

Oxford Township
2025 Annual Meeting Minutes
March 11, 6:30 pm
Isanti Fire District Station 3

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by the clerk and pledge was recited.

Attendance: 55 residents signed in by 6:29pm; 69 residents total signed in by meeting end, including two township supervisors (Ryan Hondlik & Jennifer Perkins), clerk Danielle Wiener, and treasurer Peggy Nelson.

Attendees were reminded members of the public & non-resident landowners were welcome at the meeting, but only those eligible to vote in Oxford Township may act on motions or cast a vote per Minn. Statute §365.57.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR

Danielle opened nominations for moderator. Cathy G made a motion to elect Gloria McDonnell as moderator, seconded by Barb S; Jennifer P made a motion to elect Connie Thorp as moderator, seconded by Dave T. After nominations were closed, the votes for Gloria and Connie were cast by show of hands, which was too close to call. Danielle called the vote for Gloria again, asking each resident to count off in order (starting with 1), and lower their hand as they went. A total of 24 electors voted for Gloria, and 26 for Connie. Connie was elected meeting moderator.

Approval of Agenda

Connie read the order of business for the 2025 annual town meeting aloud. Gloria M made a motion to amend the agenda and add an oral report from the town hall committee after the legislative update, seconded by Brad S. After some discussion, the amendment was put to a voice vote, and the motion carried.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Barb S, seconded by Brad S; motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Year's Annual Meeting Minutes - Paul S made a motion to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes as supplemented by the moderator, seconded by Brenda M, motion carried unanimously.

Reading of Board of Audit Report

Danielle read the report of 2024 fund balances as posted by the treasurer. A detailed financial report of 2024 income/expenses & 2025 estimates was also included on the resident handout.

2024 Isanti Fire District Report

Assistant Fire Chief Zach L gave a detailed overview of the 2024 annual report by the Isanti Fire District. Of 562 total calls, the fire district responded to 26 calls from Oxford in 2024: 3 building fires, 14 rescue/medical incidents, 4 assists, 5 good intent calls. Oxford had a 3% share of call responses and 6% of the total budget in 2024. The report also contained property valuation of the district's service areas (used in the formula to determine the years' service charges), 2024 financial summary, Oxford's share of the 2025 budget, & more.

2025 Donation Requests

Oxford received 7 donation requests this year from local organizations: Seven County Senior Federation, New Pathways, Isanti County Commission on Aging (Senior center/café), Isanti County Historical Society, Family Pathways, Viking Vittles, and Isanti County Safety & Rescue. The town board may consider approving charitable donations to qualified organizations in 2026.

Tom B with Isanti County Safety & Rescue gave a report of their 2024 activities, which included 466 hours of training (mock search & rescue with sheriff reserves & mounted patrol at Anderson Park, “lost child” scenario; November deer hunter scenarios, “falling out of tree stand”, drone/mounted patrol for an evening “lost hunter in the woods”; water rescue at Rum River, etc). They clocked 1929 volunteer hours in 2024, and he encouraged residents to consider volunteering. A Family Pathways representative spoke next; she thanked us for past support and said they served 16 Oxford township families last year. Donna S spoke for Viking Vittles; the program is funded entirely by donations, and they are providing weekend backpacks to over 360 kids experiencing food insecurity in North Branch area schools.

Legislative Update & Town Hall Discussion

Senator Mark Koran, who represents Oxford area, gave a legislative update related to townships & finances. Due to state level deficits and changes in funding, Isanti County will likely need to increase spending to cover mandated health and human services programs (with less help from the state). He also explained the annexation bill he has sponsored, which will allow township residents to vote on a potential annexation by a nearby city, and took questions from residents.

Brad S spoke next about the options the town hall committee has been exploring. Quotes for refurbishing the town hall (new roof, new vapor barrier & insulation in attic, etc) will be discussed at the April regular town board meeting, and he shared other ideas for alternatives to using the original hall in the future. There was much discussion among residents concerning the hall’s current condition and options. One resident suggested the community pitch in to get the hall fixed, and residents were encouraged to reach out or attend the April meeting if they want to help & hold licensure in trades which could contribute to lowering costs.

Powers of Electors

Moderator Connie reminded residents Minn. Stat. §365.10, subds. 1-18 lists powers which may be exercised at the annual meeting. After offering to read the statute aloud, electors waived reading and no action was taken.

MOTIONS TO SET THE 2026 LEVY

The town board’s proposed 2026 levy was read aloud:

General Fund \$83,000

Road & Bridge \$191,000

Fire \$10,000

total for 2026 of \$284,000.

Ryan H (supervisor), who drafted the approved 2025 budget, answered questions from residents about the changes in levy amounts requested per fund from the current year’s levy (2025). The Fire fund estimated balance at year end would still cover more than two years of fire service costs, so the board proposed another reduction to spend down the surplus.

The \$27,000 less in Fire was allocated to the proposed 2026 General fund total, while Road & Bridge proposed levy remains the same as 2025. Residents discussed the option of adding more to Road & Bridge instead of General; Danielle reminded the electors 2026 is an election year (which requires more expenditures from General). Any other projects (unrelated to Roads) the board chooses to address in 2026, including town hall repairs, would be paid for out of General funds.

Residents asked if approving the proposed \$191,000 for Road & Bridge would adequately cover required future road maintenance; Oxford has the fewest miles of road out of all Isanti County townships, so we have more to spend per road mile than some of the neighboring townships. The board will be utilizing road assessment tools to better track township road conditions and prioritize projects more effectively. Supervisors will be individually assessing roads from April 19-May 11, comparing results at the May regular town board meeting, and discussing maintenance plans for 2025. Residents are welcome to contact the supervisors and observe the assessment process.

After some discussion, Connie asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to accept the board's proposal; Austin L made a motion to set the 2026 levy as proposed by the board, seconded by Jack S, motion carried almost unanimously, with 1 nay.

General Discussion of Items of Concern

The Isanti County Household Hazardous Waste Program enables residents to use Chisago Hazardous Waste free once per year. Required voucher may be available at Chisago but can also be filled out online or turned in with Isanti County prior to disposal.

Community Event Planning – Everyone who would like to help plan fun events for 2025 is welcome to attend the resident meeting March 29 at Country Roads Church.

The 2024 Oxford Lake Report from the SWCD is available on the website and will be discussed by Tiffany from Isanti SWCD at the April regular board meeting.

Motion to set time of Call to Order for next annual meeting (March 10, 2026)

Jack S made a motion to set the time for 6:30pm, seconded by Gloria M, motion carried unanimously.

Notice of County Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting

June 17, 6pm, Isanti County Government Center

To contest property valuation or classification, residents are encouraged to contact the Isanti assessor's office before June 17.

Adjournment Connie asked for a motion to adjourn, Barb S made such a motion, seconded by Josh L, motion carried unanimously, 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Wiener, Oxford Township Clerk

March 13, 2025