

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City
MI 49686

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Township Board Special Meeting January 28, 2025, 7:00 p.m. Township Hall Minutes

1. Call to Order by Sanders at 7:00 p.m.
 2. Pledge
 3. Roll Call – Present: Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanger, Wunsch; Absent: Alexander
 4. Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only) – None
 5. Governmental Updates – None
 6. Approve Agenda
- Motion by Sanger to Approve Agenda by Sanger, seconded by Wunsch.

Motion passed by consensus

7. Conflict of Interest – None

8. Consent Agenda:

1. TCCI Board Representation Form Naming Maura Sanders as Peninsula Township's TCCI Representative
2. Public Hearing Notice set for March 5, 2025, on Grand Traverse County's Off-road Vehicle Ordinance
3. LDA #357 Approval with Conditions Met

Motion by Sanger to Approve Consent Agenda, seconded by Milliken. Motion passed by consensus

9. Business:

1. Updated Presentation of Fire Station 1 Replacement (Gilstorff)

Gilstorff gave the board a refresher on the status of the proposed fire station to replace existing Station #1. (original proposal made in August 2024).

- The township approved hiring **Environmental Architects** and **Gourdie-Fraser**, budgeting **\$260,000** for these services in the current fiscal year.
- The team evaluated multiple site locations but faced challenges, including high land costs and **earth-moving expenses, that significantly exceeded initial projections.**
- The original estimated cost was **\$7.9 million**, but revised calculations place it at **\$8.6 million**, a **\$700,000 increase** primarily due to earth-moving requirements.
- Efforts to reduce costs include considering alternative land use options and **separating bid requests for earth-moving work and the building itself.**

- Financing considerations include potentially bonding and incorporating existing debt into new financing structures to manage interest rates efficiently.
- The fire station is essential for future departmental needs, firefighter safety, and emergency response capabilities for the community.
- Gilstorff urges moving forward with the current plan despite increased costs, warning that delays could lead to even higher future expenses.
- The final financial approval will rest with the board once official bids and cost estimates are obtained.
- Board questioned whether new station will adequately serve township/FD for next 10–15 years. Gilstorff responded that due to the inclusion of expanded sleeping quarters; flexible, multi-use spaces that allow adjustments over time; large training and meeting areas spacious enough to support both fire department needs and potential township meetings, ensuring the facility serves the broader community; emergency services integration with office space for community police officers (CPOs), promoting collaboration while maintaining operational flexibility; and the fact that the facility is designed with a 50–60-year lifespan in mind makes it a long-term investment that can evolve with the department's needs.

Motion by Sanger to authorize Chief Gilstorff to seek bids for new fire station #1, seconded by Milliken.

Roll Call Vote: 6 Ayes, No Nays

Motion passed by consensus

2. PDR Selection Committee Appointments

Motion by Clark to recuse Isaiah Wunsch due to conflict of interest, seconded by Sanger.

Motion passed by consensus

Board discussion over two available PDR appointments and the four potential candidates.

Motion by Chown to re-elect John Wunsch and Eric Dreier to the Peninsula Township PDR Selection Committee, seconded by Sanger.

Roll Call Vote: 5 Ayes, No Nays, One Recused

Motion passed by consensus

Motion by Sanders to return Wunsch to dias for remaining meeting, seconded by Clark.

Motion passed by consensus

3. Discussion on Updating Peninsula Township Packet Policy

Board discussion over refining the township's policy on submission deadlines for materials included in meeting packets. While a memorandum written by former Planning Director Jenn Cram (dated October 25, 2022) was considered a good starting point, participants noted that it lacked specific guidelines for special meetings and needed further clarity on deadlines for applicants and township staff with a focus on ensuring the board has adequate time for review. Township staff should analyze submissions for compliance rather than assist applicants in refining proposals.

Next steps: these proposed changes will be drafted, reviewed, and finalized before implementation. If necessary, further refinements could be made based on practical challenges after the new system is tested.

4. Strategic Planning Session

Todd Sanders, Consultant: Explained his proposal to facilitate strategic planning session(s) and the process for this evening to help the board come up with targeted goals. The facilitator guided participants through an exercise (**Weighted Anonymous Feedback**) that allowed participants to evaluate ideas without bias. Each person wrote a unique idea on a card, then exchanged it face up so only the statement was visible. Upon receiving a card, they read the idea, rated it 1 to 5, and recorded the score on the back before trading again. This process continued, ensuring multiple anonymous evaluations, resulting in a collective assessment of priorities.

