

**Forsyth Township Board
Regular Meeting
Gwinn Community Center
February 27, 2025**

Supervisor Kevern called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Supervisor Kevern, Clerk Lauren, Treasurer Underwood, Trustee Hammond, and Trustee Fowler

Board Members Absent: None

Also Present: Attorney Nordeen, a number of township employees and concerned citizens.

Supervisor Kevern stated there was a special presentation. He gave the floor to Police Chief Kjellin. Chief Kjellin explained that approximately a year ago the Police Department entered into a program to receive a K9 Officer. Officer Cassie Smith has been training since then. He introduced Officer Smith's trainer from D&D Canine Dynamics, who presented Officer Smith with her final Certificate of Training. Officer Smith is also certified through a national program for K9s.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve the minutes from the January 23, 2025 Board Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Agenda: Motion by Lauren, supported by Fowler, to approve the agenda with the deletion of 13b. MERS Part-Time Employee, additions of 12r. Forsyth Forward Lease, 13d. Facebook, 13e. Move Water Department Inventory, 13f. Job Openings, and moving 12d to 13g. Zoning – Committee Attendance. Motion carried.

Public Hearing: Establishing a Commercial Rehabilitation District: At 6:34 pm Supervisor Kevern opened the Public Hearing. He asked if anyone had any questions, comments or concerns for the Public Hearing. Paul Thares, 67 E. Johnson Lake Road, Gwinn stated he has been following this subject. He asked if the Board had considered a TIF instead of, or in addition to, the CRD. He went on to explain the different programs and what they could do at KI Sawyer. The Board and Attorney Nordeen stated they had not considered the TIF. Attorney Nordeen went on to explain the differences between the CRD and the TIF. He could investigate having a CRD inside a TIF. He explained that a specific company had asked for tax abatement and a CRD was the best fit. After discussing the district, the Board opened the area to also include possibilities of other businesses using the CRD. Mr. Thares went on to explain the TIF would be beneficial for the area. Dale Throenle, 103 Fury, KI Sawyer, asked about the \$500,000 minimum and the 2 employee minimum requirements. He asked what type of businesses would use the program. He asked about the Blight that could be passed on to future property owners. Attorney Nordeen explained there were goals and objectives involved when they came up with the district. The Board decided on the requirements to give incentive to incoming businesses. Cheryl Suzzet, KI Sawyer, would like to know if this is grant funded and if the Township is accepting applications from businesses. Supervisor Kevern stated it is not grant funded and the township is accepting applications. Attorney Nordeen explained businesses are welcome no matter what. If they buy property in this district, and meet the qualifications, they can apply for this tax abatement. Supervisor Kevern explained existing businesses could expand and qualify for this abatement also. Clerk Lauren explained how the \$500,000

requirement came into play. Ms. Suzett asked if it would increase her property taxes. This program would not increase her property taxes. Brandon Langfeld with Sheetmetal Workers Local 7 on Avenue D informed the Board they are looking at adding a welding facility for training apprentices. He asked if this would be considered for the program. Supervisor Kevern stated the trades are growing and he would like to hear more about the expansion, so yes it would be considered. No other comments or questions were offered. Supervisor Kevern closed the Public Hearing at 6:45 pm.

Public Hearing: Blight Elimination Ordinance as Amended: At 6:45 pm Supervisor Kevern opened the Public Hearing. He asked if anyone had any questions, comments or concerns for the Public Hearing. Paul Thares, 67 E. Johnson Lake Road, Gwinn stated he attended Blight Committee meetings. He wanted to know how the decision was made to put a 20% limit on a pollinator area. He also asked why barriers are required when mowing makes the area confined. He also wants to know why you cannot extend out past a person's house. It looks like the Township is trying to make cookie cutter yards. Perhaps applying for a pollinator permit may be an option. He went on to explain a possible permit process. He has been battling this issue since last year. He has citations and has hired an attorney. He stated pollinators are in need in this world. Supervisor Kevern asked if Mr. Thares would set up an appointment to meet with him. He also asked if he was interested in pollinating in a different area, perhaps where he could teach citizens about pollination areas. Clerk Lauren asked about lots that would be under a certain footage. Mr. Thares stated the Ordinance is creating ill will. Clerk Lauren explained the Ordinance is trying to encompass all citizens, not just one type of citizen. Mr. Thares suggested the Police enforce blight. Zoning Administrator Johnson stated she was at the meeting with Mr. Thares and has put permits in the proposed ordinance. She further explained the borders used in the Ordinance. She informed the Board that large areas are 50' from the roadway. Natilie Thares asked about old vehicles being blight. No other comments or questions were offered. Supervisor Kevern closed the Public Hearing at 6:57 pm.

