

Casco Township Board of Trustees  
Minutes, Regular Board Meeting  
Monday, February 16, 2026, 7:00 PM

Call to Order: Overhiser called the meeting to order at 7:00 and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Overhiser, Ridley, Campbell & Fleming, along with 13 guests.

Absent: Clevenger

Public Comment:

- Tim Slais introduced himself as a candidate for Allegan County District Court Judge who hopes to be on the ballot in August 2026. He is running on the terms that he is dedicated to public safety, an experienced Prosecutor, a supporter of law enforcement, and believes in fair and equal justice. He asked for signatures after the meeting from anyone who would be willing to help him get on the ballot.
- Chris Barnett introduced himself as also running as a candidate for Allegan County District Court Judge in August 2026. He is currently serving as a Judge now and has been since August 2025. He spoke about his love for Allegan County and his love for family law, defense work, and Veterans Treatment Court. He prides himself on being willing to listen to every case that comes before him.

SHAES: Chief Brandon Hinz reported that SHAES had 19 fire calls, 29 EMS calls for a total of 48 calls in the past month. That brings the 2026 total so far for the Department to 233. Chief Hinz distributed copies of the 2025 End-of-Year Report to the Board and the public. He made note of a couple of items he felt were important in the report. The Department has reduced its overall response time by 5 seconds. He feels that increased staffing at the 66<sup>th</sup> St. Station is allowing them to accommodate more EMS calls quickly. The Department's call volume has continued to increase, but overtime is down, which is great to see as it means the SHAES crew is getting some relief. Their mutual aid calls for EMS are also down, which is helping take some pressure off their team. Hinz was also proud to report that the Department has saved \$17,000,000 of Property in 2025, which is a major accomplishment. His report showed that June continues to be the busiest month for SHAES. Going forward, as the Department and area continue to grow, they plan to move to quarterly progress reports, which will help authorize the Board to better track spending and staffing costs. Hinz reported that Fire and EMS training continues with an additional ice training taking place last week. Lastly, Hinz informed the Board of a few resignations within the Department. Will Wright and Dave Freislinger could not make their call numbers. Patrick Quinn is stepping away after 18 years due to medical reasons. Career member, Johanna Quinn has resigned after nearly 13 years with SHAES. Discussion was had by Hinz and a member of the public on the stakes in place in front of fire hydrants in the Township, and he responded that those are handy but not put in place by SHAES. He thought that it might be possible that SHAWSA oversaw those. Dave Campbell expressed his appreciation and gave kudos to SHAES for the great job they are doing.

County: County Commissioner Brad Lubbers was present and distributed new Allegan County road maps to the Board and the public. Lubbers reported that Commissioners met on January 8<sup>th</sup>, for an organizational meeting; they elected Scott Bellman as Chairman and Craig VanBeek as Vice-Chair. Lubbers reminded the Board and the public that Allegan

County Parks receive money from casino revenue. Our year-to-date numbers are up by 11%. He was unsure why that number is up, but the County is thankful for the increased revenue. The 5-year plan was recently finished and sent to the State in hopes of applying for an MDNR Trust Fund grant for a project that would put stairs in at West Side County Park. Based on the estimate that was received for an ADA-compliant ramp that would be all aluminum and removal for high water, they would be looking at around \$700,000. The grant only goes to \$400,000 and they already have the matching funds they need budgeted, but they are short of the remaining \$300,000. They have voted to table proceeding with the grant until they have a solid plan for the remaining funds necessary. He stressed the importance of doing this correctly the first time, so we have something lasting. Supervisor Overhiser asked if they anticipated not making the April 1<sup>st</sup> grant deadline, and Lubbers confirmed. It was also reported that work continues at the Rock-Tenn plant at the Brownfield site in Plainwell. In January, it was decided to terminate the old cleanup contract and continue with multiple new contracts in the future to oversee the project to completion. Lastly, Lubbers shared that on January 6<sup>th</sup>, there was a funeral service for Fire Chief Haverdink from Hamilton, who passed on the job. This was a nice remembrance of his 51 years of service to the community. The family asked if the County could make a separate moment of remembrance that will happen soon at the commissioners' meeting. Also to note, with the early Spring weather, road restrictions went into effect today (February 16<sup>th</sup>) in Allegan County and Van Buren County as well. Julie Cowie inquired about who the vendor was that provided the ramp quote for Allegan County Parks, and Lubbers was unsure but said he would get that information and email it to Julie Cowie. Discussion was had on the length of the ramp and what makes it ADA grade. Trustee Fleming inquired about the possibility of collecting donations from those who want to make a donation to this project. Lubbers directed those interested to get with Brandy Gildea with the Parks Department to make that donation, but he did note that there is no guarantee where exactly your donation will end up. He wanted to make sure people realize that donations made to the Parks might not go specifically to this project.

