

Powell Township Board Meeting
P.O. Box 319, 101 Bensinger St., Big Bay MI 49808
May 20, 2025
Minutes

1. Call to Order at 7:03 P.M. by the Supervisor.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call of Officers – Levi Ellis (Supervisor) present; Daryl Wilcox (Treasurer) present; Sharon Mattis (Clerk) present; Stephen Girard (Trustee) present; Denise Hudson (Trustee) present.
4. Approval of Agenda – **Motion** to approve Agenda with the following amendment to Item 1: Replace “Laura Mohrman” with “Dianne Hall” (Levi Ellis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
5. Approval of Minutes –
 - a. **Motion** to approve April 15, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes (Levi Ellis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
 - b. **Motion** to approve April 18, 2025, Special Board Meeting Minutes (Levi Ellis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
6. Revenue & Expenditure Report – **Motion** to approve April 2025 Revenue & Expenditure Report (Sharon Mattis, Levi Ellis). All in favor, motion carried.
7. Budget Amendments Report – **Motion** to approve April 2025 Budget Amendments Report (Levi Ellis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
 - a. Includes \$815.00 from Ambulance Department insurance funds to wages funds.
 - b. Includes \$1083.00 from Sanitation Department equipment funds to wages funds.
8. Treasurer’s Report - **Motion** to approve Treasurer’s Report (Sharon Mattis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
9. Approval of Bills – **Motion** to approve Bills to be Paid (Levi Ellis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
10. Committee & Department Reports:
 - a. Ambulance Department: K. Bourgeois for J. Boudreaux/Ambulance Coordinator:
 - i. There were six (6) calls since the last meeting.

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- ii. We were awarded a Superior Health Foundation grant for \$7,500.00 to go toward a cardiac monitor.
 - iii. We conducted training after our last monthly meeting. The training involved rescuing/transporting two (2) 60-pound sandbags. The training went well, and the department learned a great deal regarding how to further train and prepare for rescue situations.
- b. Emergency Management: K. Bourgeois/EMS:
- i. The Food Bank will open tomorrow, and the recommendation is that it be the last Food Bank night until fall. There are enough non-perishable foods and supplies to hold over for emergency needs until then, and any remaining perishable items will be taken to the Salvation Army.
 - ii. Training for the Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MI CIMS) went well. More township members will have access soon. The training detailed how to report incidents, how to use the tools to manage crisis (or other) incident information, and how the system provides useful state-wide incident data.
- c. Fire Department: M. Anderson/Fire Chief:
- i. There were two (2) incidents from April 16 – 30.
 - ii. There has been one (1) incident so far in May for a sparking power line near Hungry Hollow Road.
 - iii. We participated in water shuttle training with Marquette Township and several other townships to include Negaunee, Chocoley, and Sands. The training went well.
 - iv. Truck #2104 lights are now repaired.
 - v. Regarding the fire truck grant funds received a year ago, the truck upgrades are complete. The truck is back from its Wisconsin repair shop location and now has extra storage capacity.
 - vi. Thank you to Cassie Anderson and to Jack Bourgeois for their help in shuttling drivers to Wisconsin to pick up the truck. Since they were already traveling to Wisconsin, their help ensured there was no extra cost to the township.
 - vii. The drywall and installation materials for the fire station upgrades are in place and ready. We will install it soon.
 - viii. We are working with the head trainer for Marquette County Firefighter Training to have at least the classroom portion of training in Big Bay. The hope is to increase the number of trainees, since the training location has been the primary reason for our low numbers for several years. The burden of traveling to non-local training in the

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evening is not manageable along with other work and family requirements. We are hoping for 5-8 new firefighter trainees, especially if classroom training becomes available locally.

