

GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Meeting
May 4, 2026

MINUTES

Call to Order

Supervisor Spicher called the regular meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Board to order at 6:30 pm at the Township Hall.

Invocation

Supervisor Spicher led the invocation for the Board and the members of the public.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum for the transaction of business: Kevin Spicher, Candie Hovarter, Robin Hunt, Bill Reiber, Rick Soucy, Jodie Valenti, and Todd Walker.

Also present was Township Manager Kelly VanMarter, Township Attorney Joe Seward, and 17 people in the audience.

Call to the Public

The call to the public was opened at 6:32 pm.

Mr. John Conely stated Genoa Township has the highest return of absentee ballots for the school bond election being held tomorrow. May elections usually have a low turnout. The poll at the Nazarene Church is the only one open in Genoa Township.

Mr. Mark Lasagna of 6854 Mahinske Drive stated they have provided all of the proper paperwork for the road project. He asked the township to approve it. The road is 50 years old.

Ms. Deb Beattie of 3109 Pineview Trail hopes the master plan workshops will be held soon. She would like to see the investigation go forward. It is necessary. She stated her choice for the investigation is CMDA.

Mr. Jeff Dhaenens of 5494 Sharp Drive is a supporter of township staff. An employee survey was done with excellent results. All of the employees are happy to work here. Asking for sponsorships for the Adirondack chair is the opposite of asking taxpayers to pay for the investigation.

Ms. Stephanie Booth, City of Howell, recommended the board go ahead with the investigation. It speaks to the community's integrity as to the reason an elected official steps down.

The call to the public was closed at 6:41 pm.

Approval of Regular Agenda:

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to approve the Regular Agenda as presented. **The motion carried with Mr. Reiber voting "no"**.

Supervisor Spicher provided an explanation as to why the agenda format is different than usual.

1. Payment of Bills: May 4, 2026

Mr. Soucy stated the payment of bills presented this evening also includes items that were approved at the last meeting. All of the items dated April 21, 2026 have not been approved.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to approve the Payment of Bills: May 4, 2026 as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Request to approve the April 20, 2026 regular meeting minutes

Needed changes were noted.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Walker, to approve the April 20, 2026 regular meeting minutes as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Request for approval of Resolution #1 to Proceed with the Project and Direct Preparation of the Plans and Cost Estimates for the Grand Beach No. 3 Road Rehabilitation Assessment Project (winter tax 2026). (Roll Call)

Ms. VanMarter reviewed the proposed project, noting this district is different from others that have been done. There are different benefit levels of the project so the dollar amounts are different for residents who live on different roads in the neighborhood. Supervisor Spicher stated there are 61 percent of the residents who are in favor of the project and those approvals were spread quite evenly between the different benefit levels.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Walker, to approve Resolution #1 to proceed with the Grand Beach No. 3 Road Rehabilitation Special Assessment Project (winter tax 2025) and direct preparation of the plans and cost estimates. **The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote (Reiber - yes; Hunt - yes; Valenti - yes; Hovarter - yes; Walker - yes; Soucy - yes; Spicher - yes)**

4. Request for approval of Resolution #2 to Approve the Project, Schedule the First Hearing for May 18, 2026, and Direct Issuance of Statutory Notices for the Grand Beach No. 3 Road Rehabilitation Special Assessment Project (winter tax 2026). (Roll Call)

Moved by Soucy, supported by Walker, to Approve the Project, Schedule the First Hearing for May 18, 2026, and Direct Issuance of Statutory Notices for the Grand Beach No. 3 Road Rehabilitation Special Assessment Project (winter tax 2026). **The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote (Hunt - yes; Valenti - yes; Hovarter - yes; Walker - yes; Reiber - yes; Soucy - yes; Spicher - yes)**

5. Consideration of a request for approval of a proposal to replace the upper soccer field parking lot with four inches (4") of hot mix asphalt including concrete collar at catch basin and four (4) bollards to protect the power pole and to amend budget line item 208-751-934-021 from \$120,000 to the cost of the approved proposal.

Supervisor Spicher stated he wanted to disclose that he is very good friends with one of the owners of D&H Asphalt and knows and has done work with all the other companies. He doesn't have a conflict of interest, but he wanted to put it on the record for transparency. He explained the details of the proposed project.

Mr. Reiber questioned the proposed depth of the new asphalt and why D&H gave a quote for three inches. Supervisor Spicher stated all contractors quoted three inches as the township requested; however, they all suggested four inches, so they provided second quotes for that. D&H left the original quote for three inches on their second quote.

