

GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Meeting
February 17, 2025

MINUTES

Call to Order

Supervisor Spicher called the regular meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Board to order at 6:31 pm at the Township Hall.

Invocation

Supervisor Spicher led the invocation for the Board and the members of the public.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum for the transaction of business: Kevin Spicher, Janene Deaton, Candie Hovarter, Robin Hunt, Bill Reiber, Rick Soucy, and Todd Walker.

Also present was Township Manager Kelly VanMarter and eight people in the audience.

Call to the Public

The call to the public was opened at 6:33 pm.

Ms. Tracey Pardiac of 4312 Rurik stated she is 100 percent against the raise for Ms. VanMarter. She cited the Hard Cap Law regarding the insurance hard cap and gave a review of the raises that Ms. VanMarter has received and stated she makes more than any other township manager in the state and receives a car allowance.

Mr. Jeff Dhaenens of 5494 Sharp Drive commended Ms. VanMarter for the job she does. He is not convinced that the My Genoa App is appropriate for the township. There are enough social media platforms that the township is engaged in.

The call to the public was closed at 6:37 pm.

Approval of Consent Agenda

It was requested to have both Consent Agenda items moved to the Regular Agenda.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Deaton, to approve the Consent Agenda as corrected. **The motion carried unanimously.**

~~1. Payment of Bills: February 17, 2025. (Moved to Regular Agenda)~~

~~2. Request to approve the February 3, 2025 regular meeting minutes. (Moved to Regular Agenda)~~

Approval of Regular Agenda:

Ms. Deaton would like to move Item #14 from Items for Discussion to an action item.

Moved by Reiber, supported by Hovarter, to approve the Regular Agenda as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

1. Payment of Bills: February 17, 2025. (Moved from Consent Agenda)

Mr. Reiber questioned the \$500,000 check from the DPW Utility Fund to the Genoa General Fund. Ms. VanMarter stated it is a transfer of money from one fund to the other for reimbursement.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Deaton, to approve the Payment of Bills: February 17, 2025. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Request to approve the February 3, 2025 regular meeting minutes. (Moved from Consent Agenda)

Needed changes were noted.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Walker, to approve the February 3, 2025 regular meeting minutes as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Presentation by Huron River Watershed Council.

Ms. Andrea Paine from the Huron River Watershed Council provided a review of the Huron River Watershed and its benefits and what threatens it and the community programs, water quality monitoring, advocacy, and education and outreach that is done by the Huron River Watershed Council.

4. Consideration of a request to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 System Labor and Equipment Percentage Allocation, the amended DPW Fund Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2025 and the proposed DPW Fund Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2026.

Dr. Greg Tatara, Utility Director, and Ken Palka, the township's accountant, were present. Dr. Tatara provided a review of the 2026 System Labor and Equipment Allocation, the changes to the Lake Edgewood system due to the increased development in the area, the reasons for the amendments to the current fiscal year budget, and the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 DPW budget. He also reviewed the details of the revenue and expenses for the DPW fund.

Mr. Palka stated that Dr. Tatara also puts reserve funds aside for future large purchases, which is good budgeting.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hovarter, to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 System Labor and Equipment Percentage Allocation, the amended DPW Fund Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2025 and the proposed DPW Fund Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2026. **The motion carried unanimously.**

5. Consideration of a request for approval of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2025 and approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget and for the Lake Edgewood Sewer System.

Dr. Tatara provided a review of the budget for the Lake Edgewood Sewer System, including a history of the revenue, expenditures and rates.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hunt, to amend the FY 2025 Operating Budget for the Lake Edgewood Sewer System and to approve the FY 2026 Operating Budget for the Lake Edgewood Sewer System. **The motion carried unanimously.**

6. Consideration of a request for approval to increase the Lake Edgewood metered sewer charge from \$7.60 per 1,000 gallons to \$7.83 per 1,000 gallons, increase the flat rate sewer charge from \$148.57 per quarter to \$153.03 per quarter, and to set the minimum sewer bill from \$68.40 to \$70.47 for usage of 9,000 gallons per quarter or less effective April 1, 2025.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to increase the Lake Edgewood metered sewer charge from \$7.60/1,000 gallons to \$7.83 /1,000 gallons, increase the flat rate sewer charge from \$148.57 / quarter to \$153.03 / quarter, and set the minimum sewer bill from \$68.40 to \$70.47 for usage of 9,000 gallons per quarter or less. **The motion carried unanimously.**

7. Consideration of a request for approval of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2025 and approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Water System.

