Westphalia Township

Regular Meeting April 7, 2025

FINAL MINUTES

13950 W. Pratt Road, Westphalia, MI 48894

Supervisor Thelen called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at 6:00 p.m. Board members present were Supervisor Thelen, Clerk Thelen, Treasurer Buckley, Trustee Barker and Trustee Thelen.

ABSENT:

PRESENT: Zach Rudat, Peggy Lidgard, Jon Thelen, Kelly Thelen and Jaime Trimmer

A motion was made by Supervisor Thelen, supported by Trustee Thelen, to accept the minutes from March 3, 2025, as well as to accept the agenda for April 7, 2025. Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Thelen, supported by Supervisor Thelen, to accept the minutes from March 24, 2025 budget meeting. Motion Carried.

Zach Rudat – Gave an overview from the March County meeting, see full details attached to the minutes.

Peggy Lidgard – Gave an update that she has rolled over the data base. In addition, she is taking pictures of properties to attach to each parcel’s documents.

Supervisor Thelen, Trustee Thelen, Randy Bengel had a meeting to discuss the purchase of a new fire truck and what would all be involved. The fire department will be putting together a group of firemen to review truck options and how to pay for the truck, as they are currently running between $600,000 to $700,000. And that the process will take about 36 months. It was discussed about having some fund raisers to offset the cost, more to come on that topic.

Treasurer Buckley gave an update that we are receiving payments for the outstanding fire runs.

Treasurer Buckley presented the financial statements to all board members. A motion was made by Treasurer Buckley to approve the financial statements, as well as the bills presented for the General and FD funds. Supported by Supervisor Thelen. Motion carried.

Clerk Thelen gave an update that the phones are scheduled to be ported back from 8X8 on Monday April 14, 2025.

Clerk Thelen presented letters to support a grant for the Westphalia Historical Society, this request came from Chris Piggot. The grant would allow for a small expansion for displays and for a new furnace.

Clerk Thelen brought up that there are a couple more contracts that will be ending in the next few months that will need attention.

Supervisor Thelen is working on solidifying the contract with Dave Martin on the lawn mowing services.

Next scheduled meeting is Monday, May 5, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Supervisor Thelen, supported by Treasurer Buckley at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted

Kristana Thelen, Clerk Troy Thelen, Supervisor

3-31-25 Clinton County Update

This update includes highlights from our [3/25/25 Board meeting](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.clinton-county.org%2fAgendaCenter%2fViewFile%2fAgenda%2f_03252025-1822%3ffbclid%3dIwY2xjawJYDR1leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHa2FlQr4hOaaHHP42FaiIu1Gcew8fPAcauT0Xb_FeVUG5_dAXlcigwloJQ_aem_tjiJn-gl15Jr7YgnpPH3lw&c=E,1,X-j0c-CtneRCrwiLhXtneNTIwg7mA0TSMBCvMv0DS96WNpsesLAw66EXi-G8A6mJmpxJtcV0DGT0JRGF7NtZuNVqhqHHVJqSjuVlk7xmSUjozW6gNC-E5w,,&typo=1) and committee meetings on 3/17/25 and 3/20/25 ([Infrastructure](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.clinton-county.org%2fAgendaCenter%2fViewFile%2fAgenda%2f_03172025-1816%3ffbclid%3dIwY2xjawJYDWhleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHSNP5HoThYu-VicAxqt0WENEoH-jDzW4iBAt0oOmFAOS5fNpzZw16uyIdg_aem_hjYQYRaKdSXSJL3BeCS8kg&c=E,1,rvcFtxAgRVnxBJts_QeOp3Rf2EBz0cHPeYGTDUR84TkuL6dKKJTmHUJLuy_39bUJ5Qjsztkn4jPPY7g5Rpkv8snpmdHPDTckyc-qTA5F27AU8UJtcItkwYROy4LU&typo=1), [Ways and Means](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.clinton-county.org%2fAgendaCenter%2fViewFile%2fAgenda%2f_03202025-1824%3ffbclid%3dIwY2xjawJYDUtleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHa2FlQr4hOaaHHP42FaiIu1Gcew8fPAcauT0Xb_FeVUG5_dAXlcigwloJQ_aem_tjiJn-gl15Jr7YgnpPH3lw&c=E,1,WtmXJNgxapmez0MSuKFHiSGp0DSSgzAYMJ37ogb-obLigPN7W6qZGGXxTXf1k1YfCk0uuuSX3uSLXcNLQdjorLho_j48tCy5TeS0XchSzjx9uuLB6mz_yYS0Iby-&typo=1), and [Human Resources](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.clinton-county.org%2fAgendaCenter%2fViewFile%2fAgenda%2f_03202025-1820%3ffbclid%3dIwY2xjawJYDVpleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHa5vhb-WYRNpPdmdQZeRPg2ZiLsx-a5wkqa12IL4A2LltUZAzmL42wFikA_aem_IeLbGVir9tZwy7ksi80adQ&c=E,1,IsdWbCrM0S5cPrJEuPKZuNQbT439B04_eu-Q1fmUl4M8XegtL7VODqboPTSXbkSRggyBeG_tU2pZIwvLrOotI1j49KiOr8hAIQWbzkDVLz1rYZ5nmYld3vah4A,,&typo=1)). As always, you can find video archives of all our meetings at our [YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/@ClintonCounty-MI)!