The board discussed the different quotes, the details of the project, and which contractor should be chosen. Ms. Hovarter noted that Allied has the lowest price and Mr. Soucy stated that D&H is a local company.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hunt, to approve D&H Asphalt's proposal to replace the upper soccer field parking lot with four inches (4") of hot mix asphalt including concrete collar at catch basin and four (4) bollards to protect the power pole because they are a local company. **The motion carried with a roll call vote (Walker - yes; Reiber - no; Hunt - yes; Valenti - yes; Hovarter - no; Soucy - yes; Spicher - no)**

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to amend budget line item 208-751-934-021 from the current \$120,000 to \$162,937. **The motion carried with Mr. Reiber voting "no".**

6. Consideration of a request for approval of a proposal to perform an independent internal investigation related to allegations made by the former Township Clerk at a cost not to exceed \$25,000 from General Legal Fund #101-266-803-000.

Supervisor Spicher reviewed the comments provided by the advisory council in response to the township's request for an investigation. Additionally, a recent survey was given to employees at their annual review and no responses show that the township is a toxic or hostile work environment.

Mr. Reiber compared the situation to the Hatfield's and McCoy's and stated there are two sides of people who were allegedly fighting at the township and one side left, and the survey was taken of the people who are still here. It could be that the person who was the instigator of the toxicity is still working at the township so having one of the sides leave, they would then say that there was no hostility because the one person has left. He stated that the den of thieves would not be happy when a cop is around but when the cop leaves of course they would be happy.

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He stated the survey questions did not get down to the point of the investigation and Janene's resignation. One question should have been "Have you ever witnessed or seen a report of one employee disrespecting or making other employees uncomfortable or anxious". He thinks the survey should have been done while Janene was here. Supervisor Spicher stated this survey is part of the employees' annual reviews. It was not targeted for this discussion. It was noted that this survey was not done previously. Supervisor Spicher stated he implemented the survey because of the allegations that were received about it being a toxic work environment. Mr. Reiber reiterated his concerns regarding the timing of and questions on the survey. Supervisor Spicher stated there was never a need for the survey until there were allegations of a toxic work environment.

Ms. Hovarter stated the employees should not complain because of the benefits they receive.

Ms. VanMarter stated at the end of each year's employee review, there is a space for employees to provide feedback as part of their evaluation. There is also an Anonymous Complaint Procedure that employees can use to report problems to township leadership and there have been no complaints of a hostile work environment.

Supervisor Spicher stated Toxic Work Environment is not a legal term. Mr. Reiber stated the term can be used for other issues that occur in a workplace.

Mr. Soucy stated that if it comes out that this is not a toxic work environment, and the only toxicity was the clerk and others have been exonerated, those who have been disparaging to staff during this process could be subject to lawsuits.

Mr. Reiber stated having the investigation done will put trust in the board. Supervisor Spicher stated he would like to gain people's trust by his work performance and not by spending taxpayer money.

Mr. Reiber stated there can be three outcomes of the investigation; Janeane was right, the employees were right, or no one was right.

Mr. Reiber read a letter submitted by Susan Nichols of 4935 Fairways Drive regarding this issue. She has done research and the investigation should not be done by an attorney as they are expensive. She recommends it be done by someone outside the township, a state agency, public official, etc. Mr. Reiber questioned if an attorney is the best entity to handle this investigation. Mr. Spicher stated the Michigan Township Association recommends it be handled by an attorney. Mr. Seward reiterated that Toxic Work Environment is not a legal term so perhaps a Human Resources Firm could be contracted.

Ms. Hunt stated that after the previous clerk resigned, there were a lot of inaccurate accusations made. At that time, she agreed with the investigation. Her goal was to prove that the employees weren't doing anything wrong and to address the mistreatment of the township manager in public meetings. Because of the proposals, she is not in favor of spending taxpayer dollars to have this done. It is too much money.

Ms. Valenti is having a hard time spending money for this. She was not on the board at the time and was disappointed in Janene's resignation letter; however, since she has been on the board, she has seen that people genuinely like working at the township.

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Ms. Hunt stated the township has been running smoothly for the past six months. She would like to see the board move forward and not look back.

Mr. Soucy stated that there were resumes received for a deputy clerk after Tabitha resigned. Ms. Deaton did not pursue the deputy clerk position.

Ms. VanMarter stated that the attorneys cannot compel current or former employees to participate in the investigation.

Mr. Reiber is in favor of the investigation as it would instill the public's trust in the board and would dispel any myth that it was trying to be hidden.

Ms. Hovarter agrees that the township should move forward. It was not a good experience to be involved in.