Dr. Tatara provided a review of the Oak Pointe Water System budget and the history of the improvements that have been made to the system. He also showed this system's rates vs. other systems in the surrounding area, and a history of the revenue, expenditures and rates. Mr. Palka stated that the rates for these systems are lower than other ones that he audits.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Walker, to amend the FY 2025 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Water System and to approve the FY 2026 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Water System. **The motion carried unanimously.**

8. Consideration of a request for approval to increase the Oak Pointe Water metered charge from \$4.40 per 1,000 gallons to \$4.53 per 1,000 gallons effective April 1, 2025.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Hovarter, to increase the Oak Pointe Water metered charge from \$4.40/1,000 gallons to \$4.53 /1,000 gallons for FY 2026. **The motion carried unanimously.**

9. Consideration of a request for approval of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2025 and approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Sewer System.

Dr. Tatara provided a history of the Oak Pointe Sewer System's rates, the revenue and expenses, and reviewed the current budget and the requested Fiscal Year 2026 budget. He spoke about the PFAS issue for this system and what they have done to address it. It costs an annual average of \$56,000 for PFAS testing. They have applied for grants but have never been accepted.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Waker, to amend the FY 2025 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Sewer System and to approve the FY 2026 Operating Budget for the Oak Pointe Sewer System. **The motion carried unanimously.**

10. Consideration of a request to add a \$1.00 per 1,000 gallon or \$13 per quarter per flat rate customer charge for environmental contamination fee and to keep the O&M and Grinder Pump Fee rates and charges unchanged in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget for the Oak Pointe Sewer System effective April 1, 2025.

Dr. Tatara stated they are proposing a \$1.00 per 1,000 gallon fee on the bills for these residents to cover the increased costs due to PFAS testing. He is preparing an informational pamphlet to include. This would provide an additional \$69,000 per year of revenue. They will not be increasing the operating and maintenance sewer rates next fiscal year for this system.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Walker, to add a \$1/1,000 gallon or \$13/quarter per flat rate customer charge for environmental contamination fee and to keep the O&M and Grinder Pump Fee rates and charges unchanged in the FY 2026 Budget. **The motion carried unanimously.**

11. Consideration of a request for approval to appoint Trustee Bill Reiber as the alternate representative to the Brighton Area Fire Authority Board with a term ending November 20, 2028 as requested by the Township Supervisor.

Moved by Walker, supported by Deaton, to appoint Trustee Bill Reiber as the alternate representative to the Brighton Area Fire Authority Board with a term ending November 20, 2028 as requested by the Township Supervisor. **The motion carried unanimously.**

12. Consideration of a request for approval of a proposal from GoGov to establish a citizen notification and alert system “MyGenoa” app with an annual subscription cost not to exceed \$4,800 commencing on April 1, 2025 as requested by Trustee Walker.

Mr. Walker stated that in the Board’s efforts to increase public communication, he is recommending this app. The employee who currently posts on different social media outlets would post on the app instead, which would link the information to Facebook, other social media apps, as well as an email blast. It will not be more work for the employee.

The Board discussed the cost, how much it would be used, what type of information would be posted, how many people would utilize it, other alternatives, etc.

Moved by Reiber, supported by Walker, to approve a proposal from GoGov to establish a citizen notification and alert system “MyGenoa” app with an annual subscription cost not to exceed \$4,800 commencing on April 1, 2025 as requested by Trustee Walker. **The motion carried with a roll call vote (Hovarter - yes; Soucy - no; Deaton - no; Hunt - yes; Reiber - yes; Walker - yes; Spicher - no)**

13. Consideration of a request for approval of amendments to the Agenda Management and Minutes Policy.

Ms. VanMarter provided a review of proposed amendments to the policy as requested by the Township Clerk as well as to agree with what is done as current practice.

