

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390
Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 5:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Gray called the Township Board of Trustees Special Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Larry Gray, Supervisor
Melissa Creech, Clerk
Molly Phillips, Treasurer
Rick Sovel, Trustee
Bob Berkheiser, Trustee
Robert Long, Trustee (arrived at 5:42 p.m.)
George Weber, Trustee

Also Present: Katelyn Massey, Finance/HR Director
Natalie Hiney, HR/Finance Assistant

ITEM 1: Public Comments

Supervisor Gray opened Public Comments.

Seeing none, Supervisor Gray closed Public Comments.

ITEM 2: 2026 Township Budget Discussion

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 General Fund Revenue budget.

Trustee Weber asked about declining cable fees and if the number in the budget is a place holder.

Treasurer Phillips said yes, it is a placeholder and it's better to budget for less than you earn instead of more than you earn.

Trustee Weber asked if the Township is looking for interest and dividends to be about half.

Treasurer Phillips said they are slated to go down again.

Trustee Weber asked about the total projected revenue for 2025 and 2026.

Treasurer Phillips said we are projecting to be down almost a million dollars in interest and dividends.

Trustee Weber asked about State revenue sharing.

Treasurer Phillips said the projected impact on the Township will be minimal.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Assessing Department budget.

Trustee Berkheiser asked what the contract cost would've been if the Township still had a contract with Oakland County Equalization.

Special Meeting

ITEM 2: 2026 Township Budget Discussion continued

Supervisor Gray said the new assessing contract is about 2/3 the cost of the County's contract cost.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Attorney budget.

Supervisor Gray said \$300,000 is budgeted and this year so far the Township was billed for less hours than in previous years.

Treasurer Phillips said that some years the Township spends a little over \$300,000 and some years a little under \$300,000 and it's a good average.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Board of Review budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 budget for the Supervisor.

Supervisor Gray said the Marketing Specialist position was added to his budget. He reviewed the objectives and job duties of the Marketing Specialist.

Trustee Long said it sounds like a Deputy Supervisor position. Why don't you create a Deputy Supervisor position? It's high time.

Clerk Creech said we need a marketing person.

Trustee Sovel said a different title would be Communication Coordinator. He said it's more a communication issue than anything else.

Supervisor Gray said it's more beneficial to our residents to have someone in marketing.

Trustee Long said that is what your Deputy Supervisor would do.

Trustee Berkheiser said that he is not initially opposed to it but he needs to know what the statutory requirements are. The other thing to consider is with the other deputies, when their elected official leaves or is not re-elected, then they're done as well. He would like this position to have longevity and continuity and that may not happen if it's a Deputy Supervisor position.

Trustee Sovel said the Board has input in what it wants to accomplish with a Marketing Specialist. With a Deputy Supervisor, the Board has no input. We can't direct them.

Trustee Weber said the Board has a need to improve and he likes the title Communications and Community Engagement. He said the Library is pretty set on its communications but it could be integrated a little better but Emily just hired Ashley to do everything you just described so does that position fold into this one?

Special Meeting

ITEM 2: 2026 Township Budget Discussion continued

Supervisor Gray said that this new position would coordinate an overall communication strategy with the Library, Parks and Rec, the Senior Center, and the Township.

Trustee Sovel said this position would give the same level of support to the other departments in the Township that the Library and Parks and Rec have. One of his pet peeves is the fact that our website is outdated and not functional. The overall website, not the Library and not Parks – those are the best 2 parts.

Trustee Berkheiser said we just got a new website last year.

Trustee Sovel said it sucks.

Supervisor Gray said it is better than what we had

Trustee Sovel said we need someone fully dedicated to making it work.

Trustee Weber said that Wolverine Lake's website is better than ours. It's intuitive and easy to navigate. He said he's on our website a lot and he struggles to find information. We need a dramatically different website.

Trustee Sovel said and someone to manage it.

The Trustees further debated the pros and cons of having a Deputy Supervisor.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Street Lighting budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Government Body budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Clerk's budget.
Clerk Creech said not much has changed in her budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Elections budget.
Trustee Berkheiser asked why Clerk Creech is projecting less money will be spent in the 2026 election year as compared to the 2024 election year.

Clerk Creech said she uses the numbers from previous election years and in 2024 the Township had 4 elections and in 2026 there should be only 2 elections, costing less.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Treasurer's budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Township Hall General Services budget.

Special Meeting

ITEM 2: 2026 Township Budget Discussion continued

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Township Hall Building and Grounds budget.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Other budget.

Trustee Berkheiser asked if this includes the Michigan Airline Trailway.

Supervisor Gray said yes and it includes improvements such as the pavilion and drinking fountain at the Stillwater trail head, maintenance, and striping on the M5 bridge, among other things.

Trustee Weber asked who are the consultants listed under that line item.

Assistant Natalie Hiney said Giffels Webster and KER Engineering.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Road Improvement Fund.

Supervisor Gray said the total amount of Tri-Party funds is \$1,631,736.

Trustee Berkheiser said so to clarify, the Township has about \$500,000 that we can contribute to a road project.

Treasurer Phillips said yes, and other parties pay the other 2/3 of the cost.

Trustee Sovel asked if the Township is currently contracted to pay the County any money for projects we are set to do but they haven't billed us for yet.

Supervisor Gray answered no.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Cemetery Fund.

Clerk Creech said she increased the transfer in, decreased the building and ground maintenance, and decreased the capital outlay. Nothing else has changed.

Trustee Berkheiser does not like the fence and doesn't think it's appropriate.

Trustee Long said he thinks the Township needs to hire a landscaper and plant something in front of it and make it a trellis. Plant some grape ivy and let it go.

Clerk Creech said she does not disagree; she is not a fan of the 6-foot fence.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the 2026 Building and Improvement Fund.

Trustee Weber asked when the Priority Waste contract expires.

Supervisor Gray said in 4 years.

Trustee Weber asked if the horse farm capital outlay is for the roof.

HR/Finance Director Katelyn Massey said she asked us to move it to next year.

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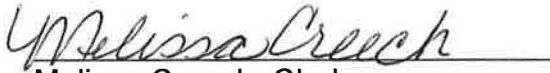
ITEM 2: 2026 Township Budget Discussion continued

Supervisor Gray said he sent employee and director reviews to the Trustees and please let him know your thoughts on those by October 31st.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Creech, to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Melissa Creech", is written over a horizontal line.

Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce