

Meeting of Sparta Township Board

Sparta Township Hall - 160 E Division St - Sparta MI 49345

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November 13, 2025 - 7pm

Present: Supervisor Dale Bergman, Clerk Marcy Savage, Treasurer Ashley Johnson, Trustee Jason Bradford, Bill Goodfellow, Barb Johnson, and Rob Steffens.

Also present: Historical Society Chairman Doug Pinckey, Sparta Library Director Merri-Jo Tuinstra and recording Secretary Sarah Fischer.

Absent: None

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Additions or corrections to the agenda:** None. Motion by Bill Goodfellow with a second by Barb Johnson. All in favor, all signify by saying yes. It passed unanimously.
4. **Public Comment for agenda items:** None.
5. **Approval of minutes and treasurer's report:**

Approval of minutes of October 9th, 2025: Motion by Rob Steffens with a second by Ashley Johnson. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

Treasurer's Report: The proposed revenue changed by 2%, being a \$11,000 change over the prior year. Additionally, the Michigan Class account generated over \$634 in interest in a single month. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report by Bill Goodfellow with a second by Marcy Savage. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

6. **Building Department Monthly Report:** this is informational only.

Business items:

- a. **Approval of Bills:** Motion by Rob Steffens with a second by Barb Johnson for approval of the bills. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

- b. Fire Authority Resolution:** Bill Goodfellow explained that the fire authority will unify fire services for the township and village, improving coordination and efficiency while giving the chief broader leadership responsibilities. Although the structure introduces added administrative and financial complexity, months of collaboration produced a joint agreement that maintains the current fire board, consolidates ownership of all department assets under the authority, and grants the ability to raise funds, issue bonds, and request millage. It will replace the existing joint fire agreement and does not require voter approval. Bill stated that the document best reflects the needed structure and requested support for approval. A motion was made by Bill Goodfellow, seconded by Jason Bradford, to approve the resolution establishing fire authority and related matters. Roll call was conducted with all members of the township voting Yes in favor of the motion. Passed unanimously.
- c. Budget Amendments:** Marcy and Bill recommended changes to the budget, including reductions in capital outlay, building department fees, and zoning costs due to lower-than-expected expenses. The library building and grounds budget was also slightly reduced since no major projects are planned, while routine needs are still funded. Overall, the amendments will rebalance the budget based on actual needs and updated cost information. A motion by Bill Goodfellow, seconded by Jason Bradford, to approve the budget changes as presented passed unanimously.
- d. Used Recording Equipment:** Staff discussed leftover equipment from the recent update to the recording system, which no longer runs through Zoom. A small computer will be kept as a backup, but an additional control screen is no longer needed. Since similar units sell online for about \$250—even with minor damage, the board agreed to try selling it, through eBay or Facebook Marketplace. This was shared as an informational update, with consensus to sell the item if possible.
- e. Michigan Fair Elections Institute Award - Marcy Savage:** Marcy received the Michigan Fair Election Institute Sunlight Award in recognition of her commitment to election integrity. Among 197 jurisdictions, Sparta was recognized for keeping clean and accurate voter rolls with no duplicate registrations. The award honors Marcy's diligent stewardship in ensuring fair and transparent elections. Congratulations, Marcy!
- f. Fairplain Cemetery Fence Issue:** The board revisited a previously discussed property matter. Dale reported that the property owner requested a net amount of \$4,000 for the township to buy the property, with the alternative being moving the fence off the owner's land. After discussion and a roll call vote, the board approved

the purchase, which will expand the cemetery property and resolve the fence issue. The vote was 4-3 with Savage, A. Johnson, and B. Johnson dissenting.

- g. Christmas Decorations for Front Porch Township Hall:** The board discussed hiring someone to install Christmas decorations on the front of the building for \$248. A motion by Ashley Johnson, seconded by Barb Johnson, to approve the work passed unanimously.

Other Information:

- The board held a follow-up discussion on the Clean Up Day project, including the possibility of shifting the event to the fall at the Sparta Sports Complex.
- Rob Steffen updated the board on Sparta's Sports Park's year-end financials. Total revenues, including concessions, fees, and donations, were approximately \$45,380, with expenses just under \$50,000. The park ran efficiently with strong volunteer support, though staffing concessions stayed a challenge, prompting consideration of modest fee adjustments. The park's account balance stands at \$89,000, excluding potential township contributions and prepaid expenses. Key improvements included an air-conditioned concession facility and expanded overflow parking using fill from the Nash Creek project, with added gravel planned for next spring. Overall, the park kept high-quality operations on a tight budget while improving capacity and amenities.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm by Barb Johnson with a second by Marcy Savage. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

Submitted by: Sarah Fischer

Reviewed by: Marcy Savage