This month, we had an infrastructure meeting to discuss the County Jail, the history of the building, and the possibility of renovations or a rebuild of the facility. The infrastructure meeting was informational only so no action has been taken at this time; we’re planning on holding another infrastructure meeting in May to discuss this further. As we continue to dive into this and consider options for the jail, here are some of the priorities I’m looking for in a solution:

- Before tackling any solution with the Jail, I believe we first need to do a thorough vetting of available funds and the county budget, specifically looking for possible waste we could cut and invest towards a solution. Doing this first ensures we’re leaving no stones unturned and utilizing every tool in the county’s toolbox.

- In the past, the jail used to be profitable from housing inmates from outside the County, but the current state of the jail is limiting their ability to do so. I’d like to see us fix that so we can make the jail profitable again, and use those profits to build a rainy-day fund for maintaining the jail moving forward.

- I take a lot of pride in our County having the lowest tax burden between Clinton, Ingham, and Eaton Counties. I believe maintaining that edge over our neighbors is critical. If a solution includes a millage increase proposal (which would only happen if the voters approve one,) that ask of the public needs to be as low as possible.

I’d like to thank Sheriff Dush and his team for their accessibility and context throughout this conversation. I will keep you all up to date on these conversations as they develop!

In Ways and Means, we received an update from our County Medical Examiner Michelle Fox. One piece of information that stood out to me is that in the first 3 months of 2025, she’s already seen half the suicides she had for the entire year of 2024. I’m including a link as a reminder of the [community mental health resources](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ceicmh.org%2f%3ffbclid%3dIwY2xjawJYDiNleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHYSyTI6XO20g1jTZDOVhnV18H57yXUn_ngulJpWaxjjLeWJzahejdTja_w_aem_PFejDfNLEpACTBaFTdhwhw&c=E,1,D76uU_8jc0pZatJK-qy7pwZxnx-SJ8q_0lZ6tRxwJLLOccQ00qLxOUiUTmwugxDT_ToE0LfnozAacXdrhW7-A4vUfF3x5SdyV-NDSQz1&typo=1) we have. As a community, let’s all be sure we’re doing our part to check in on each other and help one another through difficult times.

The Board approved pre-funding for our share of the Homeland Security Grant Program and authorized Ingham County to serve as the fiduciary for our region. We also approved the purchase of new evidence software for the prosecutor’s office and the participation of the Tri-County regional aerial photography project. These photos are used by various departments (law enforcement, central dispatch, drain department, etc.), and will be accessible to local units and the public this fall.

The county provides cell phone reimbursements to county employees whose jobs require the use of a personal cell phone, up to $54 a month. The board approved expanding this to Commissioners, however, I won’t personally be utilizing this as my phone’s already reimbursed through work.

The Board approved revisions to the Smith Hall / Fairgrounds Use Agreement and Fee schedules to include an “open field only” rental option and expanded the 501c3 discounted rate to include 501 c5s.

We formally adopted our 2026 budget calendar. In May we’ll be reviewing the capital improvement plan, over the summer our Administrator will draft a recommendation that’s presented to the board in August, the board reviews the recommendations over the fall and formally adopts a budget in October.

The Board approved a special land use petition to construct a cell phone tower on Hollister Road near Sleepy Hollow State Park. Residents who neighbor the site attended our meetings requesting the tower be moved further away from their homes. While I’m sympathetic to those concerns, this is ultimately a private company partnering with a private property owner in compliance with our ordinances. However, I would be open to reviewing our ordinances for these types of projects moving forward.

On the personnel front, the Board approved the addition of a Deputy Treasurer position, the hiring of a road patrol position, and the part-time hiring of an intern in the Prosecutor’s office as they prepare to take the bar exam with the intent of hiring them at a full-time basis as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney when they pass.

At the recommendation of the County Health Alliance, the board authorized public entity membership in the West Michigan Health Insurance Pool for a 3-year period for county employee healthcare benefits.

We also received annual reports from Drain Commissioner Phil Hanses and the Clinton County Planning and Zoning Office. Both reports can be found in the March 25th Board of Commissioners Agenda.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to read my meeting summary! As always, please reach out at any time if you have questions or I can be helpful with anything!  
  
Thank you,

Zach Rudat

Clinton County Commissioner