Library: Bob Sherwood reported on behalf of the Fennville Library Board that they are still extremely concerned with the work being done by the workgroup, Michigan Alternative Funding for Trials, which aims to redirect all penal fines in the State of Michigan. This would again mean major changes for all public libraries. This is especially concerning since the Legislature is already showing signs of support for this. Mr. Sherwood just wants to make sure the Board and public continue to be aware of what is coming down the channel soon. This would surely mean decreasing staff, among other things, at the Fennville Library.

Clerk: Clerk Ridley presented the meeting minutes from the January 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. A motion was made by Campbell to approve, supported by Fleming. All votes in favor. Clerk Ridley also made a motion to make the budget amendments to the following accounts:

- Move balance of Senior fund to general capital outlay  
\$280,811.09
- \$300,000 to appropriation of prior fund balance
- \$200,000 to building capital outlay
- \$100,000 to inspection capital outlay

- \$50,000 to senior capital outlay
- \$200,000 to the revenue account for the State of Michigan grant.

Supported by Fleming. All votes in favor.

Treasurer: In Clevenger's absence, Supervisor Overhiser presented the balances of the funds as follows:

- 101 General Fund \$917,460.46
- General Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 204 Road Fund \$603,509.32
- Road Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 206 Fire Fund \$250,949.63
- Fire Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 207 Police Fund \$90,024.81
- 208 Parks Fund \$167,531.26
- 209 Cemetery Fund \$97,627.33
- 290 Senior Fund \$280,811.09

Leaving a total balance of \$3,007,913.90. Overhiser made a motion to approve check #'s 30101-30134 in the amount of \$575,624.69 to pay the bills for January. Supported by Fleming. All votes in favor. Overhiser noted that tomorrow, February 17<sup>th</sup> is the last day to pay property taxes without penalty fees.

Planning Commission: Trustee Fleming reported that work continues on the master plan. Fleming inquired about the budget we had for work with McKenna. Overhiser clarified that we were possibly over on the number of meetings that were budgeted for the township. Fleming suggested that next time he feels like the planning commission should start with the old plan and make changes, rather than making a whole new plan.

Parks & Recreation: Trustee Campbell reported they have moved forward with the contract with Edgewater Resources. Paul has overseen communication with Edgewater. They plan to hold a public hearing at our regular board meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> in order to move ahead with the MDNR grant application that is due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. That is a short window for needing to get a lot done. Currently, the Park's Department is asking for letters of support from various people in the community. Paul is reaching out to the short-term rental community. Mary has reached out to Jen Sistrunk from Visit South Haven. The deadline for these letters is March 12<sup>th</sup>. There is a letter template for anyone interested in it for letter submission. These letters can be sent to the [clerk@cascotownship.org](mailto:clerk@cascotownship.org).

