

**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, OCTOBER 7, 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: Clerk Angie Sexton, Treasurer Sharon Clupper, Trustee Matthew Sexton, Trustee Carl Davis, and Supervisor Don Blackmond. Five members were present constituting a quorum.

Don Blackmond moved to approve the agenda with the addition of "tablet or other electronic devices" under number 11. Angie Sexton seconded, and all were in favor.

The floor opened for public comments at 7:01 pm. Upon hearing no public comments, the public comments closed at 7:02 pm.

Matthew Sexton moved to approve September 2, 2025, Regular Board meeting minutes as presented. Carl Davis seconded, and all were in favor.

Guests of Board:

Township Auditor was not present.

Tina Leary, Van Buren County Commissioner, was present. Governor Whitmer signed the state budget. State Revenue funding has been set. Veterans Services funding is down 42% over last year. Free meals will be provided at schools throughout the state.

Rick Boze, Van Buren County Road Commission. The road commission began tree work and will continue until it snows. Let the road commission know of any trees that may need addressed on SeeClickFix.

Sheriff Deputy John Horton was present and went over the September report of 5 alarm calls, 4 animal problems, 2 assaults, 1 report of child abuse, 2 civil disputes, 2 domestic violence calls, 5 EMS calls, 2 found property, 1 fraud, 5 general assist, 1 mental non-EMS call, 1 property damage accident, 5 personal injury accidents, 1 property damage, 1 sex offense, 1 stalking, 2 suspicious persons, 2 thefts, 4 threats, 21 traffic stops, 1 trespassing, 1 vehicle inspection, 2 welfare checks. Bringing the total for September to 73 calls of service. Sheriff John Horton informed the board that next Thursday would be his last day of service for the township. Officer Weekly will take over patrols. The board thanked Officer Horton for his wonderful service to the township and will be missed. A member of the public let Officer Horton know that there is a boat that is parked on the township property by the Strand and has been parked there for the entire summer.

Fire & Ambulance reports:

The Sister Lakes Fire Department – Submitted a report for the months of August and September. August had 14 calls for service with an average response time of 8:37 and 8 personnel per call. None of the calls for service in August were in Keeler. September had 11 calls for service with an average response time of 9:17 and 7 personnel per call. Two calls for service were in Keeler. One call on 9/15/25 for a motor vehicle accident with injuries and one on 9/20/25 for lines down.

Keeler Township Fire & Rescue- Andy Lubbert was present to go over the department's monthly report. The department had 14 calls for service in September, consisting of 14 EMS calls and 2 motor vehicle accidents that fire responded to: 1 in Keeler and 1 in Sister Lakes coverage area. Fire training for the month was on search and rescue techniques. EMS training was cancelled for Zach Poole's funeral. 1620 had a passenger side tire blow out while sitting in the bay. The tires were 15 years old and due to safety reasons, the remaining 5 tires were replaced as well. The parts for 1620 primer came in, and the department is waiting to schedule a repair time with Moses. The department received a quote from Triple-E Asphalt last year to replace the parking lot asphalt. Triple-E will honor last year's quote price for the work. Other asphalt quotes that were received have increased by 10%. The department would like to get the parking lot repair completed before the end of the year with Triple-E. Weather seals have

been purchased to replace the seals around the doors. An application from Dominick Gardner was submitted to the hiring committee. The committee has not reviewed the application yet and will discuss it at the next board meeting.

Tires for 1620- 1620 had a tire blow out and needed to have the 5 remaining 15-year-old tires replaced for safety. Don Blackmond moved to ratify Division Tire invoice #708433 for \$950 to replace 1620's front tire and pay for the cost out of the township property sale proceeds. Matthew Sexton seconded and a roll call vote of Clupper- support, Davis- support, M. Sexton- support, Blackmond- support, A. Sexton- support. Motion carried. Don Blackmond moved to ratify Division Tire invoice #708432 for \$2,460 to replace 1620's 4 rear tires and pay for the cost out of the township property sale proceeds. Carl Davis seconded and a roll call vote for A. Sexton- support, M. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Blackmond- support, Clupper- support. Motion carried. Don Blackmond moved to ratify Division Tire invoice #708379 for \$1,075 to replace and service 1620's blown out tire and pay for the cost out of the township property sale proceeds. Matthew Sexton seconded and a roll call vote of Davis- support, Clupper- support, Blackmond- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support. Motion carried.