Public Comment: Paul Thares commented on a Blight Meeting. He questioned how the Blight violations are being sited.

Department Reports: The following reports were placed on file: Zoning, Senior Center, Fire, Library, Police, Public Works, General Operating Financial, Emergency Management and Water/Sewer Committee. Supervisor Kevern asked the Board if they had any questions. No questions or comments were offered.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Nordeen handed out a monthly report outlining the items he has completed and items he is still working on. He stated he would like to complete the Crestview Commercial Truck Traffic issue. He needs to meet with the Roads Committee.

Approval of Bills & Vouchers: Motion by Underwood, supported by Fowler, to approve the bills and vouchers totaling \$211,451.56, as presented. Supervisor Kevern and Clerk Lauren abstained. Motion carried 3-0.

**Forsyth Township
Bills For Approval
2/27/25**

Vendor	Description	Amount
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Auto Value	Various Dept Parts	1,417.00
Alan Cook	Reimbursement for FF Supplies	1,432.14
Airgas	PW Cylinder Rental	43.04
Amazon	PD/Zoning/Office Supplies	846.24
American Planning Assoc	Zoning Training	95.00
Bound Tree	EMS Medical Supplies	716.95
BS&A Software	Software Support	5,461.00
Bush Furniture	Office Desk	1,337.00
City of Marquette	Water Testing	75.00
DLP Mqt Physician Practices	PD Testing	443.00
Elcom	PD Batteries	781.33
Election Source	Election Supplies	1,904.85
ER Disposal	Roll Off Truck	140,000.00
Fahey Schultz	Attorney Fees	1,003.00
Galls	PD Uniforms	62.40
GFS	SC Coffee Supplies	41.95
Gwinn Fire Fund	Reimbursement for Supplies	1,586.25
Honor Credit Union	PD K9 Training Supplies	14.53
IamResponding	FD Annual Support	660.00
ImperialDade	PW Supplies	465.88
Integris	Computer Support	5,747.59
Kim Davis	PD Training	600.00
Matt Perala	Reimbursement for Badging Supplies	225.99
Menards	Various Dept Supplies	745.79
Miller-Bradford	Backhoe Fees	22.50
MTA	Training	25.00
Modeltown Express	Fuel	3,823.49
O'Dea Nordeen Burnick & Pickens	Attorney Fees	1,858.00
Pitney Bowes	Postage	502.25
Pomasl	FD Uniforms	1,476.24
Pomp's Tire	EMS Tires	1,474.96
Prime Specialty Contracting	Office Furnace Repair	2,972.50
Quill	Various Dept Supplies	595.69
Range	Miss Dig Calls	50.00
Red Power Diesel	FD Truck Parts	68.20
Remy Battery	Various Dept Batteries	315.00
Ron Lauren	Reimburse for Syncurrent Enrollment	324.35
Snyder Drug	Various Dept Supplies	56.44
State of Michigan	Roll Off Truck Plate	13.00
State of Michigan	MDOT Project	67.48
State of Michigan	PD Printing	86.50

TransUnion	PD Background Checks	75.00
The Mining Journal	Publishing	2,148.00
The Sherwin Williams Co.	Forsyth Forward Paint	385.23
Unifirst	Carpet/Uniform Service	487.88
UPEA	Engineering	4,918.67
UP Health System	EMS Training	6,900.00
UP Off Road	PW Parts	299.91
US Postal Service	SC Postage	149.38
USA BlueBook	Water Parts	715.75
Wells Fargo	Various Dept Supplies	2,850.08
Zero9 Holsters	PD Supplies	179.80
Total		198,547.23

