

DRAFT

Casco Township Board of Trustees

Minutes, Regular Board Meeting

Monday, December 15th, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

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

Present: Overhiser, Clevenger, Ridley, Campbell & Fleming along with 35 guests.

Absent: None

Allegan County Sheriff Department: Casco Deputy, Zach Hoyt reported that things are slow right now and that there is not a whole lot going on currently. He reminded residents to fill out Property Inspection Requests if they will be out of town this Winter for extended periods of time. He also reminded residents that email is the best way to get a hold of him, especially if you notice something suspicious in Casco Township. Email is the quickest and most direct way of contact; zhoyt@allegancounty.org.

Public Comment:

- L. Teeter, 7374 North Shore Dr. presented the Board and the residents with a “Save the Date” card for the Casco National Night Out scheduled for Aug.4, 2026 at SHAES Station 1 (864 66th St.) from 5:30-7:30. They plan to have food, music and games while allowing neighbors to meet our Casco Township Deputy along with SHAES Staff. Teeter also provided the Board with a brief History of National Night Out and it's growing following of municipalities.
- D. Evans, Casco Resident asked the Board to please vote tonight to put the Senior Millage on the Ballot for 2026, stating to the Board that it is their right to be able to vote on this.
- D. Thorp, 7241 Thornhill Rd, asked the Board to please add the Senior Millage to the Ballot. She has recently moved to Casco Township and one of the big reasons was because of the Senior Center and what they offer for her and her 90-year-old Mother. She would like the opportunity to vote on this in 2026. She spoke on Senior depression and how much the Senior Center helps with Seniors being able to socialize and combat that depression.
- D. Weaver, 7271 Pacific Ave. Debbie asked the Board to let the decision of the Senior millage rest with the voters by allowing them to vote on the millage in 2026.
- D. Campbell, Resident questioned what the issue was with the Senior Millage. Supervise Overhiser explained the process of needing to vote tonight to include the Senior Millage on the ballot for August 2026. It is not automatically on the ballot if we do not choose to include it.
- C. Overholser, 7169 103rd Ave. voiced her concerns over continuous commercial burning taking place at Horizons Landscaping on the old Debest property. Overholser believes that they are ignoring SHAES rules and wants to see the Township do something about this.
- Casco Resident, 28 Blue Star Hwy. asked that the Board vote to include the Senior Millage on the ballot for 2026. She also mentioned that she also had witnessed large fires at Horizon's Landscaping (this Spring) that she shared concerns over.

- L. Hogle, 109th Ave., commented that he was born in 1931 and in Casco his whole life. They use the Senior Center at least 1-2 times a week along with the Casco site and he would sure like to see it added to the Ballot for 2026.
- M. Freyer, 231 Glasscap. Spoke about how wonderful the Senior Center is and how important it is in our community. He asked the Board to really think about how many years it would be before they could all enjoy this again if we were not to allow the Township to vote on this. He asked that the Board please vote to add it to the Ballot for 2026.
- Diane Rigozzi, Director of Van Buren County Senior Services, shared her appreciation of the Casco Board and the great relationship we all have. She is asking that a .5 Millage be added so that we can go on for another 4 years without interruption.
- C. Rice, 992 70th St. commented to the Board that the Senior Center gives them one good, hot meal every day and that is very important to them. She asked that the Board vote to put the Senior millage on the 2026 Ballot.
- Casco Resident, Mike commented that he and his wife have been in Casco for 42 years and they really enjoy the Senior Center and agree that this issue should be on the Ballot.
- C. Overholser spoke again stating that the Senior Population continues to grow in Casco and that speaks for itself in saying that Casco Seniors should have access to the services provided by VanBuren County Senior Services.
- D. Campbell spoke again saying there is an overwhelming turnout and let's see this on the Ballot in 2026.

SHAES: Chief, Brandon Hinz reported that for November 2025 there have been 21 EMS calls and 13 fire calls in Casco Township. They have responded to 2,798 total for the department in 2025. This is 215 more than this time last year. The 2026 Budget and Capital replacement plan was approved at this month's meeting. They continue to work through lots of new hires. This will bring lots of training for 2026. The Chief and Department continue to be very excited about their new hires. Chief Hinz also noted that SHAES will turn 30 next year! They look forward to the next 30.

Regarding the burning at Horizon's Landscaping, Hinz has been in discussion with Chief Overhiser about this several times. The Spring fire mentioned earlier was a lot larger than it should have been and SHAES put that out. The Department has discussed with them what they are allowed to burn, the size of piles and protocol for having someone stay with the fire. It is currently being addressed, and they hope for a resolution to come soon.

