

OXFORD TOWNSHIP
Regular Board Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2025

Pledge, Call to Order – 6:30pm.

Town officers present: Supervisors Jennifer Perkins, Ryan Hondlik, Mike Miller;
Treasurer- Peggy Nelson, Clerk- Danielle Wiener

Public Forum

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mike made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

Mike made a motion to approve the January regular board meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Peggy read the receipts:

Money Market Interest	\$62.60
County of Isanti 2024 Settlement	\$7,527.37

Peggy read the claims for approval:

East Central Energy (Electric service)	\$129.24
US Postal Service (stamps)	\$ 73.00
Kramer Mechanical (winterized town hall)	\$400.00
City of Stacy (Elmcrest Ave plowing)	\$420.00
Quality Tree & Snow (salting, plowing)	\$2,248.10
Peggy Nelson (reimbursements)	\$240.55
Paul K – 172 gophers	\$344.00

FUND TOTALS (before claims)

General	\$31,112.48
Road & Bridge	\$133,130.34
Fire	\$123,339.52

Mike made a motion to approve the claims, and treasurer’s report as presented, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Minnesota Benefits Life Insurance Policy Due – Oxford currently has the cheapest plan for town officers, a little over \$400 invested by the township per year.

After some discussion on cost versus payout benefits of the policy, Ryan made a motion to discontinue paying into the policy, seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously.

State Disaster Assistance Contingency Fund – On January 27, 2025, the state of MN approved a reimbursement program for clean up expenses related to the storms & tornado of August 2024. Oxford has already spent over \$8,000 to remove trees from road rights-of-way, and if all forms required by the state are submitted within 60 days, we could receive up to 75% of expenses back (around \$6,000). Mike said it was worth filling out the paperwork, Jennifer offered to work on the report. It is possible further ditch clean up related to storm damage (especially fallen trees) could also be submitted.

CLERK’S REPORT

Danielle gave a brief overview of the January Minnesota Association of Township’s Day at the Capitol event; over 100 town officers gathered to meet with their state senators and representatives. MAT legislative lobbying priorities on behalf of townships in 2025 include requesting more funding for township roads, broader access/funding for rural emergency medical services, a bill to give townships a vote in the annexation process, and more. She has also updated Oxford’s contact information with Isanti County. The MAT Isanti County Town Officer’s Association had their first quarter meeting, no dues charged this year.

ROAD REPORT

Each supervisor drove their zone of the township and didn’t notice any issues.

Snowplow operator Josh reported he has been salting the blacktop roads after plowing if necessary and temperatures are right; he said he tries to apply as little as possible at a time to avoid over salting. He has been applying either straight salt or straight gravel depending on conditions, this latest snowstorm was the first time he had to plow the gravel roads. He noticed about a dozen residents plowed across the roads, which means Josh has to circle back and clean up the excess, re-salt if necessary.

The board used to have door hanger reminders for residents about plowing across the road, but they weren't always effective; if the issue keeps occurring, Josh will let the board know, and reminder handouts may be utilized.

FIRE REPORT

The Isanti Fire District had 37 runs in the district, a decrease of 5% from Dec 2023. Ryan relayed the department had a total of 562 runs in 2024, 5% increase on 2023's numbers. The fire board will be discussing whether to extend a long term rental agreement to Oxford township for use of Station 3 at a later meeting.

Oxford Township had 2 December runs, with average response time of 14 minutes. 26 total runs were made to Oxford in 2024, with 13 minute average response time.

OLD BUSINESS

Resident Town Hall Committee Update

Bob Generous gave a brief overview, from his conversation with Isanti County Zoning about the current town hall property and its setback requirements. He supplied the board with an example sketch plan for a possible new building, 60x50 sq ft with 15x20 vestibule in front, as well as options for expanded parking. The county requires one parking space per four "seats", so a 100 person capacity building would need 25 parking spots. His sketch also retains the original septic site and well site.

Deb Cramer said the committee was also tasked with sharing the costs of refurbishing the existing town hall. Besides the ProCare Report on the mold/water damage in the kitchen/bathrooms, she said she hasn't seen the quotes from 2024 on abatement, restoration, and necessary upgrades. Deb requested permission from the board to contact contractors and get quotes on repairs required for the original town hall. Mike said the roof also needs replacement and septic habitually freezes in winter. Jennifer offered to assist in letting Deb and contractors into the town hall; she said this could provide residents with more data on the options available, and thanked the committee for their work providing information on potential costs of a new building.

Jennifer made a motion for the board to support Deb in getting additional quotes on work needed at the town hall, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Donna Setter hopes to hear more resident opinions on the town hall. Gloria McDonnell discussed financing; if residents wanted to increase the levy at subsequent annual meetings to save for a new town hall, they can't ensure the board won't spend it on other expenses. There was more discussion on bonding, saving money, & options.

