

MINUTES OF THE SALEM TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING HELD MARCH 11, 2025

Members Present: Jim Pitsch - Supervisor, Renee Busscher - Clerk, Ashley Brower – Treasurer, Dan Striegler – Trustee,
Also present: Dan Kipen – Firechief, Lisa Vandebunte – Library Director, Jason Derry – Zoning Administrator, PCI
Absent: n/a

Meeting was called to order by Jim Pitsch at 7:00PM
Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Reading of previous board meeting Minutes and Bills, if no additions or corrections Minutes and Bills were approved and paid by consent.

County Road Commissioner: n/a

County Commissioner: see attached report

Comments from Commissions & Departments of:

- *Zoning:*
 - o Jason Derry from PCI presented.
 - Discussed Planning Commission meeting from Thursday 3/6/25 with request to rezone parcel 'Old Burnips Equipment Site' from R1 to C1. Considerations and findings of fact had a little trouble saying all supporting criteria were met, however the parcel rezoning meets future land use stated in Township Master Plan.
 - Blight updates: 3115 138th – junk and cardboard throughout yard. No new updates on that property. Jason to check in with fellow zoning administrator Lori. Harmsen Property – working with lawyers after issuing citation. He has 3 months with stipulations to continue clean up efforts. Also looking at selling property to neighbor so barn can be agricultural. Chicken Farm Property - PCI in touch with Egle and they have not followed up. Stated there is a violation that they found, but haven't advised how to proceed or what to do with that violation. Building and cages are still on the south property line. Need follow up to continue with building removal. Property on 146th – checking in with Lori on next steps.
 - Special use permit was approved by planning commission for property by Coffey's Farm.
 - PCI is in works to hire enforcement officer
- *Planning:* No updates as Dan Striegler was absent from last meeting. See above notes which Jason advised.
- *Fire:* Dan Kipen presented. See attached report.
- *Ambulance:* There is a meeting 3/12 with a lengthy agenda. Yankee Springs is dropping out, so they will be going over new costs
- *Library:* Lisa Vandebunte presented, see attached report. Check out Library webpage for all information <https://saletownshiplibrary.org/>
- *Parks Planning:* Slide needs replacement as there is crack. Baby swing needs replacement also. Receiving ballpark quotes from local companies for path and tennis court. Park Grant - waiting on DNR approval to go for go ahead for bids.
- *Roads:* no new updates

Public Comment:

n/a

Old Business:

n/a

New Business:

1. Rezoning Request – VanderKolk Rezoning R-1 to C-1
Postponed. Will be moved to special meeting or board meeting in April as Brower will obtain from vote and Pitsch hadn't received information prior.
2. Salem Township Solar Ordinance

Postponed. Fire Chief had changes submitted to make sure that fire department would have good access and procedures to a solar farm. Need completed ordinance back from attorney review to approve. Jason Derry states that it will not need to go back to planning commission since that doesn't impact their previous approval.

3. Salem Township/ SEMCO Energy Franchise Ordinance:

Moved by Striegle to approve with attorney suggested changes, seconded by Brower

Discussion: n/a

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Earned Sick Time Policy:

Postponed. Waiting on lawyer. They stated they were making changes, but have not provided a new policy. Township clerk reached out this week for an update.

5. Park Lawncare Agreement

Moved by Busscher for a raise for mowing position with expectation/duty list, seconded by Striegle

Discussion: will need to discuss exactly what duties to be listed, ex: edging, weed whip etc

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Comment:

Question regarding monthly blight updates and clarification on Harmsen sale. Discussion on private road repairs and expectations. The private roads have a road maintenance agreement that is included in each property's master deed. Many private roads were built prior to a time when there were required specifications. Discussion regarding special use permit approval for Bartz duplex. Stated wells are being drilled when there is only approval for two duplexes. PCI is looking at an ordinance overhaul and getting rid of site condos. Question about where we stand with TowerPinkster. Clerk reached out by email.

Adjournment:

Moved by Brower, seconded by Dan Striegle to adjourn meeting at 8:00PM

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**See attachments on following pages



Pastor Craig Van Beek

Allegan County Commissioner District 1

Good afternoon Salem Township Board Members. If you have any questions or if I haven't covered something you are interested in, don't hesitate to let me know. Please find my report below.