Supervisor Overhiser mentioned that we are looking at the Zoning aspect of this with them being a commercial entity, burning these materials in a residential zone. Trustee Fleming inquired about the difference between contained burns and open burns. Hinz responded that open burns should be only brush, that sort of thing and contained burns would be like a burning barrel with a screen on it. Contained burns do not require monitoring but open burns do.

County Commissioner, Brad Lubbers: Lubber reported that the Allegan County budget was passed and will be official on January 8th. Also on January 8th at 10:00 there will be a

Public Hearing to renew the Allegan County Park's plan for the next 5 years, 2026-2030. This will allow the County to apply for a Trust Grant early in 2026 to hopefully rebuild the steps at West Side Park. This project is estimated at anywhere from \$.5 million-\$2 million depending on the way things are done. Something new for 2026 will be the app called Camp Spot which will be used for pavilion reservations, camp sites, etc in Allegan County. Lubbers also noted that the County is at the end of their ARPA Fund Cycle with a little extra funding, so they have extended their contract to install internet in all the Allegan County Parks. This will help Park Rangers with using the Camp Spot app and help with security so that cameras can be installed. Commissioner Lubbers also noted that the Allegan County Sheriff's Department has advised people to be on the lookout for online scams this time of year. Use caution when shopping online. Last, he informed the Board that 123.net is in the process of wrapping up their final work in the area. Supervisor Overhiser asked if 123.net is covering the entire County now. Lubbers explained that the Contract with Mercury is being abandoned which means there will still be some gaps in coverage. They are exploring options as this was not planned.

At this point Lubbers asked if there were questions and Resident Carol Rice asked who controls how many services can come down your roads and use the right of way. Right now, there are 4 providers working on their street, tearing up their yards and making installations. Who controls this? Discussion was had with Lubbers about if there was any control over this and Lubbers stated that unfortunately there isn't much that we can do about it because services must go somewhere. He personally understands as he had the same issue at home. Resident, DK Morgan inquired if 123.net has any obligations to fix drainage field tiles they damage. Lubbers was unsure if that was included in the existing contract. Supervisor Overhiser stated that the best route would be to call the Allegan County Road Commission, as Right of Way permits are issued through their office.

Library: Bob Sherwood reported that the Fennville Library parking lot expansion is now complete with 38 new parking spaces; 14 of those being handicap accessible. The total cost of the parking lot expansion was \$776,500 that they paid for using a grant, a CD, money from their checking account and a bond. Mr. Sherwood also reminded the Board about last month's report that all Libraires must find a new book vendor after the collapse of Baker & Taylor. The Fennville Library has decided to go with Ingraham. They are generally 10-20% cheaper than Amazon and quicker. Although they were disappointed with having to secure a new vendor, they feel like they will have comparable service with Ingraham. Mr. Sherwood also reminded the public about the book drop box located here in the lobby of the Casco Township Hall.

Clerk: Clerk Ridley presented the meeting minutes from the November 17th meeting to the Board for approval. A motion was made by Clevenger to approve, supported by Fleming. All votes in favor. Ridley updated the Board on the status of the new Bank Reconciliation with Siegfried & Crandall. Both the Clerk and the Treasurer will need to send Ann their bank statements within the first week of receiving them for Ann to reconcile.

Last, Clerk Ridley asked for support to attend the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Institute again this year. It is scheduled for March of 2026. This is year 2 of a 3-year program intended for Municipal Clerks. The cost to attend the Course is \$875 and lodging \$660.45 for a total of \$1,535.45. Ridley mentioned that although the course is not cheap, the

knowledge that she gained last year has served her the entire year and she feels it is well worth the cost. The Board expressed appreciation for Ridley's want to attend and gain more knowledge. A motion was made by Campbell to support this training, support by Clevenger. All votes in favor.

Treasurer: Treasurer Clevenger expressed appreciation for Clerk Ridley's willingness to work on finding reports that work best for the Board. Clevenger presented the balances of the funds as follows:

- 101 General Fund \$1,216,225.88
- General Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 204 Road Fund \$490,598.75
- Road Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 206 Fire Fund \$197,064.08
- Fire Fund CD \$200,000.00
- 207 Police Fund \$75,345.94
- 208 Parks Fund \$118,597.24
- 209 Cemetery Fund \$99,710.28
- 290 Senior Fund \$84,601.82
- 703 Tax Fund \$588,222.93

Leaving a total balance of \$3,470,366.92. Clevenger made a motion to approve check #'s 30048-30067 in the amount of \$53,002.25 to pay the bills for the month of November.