- d. Parks and Recreation Department: H. Shatz/Chair:
- i. Regarding Draver Park upgrade construction and recent updates from Hall Contracting (the company chosen for the construction):
 - 1. The park's current spring toys will be saved and placed at the Halfway Park location. If they are not moved to Halfway Park, they will be saved and repurposed.
 - 2. An announcement was made via Facebook that the park's cottonwood trees will be cut down this spring.
 - ii. Regarding the Safe Routes to School Grant:
 - 1. Mike Springer gave a presentation to the Powell Township School Board on April 23, 2025.
 - 2. A newly formed Committee will re-submit the grant on June 18, 2025.
 - iii. Regarding new trees to replace cut trees in Draver Park and Burns Landing areas, The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Program Grant (to fund the replacement trees) submitted last fall by the Conservation District is no longer available due to government cuts.
 - iv. The Big Bay Relay was May 17, 2025. It was a great race and grassroots event, with 42 teams competing this year. It brought together so many volunteers, sponsors, and participants. I encourage everyone to get involved next year. This is our largest annual fundraiser for the Powell Township trails system. A Powell Township School Team participated, cheered on near the end with lots of encouragement from our town.
 - v. The June/July Newsletter is out.
 - vi. Regarding the Summer Concert Series, there will be one (1) concert this year on July 12, 2025. The band is Ramble Tamble. This event will take place at the Burns Landing Pavilion 7:30 -10:00 P.M. There will be electricity at the LeClair Cabin and the Burns Landing Pavilion.
 - vii. Remaining Events for the year include:
 - 1. Fire on the Bay, July 12, 2025: Fundraising Chair - Levi Ellis
 - 2. Christmas Tree Lighting, December 6, 2025: Lead - Laurie Shaw
 - viii. The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development (CUPPAD) Regional Commission is working on the data received from the Powell Township 5-Year Recreation Plan community survey.
 - ix. The Noquemanon Trail Network (NTN) administration reviewed and made changes to our Memorandum of Understanding and will send

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the revised version to the Powell Township Supervisor for review and signature.

- x. The Parks and Recreation Committee would like to establish new plants in the planters around town.
- xi. We are working with the NTN and the Big Bay Stewardship Council (BBSC) on creating current trail maps for both of our trail systems.
- xii. We are looking for help maintaining the town's new Native Garden at the Big Bay Pathway Trailhead. Native Garden Work Session dates are below.
 - 1. June 4, meet at 6 P.M. at the Big Bay Pathway Trailhead entrance.
 - 2. July 8, meet at 6 P.M. at the Big Bay Pathway Trailhead entrance.
 - 3. August 14, meet at 6 P.M. at the Big Bay Pathway Trailhead entrance.
- e. Planning Commission: D. Hudson/Trustee:
 - i. There was no report this month.
 - ii. I encourage everyone to attend the meetings.
 - iii. The next Planning Commission Meetings are May 21, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. and June 18, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. (*Note to Minutes: they are now the third Wednesday of each month*).
- f. Sewer Department: C. Sorby for S. DeMoulin:
 - i. All is well.
 - ii. S. Demoulin attended a 2-day event related to preparation and training knowledge to attain his Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) operator's license.
- g. Water Department: C. Sorby/Water Operator:
 - i. We discovered a water leak in the cemetery, so the water is currently off there.
 - ii. Leak detection surveys and activity will occur this month.
- 11. Correspondence:
 - a. Hall Contracting / Draver Park construction updates
 - i. We signed permits to start demolition (demo), and the initial demo date is soon (actual date to be determined).
 - ii. Hall Contracting will demolish the old facilities being upgraded and will probably start with Draver Park.
 - iii. The park will likely become a construction zone, and we recommend steering clear of the area.
 - iv. Construction completion is still expected by mid-September 2025.

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- b. Parks and Recreation Committee: We received and posted the May 15, 2025 (new) Big Bay Events Newsletter.
- c. Presbyterian Church: The next Free Community Dinner will be June 10, then there will be a summer pause, then they will resume September 9.
- d. Powell Township Assessor: There is a new Assessor Aide opening and the job posted May 8, 2025, to the town website and bulletin boards.
- e. 906 Technologies: They are working to resolve website issues. They will also be here this week to hook up two (2) new computers (one in the front/administrative area office and one in the grounds/ maintenance office area).
- f. Operating Millage Proposal: The millage proposal for the August township ballot was approved and sent to the Marquette County Clerk. The proposal renews the wording for the millage years; the millage itself has not increased for 40 years.