REORGANIZATION MEETING, continued (from January 2025 regular board meeting)

Quotes were received from the two legally recognized local papers to comply with public notice requirements. There was some discussion, and residents agreed they would like to go with the County News Review so notices are also printed in the Scotsman.

Jennifer made a motion to use the County News Review for public notice, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

2025 Fees – After spirited dialogue among board and residents in attendance, Jennifer made a motion to keep the driveway permit fee at \$300, swing-away mailbox fee \$200 (uninstalled), and gopher bounty at \$2/gopher (pair of front feet); seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

The town ordinances and resolution binder is available for town officers to review at the town hall, also available on the website.

Town Officer Compensation

Oxford's current rates are:

Required town board and fire board meetings= \$100/mtg

Training= \$100/4 hours, \$200/all day sessions

Hourly wages= \$25 (would apply to board approved extra meetings)

Clerk and Treasurer, yearly salary= \$5,154.20/year

After board discussion, Jennifer made a motion to keep all wages the same, with the stipulation any training or meetings not required for officers to attend must be approved for reimbursement by the board ahead of time; Ryan seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Town Hall Building

Supervisors discussed the two approved expenses for the town hall from July 2024 meeting, flashing completed around a roof vent and a dehumidifier (up to \$1,000). A dehumidifier was used in the past during the summer months. The board will decide whether to move forward with a dehumidifier at a future meeting.

The insurance policy resolution to lower the coverage of the town hall was misplaced and not submitted. Jennifer will work on getting it signed and turned in.

Contract for Services

Danielle gave a brief overview of the powers electors (township residents) can exercise at the annual meeting (MN Statute 365.10), some of which are shared with the board, and the difference between contract for services agreements and donations.

Contracts for services are legal agreements of money paid for services provided to the township, which the town board can only enter into after electors vote to allow it at the annual meeting. The town board is able, under statute, to make charitable donations to certain organizations without elector approval. Food shelves and senior centers are two categories the board can donate to; the supervisors reviewed the list of past donations and which organizations also receive money from Isanti County. Ryan made a motion to donate \$700 each to Cambridge Surplus Foods, Viking Vittles, and the Seven County Senior Federation, seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposals for Website

Jennifer shared the three proposals received for a new website design, all of which have designed local township websites.

Revize Webjen has their own platform and hosting, snap backups, ample storage, with many extra features. Ongoing costs of \$1,600 per year include training, tech support, software updates, and initial design costs were over \$4,000; North Branch Township uses Revize as do many MN cities and townships.

Brilliant Bulb Design, Inc designed Athens Township's website, uses WordPress and has many similar features as Revize. The first year would be over \$4,000 and \$1,000 per year after.

Rosenthal Public Affairs uses SquareSpace, would put two years of minutes and documents, and the township would be responsible for populating the site with the rest. Leslie Rosenthal's quote was most affordable at \$1500 for initial design, custom logo of \$250, and ongoing costs under \$300/year.

During discussion, Jennifer made a note that due to different factors such as security and accessibility, website design isn't a project where cost should be the main factor. All web designs would be easy to update, mobile friendly, ADA compliant, and include integrated email & MailChimp. Developing website content & completing an update would take Jennifer a few months; some discussion followed.

Ryan made a motion to update Oxford Township's website with Rosedahl Public Affairs, seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously.

Annual Meeting

There was some discussion on options for how to check in/verify annual meeting attendees who are eligible to vote at the annual meeting. Electors must be residents, age 18 or older, who are qualified to vote in the township during a regular election. Danielle offered to help organize a check in system, potentially using a list of property owners from the county; Peggy suggested also utilizing the plat map. No decision was made by the board on a specific check in system.

Options for annual meeting notice – Post Haste can do 400 postcards slightly smaller than 4x6, on colored paper and addresses printed for \$76. Bulk postage may be an option, regular postcard stamps would cost less than \$250. Danielle asked the board if the card could include an invite to 1-2 resident meetings for the purpose of planning community events (dates TBD). Jennifer suggested the card could also have information about the upcoming website update, MailChimp email list, ongoing town hall discussion, etc. Jennifer made a motion to print such a notice, Ryan seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Microsoft 365 auto-renewed with the previous clerk's credit card information; Peggy will make sure she gets a claim sheet for reimbursement, and Jennifer requested the board discuss completing the application process for a township credit card so personal cards are no longer needed for township business.

Board Facilitator – Mike will get information for the state-affiliated facilitator to Jennifer.

MNLTAP Class, MAT Spring Short Courses

Mike made a motion for Ryan to take the virtual LTAP class on Extending Pavement Life for \$75, and for Ryan & Danielle to attend the full day MAT spring short course in April (\$75/person plus the \$200/person township training wage), Jennifer seconded, motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

Mike made a motion to adjourn at 8:34pm, seconded by Ryan, carried unanimously.

BOARD OF AUDIT MEETING

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Wiener, Oxford Township Clerk