Pumping from creeks, rivers and streams

A question about water permits came up at the last meeting in Salem Township. After looking into it, we found that the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) manages these permits. Each area and water source is graded using a color system — red, yellow, and green — which reflects the availability of permits in those areas. If you receive a permit to pump from one of these water sources, you will be required to report the total number of gallons pumped to the State of Michigan. From what I understand, there is no limit on gallons pumped. Let me know if you want more information on this.

Transportation

As part of the voter-approved tax limitation restoration the County was able to expand services. Since January 2022, through expanded service hours, Transportation has increased drivers and routes, with a 25% increase in miles traveled. On February 27, 2024 Via Mobility was deployed as new and improved scheduling and dispatching software which enables passengers to book rides from their phone. To download and access the app, passengers can search "Allegan County Transportation" in the app store (available on iOS and Android).

On November 18, 2024, evening service was extended to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and two additional buses were put on the road on Saturdays to accommodate trip requests. Future projects include continued service expansion, outreach, and marketing campaigns to improve visibility, regional collaboration with other transit providers, and strategic partnerships between community and human services organizations. Seven new propane-powered buses were added in July-Aug 2023 to improve fuel efficiency and air quality, and two new buses with bike racks were procured at the end of 2024; the buses will arrive in 2025.

Parks Recreation Plan

In the 2022 citizen survey, 75% of respondents indicated a need for recreational opportunities. The 2020-24 Plan accomplished much, including but not limited to: Dumont Lake Park – Bank and bridge stabilization to prevent erosion (2021). Bysterveld Park – Walking trail enhancements (2022). Trowbridge Dam Property – Approved resolution to lease and manage the property (2022). Littlejohn Lake Park – Development of an 18-hole disc golf course, with construction starting in 2024 and opening planned for spring 2025. Ely Lake Campground – Addition of new playground equipment.

The Board will review and approve the 2025-2029 Recreation Plan in early 2025. The new Plan will include survey input to provide guidance on the future of County recreation needs.

2025 Allegan County National Community Survey Information

We've received some feedback regarding the relevance of the survey to Allegan County. To clarify, the survey is a national tool used across many locations. We were able to select a limited number of questions tailored to reflect the interests and needs of various county entities within Allegan. Once the survey is complete and the data has been compiled, we will share the results with the community. Thank you for your participation and input — your feedback is valuable to us!

County Wide Warning Sirens

The County wide outdoor warning sirens were tested this month. To my knowledge, only one didn't sound (equipment failure) all others activated correctly.

123 NET High Speed Internet

High-speed internet over fiber optic cable will be available to 100% percent of the grant eligible addresses in Allegan County by the end of 2025. Currently, 46% of residences funded with the ROBIN grant can place an order for service. As zones are released, 123Net is seeing approximately 50% of residents place orders.

The grant funding is only available for addresses that do not already have a high-speed internet connection available. Satellite, fixed wireless or cellular hotspots are not considered high-speed internet when it comes to the grant funding. Salem should be done by July 31st.

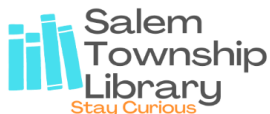
Housing

Like many communities nationwide, Allegan County stakeholders, largely employers and support agencies, have identified a gap in available housing. Directly, the County has created an opportunity within the housing environment by completing the demo at 431 Helen Street in Otsego (the former Rock Tenn Paper Mill). The total cost was \$1,458,032, which is expected to be repaid through the increased value of the redeveloped property. The City of Otsego is working

with a developer to redevelop this property into housing units based on needs identified in the recent housing studies. Housing Some housing needs can be very specific. Citizens have needs for access to services as Adult Day Services, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, and Rehabilitative Services. Utilizing the 2020 voter-approved Medical Care millage, the Allegan County Medical Care Community (ACMCC) is working to renovate the ACMCC facility and repurpose a portion of the facility to meet the needs of older adults and citizens with short-term rehabilitation needs.

In 2023, the Allegan County Community “Foundation” conducted a county-wide housing study that shows the lack of available housing as shown below. The Board of Commissioners, through its planning, has also allocated resources to remain engaged with partner agencies to look at the broader housing needs throughout the county. The Foundation formed the “Housing Stock Workgroup” to bring stakeholders together and develop resources for local government and developers in an effort to address housing gaps.

The 2023 study showed a housing gap of 6,214 units for rental and for-sale product at a variety of affordability levels. The following table summarizes the approximate potential number of new residential units that could be supported in Allegan County over the next five years.



