

Meeting of the Sparta Township Board
Sparta Township Hall 160 East Division Street, Sparta, Mi. 49345
Watch meeting Live @ [Sparta Township - YouTube](#)

November 13th, 2025

7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT

1. Approval of Minutes – October 9th, 2025
2. Treasurer's Report's
3. Building Department Monthly Report

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of Bills
2. Fire Authority Resolution
3. Budget Amendments
4. Used Recording Equipment
5. Michigan Fair Elections Institute Award – Marcy Savage
6. Fairplains Cemetery Fence Issue
7. Christmas Decorations for Front Porch Township Hall

OTHER INFORMATIONAL

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting of Sparta Township Board

Sparta Township Hall - 160 E Division St - Sparta MI 49345

Watch Meeting live @ Sparta Township - YouTube

October 9, 2025 - 7pm

Present: Supervisor Dale Bergman, Clerk Marcy Savage, Treasurer Ashley Johnson, Trustee Jason Bradford, Bill Goodfellow, Barb Johnson, and Rob Steffens.

Also present: Historical Society Chairman Doug Pinckney Library Director MerriJo Tuinstra, and Recording Secretary Sarah Fischer.

Absent: None

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Additions or corrections to the agenda:** Dale Bergman requested to add the Myer's Cemetery as the fifth item on the agenda. Motion by Barb Johnson and seconded by Bill Goodfellow. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.
4. **Public Comment for agenda items:** None.
5. **Approval of minutes and treasurer's report:**
 - **Approval of minutes of September 11th, 2025:** Motion by Rob Steffens with a second by Bill Goodfellow. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.
 - **Treasurer's Report:** Motion by Bill Goodfellow with a second by Barb Johnson. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.
6. **Building Department Monthly Report:** this is informational only.

Business items:

- A. **Approval of Bills:** An added invoice of \$1,962.75 was received from Buist for evaluating proposed work at the Township office, beyond the originally approved \$2,933. Bill Goodfellow presented an email from the contractor telling him no other fees would be charged. A copy of the email will be sent to dispute the added charge. A motion to approve all bills including the payment of \$2,933 was made by Barb Johnson, seconded by Bill Goodfellow, and passed unanimously.

- B. **Update on Petition for Annexation of Peterson Property:** The Township Board and attorney support proposing a 425 Agreement for the Peterson Property. A draft agreement was presented for the Board's vote to send it to the Village of Sparta and the County. A public hearing will be scheduled, and final documents prepared. Marcy Savage moved to send the draft to the Village and County, seconded by Barb Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. **Fairplain Cemetery Fence Issue:** The Township previously replaced fencing along the Cemetery border without conducting a land survey, unintentionally installing the new fence sixteen feet onto adjacent private property. The Board discussed two options: compensating the property owner for the land or removing and reinstalling the fence within Cemetery boundaries. The decision was tabled pending a discussion with the property owner to decide on an acceptable offer, which will be weighed against the cost of moving the fence.
- D. **Locks and Keys Replacement Quotes for Township Hall:** The Board agreed to move forward with replacing the locks and keys for the Township building. Earlier quotes had been reviewed, with an added quote of \$590.00 from Hoogerhyde Safe & Locks, Inc. presented at this meeting. After discussion, Bill Goodfellow moved to approve the Hoogerhyde quote and award them the work, seconded by Barb Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.
- E. **Meyer's Cemetery Trees:** Dale Bergman reported trimming and maintenance concerns at the cemetery, including overgrown brush and sunken gravestones. He received a quote from Beaver Tree Service, LLC and suggested obtaining a second quote for comparison. He requested Board approval for up to \$1,500 and will go ahead with the lowest bid. If both quotes are equal, he recommended selecting Beaver Tree Service. Motion moved by Rob Steffens to grant Supervisor Dale Bergman approval for this work up to the amount of \$1,500.00, with a second by Jason Bradford. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Information:

- Dale asked the Board to consider potential locations for Clean-up Days before next month's meeting. Scott Gardner, owner of American Classic—the company that managed last year's event—is interested in returning but has requested a new location.
- Marcy provided the Board with an updated budget, noting it has been a while since they reviewed one. She included explanations for certain items, such as two \$9,000 elevator payments offset by a \$10,000 grant. She recommended the Board review the budget before the next meeting, as some budget amendments—particularly related to the drain bill—will need to be discussed.
- Barb and her husband have been volunteering their time at the Greenwood Cemetery, straightening, and repairing about 165 headstones this year despite weather and scheduling challenges. A volunteer from Barb's church has offered

to use a small backhoe next spring to help level and clear around the headstones. More volunteers are needed at Greenwood and other cemeteries to help manage the work.

- Rob shared that significant work is underway at the Sports Park, including excavation of a large pit behind fields three and four to hold silt being pumped from the pond off Elkan. The removed fill, consisting of high-quality sandy soil, has been used to level and compact the future parking area. The silt removal and water reclamation process will begin soon, with ongoing grading and leveling to bring the area up to field level. This project is expected to improve the site's drainage and overall usability.