Campbell also brought up working with the Allegan County Community Foundation in terms of donations going through their non-profit 501C3 status. Once this relationship is established, we will be able to raise some funds that will help us match funds if we are chosen for this grant. Supervisor Overhiser confirmed that we plan to apply to the Allegan County Community Foundation. Next, Campbell brought up changes from the State in terms of an updated process for appropriation requests for legislatively directed spending items. The process used recently in terms of the grant received for the building renovation will no longer be the same. We will need an official submission form in the future for LDSIs (Legislatively Directed Spending Items), and Campbell will reach out to Allison Fuhrman to

get this form, so we are prepared for the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Discussion was had on the cycle of grants from companies like W.R. Grace, Holtec & Consumers Energy. Campbell reiterated it would be nice to have some form of monetary commitment before we move forward with the grant. Campbell inquired about when we will discuss the budget for this project, and Overhiser suggested we have an agenda item at the March board meeting to further discuss this after we have seen the plan from Edgewater Resources. The Parks hopes to potentially meet on February 26<sup>th</sup> if the plans are available by that date and possibly hold an informational open house to share information on February 28<sup>th</sup>, but neither plan is set in stone yet. A discussion was held on forming a committee and moving this project forward.

ZBA: No Report.

Senior Advisory Committee: Committee Member, Linda Teeter shared January numbers from Van Buren County Senior Services. There have been 12 unduplicated Seniors at the Casco site and 124 at the South Haven site. There have been 73 activities enjoyed at the Casco site and 825 activities enjoyed at the South Haven site. That makes the total for 2026 Casco seniors at the Casco site, 127, and at the main South Haven site, 2,266. A total of 18,723 activities have already been enjoyed this year. Teeter reminded the Board and public about the Casco site schedule and provided the Casco page of the Van Buren Senior Services newsletter. Teeter also updated the Board on the new guidelines that are being finalized so that all seniors know the guidelines expected for participation. Teeter also noted that the Casco Senior Advisory Committee has agreed to help with the open house planned for April 20<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the opening of the new addition. VanBuren County Senior Services Director, Diane Rigozzi, spoke briefly on changes in the numbers from 2016-2019 and current. The total number of Casco residents now involved with Van Buren Senior Services is 576. There is significant growth in the total number of members, total number of activities enjoyed, and meals served. Rigozzi also provided a copy of the mural with the Casco addition of apple trees.

Short Term Rentals (STR): No Report.

SHAWSA: Overhiser reported that work continues with Holtec, but the project is currently on hold until they have a firm commitment on everyone's part.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Short Term Rental Fee Update: After meeting with Paul and Kathy and reviewing all the expenses associated with the short-term rental fees, we are not doing too badly, but we are seeing increased costs to Granicus and SHAES for inspections. We also know that as we encounter uncooperative renters in the future, we may need an attorney, and we really have not budgeted for that. We feel there is justification to raise the short-term rental fee from \$325 to \$375. A motion was made by Campbell, supported by Ridley. Motion passed, 3 to 1 with Fleming voting no. Campbell inquired about an incentive to pay by April 1<sup>st</sup>, and Overhiser confirmed that it will happen because those who already paid had the \$325 fee, and moving forward, it will be \$375. That can be fine-tuned for next year.

Senior Millage Resolutions: In January, the Board voted to table the conversation on the Senior Millage resolution to have Supervisor Overhiser available for further conversation.