Moved by Hovarter, supported by Reiber, to table this item until the next board meeting to allow the trustees time to review the information provided. **The motion failed with a roll call vote (Walker - no; Reiber - yes; Hunt - no; Valenti no; Hovarter - yes; Soucy - no; Spicher - no)**

Mr. Reiber **moved** to enlist the services of Cummins McClorey to perform the internal investigation into the resignation of Clerk Deaton for a cost of \$25,000 with the option for the board to consider additional funding if necessary with board approval to increase funding. **The motion failed due to a lack of support.**

Moved by Hunt, supported by Walker, to not move forward with the investigation related to allegations made by the former township clerk. **The motion carried with a roll call vote (Hovarter - yes; Reiber - no; Walker - yes; Hunt - yes; Valenti - yes; Soucy - yes; Spicher - yes)**

Items for Discussion:

7. Discussion regarding request to seek sponsors for the large Adirondack chair as submitted by Trustee Reiber.

Mr. Reiber reviewed his memo contained in tonight's packet. He would like the board to formally take action to seek donations for the purchase of the Adirondack chair. In the previous meeting, it was stated that this chair is the last one, we need to act tonight, will be sold to someone else, and they're usually \$8,000. He has done research and called the business from where the chair was being purchased. He spoke to the manager and she told him they do not sell them to the public but if they do, it is \$1,800-\$2,000. They have them on their site as a novelty and they are sad to see it go.

Mr. Soucy stated he spoke to the owner of the company and the one that was purchased was still in the crate and not one of the ones that are on their property. They only had one chair at the time of the request and he was told that they could order a different color for \$2,200 but due to ordering deadlines, it may not be able to be ordered in time.

Ms. Hunt stated this was discussed at the last meeting, the board voted and it passed 6-1. Mr. Walker stated that if the total amount of \$1,800 was divided by the seven board members, it

would be \$275 and he has a check this evening for that amount.

Ms. VanMarter stated that while the vote was to purchase the item, there seemed to be some interest in seeking donations. She reached out to some of their vendors and has received positive feedback and there is enough money to pay for the chair. She added that the only donated or sponsored items at the Township park have been given to the township in memory of a loved one.

Mr. Reiber would like a policy developed regarding how donations and sponsorships will be handled at the township. Mr. Seward stated that public resources cannot be used to promote a particular point of view. Saying yes or no to certain entities because of their belief will violate the first amendment.

Ms. VanMarter stated that if someone contacts the township and wants to do something as a tribute to a lost loved one, they will work to accommodate it, but her take of this discussion is that reaching out and seeking donations and sponsors is not something that the board is interested in pursuing.

8. Discussion regarding the results of the speed study for Chilson Road south of Brighton Road.

Supervisor Spicher reviewed the results of the speed study. The Road Commission has advised that the results do not support a reduction of the current 55 mph speed limit. They also note that additional data collected within the 40 mph zone is not recommended, as preliminary observation suggests that further study could result in data supporting an increased speed limit in that area.

9. Status update regarding online conversion of BS&A municipal software suite.

Ms. VanMarter reviewed the memo from the IT Director, Adam VanTassell, noting that the software conversion has been completed and BS&A has been at the township hall training employees, and the training will continue.

Board Comments

Mr. Soucy stated the school bond election is tomorrow. Only Precincts 4 and 5 will be voting and they all will vote at the Nazarene Church on Brighton Road. Absentee ballots can also be dropped off at the township hall until 8 pm. Mr. Soucy noted this is a new clerk's office and their first election.

Mr. Soucy stated that on April 20-23, 2026 he and Mr. Walker attended the Michigan Township Association conference. It was an opportunity to take classes and meet with other government officials. Mr. Walker stated that GoGov featured Genoa Township on the back of their brochure. GoGov is ADA compliant and they are developing new features to comply with the new standards. The township's user information is 637 iOS users, 560 android users, and 173 login accounts.

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Mr. Walker addressed the audio problems at the last meeting. Adam tried very hard to fix the problem during the meeting; however, he could not. After investigation, it was discovered that two of the six connectors on the audio mixer had failed. Mr. Walker appreciates Adam's hard work so that the sound is working until the new connectors are received and installed.

Mr. Soucy stated that 23 residents participated in the last CPR class. Supervisor Spicher stated there will be a suicide awareness class in June.

Ms. Hovarter stated HAPRA put in an outdoor pickleball court and bathrooms and added more parking spaces. Volunteers are needed for the Melonfest.

Adjournment

Moved by Walker, supported by Reiber, to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary

Approved: Rick Soucy, Clerk
Genoa Charter Township

Kevin Spicher, Supervisor
Genoa Charter Township