



Hayes Township SENTINEL

Keeping Watch and Shining Light on the Politicians and Political News of Hayes Township

Published Monthly and Mailed Free to all Residences of Hayes Township, Charlevoix County

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“CAN WE PLEASE STOP SUIING OURSELVES?”

Longtime Hayes Township resident Gerry Mills took his time at public comment during the October board meeting to ask Supervisor Conklin a question: “Can we please stop suing ourselves?” This was in regards to the continuing litigation Supervisor Bill Conklin has against Hayes Township. The case was dismissed twice by Hon-

orable Judge Joe Hayes, and is currently in the beginning of the Michigan Appeals Court process, which continues to cost taxpayers hard earned dollars. Due to lack of standing, three of the original four arguments have been dropped from his lawsuit. When asked about the continued costs of his lawsuit previously, Conklin stated:

“That is not my concern.”

Mills shared that he had come into the township office and to verify the reported expenditures on the current litigation against the township and they were correct. He thanked the Sentinel for sharing this shocking and important information with the community. The Sentinel requested an

updated total of what the Conklin lawsuit has cost taxpayers from the Hayes Township office, which is now up to **\$30,342.94** as this edition was going to print. That total does NOT include any staff time or milage reimbursement to pull/transmit documents or attend court/legal proceedings.

EMS Recognition Ceremony

First on the scene, they never know what is awaiting them. Our first responders find themselves in the middle of unthinkable child abuse situations, domestic violence, mental illness, and horrific accident scenes. They find themselves floating in Lake Michigan holding the head of a diver with a broken neck above the water. They walk into bug infested homes, stench no mask could disguise, to help whoever needs them, with the utmost respect and care. Our first responders face scenarios the average person cannot fathom.

During a recent EMS Recognition Ceremony, several of our brave responders were recognized for their fast-thinking lifesaving actions. One brave individual shared how being exposed to such traumatic incidents had taken a real toll on him.

There are real people behind the uniforms and fast thinking actions, and those people endure incredible situations that most people run away from, not toward.



Some of the brave and amazing EMS first responders and their crew

Taking Care of those who care for us

The Lake Charlevoix EMS Authority works hard to facilitate and provide programs that are available to help

our first responders work through and move forward from these incidents. It is a top priority to make sure this assistance is available at all times.

Our community cannot thank this

very special group of individuals enough for their hard work and sacrifice in every emergency situation they face. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to every one of them.

Supervisor Investigates Hiring a Sergeant of Arms

During the September 2025 Board meeting, resident Stan Boris recommended the board hire a Sergeant at Arms to control meetings. Supervisor Conklin addressed this in his October 2025 Supervisor report. “A sheriff’s deputy has appeared at 4 or 5 past board meetings, without my knowledge...the presence of the police is intimidating, thwarts public discourse and restricts 1st amendment freedoms...”

When Conklin brought this up during the meeting, all four board members disagreed with this statement, and said they do not feel the deputy restricts

any first amendment freedoms at all. He said, “Having a sergeant (at a meeting) has a chilling effect.” Conklin also questioned what authorizes a member of the board to ‘summon’ a deputy for meetings.

The Sentinel has learned that anyone: a board member, a concerned citizen, a neighbor, a member of the public in attendance at a meeting, even someone from another township, has the right to request a deputy be present at a Board meeting. As long as the deputy isn’t called out on an emergency, they can sit in on public meetings. The only time they

would need to interfere is if a person in attendance caused issues or became a danger or threat. Hayes Township Public Comment rules prohibit the attacks on individuals. The deputy does not stop anyone from exercising their first amendment rights during public comment.

Conklin wrote he is “investigating whether a sergeant-at-arms is advisable at Township meetings.” But according to the MTA (Michigan Township Association) it is the responsibility of the supervisor to moderate board meetings. “It is the chairperson’s responsibility to keep discussion fo-

cused on the issue that is on the floor to prevent any sidetracking discussion. Any disorderly conduct or heated emotional outbursts should be stopped immediately by appropriate objection by the chair...” (Authorities & Responsibilities of Michigan Townships, 2025 edition)

Perhaps Conklin will learn the rules and follow through on managing disorderly meetings.

