The regular meeting of Macon Township was held on July 6, 2026 at 7:00p.m. with Supervisor Dean Montrief presiding. Roll call: Dean Montrief: present; Julia Marshall: present; Beth DeJonghe: present; Joe Rine: present; Charley Downing: absent. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Important Dates:
Township Board Meeting August 3, 2026 at 7p.m.
Planning Commission Meeting July 15, 2026 at 7p.m.

Public Comment:

Mary Tommelein – 111 Oneida – Public Comment regarding Lake Ridge Cemetery. Copy attached to the minutes.
Sharon Schroeder Douglas on behalf of Donald & Margaret Schroeder 8960 Britton Hwy – Public Comment regarding Lake Ridge Cemetery. Copy attached to the minutes.

Beth DeJonghe moved, seconded by Joe Rine to approve the June 1, 2026 minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Ledger Account Balances:
Solar Account: Balance remains the same at $1,764.46
Road Account: No Disbursements. Receipts: $5,493.25. Total balance in the Road Account: $27,284.28
Fire Account: No Disbursements. Receipts: $3,784.78. Total balance in the Fire Account: $106,986.08
Cemetery Account: Disbursements: $1,785. Receipts: $1,200. Total balance in the Cemetery Account: $23,112.02
Perpetual Care Fund: No Disbursements. Receipts: $1.83. Total balance in the Perpetual Care Fund: $16,053.10
General Fund: Disbursements: $32,777.96. Receipts: $15,273.06. Total balance in the General Fund: $249,198.48

Julia Marshall moved, seconded by Joe Rine to approve the ledger account balances. Motion carried.

Joe Rine moved, seconded by Julia Marshall to pay all bills. Motion carried.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Dean will contact someone to remove the limbs at the Township Hall from the storm.

Julia Marshall moved to adjourn the meeting to closed session at 7:14p.m. pursuant to MCL 15.268(1) (h) to consider a confidential legal discussion from the township's attorney regarding Invenergy vs. Macon Township which is exempt by State or Federal law, seconded by Joe Rine. Roll call: Dean Montrief: yes; Julia Marshall: yes; Beth DeJonghe: yes; Joe Rine: yes; Charley Downing: absent. Motion carried. Closed session was adjourned at 8:29p.m.

Julia Marshall moved to go back into open session at 8:31p.m. seconded by Joe Rine. Roll call: Dean Montrief: yes; Julia Marshall: yes; Beth DeJonghe: yes; Joe Rine: yes; Charley Downing: absent. Motion carried.

Julia Marshall moved, seconded by Joe Rine to adjourn the meeting at 8:32p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Marshall
Clerk
Macon Township

Guests: 13

Civil War

Steward Ballou 1833- 1920
Plot 21

Isaiah Easlick 1835-1870
Plot 35

Calvin Austin 1839-1914
Death record shown on Find a Grave -no grave stone (relative lot 15)

William H Goodrow 1846-1901
Plot 4

George Gould June 11, 1840 - Dec 26 1862
Plot 2

George was in the 4th Michigan Company E. He died in 1862 in Tennessee. He has no military headstone. The Fourth Michigan was recruited in the Macon and Tecumseh area. They were led by Lt. Edward Tucker of Macon. They were also the regiment that captured Confederate President Jefferson Davis in 1865. He served alongside William H Crittenden who is buried in the Macon Cemetery and received a commemorative plaque a few years ago. Source: Local Historian Bob Elliot

World War 2

Clarence Pollitz 1930-1960
Pacific US Air Force Korea
Plot 105

Harold J Schdroeder 1925-2005
No grave marker
Plot 18,A

Wills E Schroeder
1927 - 1947 Died age 19
Killed in Action - Asiatic and Pacific
Plot 1C

Walter Wonderly 1930-2016
Army National Guard
Plot 105

Dear Trustee Downing and Members of the Macon Township Board,
Because Trustee Downing was unable to attend the July Township Board meeting, We wanted to send the two public presentations regarding Lake Ridge Cemetery. Our intent is not to revisit past disagreements, but to ensure the Board has accurate historical and legal information as discussions continue.

Several statements made during the June Township meeting left the public with an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of Lake Ridge Cemetery. As elected officials, your comments carry significant weight, and we respectfully ask that future discussions be based upon verified historical records, applicable statutes, and documented facts.