**Forsyth Township
Additional Bills For Approval
2/27/25**

Vendor	Description	Amount
Amazon	PD Supplies	96.03
Ace Hardware	Various Dept Supplies	1,483.34
American Welding & Gas	EMS Oxygen	359.96
Crossroads Truck Repair	PW Parts	159.00
Election Source	Election Supplies	93.26
ImperialDade	PW Bleach	827.40
Integris	Computer Support, PD Computer	6,396.16
Michelle Borrett	Reimbursement for Party Supplies	181.76
Pickles Sewer Service	FD/EMS Clear Sewer	225.00
Pitney Bowes	Postage	1,319.50
Pomps	Transfer Station Tires	220.83
Quill	Various Dept Office Supplies	468.58
State of Michigan	W/S Training / PD Printing	204.00
Unifirst	Carpet/Uniform Svc	70.64
Zero127 Motorsports	PW Lettering	798.87
		12,904.33
	Original Bill Listing	198,547.23
	Total Accounts Payable	211,451.56

Voucher Numbers for GO, Police, Clubhouse, Ambulance, Library, Water & Sewer: 89890 - 90130

Voucher Numbers for Tax 2357 - 2371

ACTION ITEMS:

Commercial Rehabilitation District Resolution (12a.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Lauren, to approve the Resolution Establishing a Commercial Rehabilitation District, as presented. Roll call: Supervisor Kevern - yes, Clerk Lauren - yes, Treasurer Underwood - yes, Trustee Fowler - yes, Trustee Hammond – yes. Motion carried.

Blight Elimination Ordinance as Amended (12b.): Motion by Hammond, supported by Underwood, to approve the Blight Elimination Ordinance – As Amended, as presented. Zoning Administrator Johnson asked the Board to consider changing the ordinance for agricultural purposes. Supervisor Kevern asked the Board to review for further changes. Attorney Nordeen said it should be sent back to the Blight Committee for changes, then back to the Board for consideration. Roll call: Trustee Hammond – no, Trustee Fowler – no, Clerk Lauren – no, Treasurer Underwood – no, Supervisor Kevern – no. Motion failed.

Zoning – Blight 124/126 Crusader (12c.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve proceeding with the boarding up and cleaning up of 124/126 Crusader, as requested. The fees associated with this process will be placed on the property taxes. It was the consensus of the Board to bid out the process. Motion carried.

Zoning – Committee Attendance (12d.): Moved to 13g.

Hire Transfer Station Attendant (12e.): Motion by Hammond, supported by Lauren, to approve the hiring of Don Wiartalla as the Transfer Station Attendant, as recommended. Motion carried.

W/S Committee – 58 E. Blueberry (12f.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Kevern, to approve the payment plan for 58 E. Blueberry, as recommended. Motion carried.

W/S Committee – 181 N. Maple (12g.): Motion by Hammond, supported by Underwood, to approve taking no action on billing for 181 N. Maple, as recommended. Motion carried.

W/S Committee – 179 N. Maple (12h.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Hammond, to approve adjusting the bill for 179 N. Maple, as recommended. Motion carried.

W/S Committee – 70 E. Blueberry (12i.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Kevern, to approve adjusting the bill for 70 E. Blueberry, as recommended. Motion carried.

W/S Committee – 51 E. Maas St. (12j.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Fowler, to approve adjusting the bill for 51 E. Maas, as recommended. Motion carried.

Work Phones (12k.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Kevern, to approve adding business mobile phones for an annual fee of \$4,798.80, as requested. Discussion ensued. Trustee Fowler stated the Senior Center Staff is out doing home visits frequently, so he believes they should have mobile phones also. Motion amended by Lauren, support amended by Kevern, to approve adding business mobile phones for 4 Office Staff, 5 Board Members, 1 Township Manager and 3 Senior Center Staff. Motion carried.

Ambulance Write Offs (12l.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve writing off uncollectable debt for Ambulance runs totaling \$17,869.85, as presented. Motion carried.

EMS – Clinical & Consortium Agreement Renewals (12m.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve the Clinical and Consortium Agreements, as presented. Clerk Lauren explained this was needed for EMS training. Motion carried.

