

**CHASSELL TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING**  
**March 11th , 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Lynn Gierke

**PRESENT:** Lynn Gierke, Bethany Baetsen, Andrea Aho, and Curt Judson

**ABSENT:** Dan Palosaari

Presentation: John Holland from Michigan Rural Water Association (MRWA) presented his findings from the Water and Sewer Rate Study. He discussed MRWA roles and how the organization can benefit municipalities. The board discussed, asked questions, and thanked John for all his work and providing his data to the township.

**MINUTES:** Motion by Curt Judson to approve the previous month's minutes as well as the special meeting Minutes from February 21st, supported by Bethany Baetsen. M/C.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Motion to approve the December Treasurer's Report Bethany Baetsen, supported by Curt Judson. M/C.

**AGENDA:** Motion by Lynn Gierke to approve the agenda supported by Bethany Baetsen. M/C

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** The payment of bills was approved per motion by Bethany Baetsen supported by Andrea Aho. M/C

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Northern Michigan Alliance for Responsible Development representative, Nolan Wright and a group of Michigan Tech Students presented about the negative drawbacks of data centers including energy usage, water issues, and unfulfilled tax, utility, and employment promises. They stressed the importance of robust zoning ordinances in order for Townships to combat litigation issues. The board reminded residents that Chassell zoning ordinances would protect the township against any predatory behavior by AI data center developers.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** The Township received a letter from the Houghton County Road Commission reminding the Board that Utility companies such as SEMCO do not hold a higher jurisdiction than the HCRC and to be wary of signing documents related to utility Right-of-way access.

**SUPERVISOR:** Lynn has been working on the Chart of Account updates and closing out grants and paperwork for the Rural Development Sewer Loan. She also attended the HCRC monthly meeting and BOR meeting.

**CLERK:** Bethany Baetsen is caught up with reconciliation. Since she wasn't at the last board meeting she let the Board know that township taxes are complete. She discussed the need for an office procedure dealing with wire transfers. She requested the board discuss project goals and their financial burden on the township for FY 26/27 at the upcoming Budget Hearing and Special Meeting.

**TREASURER:** Andrea Aho submitted the settlement report for winter taxes to the County for millage disbursements. She spoke with BS&A reps and found that the township doesn't have the capabilities to do paperless billing for taxes at this time due to an agreement with USPS.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT/FIRST RESPONDERS:** Curt Judson reported that the Fire Department had 3 calls since the last meeting and 9 year-to-date. He mentioned that the Fire Department will need to make an insurance claim on some damaged equipment from the last structure fire. Also, the FD is still waiting on an RFP for engineering for updates to the Fire Hall. Curt informed the Board that the First Responders had 8 calls since the last meeting and 23 year-to-date.

**TOWNSHIP MAINTENANCE:** Craig Austin reported that there is currently a water leak on Lake Shore Drive which will be addressed tomorrow. He mentioned that the Ice Rink boards in the fire hall will be moved to storage soon. He asked the board to advise on whether the township can get away without the bypass pump at the Main Lift Station this spring. The board asked Craig to wait a couple more weeks and make a call then. Craig let the Board know that the new DPW truck is getting outfitted with the DPW's needs. Craig discussed keeping the walkway open on Old 41. Keith Meyers offered to communicate with the HCRC on this. Lastly, Bethany Baetsen made a motion to approve the new DPW part-time employee,

Jay Federocko at \$18/hr supported by Lynn Gierke, M/C.

**ZONING:** There is a zoning board meeting on Friday March 13th.

**PLANNING COMMISSION (PC):** Keith Meyers informed the Board that the PC will be giving Chris Holmes feedback on the Park study. The Chassell Recreation club is in the process of obtaining 501 c(3) status and will need to have one of its members become a sitting non-voting Chassell Township Board member. All board members present were agreeable to this. Keith also discussed an award winning film-maker, Heather Courtney who is looking for residents who are remote workers for one of her upcoming projects. Curt Judson informed Keith that there is currently some talk between the DNR and the Keweenaw Trails Club for linking up the snowmobile trails through Chassell and to be aware that news of this may be coming out this year.

**ASSESSOR:** Lynn Gierke attended the first Board of Review meeting yesterday and discussed how the County said Chassell's State Equalized Value (SEV) needed to be raised.

**WEBSITE:** None

**OFFICE BUILDING:** The roof is leaking on the office building. Craig is in the process of obtaining quotes for repairs.

**ENGINEERING:** Chris Holmes discussed the Letter of Engagement question and mentioned that Christina from RD thinks the township can obtain a different letter of engagement for FY 26/27. The township attorney is of the opposite opinion therefore Lynn Gierke made a motion to approach Value Core for a Letter of Engagement for the FY 26/27 Audit supported by Andrea Aho, M/C. Chris discussed the issue with the non-BABBA generator and requested that MJO submit their Pay Application without the generator in order to qualify for payment with the RD loan. Lynn Gierke made a motion to set-up a construction checking account to handle RD payments, supported by Bethany Baetsen, M/C. Chris also addressed the MRWA rate study and UPEA's own rate analysis and advised the Board that the township will need to raise sewer rates by \$8.25 before the township can begin to receive RD loan disbursements. The Board agreed to discuss and vote at the upcoming Budget Hearing and Special Meeting. Lastly, Chris informed the Board that he has plans to discuss the adjustable dock with Lowell tomorrow.

**REVIEW BUDGET:** The Budget hearing to approve the 26/27 FY budget as well as a special meeting to discuss township goals and water/sewer rates will be on Wednesday March 25th at 6 PM at the Fire Hall.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. MRWA is hosting an asset review training session on May 18-22. There will also be a smoke test that week.
- B. Pavilion curtain replacement quotes- next meeting.
- C. Keith Meyers will coordinate a meeting with UPEA to discuss the Draft Centennial Preliminary Report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Lynn Gierke presented the Par-plan Insurance policy renewal from Hannula Agency and discussed the premium increases. The board discussed and Lynn Gierke made a motion to accept the plan renewal and pay the annual fee invoice of \$36,920 supported by Andrea Aho, M/C.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM by Lynn Gierke, supported by Curt Judson, M/C.

Lynn Gierke, Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Bethany Baetsen, Clerk \_\_\_\_\_