

MINUTES OF THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meeting of Thursday, March 12, 2026, 7 PM
Sparta Township Hall, 160 E. Division St., Sparta MI
The meeting could be viewed Live @ Sparta Township – YouTube

Present: Supervisor Dale Bergman; Clerk Marcy Savage; Treasurer Ashley Johnson;
Trustees Jason Bradford, Bill Goodfellow, Barb Johnson, and Rob Steffens
Also Present: Sparta Township Historical Commission Chairman Doug Pinckney, Sparta Library
Director Merri-Jo Tuinstra, and Recording Secretary Toni Potes

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance: Supervisor Bergman called the meeting to order at
7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions or Corrections to Agenda: Noting the date of the meeting on the Agenda should be
March 12, and adding Item 7 Water Works Quotes, (a) Library Lawn Maintenance, (b) Library
Sprinkler Service Agreement, and (c) Historical Commission Sprinkler Service Agreement,
motion by Goodfellow, second by B. Johnson, to approve the Agenda with this correction
and the additions. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment for Agenda Items:

Susannah Watts introduced herself and shared her position on issues. She is running for
State Representative for Michigan House District 90.

Brooks Burg of 10870 Phelps wanted to affirm the moratorium on data centers; that's what
he knows everyone in Sparta Township wants.

Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report

1. Approval of Minutes—February 12, 2026, and Special Workshop Meeting
February 26, 2026: Motion by Goodfellow, second by A. Johnson, to approve the
Minutes of February 12, 2026. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Goodfellow,
second by B. Johnson, to approve the Special Workshop Meeting Minutes of February 26,
2026. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Treasurer's Report: Motion by Goodfellow, second by Steffens, to approve the Report.
Motion carried unanimously.
3. Building Department Monthly Report: No report received; no action taken.

Public Hearing: 2026–2027 Sparta Township Budget

Public Hearing opened at 7:08 PM

Mike Lamb, realtor for Sparta resident Nancy Berger, conveyed Nancy's offer to sell a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre
of property to the Township for the purpose of expanding the cemetery at the assessed
value of approximately \$44,000. Closing costs could be an additional \$4,000. Nancy's home
would be sold separately. The size of the property would allow for 800 additional burial sites.

Public Hearing closed at 7:15 PM

Business Items

1. Approval of Bills: Motion by Steffens, second by Goodfellow, to approve the bills. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Approval of 2026–27 Sparta Township Budget: Motion by Savage, second by Goodfellow, to reduce Budget Item Dept. 264 Capital Outlay by \$50,000 (to \$45,000) and to pursue a letter of intent for the property from Mrs. Berger. Motion carried six to one, with Bergman opposing. Savage will write the letter of intent and visit Mrs. Berger. Motion by Savage, second by B. Johnson, to leave the roads at zero. Motion carried five to two, with Bergman and Goodfellow opposing. Motion by Savage, second by B. Johnson, to raise the Library budget up to the \$10,000 that they asked for, for a total of \$215,000. Motion carried six to one, with Goodfellow opposing. A. Johnson mentioned she lowered the deputy treasurer line item to \$25,000. Motion by Steffens, second by A. Johnson, to approve the budget. Motion carried six to one, with Bergman opposing.
3. Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations: The document was not in the board packet. Motion by A. Johnson, second by Bradford, to table. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Data Center Moratorium Resolution: Goodfellow requested and the Board agreed to remove Exhibit A and its references; Exhibit B then becomes Exhibit A. Motion by Goodfellow, second by B. Johnson, to approve the Resolution. Roll call vote: Savage, yes; Bradford, yes; Goodfellow, yes; A. Johnson, yes; B. Johnson, yes; Steffens, yes; Bergman, yes. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Historical Commission Appointment—Barb Johnson: Motion by Goodfellow, second by Bradford, to accept the appointment of Barb Johnson to the Sparta Township Historical Commission. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Historical General Museum Rental: Sparta Township Historical Commission Chairman Pinckney, present with Roxie Claxton, explained the rental arrangement of the military museum (\$100 per month) and the new museum (\$300 per month plus utilities), both at the Civic Center.
7. Water Works Quotes
 - (a) Library Lawn Maintenance: Motion by Bradford, second by B. Johnson, to accept the bid from Water Works to be paid by April 1, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.
 - (b) Library Sprinkler Service Agreement: Motion by Steffens, second by Savage, to approve the library service agreement. Motion carried unanimously.
 - (c) Historical Commission Sprinkler Service Agreement: Motion by Steffens, second by Savage, to approve the Historical Commission sprinkler agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Informational: Savage checked out textmygov. It may be beneficial, maybe more so for the Village than the Township. The cost is \$7,000 per year, and the Township doesn't have access to too many phone numbers. Goodfellow is reviewing and working on a Principles of Township Governance and Excellence; Bergman suggested that the deputies sign the document if they want to. Steffens shared a discussion he had with Mike Wahlfeld, who sits on the State Board. Water is becoming a huge issue. In Ottawa County, 100 subdivisions sit on hold due to lack of water. Some solutions include recharging the aquifer faster and restricting high-output wells in Kent County.

Public Comment:

Robert Whalen, Village President of 273 River Road, corrected the Supervisor's claim in that if we become a city, the millage won't go up. The current mills is 12 and has been so for 15 years. If the Village residents vote to become a city, he guarantees, this council and our manager guarantee 1.2 mills lowered for the city residents.

Brian Sapita of 5300 Patterson, Grand Rapids, is senior manager for government affairs for Comcast. He wanted to introduce himself. The franchise with the Township is coming up in the next year, and he wanted to put a face to the email that will be coming in. He hopes the Board is having a great day.

Sparta Library Director Tuinstra thanked the Board for their support. The community is really enjoying the library, and with the Board's help, we can continue to do that.

Jody Hyde of 2155 Van Dyke St., Conklin, discussed an agenda item from the January 8th meeting regarding a code of conduct investigation presented by the Village Manager. She stated that their presentation proved that she did not break the law. She questioned what the code of conduct will include: selective, personal, a tool to silence, what level of control would this policy be used for? She discussed the Supervisor's residency.

Robert Carlstrom of 475 Martindale had accessory dwelling unit points to consider and an insurance question on the museum rental.

Chad Momber is a supporter of purchasing the cemetery land due to it being the only area that can be acquired to expand the cemetery. He has some ideas to help the Township that he will run by the realtor selling the property.

Sparta Township Historical Commission Chairman Pinckney confirmed that the Township has insurance on the military museum, and Supervisor Bergman will work on insurance for the new museum.

Adjournment: Motion by B. Johnson, second by Savage, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM.

Motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Sparta Township Board will be Thursday, April 9, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
—Toni Potes, Recording Secretary