UPSET (12n.): Motion by Underwood, supported by Lauren, to approve the UPSET Agreement for Law Enforcement Services with \$10,000.00, as presented. Motion carried.

Purchase Laptops (12o.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve the quote from Integris for 2 laptops to be used by Township Office staff, totaling \$4,070.16. Clerk Lauren explained this would replace Deputy Clerk Cronick's laptop and a new computer for the Township Manager. Motion carried.

Cemetery Mapping (12p.): Motion by Kevern, supported by Lauren, to approve the Proposal from TriMedia for the Cemetery Mapping Project, not to exceed \$21,200.00, as presented. Clerk Lauren explained that they will use a drone to construct the map, then the data will be used on the website for people to search for specific cemetery lots. Motion carried.

Liability and Property Insurance Renewal (12q.): Motion by Lauren, supported by Underwood, to approve the MML Liability and Property Insurance renewal for \$83,267.00. Clerk Lauren stated we will be receiving a dividend. Motion carried.

Forsyth Forward Lease (12r.): Motion by Hammond, supported by Underwood, to approve the Forsyth Forward Lease, as presented. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Water & Sewer Certified Backup (13a.): Supervisor Kevern stated that we need a Water & Sewer Assistant. This will be a permanent position with certifications to be a backup for when the current Water Operator is out. Water Operator Collick stated the person will have to work 1 year in the lagoon system before certification.

MERS Part-Time Employee (13b.): Deleted

Capital Improvement Plan (13c.): Bookkeeper Carter is absent from the meeting. This will be discussed during the Budget Workshop.

Facebook (13d.): Supervisor Kevern asked Attorney Nordeen to summarize his research regarding recording the meetings. Attorney Nordeen stated if its for a live feed for residents and for recording minutes, it could be deleted after the minutes approved. Clerk Lauren questioned continuing with the live feed, as it is not used by many. This is what happened with the Mass Notification System, which people did not use, therefore it was not renewed. Treasurer Underwood gave the 3 options involved with using Facebook to televise the meetings. Supervisor Kevern will do more research.

Move Water Department Inventory (13e.): Supervisor Kevern explained the location of the current office meeting room is awkward. He would like the current workshop moved to an area at the Transfer Station. Water Operator Collick believes it could be relocated. The new meeting room would then be moved to the workshop area. It was the consensus of the Board and the Water Operator that this was a feasible option.

Job Openings (13f.): Clerk Lauren believes the current job descriptions should be updated. He would like to wait for a manager to decide what is best for the township, prior to filling any positions. The janitorial job could be re-advertised. Supervisor Kevern expressed his opposition. He would like to hire soon, as we are short-staffed. Descriptions could be cleaned up later. Trustee Hammond would like to see cross training. This would help current employees with advancement possibilities and filling in areas that have temporary vacancies. Trustee Fowler agrees with the cross training.

Zoning – Committee Attendance (13g.): Supervisor Kevern stated attendance has been a struggle. Trustee Underwood has been working out of town, therefore unable to attend some committee meetings.

Motion by Kevern, supported by Underwood, to replace Treasurer Underwood with Deputy Supervisor Bodenus on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Discussion ensued. Treasurer Underwood would like the Zoning Administrator to have some discretion with zoning. Attorney Nordeen will research the authority request. Treasurer Underwood will be the ZBA Alternate. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Public Comment: Paul Thares thanked the Board and the Zoning Administrator. Joe Boogren commented on the Zoning Administrator statutory duties. Don Wiartalla thanked the Board and is excited to work for the Township.

Board Comment: Trustee Hammond stated one of his main goals is the Little Lake Firing Range. He would like to make the range much more user and family friendly. He will bring a proposal to the Board for the next meeting. Clerk Lauren informed the Board that we have 5 Township Manager applicants at this time. More are expected prior to the deadline. Attorney Nordeen stated Marquette County had 44, Chocolay Township had 30, hopefully there will be more. Supervisor Kevern thanked everyone for their attendance.

Adjournment: Supervisor Kevern adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Linnee
Board Secretary

Ron Lauren
Forsyth Township Clerk