Public Comment:

- Robert Carlstrom, addressed the board on disruptive and disrespectful behavior by several members during public meetings over the past year.
- Lauren Crowell addressed the board on an untruthful comment made by Township Treasurer.
- Michelle Crowell at 155 Liberty Street, addressed the board in response to untruthful statement made by Township Treasurer.
- Lori Whalen at 273 River Road, spoke out against slanderous comments made by Township Treasurer during a public village meeting.
- Village President Robert Whalen at 273 River Road provided multiple comments.
Correction & Apology: He opened by apologizing for his earlier outburst and misattributing a comment to the wrong board member.

Peterson Property Concerns: Shared concerns about the board drafting a 425 agreement when the property owner never requested it. Additionally, raised concerns about a board member with potential conflicts of interest voting on the matter.

Response to Ashley Johnson's Comments: Condemned Treasurer public comment of his minor granddaughter..

Additionally, Robert expressed his concerns about the Township's financial management.

- Courtney Mias at 313 Hill Valley Lane expressed strong disapproval of Treasurer behavior.
- MerriJo Tuinstra at 100 Orchard Drive, Sparta Library Director, said thank you to board members and community members who attended the library's open house. She shared that the event was well-received and highlighted updates to the space, including new colors and shelving.
- Historical Society Chairman Doug Pinkey disputed Village members' claims of township bankruptcy.

- Chad Momber 1423 Lake Shore drive, expressed frustration over slow progress on a development plan he first gave eight years ago. Chad also shared upcoming community events at his venue, including a Make-A-Wish fundraiser, the Sparta 300 event, and announced that his venue will host a televised Governor debate.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 8:04pm by Barb Johnson with a second by Marcy Savage. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

Submitted by: Sarah Fischer

Reviewed by: Marcy Savage

Building Department Monthly Report

Month Ended:	October 2025		
Building Permits:			
	New Homes		
	Modular Homes		
	Mobile Homes	1	
	Remodel and Additions		
	Accessory Building	1	
	Decks		
	Garage		
	Demolition		
	Swimming Pool		
	Commercial New:		
	Commercial Alteration		
	Commercial Addition		
	Renewal		
	Other:		
		Total Building:	2
Mechanical Permits:			
		Total Mechanical:	1
Plumbing Permits:			
		Total Plumbing:	1
Electrical Permits:			
		Total Electrical:	0
Zoning Permits:			
		Total Zoning:	0

Permit List

11/12/2025

Permit	Address	Issued	Status	Category	Permit Fees	Const. Value
PB250058	8755 COUNTRY VIEW	CI10/28/2025	ISSUED	MOBILE HOME	\$250.00	
PB250059	8933 W WOODLANE DR	10/29/2025	ISSUED	ACCESSORY BUILDING	\$118.00	\$5,700

Total Permits: 2

Total Value: \$5,700

Total Fees: \$368.00

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION SPARTA AREA FIRE AUTHORITY

These Articles of Incorporation (“Articles”) are adopted for the purpose of creating the Sparta Area Fire Authority (“Authority”) under the provisions of the Emergency Services to Municipalities Act, 1988 PA 57, as amended.

ARTICLE I NAME AND OFFICE

A. **Name.** The name of this Authority is “Sparta Area Fire Authority,” referred to as the “Authority.”

B. **Principal Office.** The principal office of the Authority will be located at the Sparta Fire Department, 36 Elmwood Street, Sparta, MI 49345, or at such other office location as may be designated by the Authority.

ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS

A. **Act 57** means the Emergency Services to Municipalities Act, 1988 PA 57, as amended.

B. **Authority** means the Sparta **Area** Fire Authority incorporated under the provisions of Act 57.

C. **Board** shall mean the Authority’s governing board.

D. **Emergency Services** means fire protection **and medical first response** services.

E. **Incorporating Municipalities** means a Municipality that is part of this Authority or joins in a manner provided for in these Articles.

F. **Municipal Emergency Service** means an emergency service performed by a Municipality rather than by this Authority.

G. **Municipality** means a county, city, village, or township.

H. **Non-Incorporating Municipalities** means a Municipality that does not become part of this Authority in the manner provided for in these Articles.

Other terms shall have such meaning as may be specified in the various provisions of these Articles.

ARTICLE III INCORPORATING MUNICIPALITIES

The Incorporating Municipalities creating this Authority are the Village of Sparta and the Township of Sparta, each located in the County of Kent, State of Michigan, which are each hereby designated as an Incorporating Municipality. Any municipality that subsequently joins the Authority pursuant to Act 57 and these Articles shall also be an “Incorporating Municipality.” If any Incorporating Municipality modifies its form of incorporation, the successor municipal entity shall also be bound by these Articles.

ARTICLE IV PURPOSE

The purpose of this Authority shall be and is to provide Emergency Services in accordance with Act 57 and within or without the Authority’s jurisdiction described in Article V of these Articles as may be authorized by these Articles or pursuant to contract with the Authority by any Incorporating Municipality, Non-Incorporating Municipality, or any other lawful entity in accordance with Act 57.

