve the resolution for disposal of real property not needed for township purposes. Carl Davis seconded it, and a roll call vote was taken of Blackmond- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support, and Davis- support. All were in favor and the motion carried.

New Business:

Sister Lakes Area Utilities Authority 2025 Winter Taxes- Sister Lakes Area Utilities Authority operates the sewer that goes around the lakes. Bills are sent out periodically, and some people do not pay those bills. Those unpaid bills then become warrants placed on the property tax roll and collected as property taxes. There are \$35,685.48 in unpaid utility bills for the 2025 winter tax bills. Don Blackmond moved to place \$35,685.48 in unpaid utility bills on the 2025 winter tax bills. Sharon Clupper seconded, and all were in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

BS&A for Property Taxes- BS&A will discontinue their current server and will take property taxes, assessing and special assessing to a cloud-based program. The estimate to move files, set up and train the treasurer, assessor and special assessor on the new software is \$11,485.00. Keeler Township really has no choice in the matter. If the system is not switched over to the cloud, the township will lose connection to the Van Buren County treasurer information.

Sharon Clupper said that the timing needs to be planned right so that the changeover does not interfere with taxes. The treasurer will continue to get information on the switchover and plan.

Software for bookkeeping- The township is in the middle of the township audit. The township in the past used handwritten ledgers and then switched to using QuickBooks. QuickBooks is not set up for governmental accounting, and the township has tried to make QuickBooks work for its needs. The township has reached a point where it is making our audits more difficult than they should be. The township is looking into programs geared towards governmental accounting. Sage Intacct and BS&A are two that have been recommended to the township by the auditors. While Sage is cheaper, it does not have a program set up to handle the township special assessment districts. BS&A is set up to handle the township special assessment districts and work with the treasurer, assessor, and special assessors' information, it comes at a much higher cost to set up. The board will investigate which program will be the better choice after the audit is completed.

Mehlenbeck request; \$87.78 for cemetery items- Resident Jennifer Mehlenbeck purchased 3 plots in the cemetery, one for her late husband, one for her and then an extra one that she was given permission to plant one tree on. Mrs. Mehlenbeck planted two trees on the plot, some landscaping, and a little memorial for her husband. The trees were surrounded by small fencing. Mrs. Mehlenbeck went to the cemetery and found that the fencing had been removed along with the trees, and the holes filled in. Mrs. Mehlenbeck reported the theft to the township supervisor, and he suggested that she report the theft to the Van Buren County Sheriff's office, which she did. Mrs. Mehlenbeck believes that the township landscaping contractor is responsible for the removal of the trees and fencing. Clerk Sexton spoke with the landscaping contractor, and they denied any such removal. Mrs. Mehlenbeck is present requesting that the township reimburse her the \$87.78 for the cost of the two trees and fencing. Trustee Matt Sexton told Mrs. Mehlenbeck that as a township trustee, he is charged with overseeing the township taxpayer's money and he cannot in good faith reimburse her for something that the township had nothing to do with the taxpayers' money. Clerk Sexton said she is sorry for what has happened to Mrs. Mehlenbeck's trees and fencing but, rule 24 of the Keeler Township Cemetery rules states "The Township shall not be liable for any damage caused by the elements, act of God, or work performed by contractors" and therefore the township is not responsible for the theft or vandalism on the plot. The board agreed to not reimburse the \$87.78.

November Board Meeting- The township will hold a Special Election for Dowagiac Union Schools on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, which is the same day that the November township meeting is scheduled. The clerk has asked for the meeting to be rescheduled. Carl Davis moved to reschedule the November 4 meeting to Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Don Blackmond seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The motion carried.

L-4029- Supervisor Blackmond went over 2025 L-4029 was filled out with information from the Special Assessor. L-4029 gets submitted to the Van Buren County Equalization director, to have the millages placed on the tax roll. Don Blackmond moved to approve the 2025 L-4029 as presented. Angie Sexton seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The floor opened to public comments at 8:22 pm. Upon hearing no comments, public comments closed at 8:22 pm.

Correspondence: Don Blackmond received a 2025 annual report from Market One. No other correspondence.

Motion by Don Blackmond to adjourn and seconded by Carl Davis. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Submitted by,

Angie Sexton, Clerk

TOWNSHIP OF KEELER

COUNTY OF VAN BUREN, STATE OF MICHIGAN

**RESOLUTION FOR DISPOSAL OF REAL PROPERTY NOT NEEDED FOR
TOWNSHIP PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the Township of Keeler owns certain unaddressed real property located on Lakeshore Drive extending to Crooked Lake between addresses 66793 and 66757 Lakeshore Drive, Dowagiac, Michigan (Parcel No. 80-12-170-0067-10), legally described as:

Commencing at the Northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 6 of said plat; thence South along the Easterly line of said Lot 1 to the Southeast corner of Lot 1; thence Northwesterly along the South line of Lot 1, 20.8 feet more or less; thence North to a point on the North line of said Lot 1, which is 20 feet West of the Point of Beginning; thence East along the North line of said Lot 1 to the Northeast corner of said Lot 1, being the Place of Beginning. All being in Woodland Beach (hereinafter "subject property").

and

WHEREAS MCL 41.2 allows the Township Board to sell or convey property no longer needed for public purposes by resolution; and

WHEREAS, an adjoining property owner wishes to purchase said property from Keeler Township; and

WHEREAS Keeler Township has determined that the value of said lakefront property is \$5,850 per lakefront foot and said number of lakefront feet shall be established by a survey to be paid for and obtained by the Purchaser.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Township Board finds that the subject property is not needed for township purposes; and

The Township Board is willing to sell the property to the identified adjoining property owner via quit claim deed for \$5,850 per lakefront foot; and

The Township Supervisor is hereby authorized to sign the deed conveying the property to the adjoining property owner upon receipt of the signed sales agreement; performance thereof and payment of the purchase price as determined by the survey to be obtained by the Purchaser.

All resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Motion was made by Blackmond and seconded by Davis to adopt the foregoing Resolution.

Upon roll call vote the following voted "Aye": Blackmond, Clupper, M. Sexton, A. Sexton, Davis

The following voted "Nay": None

The following were absent: None

The Supervisor declared the motion carried and the resolution duly adopted.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Keeler Township Board held on September 2, 2025; that the meeting was conducted and public notice of the meeting was given pursuant to and in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act; that a quorum of the Board was present and voted in favor of the resolution; and that the minutes of the meeting will be or have been made available as required by the Open Meetings Act.

Angie Sexton, Clerk
Township of Keeler
Van Buren County, Michigan