Ms. Deaton stated that the minutes are too long. She would like to change “summary” to “synopsis”. Ms. Hunt likes the way they are currently done so that it shows the reason why someone voted the way they did. Mr. Walker agrees. He would like to have a summary of the discussions. Ms. Deaton stated that Livingston County, Hamburg Township, Brighton Township and Green Oak Township do it this way. Genoa is the only township that does the summary of who said what and the minutes are always being changed.

Ms. Deaton provided examples of other municipalities’ minutes.

The Board and Staff reviewed the examples provided and discussed the pros and cons of changing the policy as recommended as well as what the expectations are for what is put in the minutes. They will continue to be refined to meet the Board’s expectations.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Walker, to approve the amendments to the Agenda Management and Minutes Policy as submitted. **The motion carried unanimously.**

14. Delivery of the Trustee/Appointed Official Compensation Policy as approved by the Township Board on February 3, 2025. (Moved from Items for Discussion to Action Items).

Ms. Deaton stated that when she voted yes on this when it was previously presented, she did not realize that it also included a mileage payment. Elected and appointed officials should not be paid to drive to an event or meeting. They should only be paid for the meeting. Ms. Hunt said it is only for meetings outside of Livingston County.

The Board agreed that the wording in the policy is confusing and recommended that it be revised.

Motion to revote for this noting the mileage associated with the drive time is on top of the per diem payment for meetings

Moved by Deaton, supported by Walker, to approve the Trustee/Appointed Official Compensation Policy as approved by the Township Board on February 3, 2025, including payment for drive time. **The motion carried with a roll call vote (Walker - yes; Reiber - yes; Hunt - no; Deaton - no; Soucy - yes; Hovarter - yes; Spicher - yes)**

Items for Discussion:

15. Update regarding public outreach component of the Township Master Plan Update.

Ms. VanMarter stated Giffels Webster has provided a proposal to assist with the public outreach portion of the Master Plan update. They have also published the project website. She is recommending that the Planning Commission review the scope of the plan update and public engagement options and provided feedback to the Board prior to making a final decision on the proposal.

Correspondence

Supervisor Spicher stated there will be a second town hall meeting on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Township Hall. He, Clerk Deaton, and Trustee Reiber will be in attendance, There may also be members of the Planning Commission there.

Ms. Deaton stated the Big Red Barrel will be at the township hall during this meeting.

Board Comments

Ms. Hunt stated that the Township Manager is under fire again, citing the call to the public tonight and on social media. This Board has not seen a proposal for a five percent increase. There is a proposed four percent increase for township employees; however, Ms. VanMarter would be getting less than that. If we were to replace Kelly, the township would pay the same, or more, and that person would not come with the knowledge she has. She also lives in the Township.

Ms. Deaton stated that the first draft budget states five percent and that is where the public is getting their information.

Supervisor Spicher admitted that he questioned the manager's salary before he was elected; however, after working here for two months, he knows that Kelly is a very qualified person with a lot of experience, and she also lives in the Township. The Township of Milford is advertising for a township manager and the salary they are offering is \$117,405 - \$150,291, depending on experience.

Ms. VanMarter provided the following updates:

- The public hearing for the 2025/2026 budget will be held at the next Board of Trustees meeting.
- She handed out a project open house notice for solar power ordinance that one of the surrounding townships is holding in case any trustees would like to attend.
- The special Board of Trustees meeting to receive the legal opinion regarding the Latson Road PUD has been set for February 25, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the township hall.

Ms. VanMarter addressed the comment at the call to the public. She confirmed that she has three years' experience as the Genoa Township Manager. She has worked for the township for 26 years and was Assistant Township Manager for nine years. During that time, she was essentially performing all the duties of the Manager. Additionally, she was also the Planning Director for the township. She has many years of experience.

Adjournment

Moved by Deaton, supported by Reiber, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas
Recording Secretary

Approved: Janene Deaton, Clerk
Genoa Charter Township

Kevin Spicher, Supervisor
Genoa Charter Township