ARTICLE V JURISDICTION

The Authority’s jurisdiction shall include all the territory included within the corporate boundaries of its Incorporating Municipalities as now constituted or as hereafter expanded through annexation, consolidation, or change of municipal identity. The Authority has exclusive authority to determine how Emergency Services will be provided within its jurisdiction.

ARTICLE VI POWERS

A. **Body Corporate.** This Authority shall be a body corporate with **the** power to sue or be sued in any court of the State of Michigan.

B. **Powers.** The Authority shall possess all of the powers now or hereafter granted by Act 57, by any other applicable **statute** of the State of Michigan, by these Articles, and those incident to those purposes, including but not limited to the following:

1. *Bylaws and Rules.* Adopt bylaws and rules of administration to accomplish the purposes of this Act.

2. *Ordinances.* Pursuant to the procedures set forth in Act 57, adopt ordinances that allow the Authority to assess fees on owners or occupants of property who receive Emergency Services to cover the costs of providing Emergency Services under Act 57, and enforce fire-related ordinances adopted or amended from time to time by the Incorporating Municipalities.

3. *Grants, Loans or Contributions.* Apply for and accept grants, loans, or contributions from the federal government or any of its agencies, the state, or other public or private agencies to be used for any of the purposes of this Act and to do any and all things within its express or implied powers necessary or desirable to secure that financial or other aid or cooperation in the carrying out of any of the purposes of Act 57.

4. *Contracts.* Enter into any contracts with other entities or persons not prohibited by law.

5. *Issuance of Bonds.* Issue unlimited tax general obligation bonds upon approval of a majority of the electors in the jurisdictional limits of the Authority voting on the question of the issuance of such bonds. The proposal to issue unlimited tax general

obligation bonds must be submitted to a vote of the electors in the jurisdictional limits of the Authority by resolution of the Authority Board. The resolution must contain the language of the ballot proposal. The Authority may also issue its limited tax general obligation bonds without a vote of the electors in accordance with applicable State law, Act 57, and these Articles.

6. *Installment Purchases.* Enter into a contract or agreement for the purchase of real or personal property for public purposes to be paid for in installments over a period not to exceed 15 years (or the maximum period permitted under Act 57 at the time of financing), or the useful life of the property acquired, whichever is less. Real or personal property purchased under this section may serve as collateral in support of the contract or agreement.

7. *Investigation.* Investigate Emergency Services requirements, needs, and programs and engage, by contract, consultants as may be necessary and cooperate with the federal government, state, political subdivisions, and other authorities in those investigations.

8. *Employees; Consultants.* As stated more fully in Article XVII of these Articles and subject to the provisions of Act 57, Michigan law and these Articles, hire employees, attorneys, accountants, and consultants as the Authority considers necessary to carry out the purposes of the Authority.

9. *Taxation.* The Authority may levy a tax on all of the taxable property within the limits of the Authority for the purposes of and as provided in Act 57 and these Articles.

10. *Property.* Acquire private property by purchase, lease, gift, devise or condemnation, either within or without its corporate limits and may hold, manage, control, sell, exchange or lease such. For the purposes of condemnation, the Authority may proceed under the Acquisition of Property by State Agencies and Public Corporations Act, 1911 PA 149 of the Uniform Condemnation Procedures Act, 1980 PA 87.

11. *Additional Powers.* Possess all other powers authorized by law that are necessary to carry out the purposes of its incorporation and those incident to those purposes.

C. **Limitations.** The enumeration of any powers herein shall not be construed as a limitation upon its general powers unless the context or Michigan law shall clearly indicate otherwise.

D. **Corporate Seal.** The Authority may adopt a corporate seal, and may alter the seal, and may use it by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be affixed, impressed or reproduced in any other manner.

ARTICLE VII TERM

The Authority shall continue in existence perpetually or until dissolved by act of the Incorporating Municipalities or by law, if such dissolution is permitted by law.

ARTICLE VIII FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Authority shall commence on the first day of April in each year and shall end on March 31 of the following year.

**ARTICLE IX
BOARD OF MEMBERS**

A. **Board Members.** The governing body of this Authority shall be a Board of Commissioners (the “Board”), which shall be comprised of three (3) Commissioners from each Incorporating Municipality appointed as set forth herein.

B. **Appointments.** The governing body of each Incorporating Municipality shall appoint three (3) regular Commissioners. Not more than two (2) of the appointees by each Incorporating Municipality shall be a member of the legislative body of the respective Incorporating Municipality. All appointees by each Incorporating Municipality shall be residents of the respective Incorporating Municipality.

C. **Terms.** The Initial Term for one Commissioner from each Incorporating Municipality shall commence upon appointment and shall expire on March 31 in the year following appointment. The Initial Term for all other Commissioners shall commence upon appointment and shall expire on March 31 of the second year following the year of appointment. After the Initial Terms provided herein, each Commissioner appointed by an Incorporating Municipality shall serve a term of two years. However, each Commissioner shall serve until that Commissioner’s successor is appointed and qualified. All terms of office (other than the Initial Term) shall begin on the first day of April.

D. **Timing of Appointment.** No appointment to the Board shall be deemed to be invalid because it was not made within or at the time specified in these Articles.

