

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP BOARD
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
SEPTEMBER 11, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Supervisor Ben Martin	Supervisor	Present
Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield	Treasurer	Present
Clerk Amber Lawrence	Clerk	Present
Trustee Jerry Amos	Trustee	Present
Attorney Rob Thall	Attorney	Present

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Supervisor Martin.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the agenda. Motion was supported by Trustee Amos. Motion passed by voice vote.

RESULT: PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield
SECONDER: Trustee Jerry Amos
AYES: Supervisor Ben Martin, Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield, Clerk Amber Lawrence, Trustee Jerry Amos

CITIZEN COMMENT(S) ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Robin Burpee spoke as a private citizen, not on behalf of the Township. She stated she began work as the Clerk's assistant two weeks earlier, and shared her background growing up in Parchment, working at Howard's Cards and Gifts at Easttown Mall in the late 1970s, and living in Comstock Township near Homer Street and East Michigan Avenue for about seven years in the late 1990s before moving to St. Joseph County. She said she applied for the position on her own initiative and was not recruited. She spoke to the Trustee application and interview process that would be discussed under New Business, noted the volume of interest from community members who applied, and asked that residents evaluate the outcome of the process fairly.

Tammy Keeler asked whether a Clerk's assistant or board member is required to live within the Township, noting she understood staff came from Portage. She stated that in her view, Kirk Hart would make a good Trustee based on his experience and long residency in the community.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Potential Decisions Regarding the Appointments to the Open Trustee Positions

Supervisor Martin explained that the board had divided into two groups to interview the 19 applicants for the three vacant Trustee seats: Supervisor Martin and Clerk Lawrence conducted interviews at Township Hall, while Treasurer Bloomfield and Trustee Amos conducted interviews at the VFW. Each group asked all applicants the same questions and did not discuss candidates with the other group prior to this meeting, in order to avoid a quorum of the board meeting outside a properly noticed public meeting.

Attorney Thall confirmed that this approach complied with the Open Meetings Act. He explained that had all four board members interviewed applicants together, that would have constituted a meeting of a quorum requiring public notice, and that splitting into two groups of two, asking identical questions, and avoiding cross-communication between the groups until this public meeting preserved the board's compliance with the Act.

Supervisor Martin explained the timing of the special meeting: the board's next regularly scheduled meeting is September 21, 2026, and appointing candidates in advance of that meeting would give them time to obtain building access, Township email and login credentials, and to prepare for the topics on the next agenda before casting a vote as seated board members.

Treasurer Bloomfield disclosed that she had introduced Kirk Hart to the board as a candidate, that her husband's business had built Mr. Hart's home, and that she had discussed with Supervisor Martin prior to the interviews that she would likely need to recuse herself from voting on his appointment. A motion was made by Supervisor Martin to allow Treasurer Bloomfield to abstain from any discussion or vote regarding Kirk Hart, supported by Clerk Lawrence. Motion passed by voice vote.

RESULT:	PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Supervisor Ben Martin
SECONDER:	Clerk Amber Lawrence
AYES:	Supervisor Ben Martin, Clerk Amber Lawrence, Trustee Jerry Amos
ABSTAIN:	Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield.

The board then discussed the candidates. Each member in turn named candidates under consideration, with reasons, over several rounds. Candidates named included Kirk Hart, Jesse McDonald, Joseph VanBruggen, John Paver, Mary McDermott, and Andy Sparks. Supervisor Martin noted Mr. Hart's experience as a commercial pilot and youth sports official, and his ability to make firm decisions under pressure. Clerk Lawrence and Trustee Amos each also named Mr. Hart. Trustee Amos, Clerk Lawrence, and Treasurer Bloomfield each named Joseph VanBruggen, citing his business background and his firsthand perspective as a resident and property owner on Township taxes. Supervisor Martin, Trustee Amos, and Clerk Lawrence each named John Paver, citing his experience engaging with other municipalities and his long-standing involvement with the community. Treasurer Bloomfield also named Mary McDermott and Andy Sparks but noted she was separately considering Ms. McDermott for an appointment to the Planning Commission, which is filled by the Supervisor with the board's confirmation, rather than for the Trustee vacancy under discussion.

Supervisor Martin motioned to appoint Joseph VanBruggen to the Board, supported by Treasurer Bloomfield. Each member of the board commented in agreement with the appointment. Roll call vote was taken.

RESULT: PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Supervisor Ben Martin
SECONDER: Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield
AYES: Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield, Supervisor Ben Martin, Clerk Amber Lawrence, Trustee Jerry Amos

Supervisor Martin motioned to appoint John Paver to the Board, supported by Clerk Lawrence. Clerk Lawrence stated that Mr. Paver's broad knowledge would help round out the board; Treasurer Bloomfield stated that while he was not on her own list, she respected his business knowledge and would support the appointment. Roll call vote was taken.