12. Presentations:

- a. Bethany Leiter of Highline discussed the Highline internet service footprint and timing for Powell Township.
 - i. Highline is an internet service provider that will likely “turn on” for service to Powell Township in November, once the service infrastructure is in place.
 - ii. Gabrielle Goetz and Joe Erickson of Highline will likely visit in a few months to give more details, coverage information, and county roads included in coverage.
 - iii. Service in Powell Township is possible because Highline received \$187 million in Federal Communications Commission Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) money to bring high-speed internet to areas including ~42,000 upper peninsula homes. They are focusing on Marquette County this summer.
 - iv. Highline provides symmetrical gig speed internet service (1000 up, 1000 down). This provides internet service without buffering or delays during online activities such as gaming and telehealth events. Their prices are based on speed, not data, so there is no cap on data used. Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) is also an option.
 - v. Highline services should run \$111.00/month with a \$200.00 installation charge. At Highline’s next local sign-up event, there will also be an offer for free installation with same-day signup.
 - vi. Installation is a 2-step process.
 - 1. Trench a line (to place and bury fiber) to the home.

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- 2. Install equipment ("white glove installation") within the home after arranging an appointment.
 - vii. They will be servicing approximately 791 homes in the area.
 - viii. 906 Technologies customers will gradually transition to Highline, since Highline also acquired the internet side of their company.
 - ix. Service will likely "turn on" in late November, so they would like to make all trenches before the ground freezes. This eliminates the need for temporary drops and secondary construction next year.
 - x. Highline is running their own network and not using other fiber already in place.
 - xi. If Highline workers leave a mess during construction, they would like residents to call the 888 number they will provide so that they can remedy the issue.
- b. Marquette County Drain Commissioner Paul Altobello discussed the Lake Independence Dam and its restoration requirements following an inspection. David Hulce was available to field technical and repair questions.
- i. The dam's recent triennial inspection was more detailed than previous inspections. Full details are available on request by contacting regional support at [Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners \(https://macdc.us/\)](https://macdc.us/), or on request through the township.
 - ii. There is a v-cut slot in the dam, but there is not much way to control the water amount. The slot was originally put in for fish ladder/control and not water flow. The fish ladder/control was not ever implemented.
 - iii. There is concrete deterioration. It deteriorates on the curve. When it gets to a certain point, it deteriorates quickly. There are 1-2 horizontal cracks in the concrete, and 3-4 vertical cracks that are due to natural expansion and contraction.
 - iv. There is no current safety emergency due to flooding. The dam is a control dam. It requires restoration but is not in danger of collapsing, and any dam loss would also change lake levels but not cause major flooding.
 - v. The repair intent is to cut a new slot and affix control panels so that operators can adjust water flow. This will extend the life of the dam.
 - vi. If the full restoration work is done, the rough estimate is that it will add 50 years to the dam's operating life, since it is only a control dam.
 - vii. Paul is currently working with federal agencies, and it may be possible that the restoration project will be fully paid with federal funds and will be a complete (not temporary) fix to the dam.

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- viii. The plan is to restore one part of the dam, then block off another spot, then work the other part. This approach should not affect existing flow.
 - ix. Regarding erosion issues, they will keep them in mind as they are near repair work and while the work is conducted.
 - x. Any safety or security regarding people walking the dam is something the township can approach with the county.
 - xi. Paul will share any further information he receives and will keep in contact with the Powell Township Supervisor, Levi Ellis.
- c. Mike Springer presented the attached Parks and Recreation Committee Safe Routes to School Grant updates.
- i. He gave a presentation and updates to the Powell Township School Board on April 23, 2025.
 - ii. A newly formed Committee will re-submit the grant on June 18, 2025, since the previous efforts are already two (2) years old.

Public Comment:

- Kelsey Wermanger:
- 1. The 15th Annual Big Bay Rummage Sale, hosted by the BBSC, is Saturday, June 14, 2025, 9 A.M. – 4 P.M. To sign up, and get on the rummage sale map, visit Cram's, or contact Kelsey at director@bigbaystewardship.org or (847)894-3763.
- 2. The Northern Michigan University (NMU) Center for Native American Studies praised Powell Township's local Lake Superior beach's new name, Mino-kwe jiigibiik, meaning "good woman by the water" in the Ojibwe language. Kelsey has an audio recording of the beach name pronunciation, provided by NMU, for anyone interested. (*Note to Minutes: "Mino-kwe Jiigibiik" replaced "Squ-- Beach" in 2022 upon direction from the United States Geological Survey's U.S. Board on Geographic Names. Pronunciation recordings are also available in online Ojibwe dictionaries.*)