E. **Qualifications.** Each Commissioner shall be a qualified elector residing within the territorial boundaries of the Incorporating Municipality who appointed him or her and within the jurisdiction of the Authority. A Commissioner shall not be an officer, member or employee

of any emergency service transferred to, operated by, or contracted with the Authority, including a person who has contracted with or receives a direct financial benefit or compensation from the Authority.

F. **Oath.** Each Commissioner shall qualify by taking the constitutional oath of office and filing his or her oath with the Authority and as otherwise required by law.

G. **Expenses of Commissioners.** Commissioners shall not be compensated by the Authority for attending meetings of the Authority. However, a Commissioner may be reimbursed for expenses actually made by him or her in carrying out the duties of the Authority (exclusive of Board meetings) only upon approval of the Authority Board in advance of the expenditure and to the extent authorized by the budget for the Authority for each fiscal year.

H. **Vacancies.** A vacancy shall be defined as the four (4) month continuous absence of, or the retirement, removal, resignation, or death of a Commissioner. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commissioner, the governing body of the Incorporating Municipality that selected the vacating Commissioner shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

I. **Removal.** Any Commissioner appointed by an Incorporating Municipality as its representative may be removed at any time without cause by action of the governing body of that Incorporating Municipality that appointed the Commissioner.

ARTICLE X MEETINGS

A. **Meetings.** The Board shall meet regularly and at least quarterly at such time and place as shall be determined by motion of the Board. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson or any two Commissioners. Public notices of all regular, special or rescheduled regular meetings of the Board shall be given pursuant to the applicable provisions

of the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, as amended from time to time, and shall be posted on the Authority's website.

B. **Quorum.** A majority of the Commissioners who are appointed and serving shall be required for a quorum.

C. **Voting.** The Board shall act by motion or resolution, unless a particular format is required by law. Each Commissioner shall have one vote. A majority vote of the Commissioners appointed and then serving shall be required for the passage of any resolution providing for the approval and execution of any contract, election of officers, adoption of by-laws, rules and regulations, or the levying of any tax. In all other matters, a vote of a majority of the Commissioners present at any meeting at which a quorum is present and who are authorized to vote on such matters shall be sufficient for passage. The Board shall keep minutes of its proceedings as required by law. All votes shall be "yeas" or "nays" except that where the vote is unanimous, it shall only be necessary to so state.

D. **Adoptions of Rules and Procedures.** The Board shall have the right to adopt rules governing its procedure which are not in conflict with Michigan law, federal law or these Articles. The Board shall also have the right to establish rules and regulations for the use of its real or personal property owned, held or operated by it under the provisions of law.

ARTICLE XI OFFICERS AND OFFICER DUTIES

A. **Appointment of Officers.** Annually, the Board shall select a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and a Treasurer (or a Secretary/Treasurer), each of whom shall be a Commissioner. Such officers shall serve until the next annual meeting or until their respective successors shall be selected and qualify. No selection of an officer of the Board shall be deemed to be invalid because it was not made within or at the time specified in these Articles.

B. **Officers.** The Officers of the Board shall have such other powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by the Board and Act 57 including, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

1. *Chairperson.* The Chairperson of the Board shall be the presiding officer of the Board at all Board regular or special meetings. Except as otherwise provided by these Articles, the Chairperson shall not have any executive or administrative function in the Authority, other than as a Commissioner.

2. *Vice-Chairperson.* In the absence or disability of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson.

3. *Secretary.* The Secretary shall be the recording officer of the Board and the custodian of the Authority's records. The Board may hire consultants necessary to assist the Secretary with his or her duties.

4. *Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the Board and shall give a bond conditioned upon the faithful performance of the duties of his or her office. The Board may hire consultants necessary to assist the Treasurer with his or her duties.

C. **Duties Regarding Authority Fund.** All moneys shall be deposited in a financial institution or financial institutions designated by the Board into the Authority fund. All checks or other forms of withdrawal from the Authority fund, including paychecks, shall be signed by two authorized persons. Authorized persons include the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or other authorized Board member, and the Chief Administrative Employee of the Authority. All authorized signatories shall give a bond to the Authority conditioned upon the faithful performances of his or her office. The cost of said bond shall be paid by the Authority.

ARTICLE XII BUDGET AND AUDIT

A. **Annual Budget.** The Authority's Chief Administrative Employee and Chairperson shall prepare a proposed annual operating and capital budget reflecting the projected revenues and projected expenditures of the Authority for the next fiscal year beginning April 1 and such budget shall be reviewed and approved by the Authority as herein provided.

1. *Budget if there is an Authority-wide Millage Only.* If the Authority (a) is authorized by voters to levy an Authority-wide millage at the time the budget must be completed (e.g., by March 31 prior to the next fiscal year), or (b) submitted a ballot proposal to the Authority electors for consideration at the November election prior to the next fiscal year, which if approved, authorizes the Authority to levy an Authority-wide millage on December 1 preceding the next fiscal year without any funding from the Incorporating Municipalities, the preliminary budget shall be prepared and presented for a budget meeting to be held in October prior to the next fiscal year. The final budget shall be adopted at a Board budget meeting in December by a majority of Commissioners appointed and serving. The Incorporating Municipalities shall have the opportunity to provide comments on the budget but do not have the authority to change or approve the budget. The Commission may amend and adjust the budget from time to time upon approval by a majority of Commissioners appointed and serving.

