

Helena Township Board Meeting Synopsis

October 9, 2025 – Helena Township, Alden, MI

The Helena Township Board met with all members present. Fire Chief Paul Fabiano reported 200 calls to date for South Torch Lake Fire & Rescue, up from 179 in 2024 and noted ongoing structural inspections at the fire station. Sheriff Kevin Hoch shared department updates, highlighting staff changes and increased drug enforcement efforts. The board approved the purchase of a Flock security camera. Mike Robinson of the Township Ambulance Authority reported four ambulances in service and one replacement pending. Guest speaker Leslie Meyers provided updates on county dam projects and funding efforts. Danielle Lynch announced 2026 event plans and a proposed Farmers Market schedule change and Marilyn Barber Ciszewski reported on Veterans Memorial progress and future ADA improvements. Committee reports covered zoning permits, Parks and Recreation grant applications, Planning Commission ordinance updates, and upcoming road projects. A banking resolution, technology upgrades and election preparation were approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. Full minutes can be found at the Helena Township website: www.helenatownship.com

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Thursday, October 09, 2025 @ 7:00pm
8751 Helena Road, Alden, Michigan 49612

Call to Order: Chair Butch Peeples called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

Pledge of Allegiance: All present participated.

Roll Call: Present – B. Peeples, O. Leffew, C. Rice, J. Schilling, B. Bartz.
Absent – None

Conflict of Interest: No conflicts declared

Public Comment: M. McCracken commended Marilyn Barber Ciszewski on the Veterans Memorial.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by J. Schilling and seconded by B. Bartz. to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion passed.

Approval of September 11, 2025, Minutes: Motion by B. Bartz and seconded by J. Schilling to approve minutes with correction to Treasurer's report for receipts and balance as of the end of September. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report:

- \$6,896.10 – Receipts
- \$57,509.82 – Disbursements
- \$735,294.23 – Bank Balance

Presentation of Bills – September Balance Sheet:

- September Disbursements -\$54,280.34
- October to date - \$15,269.18

Motion by B. Bartz. and seconded by O. Leffew to approve the Treasurer's Report and bills as presented.
Motion passed.

Fire Chief Report: South Torch Lake Fire & Rescue: Report presented by Chief Paul Fabiano

- 200 calls YTD (2025) compared with 179 total in 2024.
- Inspectors and engineers are investigating structural issues with the fire station building.
- Community Dinner on October 29 at 5:00pm, at the Fire Dept.
- Trunk and Treat is October 18 at the Methodist Church from 12noon to 2:00pm

Antrim County Sheriff's Report: Report presented by Sheriff Kevin Hoch.

- Department personnel shifts continue to improve public service coverage.
- Ongoing efforts with illicit drug enforcement.
- Distributed bulletin regarding the Antrim County Public Safety Center.

Motion for Helena Township to purchase Flock camera (\$3,000.00) by B. Bartz and seconded by J. Schilling.
Roll call vote: Bartz-Y, Schilling-Y, Peeples-Y, Rice-Y, Leffew-Y. Motion passed.

Township Ambulance Authority (TAA) Report: Presented by M. Robinson

- Four ambulances are currently in service.

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- The fifth unit sold to a firm in New Jersey, a replacement is being sought.

Guest Speaker: Leslie Meyers provided updates on the ongoing and future dam project timelines and funding. Questions can be directed to meyersl@antrimcountymi.gov.

Communications:

- **Danielle Lynch** provided updates on special events in 2026 and proposed moving the Farmers Market from Thursdays to Mondays.
- **Marilyn Barber Ciszewski** updated the board on the Veterans Memorial project, noting the need for ADA-compliant sidewalks and future landscaping. She will explore ADA grant options.

Committee Reports:

Zoning: Bob Logee presented the September 2025 zoning activities including 3 land use permits

Parks and Recreation: Report by Gordy Schafer on Ball Park Phase 1 progress and funding.

- Phase 1 completion would include the beach area
- Two grants identified: \$125,000 (2025) and \$100,000 (2026).
- Request made for \$60,000 township contribution.
- Board reviewing budget and revisit in November 2025.

Planning Commission: Report by Jim Gurr:

- Reviewed Commission approval of updated Ordinance 5.02.01 language on private waterfront access (vacant).

Motion made by J. Schilling, seconded by C. Rice.

Roll Call vote: Bartz-Y, Schilling-Y, Peeples-Y, Rice-Y, Leffew-Y. Motion passed.

Roads: Report by Butch Bartz.

- Some 2025 projects have moved to Spring 2026.

New Business:

- New Coy Mountain signage has been ordered.
- Township office upgrades underway, including new technology and development of Standard Operating Procedures.
- Township website update planned for winter with additional community event links.
- Clerk preparing for November 4, 2025 election.
- Replacing conference room table and chairs under review for meeting room.
- Resolution #10092025: Remove Anthony Smedra from all Helena Township bank accounts. General Fund will have Oryana Leffew-Clerk, Catherine Rice, Treasurer & Ernest Rice on the account only.

Motion by J. Schilling and seconded by O. Leffew.

Roll Call vote: Bartz-Y, Schilling-Y, Peeples-Y, Rice-Y, Leffew-Y.

Resolution passed unanimously.

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Old Business:

- Three speed limit sign installation pending Antrim County permit approval.
- Spencer Creek bridge completion is expected to be Spring 2026.
- Hazard tree removed from Alden Cemetery.

Announcements: Chair Peebles announced the Honor Flight return from Washington DC on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 8:30pm (Traverse City Airport). Butch encouraged the public to attend and welcome our veteran's home.

Motion to Pay Bills: Motion by J. Schilling, seconded by B. Bartz to pay all bills as presented. Motion passed.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Oryana Leffew – Helena Township Clerk