Keeler Township Fire Department Parking Lot- Keeler Township Fire Department acquired several quotes at the end of last year to replace the parking lot asphalt. Quotes received Chorba Asphalt for \$45,200.00 for a 2" mill and 2" repave and from Triple-E Asphalt to mill 2" down and replace with 2" of asphalt for \$44,595.08. Triple-E Asphalt did not recommend the 2" repair as they felt it would not hold for more than a year. Quotes for a complete teardown and mill of the old asphalt, pave in 2' average base and 2" average surface and repaint parking lot were obtained from Arnt Asphalt for \$84,130.00 and from Triple-E for \$80,233.55. Don Blackmond proposes using the proceeds from the property sale to pay for the asphalt work. Matt Sexton was concerned that the revenue shared by the state will go down and will cause a shortage, and the money should be saved. Don Blackmond moved to approve the Triple-E Asphalt invoice in the amount of \$80,233.55 and use funds from the property sale to cover the cost. Angie Sexton seconded and roll call vote for M. Sexton- support, Davis- support, A. Sexton- support, Clupper- support, Blackmond- support. The motion carried.

VBEMS- VBEMS submitted a report for August with 10 Priority 1 calls for service with an average response time of 10:13 and 3 Priority 2 calls with an average response time of 12:40.

Treasurer's report - The beginning balance in the general fund for the month was \$277,501.00, deposits of \$79,186.87, interest of \$57.98; bills paid \$79,936.90, ending balance of \$276,808.95. The balance from Michigan Class Investments is \$309,727.59.

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

Zoning Administrator- Ryan Laylin wrote 6 zoning permits in September. 1 shed on Hillside Dr., a seawall permit on Point Ct., a potential house edition that was denied and they will go before the ZBA in October, a commercial building on M 152, a garage on 95<sup>th</sup> and a new home on Hillside Dr. Ryan Laylin needs a tablet or laptop at the hall. A monitor or tv is also needed. Don Blackmond moved to approve up to \$1000 for the purchase of a tablet or laptop for the Zoning Administrators to use at the hall. Angie Sexton seconded and a roll call vote was taken of Blackmond- support, Davis- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, and A. Sexton- support. All were in favor, and the motion carried. Jerry Morin, the township's IT support, suggests taking the tv in the entry way of the hall and relocating it into the building and zoning office for their use as opposed to an additional monitor. Ryan Laylin was fine with that, and the board agreed with the idea.

Trustee Carl Davis reported that the Planning Commission meeting was held on September 9<sup>th</sup> and the commission moved to accept and present to the board the proposed Short-Term Rental Ordinance for their review. The proposed ordinance was forwarded to the board. The next commission meeting is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Trustee Matt Sexton reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not have a meeting in September but has a meeting scheduled for October 21, 2025, for the Doyle application.

Old business:

Recreation Plan- Still on hold.

Dangerous Building on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave. Update- The bill for the demolition work in the amount of \$19,794 was paid by the township. The township has forwarded the invoice to legal counsel to request reimbursement from the property owner for the work. If it is not repaid, then the amount will be placed as delinquent property taxes. Counsel prepared

the letter for the township assessor, and the letter was mailed to the property owner on October 6, 2025. If it is not paid, the amount will be placed as a lien against the property owner's other properties.

Parcel No's & 80-12-170-067-10 update- There is no update for parcel #80-12-031-045-00 as the parcel is a little more complicated. Parcel #80-12-170-067-10 has been purchased for the net cost of \$120,730.00 by Michael Conrad, the property owner to the east. The township had offered to split the parcel with both adjoining landowners, but LaFaire declined the purchase. The assessor deemed the property worth \$5,850 per linear foot of lake frontage. Mr. Conrad paid to have the property surveyed prior to purchasing, and the lot was found to be 20.8 linear feet. Mr. Conrad paid \$5,850 per foot for the frontage surveyed amount.