2. *Budget if there is a Full or Partial Funding by Incorporating Municipalities.*

a. If the Authority's budget for a fiscal year includes direct funding by the individual Incorporating Municipalities for all or a portion of the costs to operate the Authority (including capital expenses) for a given fiscal year, the

preliminary budget for the next fiscal year shall be prepared for and presented to the Board at a budget meeting to be held no later than the October Board meeting prior to the end of the Village's fiscal year. The Board shall approve, by a majority of Commissioners appointed and serving, submittal of the budget for the next fiscal year to the Incorporating Municipalities at least thirty (30) days before the end of the Incorporating Municipalities' fiscal year. The budget must include what percentage (currently $\frac{2}{3}$ township and $\frac{1}{3}$ village) of the operational annual budget each Incorporating Municipality must pay as agreed to by Authority and the Incorporating Municipalities. The budget must be approved by the governing body of each Incorporating Municipality.

b. If the Village incorporates as a home rule city and the Authority is funded in full or in part by direct funding by the individual Incorporating Municipalities, the preliminary budget for the next fiscal year shall be prepared for and presented to the Authority at a budget meeting no later than the Authority's October Board meeting prior to the end of the fiscal year, and the Board shall approve, by majority of Commissioners appointed and serving, submittal of the budget for the next fiscal year to the Incorporating Municipality at least 30 days before the end of the Incorporating Municipalities' fiscal year. Each Incorporating Municipality's share of funding for the Authority's budget shall be based on a formula (the "Formula") comprised of the following three factors: (1) the respective Incorporating Municipality's taxable value as a proportion of the combined taxable value of all Incorporating Municipalities; (2) the respective Incorporating Municipality's population as a proportion of the

combined population all Incorporating Municipalities; and (3) the number of fire runs during the prior fiscal year in an Incorporating Municipality as a proportion of the combined fire runs in all Incorporating Municipalities. Each of the foregoing factors shall be weighted one-third of the total amount due and the aggregate shall constitute the Incorporating Municipality's respective share of the Authority Budget for that fiscal year. All values shall be determined as of the prior December 31 and the most recently completed Decennial Census for the Incorporating Municipality. The budget must be approved by the governing body of each Incorporating Municipality.

c. Amendments to the budget must be approved by a majority of Commissioners appointed and serving, and the governing body of each Incorporating Municipality.

B. **Accounting and Budgeting Procedures.** The Authority's accounting and budgeting practices shall conform to standard accounting practices, the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, 1968 PA 2, and all other applicable provisions of law. The Board shall cause an annual audit to be made of the books, records and financial transactions of the Authority by an independent certified public account and shall furnish at least two copies thereof to each Incorporating Municipality. The books and records of the Authority shall be open for inspection by any Incorporating Municipality at all reasonable times.

ARTICLE XIII COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS; EMERGENCY SERVICE AGREEMENTS

The Authority may enter into agreements with any Incorporating Municipality, Non-Incorporating Municipalities, or other entities pursuant to Act 57, the Urban Cooperation Act, 1967 PA 7, 1951 PA 33, or another applicable Michigan law for the purpose of, among other things,

providing emergency services to the Authority, Incorporating Municipalities and Non-Incorporating Municipalities and their residents. Contracts by the Authority to provide emergency services under Section 8 of the Act 57 shall be executed in the name and on behalf of the Authority by its Chairperson and Secretary by manual or facsimile signature, and the corporate seal of the Authority or facsimile thereof, if any, shall be printed on and affixed to the contract. An Incorporating Municipality may transfer any Municipal Emergency Service to the Authority by transfer agreement.

ARTICLE XIV ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Unless and until the Authority adopts such ordinances as provided in Article VI.B.2 of these Articles, Incorporating Municipalities, in cooperation with each other, shall promulgate uniform ordinances providing for cost recovery for Emergency Services provided by the Authority. In addition, the Incorporating Municipalities, in cooperation with each other, may promulgate ordinances regarding other lawful issues related to the provision of emergency service. From the date on which these ordinances shall take effect, the provisions thereof shall be controlling within the limits of the Authority. At any time, the Board may adopt other ordinances in a similar fashion, provided they are applicable to the purpose of the Authority.

ARTICLE XV FINANCING THE AUTHORITY

A. **Property Tax Levy by Authority.** Subject to the terms and conditions provided in Section 12 of Act 57, the Authority may levy a tax upon all of the taxable property within the jurisdiction of the Authority for the purposes of Act 57. The tax shall not be levied without the approval of a majority of the registered electors residing within the Authority's jurisdiction and qualified to vote and voting on the tax. The election may be called by resolution of the Authority Board pursuant to Michigan law and in compliance with Act 57. Taxes authorized by the Authority

may be levied at a rate not to exceed **five (5.00)** mills and for a period as determined by the Board in the resolution calling the election and included in the ballot proposal. The taxes shall be levied, collected and paid by each tax assessing and collecting officer and the County Treasurer to the Authority as provided by Act 57.