Henne Makes Another False Allegation Against VanZee

As has been a pattern for many months, resident Betty Henne made yet another random public attack against Zoning Administrator Ron VanZee. The latest gaffe, at the October 13 Board of Trustee meeting, was when she stated that he did not support the purchase of Hayes Township Park Camp Sea Gull.

“I should be used to the lies by now, but this one struck a nerve,” Van Zee stated when The Sentinel reached out for clarification of Henne’s statement. “Even though I lived in the township

when the park was purchased, I was not part of the politics or business. When I learned of the proposals for that property, I knew I had to get involved. What I was against was: turning 700 feet of natural shoreline into concrete and asphalt, which was half of the entire shoreline. Destroying hundreds of mature oak and maple trees. Paying to have a beautiful steel frame cafeteria building removed. Compromising the stone shoreline wall that is now in total disrepair. Removal of thousands of yards of Nor-

wood Shale. Creating a dangerous cliff that cost thousands of dollars to retain. Rain gardens with no purpose because they were not property connected to storm water routes. Putting the Township in a severe financial situation that took the Board years to overcome and prevented the township from being able to make it a real park for the entire community instead of just a boat launch. Those are the things I was against. The park itself I was always in support of.”

Planning Commission Master Plan - Draft Shared with BOT

On October 27, 2025 at 7pm, the Planning Commission held a special meeting to review the most recent draft of the Master Plan. The draft was posted on the township website (hayestownshipmi.gov) the Friday before the meeting, along with the announcement of the meeting. The PC reviewed the contents of the draft Plan noted some errors in the text and some of the map work. Public comment also identified these errors. The errors did

not affect the overall intent or direction of the draft Plan.

It was decided, after making the corrections, to ask the Board of Trustees for permission distribute the draft Plan as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The Planning Commission comments also included the announcement that a draft of an updated Zoning Map has been received from the County Equalization Department. The Township zoning staff and the

County Planner, as well as the Director of the Equalization Department, worked together on this challenging project to produce a map that reflects all the changes in zoning of various parcels made since 2009. A Public Hearing on the proposed updated Zoning Map is scheduled for November 18, 2025, during the regular Planning Commission meeting.

BOT Approves Review of Master Plan Draft

The Hayes Township Board of Trustees met in a special meeting that started five minutes after the close of the Planning Commission meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to act on the request from the PC to grant permission to release the draft Master Plan to the required agencies and municipalities. The Board reviewed the draft document and after discussion and questions to those PC members in attendance, agreed that the corrections when made would be sufficient allow a reasonable review by those entities which will receive the draft Plan. The Board voted unanimously to allow the release of the Plan as amended.

If you are interested in viewing the draft, go to the Hayes Township website. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the draft at the end of the review period.

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How the Hayes Township Board Functions

POWER OF THE VOTE

No one position on the board is more “powerful” or has more authority than another. Actions taken by the Township Board must be approved by a majority vote of the Board members in an open meeting. Any claims to greater authority by one Board member or more privilege due to their role must be viewed as suspicious.

It’s important to understand the roles of our board members. A title may imply something more than it is, however, each member has the same ultimate power of their vote. From the first meeting with Supervisor Bill Conklin in office, there has been a disconnect of what his actual role is within the township, with his actions, supervisor

report, as well as with comments made by some of his supporters. The five board positions are: Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two trustees. They are all elected positions, and each position has a vote in township business and decisions. In the work world, the title ‘Supervisor’ usually implies that individual is the boss. In

township government, the Supervisor role is NOT a boss. Each role on the board is independent, and each person has their statutory duties. Working as a team to address the needs of the community is the ideal environment. Open communication and sharing responsibilities should be the goal. According to Michigan’s PA 621: “Un-

less some other official has been so designated, the supervisor or superintendent is considered the chief administrative officer for the development of the township budget. However, all township board members play a role in adopting, monitoring, and amending the budget.”



The Michigan Townships Association (MTA) further defines the supervisor’s (and other board members’) statutory duties, as follows:

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

- Moderates board and annual meetings
- Chief assessing officer (if certified)
- Secretary to Board of Review Township’s legal agent
- Maintains records of supervisor’s office
- Responsible for tax allocation board budget (if applicable)
- Develops township budget
- Appoints some commission members subject to board approval
- May call special meetings
- May appoint a deputy

As you can see, this role is far from being the boss of the township.