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. The treasurer will continue to get information on the switchover and plan.

Software for bookkeeping- The township has received a quote to transition the township accounting and payroll needs to BS&A online for \$47,835, which includes the \$11,485 charge for both assessor's and treasurer's upgrade to the cloud. That amount includes converting data, set up, training, and the modules for general ledger, payroll, treasurer, assessor, and the special assessor. Sage and BS&A are two programs that have been recommended to the township by the auditors. BS&A is set up to handle the township special assessment districts and work with the treasurer, assessor, and special assessors' information.

#### New Business:

Fire Millage Money- The fire millage money is split 40% to Keeler Township Fire Department and 40% to Sister Lakes Fire Department. Both departments have asked for the remaining 10% to be automatically distributed to the departments. An additional 20% of the fire millage is supposed to go towards special projects. Carl Davis moved to continue paying 40% to each department and withhold the additional 20% in reserve for special projects. Angie Sexton seconded the motion. Roll call vote for Blackmond- support, Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, A. Sexton- support, Davis- support. All were in favor.

Lily Park Request- The residents surrounding the township property residents call "Lily Park" had a representative of the neighborhood call the township Supervisor and requested that the township clean up the "park." The township property is not a public park, but a township owned property on the west side of Round Lake. The representative let the supervisor know that there is a smell of dead animals coming from the property as well as dead trees and the ditch is full of debris and grass. The ditch is an intercounty drain, and the township can request the drain commission to look at the drain but, that is about it. The property is a natural swamp area. Supervisor Blackmond went and walked the property and saw several dead deer on the property that he assumes have EHD and have died after seeking water. A special permit would be needed from DNR to remove the dead deer. The board was against taking any action on the property.

Trick or Treat Date and Hours- The Keeler Township Fire Department would like to hold trick or treating on October 31, 2025, from 5:00-7:00 pm. Don Blackmond moved to accept the day and times for trick or treating. Angie Sexton seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Motion carried.

ARPA Account/Funds Designation- The ARPA funds were taken as a loss of revenue to the township. The funds were designated for the implantation of broadband services in the township. Broadband has been installed, and every resident in the township can connect to broadband if they choose to. The invoice has been paid. There are remaining funds of \$18,536 in the fund. Don Blackmond moved to remove the special designation for the balance of \$19,000 and place it in a new Township Improvement Fund. Sharon Clupper seconded and a roll call vote of Clupper- support, M. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Blackmond- support, A. Sexton- support. All were in favor.

Brown Sewer Matter- The former Blue Fin Marina, turned site condominium, site plan approval required each unit to have its own connection to the sewer system. The old Bluefin building had one sewer tap and two lines that went into the tap. When the first unit was erected, that building connected to the existing tap. When the next unit was that building connected to the same sewer tap. When the second unit was occupied, there was a backup. After some investigation, it was determined that each unit was not connected to their own sewer tap. Resident Tracy Brown has paid for a sewer tap and connection to her unit. She is asking the township for reimbursement for connections of around \$16,000. Supervisor Blackmond informed her that the township will not be reimbursed for the costs incurred to connect as the township does not receive any funding from the sewer tap fees. All tap fees

and sewer permits are through the Sister Lakes Area Utility Authority. The subject will be discussed at the next SLAUA meeting. Meetings are open to the public.

The floor opened to public comments at 8:44 pm. Darren Lane asked if there was any way to lower the 1% Property Tax Admin Fee that the township takes in. Clerk Sexton said that she did not feel that the township could reduce it, especially as the township treasurer takes on more responsibilities that are being transferred from the county level to the township. Treasurer Clupper said that now the township will have to pay even more for software now that the county is going to have a cloud tax system. A resident asked if the fire department has considered a utilization fee to recover costs associated with calls. The board informed the residents that the fire department does have a cost recovery order that allows for billing when they are able to. The next board meeting will be Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 7:00 pm. Upon hearing no comments, public comments closed at 8:51 pm.

Correspondence: No correspondence.

Motion by Don Blackmond to adjourn and seconded by Sharon Clupper. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Submitted by,

Angie Sexton, Clerk