B. Interim Period Financial Contribution From Each Incorporating Municipality. During any time where an Authority-wide tax or millage has not been approved and levied as provided in Subsection A above (“Interim Period”), and the Village has not become a City, each Incorporating Municipality agrees to provide support to the Authority through direct funding using any lawful funds. The Authority’s operational budget will be set at 2/3 for the Township and 1/3 for the Village of the Authority’s operation budget. If the Village becomes a city, the budget funding will be determined using the Formula set forth in Article XII.A.2.b above. For each budget year during the Interim Period, the Chief Administrative Employee and Chairperson shall prepare a proposed annual operating and capital budget as provided in Article XII of these Articles. The Incorporating Municipalities agree to pay the annual amounts set forth in the budget in quarterly installments. The quarterly payments by the Village of Sparta shall commence on December 1 following the last year that an Authority-wide millage was levied by the Authority and shall continue until November 30 of the next year in which any Authority-wide millage is authorized and levied by the Authority. The **quarterly** payments by the Township of Sparta shall commence on **April 1** following the last year that an Authority-wide millage was last levied by the Authority and shall continue until **November 30** of the next year in which any Authority-wide millage is authorized and levied by the Authority.

C. Property Tax Levy by Municipality. Any Incorporating Municipality or municipality granted taxing authority under Michigan law may levy a tax on all of the taxable

property within the limits of its political subdivision and appropriate, grant, or contribute the proceeds of the tax to the Authority for the purposes of Act 57 or to provide sufficient money to fulfill its contractual obligation to the Authority, which tax shall be within the charter statutory constitutional limitations.

D. **Other Sources of Revenue.** The sources of revenue for financing the Authority specified herein are non-exclusive. The Authority, the Incorporating Municipalities, and any Non-Incorporating Municipalities may provide for their respective financial contributions to the Authority from all other sources of revenue authorized by law.

E. **Federal or State Grants in Aid.** The Authority shall have the power to apply for and accept grants, loans, or contributions from the United States of America or any agency or instrumentality thereof, the State of Michigan or other public or private agencies; and to do any and all things necessary or desirable to secure such financial or other aid or cooperation in carrying out any of the purposes of Act 57.

ARTICLE XVI PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT TRANSFER AND OWNERSHIP

All Property and Equipment titled or deeded in the name of Sparta Fire Department shall become the Property of the Authority and all necessary documents and instruments to cause title to transfer shall be duly executed.

ARTICLE XVII EMPLOYEES AND INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

A. **Power to Employ.** Subject to the terms and conditions provided in Section 10 of Act 57, the Board shall have the power to hire all officers and employees as it may consider desirable to carry out the functions of the Authority.

B. **Chief Administrative Employee.** The Board is authorized to hire a Chief Administrative Employee of the Authority who shall be the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief shall administer the activities conducted and services provided by the Authority on a daily basis as may be more fully determined by the Board.

C. **Independent Contractors and Consultants.** The Authority may retain from time to time the services of attorneys, accountants, and other consultants as the Authority considers necessary to carry out the purpose of the Authority.

ARTICLE XVIII INVESTMENT

The Treasurer of the Authority and/or his or her consultant when authorized by resolution of the Board may invest general funds of the Authority in compliance with the laws of the State of Michigan.

ARTICLE XIX PUBLICATION

These Articles shall be published once in the *Grand Rapids Press*, and once on each Incorporating Municipality's website, which newspaper and websites have general circulation within the jurisdiction of the Authority. One printed copy of the Articles, certified as a true copy, as hereinafter provided, with the dates and places of publication shown by publishers' Affidavit of Publication attached hereto, shall be filed with the Secretary of State. The Township Clerk of the Township of Sparta is hereby designated as the person to cause these Articles to be published, certified and filed as aforesaid.

ARTICLE XX WITHDRAWAL OF INCORPORATING MUNICIPALITY

A. **Procedure for Withdrawal.** An Incorporating Municipality may withdraw from the Authority by resolution of the Incorporating Municipality's legislative body approving the

withdrawal, a certified copy of which resolution shall be provided to the Board and the other Incorporating Municipalities at least twelve (12) months prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year for the Authority. Such new fiscal year shall serve as the effective date for the withdrawal. If there is no Authority-wide tax levied under Section 12 of Act 57 and Section VI.B.9 of these Articles, the Incorporating Municipality that withdraws shall continue to be financially obligated to continue all funding, including operations and capital equipment budgets, as required by these Articles or other contract until the Effective Date of the withdrawal.

B. **Tax Liability.** An Incorporating Municipality that withdraws from the Authority (“Withdrawing Municipality”) shall continue to be subject to any tax levied in its jurisdiction under Section 12 of Act 57 and Section VI.B.9 of these Articles, for the duration of the period of that tax as determined pursuant to Section 12(3) of Act 57.

