

Helena Township Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 7:00pm
8751 Helena Road, Alden, Michigan 49612

Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Supervisor, Butch Peeples at 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: All in room stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Butch Peeples, Catherine Rice, Jim Schilling, Butch Bartz

Members Absent: Tony Smedra

Conflict of Interest: No Conflicts

Approval of Agenda: Motion by J. Schilling, seconded by B. Bartz. Agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes: June 12, 2025; Motion by C. Rice, seconded by J. Schilling. Minutes approved.

Public Comment:

- Bonnie Robbins commented about the election results from November 2024.
- Paul Sak volunteered to take Planning Commission members on boat ride to visit the five exempted properties relating to Zoning Ordinance Chapter 5, Section 5.02.02.
- Many compliments on the great work being completed in the Ball Park.

Treasurer's Report June 2025

\$ 27,068.19 – receipts
\$ 62,912.67 – disbursements
\$866,483.41 – bank balance

Motion by B. Bartz to approve June 2025 Treasurer's report, seconded by J. Schilling. Unanimous approval of Treasurer's report.

Fire Chief Report: Review of the South Torch Lake Fire & Rescue report from Chief Paul Fabiano.

- The service calls per month continue to rise in 2025; with 123 YTD.
- Required testing of hoses and aluminum ladders was completed and all passed.
- A structure has been donated for fire training.
- Helena Township Community Dinner is planned at the Fire Station on Wednesday, July 30th, 2025 from 5-6pm.

Sherriff's Report: No report; however, a document was available.

Township Ambulance Authority (TAA) Report: No report

All reports are linked with the minutes on the township website www.helenatownship.com

Guest Speaker: Marilyn Barber Coszewski shared her prework with estimates of completion for honoring all the veterans in Helena Township Cemetery.

- The bid for two maintenance free sheet signs measuring four (4) feet by ten (10) feet signs with graphics is \$6,630.00. More than half of that amount was donated during this meeting from the gracious residents of Helena Township.
- Marilyn noted that additional bronze plaques are needed, and broken headstones can be replaced.
- Marilyn will work with Cathy Rice and Butch Peeples to solidify the project plans, timelines, and lighting.
- Motion to approve this pricing and down payment expenditures by B. Bartz and seconded by J. Schilling. Motion unanimously passed.

Communications:

- On July 4th some late night unauthorized fireworks were set off at the ballpark. Individual/personal fireworks are not legal on township property. A request for late night checks at the ballpark will be made to the sheriff for July 4th, 2026. A special thank you to all those who did ballpark clean up after July 4th.

Committee Reports: Terry VanAlstine shared:

- COA work sessions have begun with the architect and local builders.
- Safety Center modifications for bond proposal are completed for the November 2025 election.

Zoning: Bob Logee presented the busy June 2025 zoning activities.

Parks & Recreation: Steve Dell and Gordy Schafer reviewed the following:

- Fence work is completed at the ball park.
- Eight (8) buoys have been installed at 150 feet off shore.
- Donated cameras with live feeds will be installed at the Ball Park, Alden Harbor and the Tennis Park.
- Ongoing activities at the Tennis Park: (1) health department to confirm placement of drain field is needed before any work begins with the donated new toddler equipment installation. (2) Repair of the tennis courts has moved into 2026.
- An ADA compliant ramp is planned for installation at the ballpark.

Planning Commission: Jim Gurr presented:

The updated language in Helena Township Zoning Ordinance at Chapter 5 Supplemental Regulations; Section 5.02.02 Restrictions Applicable to Property Abutting Lakes, Rivers or Streams was presented for Helena Township Board approval.

- The above had been presented to and reviewed by the Antrim County Planning Commission, and approved.
- Motion by B. Bartz and 2nd by Jim Schilling. Yes votes: Bartz, Peeples, Rice and Schilling. Unanimous approval on July 10, 2025.

Roads: Butch Bartz reviewed the following:

- Paige and Cemetery roads are completed.
- Logging semitrucks are using McPherson and causing road damage. Logging company will repair the road damage once the job is complete. Residents are advised to use caution when driving this road

New Business:

- Vandalism has occurred:
 - Alden Marina signage damage that cannot be repaired;
 - Spencer Creek digging blocking both river flow and disrupting environmental testing, as well as causing water damage to home basements;
 - Marina Porta Jon overflows;
 - Tennis Park public toilets clogged; may have to consider locking doors after hours.
 - Helena Township Community Center experienced vandalism to all the onsite dumpsters. GFL will repair the dumpster damage. It is believed the individual was driving a 4 door Chevy Silver pick-up with MIA stickers and temporary out of state plates.

Old Business:

- J. Schilling has received the invoice for three Michigan DOT flashing speed limit signs to be used in Alden Village. Approved cost of \$9850.00.
- J. Schilling and B. Bartz are leading effort with Burt Thompson to ensure sign placement meets Michigan DOT requirements.

Announcements: Sports Car Auto on Saturday, August 23, 2025 in Alden Tennis Park area.

Public Comment:

- M. McCracken expressed thanks for the on-going and completed work that adds value to Helena Township.
- B. Peebles confirmed that the “Helena Township Advocacy Group” is not affiliated with any governmental bodies in Helena Township.

Motion to Pay Bills: Motion to pay bills by C. Rice and seconded by B. Bartz. Unanimous approval to pay bills.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by B. Bartz and seconded by J. Schilling. Unanimous approval and meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fay M. VandenBerg, Helena Township Board Recording Secretary