The first presentation recognized the **nine veterans buried at Lake Ridge Cemetery** in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States. These veterans served our country from the Civil War through World War II, Korea, and the National Guard. Their service and sacrifice deserve recognition, and their final resting place deserves thoughtful stewardship.

Special recognition was given to **Harold J. Schroeder**, a World War II veteran who served in Europe. Because he spoke German, Harold translated captured German documents for the Army. Like many veterans of his generation, he rarely discussed the war, although he shared memories of marching for miles in freezing conditions until his feet bled. Harold and his wife, Joyce, are buried in Lake Ridge Cemetery. *(Sharon Schroeder Douglas interviewed Harold while alive for a school project)*

The presentation also honored **Willis E. Schroeder**, who was lost while serving in the Pacific Theater during World War II and whose memorial marker is located at Lake Ridge, along with the remaining veterans whose sacrifices helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy today.

The second presentation addressed several factual issues that arose during the June meeting. Among those clarifications were:

- Donald Schroeder does **not** own a burial plot at Lake Ridge Cemetery. His parents and several siblings are buried there, while Donald and Margaret Schroeder purchased plots many years ago in Macon Cemetery.
- The graves Trustee Downing referenced as being "mismatched" are, in fact, the graves of his own uncle's parents, World War II veteran Harold Schroeder.
- The stone fragments located near the township building are not evidence of missing graves. They are original pieces of monuments that were carefully salvaged during previous cemetery restoration work.
- Volunteers, including Ben Yenor, Don Schroeder, Ron Miller, and many others, repaired monuments and maintained the cemetery for years. Previous Township Boards publicly acknowledged those efforts and reimbursed volunteers only for documented out-of-pocket expenses incurred at the Township's request. These reimbursements were never compensation for labor.
- Historical documentation was again presented showing Lake Ridge Cemetery's establishment in 1837 and incorporation under the Lake Ridge Cemetery Association in 1855.

For your convenience, We have attached a copy of **Public Act 254 of 1968**, specifically **Section 35b (MCL 456.35b)**. This statute clearly exempts nonprofit cemeteries of ten acres or less, operating prior to March 10, 1967, from the perpetual care fund requirements contained in Sections 35 and 35a. Based on its documented history, Lake Ridge Cemetery falls within this exemption. This directly addresses concerns previously raised regarding perpetual care requirements.

We have also attached information regarding the estimated tax impact discussed during the June meeting.

The tax calculations presented in June do not accurately reflect the financial obligation associated with the Township assuming ownership through a quiet title action. They appear to overstate the impact by using assumptions that are inconsistent with the actual annual maintenance costs that have historically been incurred.

As discussed during the July presentation:

- Historical maintenance expenses have generally been approximately **$2,000 to $3,000 annually**
- When viewed against the Township's overall budget and taxable value, the actual cost to maintain Lake Ridge Cemetery represents only a small fraction of a mill.
- Presenting significantly larger tax figures without explaining the underlying assumptions creates unnecessary concern among taxpayers and does not provide residents with an accurate understanding of the financial realities.

Our hope is that future discussions will focus on documented facts rather than speculation.

This issue is ultimately about preserving an important part of Macon Township's history, honoring the families who established our community, and ensuring that the nine veterans buried at Lake Ridge Cemetery continue to receive the respect they have earned through their service to our nation.

Each member of this Board took an oath to faithfully discharge the duties of public office. Part of that responsibility is ensuring that information shared during public meetings is accurate, well-researched, and fairly presented.We respectfully ask that all future discussions regarding Lake Ridge Cemetery reflect that commitment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sharon Douglas and Mary Tommelein representatives of Lake Ridge Descendents

Attachments:

1. Public Act 254 of 1968 – Section 35b (Perpetual Care Fund Exemption)
2. Lake Ridge Cemetery Historical Timeline
3. Tax Impact Analysis Regarding Quiet Title and Township Ownership

Attachment A

Review of Legal and Financial Issues Raised Regarding Lake Ridge Cemetery

Purpose

This summary is provided to clarify several issues discussed during the June Township meeting and in Trustee Joe Rine's written presentation. The intent is to encourage decisions based on applicable law, documented history, and verified financial information.

1. Perpetual Care Fund

Concern Raised: The Township may be required to establish a perpetual care trust fund estimated at approximately $140,000 if it assumes ownership.