RESULT: PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Supervisor Ben Martin
SECONDER: Clerk Amber Lawrence
AYES: Trustee Jerry Amos, Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield, Supervisor Ben Martin, Clerk Amber Lawrence

Clerk Lawrence made a motion to appoint Kirk Hart to the Board. Motion supported by Supervisor Martin. Trustee Amos stated he agreed Mr. Hart was a good candidate. Clerk Lawrence stated that she made the motion because Mr. Hart brings a different set of experiences to the board than the members already seated and those just appointed. Roll call vote was taken.

RESULT: PASSED [3 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Abstention]
MOVER: Clerk Amber Lawrence
SECONDER: Supervisor Ben Martin
AYES: Supervisor Ben Martin, Clerk Amber Lawrence, Trustee Jerry Amos
ABSTAIN: Treasurer Sandy Bloomfield

Attorney Thall advised that the oaths of office be administered only after all appointments were decided, so that newly seated members would not vote on subsequent appointments made the same evening. Mr. Hart was not present at the meeting; the board noted that his oath would be administered separately and that he was expected to be seated by the September 21, 2026, regular meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENT(S) ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Tammy Keeler asked whether the newly appointed Trustees would be sworn in and seated during the meeting, noting a prior board had done so. Supervisor Martin confirmed they would be.

Karen Hite commented on the proposed new fire station, stating the current proposed site is landlocked, and suggesting the board instead consider the roughly 100-acre parcel offered to the Township in front of the battery storage facility, which is not landlocked.

An unidentified resident said she had no negative comments and appreciated the board's process in reviewing the candidates.

Richard Hathaway, 3617 Silver Hills Avenue, spoke as a resident within the Comstock school district. He noted that the meeting fell on the 25th anniversary of the September 11th attacks and stated that his sister's stepson was lost that day. He wished Supervisor Martin and the board well in restoring the Township for future generations, stated he had confidence in the team assembled that evening, and noted he had left printed Michigan

Department of Education data for Comstock and surrounding school districts on the table for the board's review.

John Scholly stated he was glad to see John Paver appointed to the board and commented that it should have happened previously. He stated that due to his own workload and family circumstances he did not have time to serve himself and expressed hope for a board that works together.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Joseph VanBruggen took the oath of office for Township Trustee.

John Paver took the oath of office for Township Trustee. Mr. Paver commented that everyone had done their best with the information available to them, and that as long as the board remains honest and transparent, and keeps the public's business in public, that is what residents can ask of the board.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Amos congratulated the newly appointed members and thanked everyone who applied and participated in the process.

Treasurer Bloomfield thanked everyone for attending on a Friday evening, congratulated the new Trustees and Mr. Hart, and encouraged applicants who were not selected to stay involved with the Township.

Supervisor Martin echoed Treasurer Bloomfield's comments, noting the difficulty of narrowing 19 qualified candidates to three. He stated that he and Clerk Lawrence have discussed creating a new form of citizen engagement, such as an advisory committee structure, with further details to be determined. He also stated his intent to bring a proposal to the next regular meeting to revisit the Township's citizen comment format, stating that the current structure, which limits public comment to agenda items with a single comment period, has not served the Township well since it was adopted by a previous board.

Clerk Lawrence echoed the sentiment of staying involved, stated that she and Supervisor Martin intended to establish a form of community engagement session, and stated she had visited the Township cemetery and heard resident concerns about its condition and management, which she intends to address with community input. She also noted planned improvements to the Township website to make information more accessible to residents.

Trustee VanBruggen stated he grew up in the Township and returned four years ago to build a home. He stated he was surprised by changes he observed in the community since his childhood, and that this motivated him to serve. He stated his intention to listen to and serve all residents.

Trustee Paver stated his family has been part of the community since 2011 and echoed Trustee VanBruggen's comments. He stated that changing how the board handles public comment is important to the Township's growth and encouraged residents to continue speaking up regardless of the outcome of any particular decision.

Supervisor Martin thanked Attorney Thall for attending on short notice on a Friday evening. He reported that the Planning Commission had approved the site plan for the battery energy storage project, and that he had begun the process that morning of applying for a \$2 million grant available to the community related to that project. He stated that the board would monitor funds received from the grant and the community host development agreement based on resident feedback and congratulated the board on having all three Trustee vacancies addressed ahead of the September 21, 2026 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:14 PM.

Minutes signatures

Attested:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Lawrence', written over a horizontal line.

Amber Lawrence, Township Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Martin', written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin Martin, Township Supervisor