Supported by Fleming. All votes in favor. Clevenger reported to the Board that tax bills went out on December 1 along with dump cards. He also noted that the Treasurer's office has made the commitment to send letters in the future to all mortgage holders, so they know that their property taxes have been paid on their behalf instead of them being paid by the bank and property owners unsure if they have been taken care of. A Casco Resident inquired about the recent reassessments, asking if those would show up on the Winter tax bills and Supervisor Overhiser explained that those reassessments should primarily affect State Equalized Value and not property taxes, for the most part. Clevenger also mentioned that his office has been on the lookout for missing PRE's on neighboring properties. He reminds residents that we can go back three years on these for reimbursements. He reminds residents that as Treasurer he just wants to make certain that we are all paying our own fair share.

Planning Commission: Trustee Fleming reported the Planning Commission plans to meet Wednesday evening, 11/19/25. Work continues the Master Plan.

Parks & Recreation: Trustee Campbell reported that Parks Committee Member, Debbie Weaver presented an interesting concept at the last meeting that would serve as more of a bridge from the bluff to the beach than a path cut in or steps. The thought is that this solution may be more cost and time effective in terms of getting access to the Beach. They have a few engineering firms looking at this currently and in January they should have more information. Campbell expressed appreciation for Weaver and all the creative efforts she puts into the Parks Committee.

ZBA: Trustee Campbell reported that they had a meeting last Thursday regarding a home in Eaton Park that requested a garage setback so that they could add a second stall to their garage. There were no concerns or objections about this, and it passed.

At this point, Resident Tom Chapman inquired about the missing split rail fence pieces at the Casco Nature Preserve and if we knew what was happening to them and if we could remedy it. Clerk Ridley explained how people have started tossing the rails over the bluff in the warmer months so that they can traverse their way down the bluff to the beach. We are hoping to replace pieces where needed and screw the fence together. Supervisor Overhiser commented that now with 123.net we are hoping we might be able to get security cameras to help deter from this vandalism. Chapman also inquired about whether or now we could rent a few camping sites out at the Casco Nature Preserve now that we have the nice restroom facility. Supervisor Overhiser informed him that they would currently be against our ordinance.

Senior Advisory Committee: Committee Member, Linda Teeter reported on Senior numbers for Casco Township for the month of November. There were 11 unduplicated seniors at the Casco site and 165 at the South Haven site. 106 activities enjoyed at the Casco site and 1,225 activities enjoyed by Casco Seniors at the South Haven site. The numbers of happy Seniors just continue to grow. This Thursday, December 18th will be the last regular day of activities before the Holidays. Activities will resume on January 5th at both the South Haven site and Casco Township site. Also on this Thursday, December 18th there will be a Holiday Party at the Casco site to kick off the Holiday festivities. Teeter expressed appreciation to the Board for the work happening all around between the Board, the Casco Site Director and the Senior Center. She also expressed appreciation to Clerk Ridley and Treasurer Clevenger for making sure Senior events were highlighted in the Winter Newsletter from the Township.

Short Term Rentals (STR): Rental Coordinator, Kathy Stanton, is currently recovering from knee surgery so she did not have an official report this month. Overhiser has reached out to Granicus to inquire about our fee for 2026, but he has yet to hear back from them. He will follow up so that we know what we are looking at for next year. Trustee Campbell inquired about searching for PRE's in the STR List to make sure PRE's are properly coded as such.

SHAWSA: Supervisor Overhiser reported that they had a good, informational meeting last week for SHAWSA. There have been issues with rate consistency based upon different size meters due to fire suppression. Adjustments will be made.

OLD BUSINESS:

Outdoor Gathering Ordinance: Continued from September meeting. Supervisor Overhiser sent over two different amendments to the Outdoor Gathering Ordinance. We have had two concerns. One being that we need to limit the number of times this can be utilized in a calendar year. Two, that we want to get out of regulating personal events such as weddings, graduations, etc. The two proposed Amendments are included in this meeting packet.

Discussion was had by the Board on our original concerns and the reasons we are looking at amending the ordinance. Fleming voiced concerns over unintended consequences that come from more regulations. Overhiser pointed out that this takes all non-commercial

events off the table, in terms of outdoor gatherings. The first amendment focuses on D) non-commercial events, E) special use permits, and F) events allowed under zoning ordinances. A motion was made by Clevenger to approve Section 1 Amendments: D, E, & F. Support by Ridley. Roll call vote: Fleming, yes. Clevenger, yes. Overhiser, yes. Ridley, yes. Campbell, yes. All votes in favor.