Response: Michigan law provides an exemption for nonprofit earth interment cemeteries of ten acres or less that existed prior to March 10, 1967. Lake Ridge Cemetery was established in 1837 and incorporated in 1855. Section 35b of Public Act 254 of 1968 (MCL 456.35b) states that qualifying cemeteries are exempt from the perpetual care fund requirements of Sections 35 and 35a. Accordingly, the applicability of this exemption should be fully evaluated before concluding that a perpetual care fund is legally required.

2. Taxpayer Impact

Concern Raised: A dedicated millage may be needed to support cemetery maintenance.

Response: The examples presented used one-mill and one-tenth mill calculations. However, property taxes are levied against taxable (or assessed) value rather than market value. More importantly, no evidence has been presented that a dedicated millage would be necessary. Historical maintenance costs have generally been in the range of approximately $2,000 to $3,000 annually when volunteers were reimbursed for documented out-of-pocket expenses. Those costs represent only a small fraction of the Township's annual budget.

3. Long-Term Maintenance

Concern Raised: Cemetery maintenance could become a significant ongoing financial obligation.

Response: For many decades Macon Township budgeted for Lake Ridge Cemetery maintenance. Previous Township Boards publicly acknowledged volunteers and reimbursed documented expenses for materials and supplies, not labor. These historical practices demonstrate that routine maintenance has been manageable.

4. Cemetery Closure and Relocation of Graves

Concern Raised: The Township could incur substantial costs associated with moving graves.

Response: No proposal has been made to close Lake Ridge Cemetery or relocate human remains. The discussion has centered on clarifying ownership through a quiet title action so the cemetery may continue to be preserved. Consequently, references to cemetery closure and relocation costs do not appear directly related to the proposal currently under consideration and may unnecessarily alarm residents.

Supporting Statute

Public Act 254 of 1968, Section 35b (MCL 456.35b):
"Earth interment cemeteries of 10 acres or less in size which are owned and operated exclusively by nonprofit entities existing prior to March 10, 1967 ... shall be exempt from the care fund requirements of sections 35 and 35a..."

Attachment B

Fact Check: Statements Discussed During the June Township Meeting

Purpose

This document compares several statements made during the June Twp meeting with historical documentation, applicable law, and information presented during the July public comments. Its purpose is to encourage accurate, well-supported public discussion.

Statement or Concern Presented	Supporting Facts and Documentation
Perpetual care fund of approximately $140,000 may be required.	Michigan law (MCL 456.35b, Public Act 254 of 1968) exempts nonprofit earth interment cemeteries of 10 acres or less existing prior to March 10, 1967, from perpetual care fund requirements. Lake Ridge Cemetery was established in 1837 and incorporated in 1855. The applicability of this exemption should be fully evaluated before concluding a trust fund is required.
Township taxpayers may need a significant millage increase to maintain the cemetery.	Historical maintenance costs have generally been about $2,000–$3,000 annually when volunteers were reimbursed for documented out-of-pocket expenses. No evidence has been presented that a dedicated millage is necessary. Examples using a full one-mill levy substantially exceed historical maintenance costs.
Property tax examples presented reflected the cost to taxpayers.	Michigan property taxes are levied on taxable (or assessed) value, not market value. Any discussion of tax impact should clearly distinguish between these values and explain the assumptions used.
Graves were described as mismatched or missing markers.	The graves referenced belong to members of Trustee Downing's extended family, including World War II veteran Harold Schroeder. Stone fragments near the township building are salvaged portions of monuments removed during prior restoration work and are not evidence of abandoned graves.
The cemetery may require closure or relocation of graves.	The proposal discussed by descendants has focused on clarifying ownership through a quiet title action so the cemetery can continue to be preserved. No proposal has been made to close the cemetery or relocate remains. Discussion of relocation

	costs is therefore not directly related to the proposal under consideration.
Historical ownership and status remain uncertain.	Historical records document the earliest burial in 1837, formation of the Lake Ridge Cemetery Association in 1855, (No remaining Association or records of meetings after 1940) and approximately a century of Township financially supporting the maintenance and care. These records should be carefully reviewed when evaluating future action.

Recommendation

Because public statements made by elected officials carry significant weight, future discussions should be supported by primary historical records, applicable statutes, and independently verified financial information. Providing residents with accurate and complete information will foster informed public discussion and sound decision-making regarding the future of Lake Ridge Cemetery.