C. **Debts and Liabilities.** A Withdrawing Municipality shall remain liable for a proportion of the debts and liabilities of the Authority incurred while the Withdrawing Municipality was a part of the Authority. In the same manner using the formula set forth in Article XII.A.2.b., above, determined as of the effective date of the withdrawal.

D. **Authority Property.** Any property owned by the Authority, which is in the possession of the Withdrawing Municipality or in the possession of personnel who will no longer remain with the Authority as a result of the Withdrawing Municipality’s withdrawal from the Authority, shall be returned to the Authority before the effective date of the withdrawal. The Withdrawing Municipality shall not be entitled to the return of any credit for any property or money it transferred to or paid to the Authority prior to the withdrawal.

E. **Employees.** Employees of the Authority who perform emergency services in the jurisdiction of the Withdrawing Municipality shall be protected in relation to the Withdrawing

Municipality to the same extent as employees of the Incorporating Municipality are protected in relation to the Authority under Section 10 of Act 57.

F. **Effect on Authority Governance.** Upon the effective date of withdrawal, the Authority's Articles shall be amended to reflect the withdrawal. If only one Incorporating Municipality remains, the Authority shall be deemed dissolved unless otherwise authorized and recognized under applicable law.

G. **Dissolution.** If all of the Incorporating Municipalities withdraw or if the Authority is otherwise dissolved as permitted by law, all assets of the Authority shall be disbursed at the time of dissolution to the Incorporating Municipalities based on the Formula set forth in Article XII.A.2.b., above.

ARTICLE XXI EFFECTIVE DATE

These Articles shall become effective upon the filing of certified copies of these Articles with the Secretary of State, as provided in Article XIX hereof.

ARTICLE XXII AMENDMENTS

These Articles may be amended at any time so as to permit any county, city, village, township or charter township to become a part of this Authority if such amendment to the Articles is adopted by the governing body of such county, city, village, township, or charter township proposing to become a member, and if such amendment is adopted by the governing body of each Incorporating Municipality of which the Authority is comprised. If there is an Authority-wide tax, the Authority shall condition acceptance of any county, city, village, or township on the authorization of that Authority-wide millage by the majority of the electors of the municipality desiring to become part of the Authority. Other amendments may be made to these Articles at any

time if adopted by the governing body of each Incorporating Municipality of which the Authority is composed. Any such amendment shall be endorsed, published, certified and printed copies thereof filed in the same manner as the original Articles, except that the printed and filed copies shall be certified by the Secretary of this Authority.

ARTICLE XXIII MISCELLANEOUS

A. **Counterparts.** These Articles may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

B. **Captions.** The captions of these Articles are for convenience only and shall not be considered as part of these Articles or in any way limiting or amplifying the terms and provisions hereof.

ARTICLE XXIV ENDORSEMENT

These Articles have been adopted by the Township of Sparta and the Village of Sparta, as set forth in the following endorsements, and in witness whereof the Supervisor and the Clerk of the Township of Sparta, and the President and Clerk of the Village of Sparta have endorsed thereon the statement of such adoption.

SIGNATURES

These Articles of Incorporation were adopted by the Township Board of the Township of Sparta, County of Kent, State of Michigan, at a meeting duly called on the _____ day of _____ 2025.

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA

Dale Bergman
Supervisor, Sparta Township

Marcy Savage
Clerk, Sparta Township

These Articles of Incorporation were adopted by the Village Council of the Village of Sparta, County of Kent, State of Michigan, at a meeting duly called on the _____ day of _____, 2025.

VILLAGE OF SPARTA

Robert Whalen
President, Village of Sparta

Kristen Phelps
Clerk, Village of Sparta

CERTIFICATE OF TOWNSHIP CLERK

I, Marcy Savage, hereby certify that I am the Township Clerk of the Township of Sparta, Kent County, State of Michigan; and that the above is a true and complete copy of the printed Articles of Incorporation of the Sparta Area Fire Authority, a public corporation incorporated under the provisions of Act 57 which Articles were published on _____ in the _____, and on _____ in the _____, as stated in the attached affidavits of publication and are on file in said Township's office at 160 East Division Street, Sparta, Michigan.

Marcy Savage
Clerk, Township of Sparta

Dated: _____, 2025



Sunlight Award

THIS CERTIFICATE IS PROUDLY PRESENTED TO

Marcy Savage, Sparta Township

as a Vigilant Steward in recognition of your outstanding dedication and exemplary service for maintaining your local voter registration files free of duplicate registrations. Your commitment to transparency and efficiency strengthens public trust in the democratic process and upholds the highest standards of civic duty.

Patrice Johnson

Patrice Johnson, Chair, Michigan Fair Elections Institute

October 19, 2025

"Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light the most efficient policeman."

--Associate Justice Louis D. Brandeis, United States Supreme Court



P.O. Box 41, Stockbridge, MI 49285

Email: contact@mifairelections.org, ph: 517-299-8002

October 19, 2025

Marcy Savage
Sparta Township Clerk
Kent County
160 E Division St
Sparta, MI 49345
Dear Clerk, Savage,

It is my pleasure to inform you that you are among a select group of township and municipal clerk offices to receive the Michigan Fair Elections Institute's **Sunlight Award** as a **Vigilant Steward**. In March of this year, an independent investigation of Michigan's official Qualified Voter File (QVF) found only 17 % of 1138 jurisdictions of 1000 or more voter registrations had no potential duplicates identified in the QVF. We are pleased to recognize yours as one among the 197 jurisdictions to show no duplicate voter registrations.