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

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1. Planning Commission: **Motion** to accept the resignation of Dianne Hall. (Levi Ellis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
2. Planning Commission: **Motion** to accept the resignation of Phil Moran (Sharon Mattis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
3. Planning Commission: **Motion** to appoint Michael Kantola to the Planning Commission for a 2-year term effective immediately. (Levi Ellis, Sharon Mattis). All in favor, motion carried.
4. Planning Commission: **Motion** to appoint Bruce Hutchinson to the Planning Commission for a 3-year term effective immediately. (Levi Ellis, Sharon Mattis). All in favor, motion carried.
5. Parks and Recreation Committee: **Motion** to approve a \$1,500.00 payment from Burns Landing operating funds for materials to run electric to the cabin and pavilion. (Sharon Mattis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
6. Parks and Recreation Committee: **Motion** to approve a \$300.00 payment from donated funds to purchase flowers for existing township planters (Daryl Wilcox, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
7. Parks and Recreation Committee: **Motion** to approve an \$800.00 payment for the Fire on the Bay Concert Series band (Levi Ellis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
8. Cemetery Department: **Motion** to approve the purchase of flags with brass markers for the veterans' headstones that still need them (Sharon Mattis, Levi Ellis). All in favor, motion carried.
9. Emergency Management Department: **Motion** to approve Emergency Management Department: Approve any continuing dates through summer for Food Bank. (Levi Ellis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
10. Fire Department: **Motion** to approve a \$457.56 payment from equipment funds to replace six (6) expiring Automated External Defibrillator (AED) pads (Sharon Mattis, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
11. Fire Department: **Motion** to approve application submission for this year's DNR Volunteer Fire Capacity Grant (Sharon Mattis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.

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12. Fire Department: **Motion** to approve \$411.17 payment from maintenance funds for state-required water back-flow preventer testing at Station 1 (Sharon Mattis, Levi Ellis). All in favor, motion carried.
13. Ambulance Department: **Motion** to approve receipt of \$7,500.00 in Superior Health Foundation Grant funds (Daryl Wilcox, Denise Hudson). All in favor, motion carried.
14. Ambulance Department: **Motion** to approve a \$218.84 payment to re-stock emergency medical supplies (Sharon Mattis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
15. Water Department: **Motion** to approve the proposal and \$3,353.00 payment for a township water system leak detection survey (Daryl Wilcox, Levi Ellis). All in favor, motion carried.
16. **Motion** to approve meeting rate pay adjustments, effective April 1, 2025, for all Departments, Commissions, and Committees. Chair and Secretary rate will be \$40.00. Member rate will be \$30.00 (Daryl Wilcox, Sharon Mattis). Roll call vote: L. Ellis – Aye, D. Wilcox – Aye, S. Mattis – Aye, S. Girard – Aye, D. Hudson – Aye, motion carried.
17. **Motion** to approve a \$2,259.00 annual payment to BS&A software for township accounting and payroll system services (Sharon Mattis, Daryl Wilcox). All in favor, motion carried.
18. **Motion** to approve a \$125.00 payment for five (5) additional attendees for the Michigamme Township Annual Banquet (Daryl Wilcox, Levi Ellis). All in favor, motion carried.

Public Comment:

- Gene Champagne – There will be at least one (1) additional proposal on the November ballot. Proposal wording will be something like “to protect voters’ rights.” The proposal’s intent is to keep proof of U.S. citizenship requirements reasonable, ensuring the burden of proof is adequate but not a deterrent. Gene has been an election inspector for years and noted that it is hard to “game” the voter system; voter fraud incidents are rare.

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- S. Mattis – Regarding G. Champagne’s public comments: Additionally, everyone having to prove any additional citizenship requirements with extra documentation in person will require clerks and clerk offices to increase open hours and time on duty. This will put a burden on all clerks and government offices.
- L. Ellis – Thank you to all the presenters in informing the community, and thank you to all the town committees, commissions, and departments for your hard work.

Next Meeting: Regular Board Meeting June 17, 2025, 7:00 P.M.

Adjourn 8:22 P.M.

Minutes prepared by: M. Mramor, Deputy Clerk