Overhiser expressed that he personally believes that we need to limit the number of times in a calendar year that this can be used. Discussion was had by the board about what numbers felt comfortable for them. Ridley asked for clarification that this wording puts the responsibility back on the property owner and that was verified; meaning there cannot be three different entities asking for an outdoor gathering on the same property. The responsibility lies with the property owner. Fleming proposed 12 times per calendar year. Discussion was had on the need to still follow the noise ordinance. Ridley pointed out the importance of wording on the amendment because 12 events in a three-month span could put us right back in the same situation in terms of issues we had this Summer with back-to-back events every weekend. Fleming proposed 1 per month verses 12 each year. Ridley stated her comfort would be closer to half that or lower, 12 just seems too much.

Campbell stated that her preference is to limit it and we can always change that later. Fleming stated that he felt we should start high and it can always be lowered but if we start low, we rarely go back because people are afraid if it is working well, why change it? Overhiser commented, if we really wanted commercial activity to take place in these zones, we would permit it, but we do not want that. Overhiser pointed out that given that we are primarily a summer community, he feels like 3 would be a generous number. Campbell stated that she can live with 3 but not 12. Discussion was had on listening to what the Board has heard from the neighbors all Summer. Clevenger proposed that we set the number at 4 per calendar year.

Support by Fleming. Roll call vote: Campbell, No. Clevenger, yes. Overhiser, yes. Ridley, yes. Fleming, yes. 4 to1, motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Proposed Meeting Dates: As discussed in November, the Casco Township Board will meet the third Monday of the month, at 7:00 PM except for January. January's meeting will be moved to the following Tuesday in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. A motion was made by Clevenger to approve the schedule. Support by Fleming. All votes in favor.

Tuesday, January 20, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, February 16, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, March 16, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, April 20, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, May 18, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, June 15, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, July 20, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, August 17, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, September 21, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, October 19, 2025; 7:00 PM
Monday, November 16, 2025; 7:00 PM

Monday, December 21, 2025; 7:00 PM

2026 Senior & Road Millage: Overhiser informed the Board that we have two Senior millages expiring this month. We had a 4-year millage that was passed in 2022 and will expire this December. We had another \$250,000 that was passed in 2024 that will also expire this year in 2025. In speaking with Diane Rigozzi, VanBuren County Senior Services would like us to go with a \$.5 million millage to continue with their Senior Services. That is Supervisor Overhiser's recommendation. This will not be a renewal but a brand-new millage. Trustee Campbell spoke on the importance of putting this on the ballot, talking specifically about the mental health benefits and the growing number of Seniors in Casco Township and the fact that this service is needed. Trustee Fleming stated that he feels this needs a lot more discussion and he requested the vote be tabled for the evening so that more discussion could be had. He felt that two years ago this vote was pushed forward with a lot of momentum and he remembers hearing of taxpayers in tears because of their increased taxes to support this. Fleming shared quotes from both William Bradford and John F. Kennedy. He also spoke about the fact that we need to really look at the numbers involved here. He acknowledges all the good that is happening but also that it is very expensive. He reminded the board that this is not a democracy but a republic and that we as a Board have the responsibility to decide if this is a good thing to put on the ballot. Discussion was had. Fleming ultimately asked why is this Casco Township's responsibility? He feels there are other options for Senior activities led by the Seniors themselves. Overhiser pointed out the various programs that have happened in the Township for our Seniors and this by far, has brought in the most amount of people. We were never able to get more than 18-20 people involved so the numbers we see clearly show need and interest. Treasurer Clevenger stated that last time he voted no on this. As Treasurer he doesn't want to raise taxes, but he also sees the geographic issues in Casco Township, and he agrees the numbers are high. He also feels you can't deny what the Seniors and voters want. If the voters want to vote on this, we should listen to our voters. Fleming asked why not let those who want it pay for it and Overhiser stated, its not structured like that as it is not a private club you can pay in to. Clevenger made a motion to add the 4-year Senior millage to the Ballot for August 2026. Support by Campbell. Roll call vote: Overhiser, yes. Campbell, yes. Ridley, yes. Fleming, No. Clevenger, yes.

The 2020 Casco Township Road millage will also expire at the end of the month. Overhiser recommended we renew this millage at \$1.464 million and increase the balance. Clevenger made a motion to accept Overhiser's recommendation, support by Fleming. All votes in favor.

Overhiser let the Board know that he has been speaking with Building Inspector, Eric Davis and that we are exploring possibilities of moving towards BS&A for our building records. There will be some components to figure out with this so expect more information to come. He noted that this will probably require the hiring of an office assistant for the building department.

Public Comment:

- B. Sherwood, shared his appreciation with the Board for allowing the public to vote on the Senior millage in 2026.

- D. Campbell commented that he thought using BS&A for the Building Department would be great for continuity across all departments.

Adjournment A motion to adjourn was made by Clevenger to adjourn at 8:40 PM. Support by Ridley. All votes in favor.

Rachel Ridley
Casco Township Clerk