As the enclosed certificate states, this award recognizes you as a **Vigilant Steward** for your "outstanding dedication and exemplary service in keeping your local voter rolls clean of redundant registrations."

Michigan Fair Elections Institute is presenting the award to you in honor of your commitment to preserving election integrity through maintaining clean and accurate voter rolls. Your work strengthens public trust in the republic's democratic process and upholds the highest standards of civic duty.

The Sunlight award is named in honor of U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Louis D. Brandeis's famous statement that "sunlight is the best of disinfectants." MFEI is committed to educating citizens and encouraging their engagement in the state's electoral processes. Citizen engagement is fundamental to preserving individual freedom and serves as a vital component of the check-and-balance system envisioned by the Founding Fathers. This system of accountability only works when clerks like you follow the law and work diligently to maintain clean voter files.

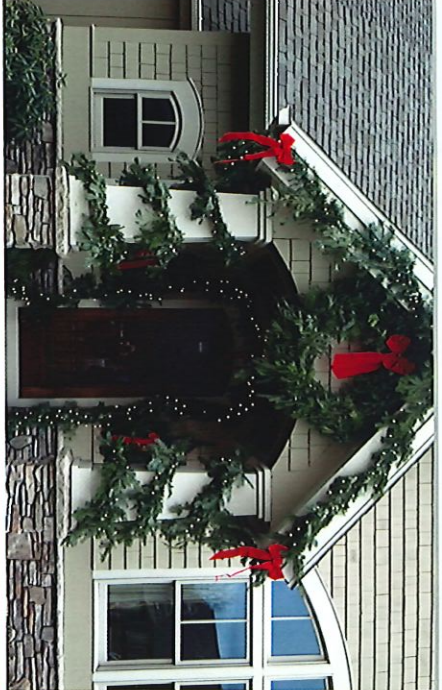
Congratulations! Thank you for your service to the people of your community and to the great state of Michigan.

Sincerely,

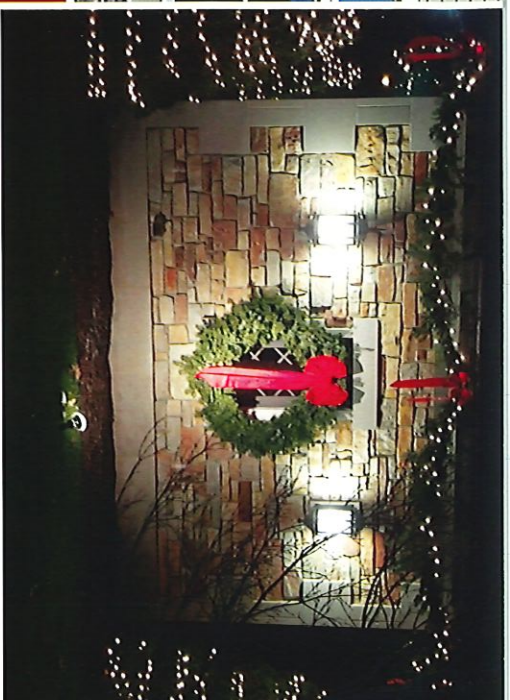
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Patrice Johnson'.

Patrice Johnson
Founder and Chair
Michigan Fair Elections Institute
Website: Mifairelections.org
MFEI, P.O. Box 41, Stockbridge, MI 49285

Enclosure: Sunlight Award Certificate



We use only 100% Michigan-grown fresh evergreens to decorate your home and business. Our greenery is of the highest quality at a price you can afford. We offer wreaths, garland, lights and bows.



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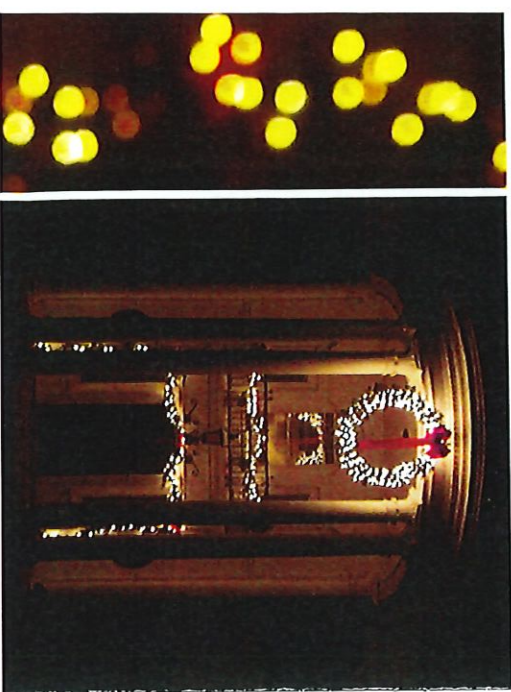
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