

**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, JANUARY 6, 2026**

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 Matthew Sexton, Supervisor Don Blackmond, Trustee Carl Davis, and Clerk Angie Sexton. Five members were present constituting a quorum.

Don Blackmond moved to approve the agenda as amended with the addition of 15 b.- SLAUA. Matthew 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 December 2, 2025, Regular Board meeting minutes as presented. Don Blackmond seconded, and all were in favor. Motion carried.

Guests of Board:

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

Rick Boze, Van Buren County Road Commission, was present. The Van Buren County Road Commission budget has been finalized. Keeler Township will receive an additional \$1,020 more in Revenue Sharing for 2026. The road commission crews were off New Years Eve and New Years Day. They worked Friday and Saturday after the new year and some on Sunday clearing roads from the heavy weather that the county received during the holiday. The township has submitted the 2026 Road Plan. The Road Commission sent the Rev Share Notice and Agreement to the township for review and signature. Don Blackmond moved to accept the Rev-Share 2026 agreement as presented. Matthew Sexton seconded and all were in favor. Motion carried.

Van Buren County Sheriff Deputy Slade Weekly is still out on medical leave. His replacement sheriff was not present.

Fire & Ambulance reports:

The Sister Lakes Fire Department – Sister Lakes Fire Department had a total of 11 calls for the month of November, which consisted of 4 calls in Keeler with an average response time of 12:27 and 8 responders. The month of December Sister Lakes Fire Department had 8 calls in total, which consisted of 2 calls in Keeler with an average response time of 12:56 and 9 responders.

Keeler Township Fire & Rescue- Supervisor Blackmond went over the department's monthly report for December. The department had 22 calls for service in December, consisting of 18 EMS calls and 4 fire calls. Fire training was forcible entry; EMS training was over patient assessment. 3 members signed up for Fire 1 & 2. Lexi and Dominick will be taking the whole class, and Zoey will be retesting. This is at no cost. Nathan is still doing good in the EMT class. The pump on 1620 is leaking and still needs to be rebuilt. The engine will need to be out of service for a month for the entire cab to be removed to access the pump. The cost is estimated to be around \$10,000. Don Blackmond moved to approve the cost to repair the pump for 1620 by Mose's. Matthew Sexton seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken of Carl Davis- support, Matt Sexton- support, Sharon Clupper- support, Don Blackmond- support, Angie Sexton- support. Motion carried.

VBEMS- VBEMS submitted a report for December with a total of 14 calls for the month consisting of 9 Priority-1 calls for service with an average response time of 11:25, 3 Priority-2 calls with an average response time of 13:22 and 2 Priority-3 calls with an average response time of 11:45.

Treasurer's report - The beginning balance in the general fund for the month was \$137,893.00, deposits of \$180,317.90, interest of \$27.14; bills paid \$203,224.43, ending balance of \$115,013.61. The Michigan Class Investments balance is \$312,923.23.

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

Zoning Administrator- Ryan Laylin wrote two zoning permits for the month.

Trustee Carl Davis reported that the Planning Commission held a meeting on December 16, 2025. The commission reappointed chairs for the commission and set the 2026 meeting dates.

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

Old business:

Recreation Plan- Still on hold.

Dangerous Building on 95<sup>th</sup> Ave. Update- A letter of debt collection was sent to the property owners to pay the \$19,794.00 on October 6, 2025. The debt was not paid by the deadline set, and a tax lien was recorded on all properties owned by the owner of 95<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Dangerous Buildings on Oak St.- Still waiting for a Dangerous Building hearing date for the property red tagged on Oak St. that still contains two rental unit.

Mehlenbeck Lawsuit- The township filed a Notice of Appeal to the judgment against the township for the loss of tree claim brought forth by resident Jennifer Mehlenbeck. The notice of appeal was interpreted as a request for a rehearing. Don Blackmond attended the rehearing before the Circuit Court judge on behalf of the township. The judge reheard the case in its entirety and ruled in favor of the township and against Mehlenbeck. The plaintiff has a period of appeal.

Short-Term Rental Ordinance- The board is waiting for the completion of recommended changes to the proposed Short-Term Rental Ordinance, and the board will hold another special workshop to go over the ordinance changes once completed.

Electronics Recycling- The Van Buren County Conservation District would like to hold an electronic recycling drive at the Keeler Township Transfer Site. There would not be any cost to the township for the event. The conservation district will park a semi at the transfer site during the dates of July 8- July 21. Those 2 weeks will be available for Van Buren County residents and property owners to drop off electronics to be recycled during open hours on Saturdays. There is a Memorandum of Understanding that needs to be signed by the township. Don Blackmond had a question about the indemnification clause in the contract that he would like to run past the townships insurance agent before signing. Don Blackmond moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding under the condition that it is acceptable with insurance. Angie Sexton seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken of M. Sexton- support, Davis- support, Blackmond- support, Clupper- support, and A. Sexton- support. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

New Business:

Budget Workshop- Don Blackmond moved to schedule a special budget workshop meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 5:00 pm. Sharon Clupper seconded and all were in favor.

SLAUA- SLAUA runs waste to the Dowagiac Sewer system to be processed. There have been some changes at the City of Dowagiac which may cause a revisit to the operating agreement in place and lead to some rate increases. SLAUA is an operating authority created by Silver Creek Township and Keeler Township for the ring sewer system around the lakes. Ownership is based on a percentage formula based on the amount of sewer taps that each township has. Silver Creek has more taps than Keeler Township. There was an existing sewer system around Indian Lake, owned by Silver Creek that, Silver Creek hired SLAUA to be the daily operator of, after SLAUA was formed. SLAUA has decided that it no longer wants to operate the Indian Lake sewer system and has sent notice to Silver Creek that the operation of the Indian Lake sewer system will end on February 28, 2026. The Silver Creek board is seeking alternatives to the issue, one of which could be to transfer ownership of the Indian Lake Sewer system to the

Sister Lakes Area Utility Authority. Any type of agreement where ownership is acquired would need to be approved by both the Silver Creek and Keeler Township Boards. Don Blackmond will keep the board updated.

The floor opened to public comments at 7:33 pm. Pat Hickey asked what the delay with the Recreation Plan and the Short-Term Ordinance was. He was informed that companies need to be solicited for quotes for the Recreation Plan, and the Short-Term Rental Ordinance changes need to be completed, and another hearing held. Mike Cummins asked what the weight limit was over the tube between the lakes on 95<sup>th</sup> due to Mitchell Landscaping driving over it excessively carrying concrete. Rick Boze from VBCRC will investigate it. Mr. Cummins also asked if residents still needed to post building permits in their windows after issuance. The Zoning Administrator let him know that people are still required to post them in their windows. Upon hearing no comments, public comments closed at 7:43 pm.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Motion by Don Blackmond to adjourn and Matthew Sexton seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Submitted by,

Angie Sexton, Clerk