**Director's Report
February 2024**



Mission:
Building a community of
people who discover,
share and belong



Vision:
Inspire Curiosity
Foster Community
Ignite Imaginations
Cultivate Learning



Core Values:
Teamwork
Respect
Access
Curiosity
Kindness

Allegan County Libraries Circulation

	<u>Circulation</u>	<u>Population Served</u>	<u>Hours Open Weekly</u>
Salem Township Library	5,116	8,289	45
Dorr Township Library	2,740	7,922	31
Fennville District Library	3,112	14,496	53
Hopkins Distrcit Library	1,370	4,851	37
Leighton Public Library (Moline)	5,125	7,001	40
Saugatuck District Library	4,752	5,686	47
Henika District Library (Wayland)	2,902	7,978	53

Salem Township Library Stats

	<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Last Year</u>	<u>% +/-</u>
Circulation	5,116	5,885	-15%
Overdrive	907	986	-9%
Hoopla	596	409	31%
Hotspots	24	14	42%
ILL Requests	380	371	2%
MEL Holds	41	27	34%
References	91	111	-22%
New Patrons	19	22	-16%
Patron Count:			
Children	403	474	-18%
Adults	665	686	-3%
Total	1068	1160	-9%

Programs/Events:

- * Princess Tea Party #2: 12 total participated
- * Cruise Presentation: 4 participated
- * Stuffed Animal Sleepover: 15 participated
- * Adult Winter Reading - 71 participated; 44 finished
- * Iditaread - 24 participants so far
- * Collecting donations for Allegan County Animal Shelter until March 29
- * March 8: Lego Club @ 11am
- * March 24: Make an Oreo Cookie Pie class @ 6:30pm
- * March 29: Allegan County Animal Shelter Pet Emergency Presentation @ 11am

Other Notes:

- * Cake pans have been added to our Library of Things (LOT) collection.
- * FirePros came and did there routine inspection of the library.



**Salem Township Fire Department
Monthly Report
February 2025**

Projects	
SOGs	Working on updating operational SOGs
Grants	Working on grants to get headsets in 1712 and 1714
Mutual aid trainings	Will be focusing training with mutual aid department this year. Several on the calendar already.
Sandy Pines Polar Plunge	Feb 8 th is the polar plunge at Sandy Pines, will be conducting safety for the event- Had 12 participants
MES hydro-testing	West Shore Fire was bought by MES. 1/3 of our bottles needed hydro-testing. All passed
4H fire safety	Will be hosting a fire safety meeting for 4H in March
New Office maps	Working with Allegan County GIS to get updated maps for in the fire station
Fire Pros Inspections	Coordinated inspections for the township with Fire Pros, looking at what the fire department can do instead of paying Fire Pros to all inspections

Total Fire and EMS Year To Date- 63			
Fire Incidents	Total -8	YTD-	Incidents in Sandy Pines- 0
Type	Number of Incidents	District	Notes
Vehicle accident	1	1-Monterey	1 with no injuries
Assist EMS	1	1-Salem	WAEMS requested man power for list assist
Carbon Monoxide alarm	2	2-Salem	No CO found/ faulty detector
Gas Leak	1	1-Salem	Gas leak around stove in St Mary's Hall
Fire Alarm	1	1-Salem	Pan left on stove at Rehoboth
No incident found	1	1-Salem	iPhone crash notification- found phone along road
Public Service	1	1-Salem	Smoke alarm install
Year to date Incidents in Sandy Pines- 0			

Salem Township Fire Department has a dedicate group of personnel that respond from home and work to help keep the residents of Salem Township and the surrounding communities safe.



**Salem Township Fire Department
Monthly Report
February 2025**

EMS				
Total -13	YTD-33	Incidents in Sandy Pines-1	Incidents in Rehoboth- 0	
District	Number of Incidents			
Salem-	13			
Monterey-	0			
Canceled Medical alarms- 1	2			
Disregarded Priority 3 medical	5	YTD Priority 3:	13	
Year to date Medical Incidents in Sandy Pines- 1			Year to Date in Rehoboth- 1	

Trainings/Meetings	
Topic	Number of Personnel
Threat Assessment and Scene Safety presented by "2 the Rescue" at Dorr Twp	19
Ice Rescue class room certification	3
Ice Rescue practical	10
Officers meeting	4
Equipment Checks	6

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