Trustee Fleming started the discussion and shared the concerns he has, mainly about funding. He reiterated that he feels the Senior Center is a nice place, doing nice things, but he worries about the way in which we are funding this project. He also inquired about a comment made at the previous meeting regarding the fact that, since we had voted to put this issue on the ballot, as a Board, we could not go back on that. Supervisor Overhiser stated that he would have to look at our exact wording and consult our Attorney on that. Trustee Fleming mentioned the newsletter that went out with the taxes and the wording chosen for that. He asked the question of why we have a millage for these services specifically, while ignoring many other senior needs. He feels like this is strictly for entertainment while the real services are still provided by Allegan County, and he wants to know, at what cost? He voiced concerns that he felt that Board members may feel pressure in some way because of the many faces and voices in the room asking for this. Clerk Ridley mentioned she felt no pressure from the public but felt like her decision came from a place of seeing the many Casco seniors in the office weekly who greatly need and appreciate these services. Trustee Campbell revisited the fact that socialization is extremely important for keeping folks out of nursing homes, so the entertainment aspect shouldn't be taken lightly. Overhiser reiterated the fact that it must go on the ballot because we cannot put a tax on the people, but the people must vote to take that on. The reality is, even if we don't vote as a Board to put this on the ballot, they can acquire the signatures on a petition to do so themselves. Trustee Fleming shared a couple of quotes from both Benjamin Franklin and Casco resident, Esther Wilkinson. Discussion continued with a focus from Fleming on being a republic vs a democracy. Both Overhiser and Campbell spoke about the many benefits they see. Clerk Ridley mentioned her focus is on the greater good and knowing that we will all require these services someday. It's not different from paying school taxes when her own children are homeschooled. Trustee Fleming felt that the ballot proposal was on the vague side and felt like we should make the ballot language like that of the newsletter. Overhiser reiterated the fact that the ballot language really should be vague and non-promotional; it would not be appropriate to carry that language over onto the ballot. Fleming worries that the ballot language is not clear. He specifically mentioned the phrase that we hear used frequently by Diane Rigozzi, that "we want seniors to feel like they have entered an adult Disneyland when they attend our programs." Director Rigozzi was able to give clarity on that phrase, stating that Disneyland trains its employees to leave their own personal problems and stresses at home; that is exactly what Rigozzi asks of her staff so that our Seniors can have the best experience possible. A motion was made by Campbell to approve the Senior Millage resolution, supported by Ridley. Roll call vote: Overhiser, yes. Ridley, yes. Fleming, no. Campbell, yes. The motion passed 3 to 1.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Parks Millage Renewal: Clerk Ridley made a motion to accept the Parks Millage resolution as it stands, supported by Campbell. Roll call vote: Fleming, yes. Overhiser, yes. Campbell, yes. Ridley, yes. All votes in favor. Motion passed.

Road Millage Renewal: Supervisor Overhiser explained that this millage will not expire until the end of 2026, but if we wait to renew this, we will have to pay for a special election in 2027. The downside is that we will receive a small rollback, but we will not have to take on the cost of a special election. A motion was made by Campbell to approve, supported by Fleming. Roll call vote: Overhiser, yes. Ridley, yes. Campbell, yes. Fleming, yes. All votes in favor. Motion passed.

Bendzinski Proposal: This is a contract we have with Bendzinski because we issue bonds; we must provide a continuing disclosure statement. This contract is for \$1,000 for the next 5 years. A motion was made by Fleming to approve, supported by Campbell. All votes in favor.

Allison Furman-LDSI Appropriation Request: This was already discussed during the Parks report with Trustee Campbell. She will work with both Andy Litts, Parks chairperson, and Supervisor Overhiser to have this filled out and ready before the next meeting.

Eagleview Contract: This contract is for the aerial maps used by the Assessor, Zoning Administrator, Building Administrator, and Supervisor. This is a proposal to do this mapping more frequently but also to cover part of the costs. We are looking at \$2,308 annually. A motion was made by Ridley to approve, supported by Campbell. All votes in favor.

Allegan County Community Foundation Agreement: This is a contract to accept the ACCF as our agent for 501C3 purposes and moving forward with donations for our upcoming parks project. A motion was made by Campbell, supported by Fleming. Roll call vote: Fleming, yes. Campbell, yes. Ridley, yes. Overhiser, yes. All vote in favor. Motion passed.

Cemetery Fee Amendment: This is not a change to the fee amount but a change to some conditions of scheduling, especially in terms of Holidays. We need more notifications to prepare for funerals, especially in the winter months, due to the loss of the heated garage. This would give us an additional day. This resolution states that all burials between November 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> will require a 72-day notice and are subject to a \$250 snow removal fee, if needed. It also states that Monday burials will require notice by the preceding Wednesday. A motion was made by Ridley to approve, supported by Fleming. Roll call vote: Overhiser, yes. Campbell, yes. Fleming, yes. Ridley, yes. All votes in favor. Motion passed.