Exercise #1 Result: The highest priority item identified during the session was conducting a community survey. Other major concerns included staffing vacancies in planning and zoning, the zoning ordinance, and creating a capital improvement plan. Additional priorities included developing a police power ordinance, a parks funding plan, and updates to the shoreline ordinance. Participants also highlighted the need for partnerships with non-profits for parks management, a township website update, and work on a Headlee rollback ballot item. Increasing police presence and improving bike paths, particularly on Center and Peninsula roads, were also noted as key issues. The facilitator ensured that all inputs were considered and invited further discussion to identify any overlooked or lower priority concerns that still warranted attention.

The facilitator emphasized the importance of regularly reviewing priorities, suggesting monthly check-ins and quarterly discussions. He then introduced the second exercise (Budget Voting), where participants used seven budget units to allocate funding priorities anonymously. Each person could distribute their votes across multiple items in any combination, even assigning all seven to a single priority if desired. The exercise aimed to create a "heat map" of important funding needs, helping to identify both high-priority, high-cost initiatives and lower-cost yet impactful projects.

Exercise #2 Result: Staffing, zoning, and the Headlee rollback ballot each received seven budget units, indicating strong support. Other key priorities included the community survey (six units), parks funding plan (six units), capital improvement plan (four units), and an updated shoreline ordinance (four units). Several items received little or no funding, including police power, parks as a non-profit partnership, additional police presence, bike paths, and funding for PDR [PDR funding remains on track and needs no support at this time].

The facilitator highlighted the efficiency of the exercise, noting that it helped quickly capture collective priorities without prolonged discussion. The next step would be to develop action plans and strategies for implementation. Ensuring alignment on priorities before moving forward is crucial to making progress effectively.

He then introduced the final exercise (Identifying Obstacles), emphasizing that organizations often overlook potential challenges to achieving their goals. Using the Weighted Anonymous Feedback method again, participants were asked to write down a single, clear obstacle that could hinder progress.

The biggest obstacle identified was funding, followed by staff focus, zoning ordinance updates, and the potential impact of the outcome of the winery lawsuit. The facilitator urged proactive problem solving, integrating these challenges into planning efforts.

For next steps, he recommended digitizing insights, assigning clear ownership to objectives, and leveraging ad hoc committees to drive progress. To ensure success, teams should define outcomes, set deadlines, and establish metrics, structuring each initiative for effective execution.

10. Citizen Comments

Dave Murphy: Asked for an update on the DNR boat launch.

Sanders: Spoke with Kasey Cline, the DNR Cadillac district manager, who indicated they have likely received all public comments and mentioned minor adjustments but no plans to keep the existing exit. Proposed changes include adding sidewalks for pedestrian and bicycle use. The DNR plans to bid both projects independently but simultaneously for cost efficiency and to avoid delays to improving the Bowers Harbor launch. While some neighbors have engaged in discussions, no re-engineering is planned. The township must now decide whether to remain neutral or take a position on the issue.

Murphy: Urged the town board to work with the road commission on permitting. Noted East Shore Road's lack of plowing and maintenance despite its primary road status. Advocated for improvements before traffic increases, echoing concerns raised by Susie Shipman.

Fred Woodruff, 4824 Forest Avenue: Requested an easier way to select certain parts of the packet for perusal/saving to a digital format.

Sanders and Chown offered to assist Woodruff with a strategy to address his issue.

Gilstorff: The fire department primarily uses DNR boat launches for deploying vessels in East and West bays. With both launches undergoing reconstruction, the department is exploring alternative options, particularly for East Bay, where launching will be more challenging. Asked residents with an available hoist or dock space for a 17-foot boat to consider lending it temporarily. For West Bay, plans to contact the boat club for mooring options. The goal is to maintain service during construction. Residents willing to assist can contact the fire department.

Wes Cowan, 2849 Shorewood Drive: Concerned that items included in the Manor Costerisan audit report were not addressed at the strategic planning session. Does not want those items to be overlooked. Police department surplus is one concern among others.

11. Board Comments

Sanger: Proposes setting any second town board meetings of the month as dedicated working sessions without votes, focusing on discussions. Acknowledging the challenge of avoiding additional agenda items, the board needs to resist the temptation to include other matters to keep the session productive.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Wunsch, seconded by Chown.

Motion passed by consensus

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.