TOWNSHIP TREASURER

This role is involved in all of the activities that the township pays for and helps keep the bank accounts up to date.

- Collects real and personal property taxes
- Keeps an account of township receipts (revenues) and expenditures
- Issues township checks
- Deposits township revenues in approved depositories
- Invests township funds in approved investment vehicles
- Collects delinquent personal property tax
- Responsible for jeopardy assessments in collecting property tax
- Collects mobile home specific tax
- In addition to issuing property tax bills and collecting taxes the treasurer maintains the bank accounts utilizing the records created by the Clerk

TOWNSHIP CLERK

In township government, however, the Clerk is the one person most involved in the ongoing operation of the township.

- Maintains custody of all township records
- Maintains general ledger
- Prepares warrants for township checks
- Records and maintains township meeting minutes
- Keeps the township book of oaths
- Responsible for special meeting notices
- Publishes board meeting minutes (if taxable value is \$65 million in 2005, annually indexed, or a charter township)
- Keeps voter registration file and conducts elections
- Keeps township ordinance book
- Prepares financial statements
- Delivers tax certificates to supervisor and county clerk by September 30
- Must appoint a deputy
- Must post a surety bond

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE’S STATUTORY DUTIES

Trustees are board members elected by the people who provide additional support to the operation of the township and reflect the voice of the people in deliberations on the actions of the board.

The MTA offers this:

- Township legislators, required to vote on all issues
- Responsible for township’s fiduciary health
- Other duties as assigned by board

ALL BOARD MEMBERS

In all instances, every member of the board has a fiduciary responsibility to the township to maintain the financial health of the township and to accomplish the needed government actions to promote the furtherance of the township’s goals.



"DEMOCRACY DIES IN DARKNESS"

OPINIONS

Shining Light on Political News

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Gravel Pit



Private Pole Barn - If you look closely, you can see the owners' boats stored in their barn.

Bayshore the Beautiful

By Publisher & Editor
DAVID L. ZIPP

I have lived in the Bayshore area all my life. Many of my friends and families have also lived in this unincorporated village. Driving by the gravel pit almost daily, I wished that someone would take an interest in taking a wasteland and turn it into something beautiful. Something that would increase property values instead of constantly taking away. Something to just turn the corner and provide hope that it could be more than an ugly hole in the ground.

And lo and behold, there is now a first-class personal storage building that has set the bar very high for future development. The aesthetic of the colors, stone accents, and gorgeous landscaping will be hard to top. This building that can really only be seen from the entrance on Pincherry Road is screened from Townline Road and the adjacent Bayshore Village. And

from this new pole barn that was constructed with all appropriate permits, two new lawsuits were born.

One, that the owner won, was the claim that this is a commercial event center designed to play pickleball, was dismissed without prejudice, meaning the same claim can be filed again, but only if there are new facts to present. The second one, demanding the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) hear a case that was incorrectly filed. And yet, we (yes, we, the residents of Hayes Township) are all being sued again by the same group of people, potentially back in court, with a second lawsuit by the same group trying a different route to disrupt,

cause confusion and discourse, and continue to cost taxpayers thousands of dollars in legal fees.

What is there to gain to continue this current lawsuit? NOTHING. The owner of this property has all the proper

building on private property to Ellis Boal in court--and according to Boal, if the land is zoned agriculture, no ping pong for you. Common sense squashed this case. This shows how ridiculous, like all the other claims that have been made and wasted the courts time and taxpayer money.

And why doesn't Supervisor Bill Conklin help to prevent these lawsuits? After all, they are perpetrated by his supporters and he has claimed to be fiscally conservative with taxpayer money. Oh, that's right, he's suing YOU too!

It's time for this to stop. The majority of land in Hayes Township is zoned Agricultural--be careful what you do in your barn or garage because YOU could be the next target. Come to a Board of Trustee meeting and let your voices be heard. The same people have been wasting your taxpayer dollars for years with their nonsense.

"...be careful what you do in your barn or garage because YOU could be the next target."

permits, inspections, and Charlevoix County occupancy permit. The construction is complete. Even Judge Hayes posed a question about playing ping pong being legal in a private