Receptionist/Building Dept. Assistant: Clerk Ridley provided the Board with a job description for a proposed Receptionist/Building Department Assistant. This position would be either a Monday-Friday or Monday-Thursday, 9-5 position that would not only serve as an assistant to Eric Davis, Building Inspector, but also serve as a general receptionist to the Township. This would allow residents to have better access to the Township Hall for things like picking up building permits, dump cards, making tax payments outside of treasurer hours, etc. Ridley has tried to incorporate many seasonal tasks that we already pay people to do into this job description to help with things like filing, absentee ballots during elections, various tasks for the Assessor, filling tax bills, and dump cards. We are hoping this will generally provide more accommodation for our residents and keep a face at the front door to monitor people coming into the building. The hope is that this would also free up some time for Deputy Clerk Stanton, as she generally sees a lot of interruptions in her day as the first face seen when people enter the Township. Moving

forward, we also know that there will be changes to the way the Building Department operates in terms of software that interacts between the Building Department and the Assessor; that will require someone to assist in the future if we make a move to BSA Cloud services. We are at the beginning of this process, so we do not have a pay rate established, but we wanted the Board to be aware that we are working towards this position. Both Trustee Campbell and Trustee Flemming felt this sounded efficient and was an overall good idea for the Township. Clerk Ridley reminded the Board and public that after the building is complete, we will be using the South entrance as our new, main entrance, which is where this receptionist would be. No votes are necessary tonight, but we wanted to make the Board aware of the beginning of this process. We may decide on a special meeting to discuss this, but we will keep the Board informed. Clerk Ridley reminded the Board that she will not be present at the next meeting as she will be away at the Clerk's Institute in Mount Pleasant that week.

Furniture Budget: Clerk Ridley, Dep. Clerk Kathy Stanton and Julie Cowie have all been hard at work finding furniture for the newly renovated addition. They have focused mainly on finding used or overstock items to keep costs down. The budget has been provided for the Board's review. This included furniture for a reception area, a main room with mobile tables on wheels to be used for Board meetings and PC meetings, the Clerk's new office, the Deputy Clerk's new office, the election storage area, the seniors' office/storage room, and some miscellaneous items needed. The costs for all furniture are set not to exceed \$20,000, with some of those costs being picked up by Van Buren County Senior Services. A motion was made by Campbell to approve, supported by Fleming. All votes in favor. Campbell questioned what would be done to freshen up the current portion of the township hall. She would like to see it included in next year's budget to paint and refresh the current area. Overhiser stated that he would feel more comfortable waiting until the next fiscal year to tackle that. Clerk Ridley also mentioned that the Treasurer's office would like a larger counter area when we revisit this side of things. Ridley also reminded the Board that there will be a small fee associated with putting together the furniture we have bought.

Overhiser also noted that this week, all the fire extinguishers were certified. He also met with the Insurance agent and did a walk-through to have the new addition added to our policy. Overhiser also noted that we are due to close out the state and local fiscal recovery funds that we received at the start of COVID. He has started that close out process and does not anticipate any issues. Overhiser also announced that there will be a building dedication ahead of our April Board meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00. All are welcome to attend to enjoy light refreshments and see the new space.

Public Comment:

- D. Campbell commented that he feels the new receptionist will be a great addition to our Township.
- L. Tuohy commented regarding Fleming's comments on the Senior millage, stating that she hopes and feels like folks are educating themselves about what they are voting for.

Overhiser reminded the Board and public that in commemoration of the Country's 250th Anniversary, we should all go back and reeducate ourselves on some of these important dates and situations in history.

Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn by Ridley at 9:18 PM. Supported by Campbell. All votes in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rachel Ridley, Casco Township Clerk.  
Casco Township Clerk