

OXFORD TOWNSHIP
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025

Mike Miller called to order, town officers present were Mike Miller, Ryan Hondlik, Jennifer Perkins, and Peggy Nelson. Pledge was recited.

Ryan Hondlik took the oath of office.

Public Forum – Cathy G resigned from cleaning the town hall, handed in keys.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Clerk-Elect Resignation

Jennifer made a motion to accept the resignation of Laurie Faust and declare a vacancy in the office of town clerk, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Appoint Township Clerk

Jennifer made a motion to appoint Danielle Wiener as township clerk, seconded by Ryan; Danielle accepted, motion carried unanimously.

Discussion on allotting hours and setting wages for training of the clerk.

Jennifer made a motion to set training wage of \$25/hour, with a flexible cap of 15 hours per month for two months, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

Jennifer made a motion to accept December regular board meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Peggy read the claims for approval:

MSA Professional Services	\$6119.60
United States Treasury	\$593.31
PERA, 4 th quarter	\$568.86
MAT Dues	\$740.88

Isanti Soil and Water	\$1,234.64
Gustafson (grading Oct/Nov)	\$8,868.75
Isanti Area Joint Fire	\$10,982.22
PERA reimbursement	\$118.83
ECE Electric Services	\$122
North Branch Township (gravel for 277 th)	\$26,132.66
Quality Tree and Snow	\$3,035.20

Peggy read the receipts:

Money market interest	\$72.61
State of MN credit	\$4,715.09
Township Aid	\$675.50

FUND TOTALS (before claims)

General	\$33,657.21
Road & Bridge	\$144,849.70
Fire	\$133,419.85

Jennifer made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Claim Sheet for Town Officers

There was some discussion on what details would be included on the proposed claims sheets. Jennifer made a motion for the town officers to submit claims sheets for meetings and trainings attended, along with work done outside meetings, to accompany the quarterly payroll moving forward. Seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

ROAD REPORT

Josh (Snow plow operator) has been proactively spreading a mix of granite chip/salt on township roads during icy conditions.

Residents were reminded, please do not plow across the township or county roads, it makes extra work for snowplow operators and is technically illegal.

Update on MNDOT Road Inventory Tool

Resident Margie T presented at the October meeting about the tool used by MNDOT to inventory, evaluate, and prioritize road maintenance. Jennifer worked with Margie to condense and customize the data of Oxford's roads (length, width, gravel-specific conditions, & other information). The roads are listed as segments, and Jennifer used the road mileage of Oxford's roads collected by resident Mark F along with the road widths she measured to complete the initial draft of the inventory tracker & assessment spreadsheets.

A road maintenance tracker was also introduced. The re-graveling & paving projects of the past 3 years and associated costs are listed, with an additional category for cost/mile based on the data entered. This tracking spreadsheet can be used to monitor expenses and maintenance over time, and aid in the planning of future road projects.

Jennifer proposed the supervisors go out in the spring and grade the roads individually & publicly, and bring the data together to create a road usability rating. She would also like the initial road inventory figures to be verified for accuracy by Ryan and Mike. The hope is to decide on a consistent standard for acceptable township road conditions.

There was further discussion on adding photos of roads to the data set, making the information public for the residents, and having a March regular board meeting dedicated to continued conversation on the MNDOT tool.

Jennifer also suggested the board work with a facilitator at a future date to foster effective communication among the town officers.

There was discussion about when to have a March regular board meeting, as the 2nd Tuesday in March is the Annual Town Meeting. Mike suggested the budget also be a focus of the March regular board meeting, and to schedule it before the annual meeting.

Jennifer made a motion to have a regular town board meeting on March 4, 2025 at 6:30pm to discuss the road tool data and township budget, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Isanti Fire District Update

Ryan attended the most recent meeting of the Isanti Fire District, and asked for feedback from residents on what information they would like relayed from those meetings. The fire board discussed bills, new hire update (9 applicants, 1 for station 3), reviewed pension, set the fire board meeting schedule, reorganized the board, & reviewed calls for the month.

There were 4 calls to Oxford in November 2024 (including the house fires on Pigeon Loft Road); average response time to calls was 16 minutes. The fire board noted the residents were appreciative of the firefighter's work putting out those structure fires.

Mike commented Oxford may be interested in fire hardening procedures in the future due to the prevalence of trees around houses in our township. The fire department is always looking for more volunteers.

The next fire board meeting at Station 3 will be March 19 at 7pm; 2025 monthly meeting schedule will be posted at Oxford Town Hall.

Jennifer and Danielle volunteered to stay after regular monthly board meetings and clean the Station 3 spaces used by the township.

Town Hall Winterizing

Mike shut off the well, drained water from all faucets, nothing is broken. The quote to winterize from Kramer Mechanical was \$400; they will pump RV antifreeze through pipes & drains, and recommended keeping furnace at 45 degrees. The breaker is off so the well doesn't run. Jennifer made a motion to accept the winterization quote from Kramer Mechanical, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

There was some discussion on moving files and township supplies/property out of the hall; Jennifer proposed the township look into purchasing a metal storage container instead of renting long term storage; a storage container could be sold after use or utilized as a township shed. Jennifer will get a quote for further discussion at February board meeting.

Additional Town Hall Updates

Donna S of the resident town hall task force asked for more feedback from the residents of Oxford Twp on the different options for a town hall/meeting space long term. The task force will present information on saving money for a new building at the February regular board meeting, and an example plan for a new building on the existing township property. There was discussion about the Northwest Saddle Club as a potential option for long term rental; as of right now, still waiting on a response from the rental coordinator. Mike spoke to Isanti County Zoning about the Saddle Club's conditional use permit (CUP), there was much discussion. Resident Connie T also spoke to Isanti County Zoning, the CUP is related solely to the Saddle Club's horse shows & related activities. Jennifer will attend the February Saddle Club monthly meeting for an update on possibility of renting.

In the interim, Jennifer made a motion to request a 12-24 month contract agreement from Isanti Fire District for use of Station 3, stipulating the contract be unrelated to ongoing Joint Powers Agreement discussion. Motion also includes an offer from Oxford Township to make a reasonable contribution to Isanti Fire District in exchange for the use of Station 3 for regular monthly board meetings and to cover any costs incurred by such use. Seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously; Ryan will verbally relay the offer at the next Isanti Fire District meeting.

Internet Access and Zoom Update

Oxford township paid \$700 for in October 2024 for the Zoom account, renewed through October 2025 whether we use it or not. Mike noted he hasn't had any resident complaints at the lack of Zoom meeting access over the past few months, neither have Jennifer or Ryan. Resident interest in continued hybrid meetings could be a topic during the annual meeting.

Jennifer shared another internet access option for the board meetings at Station 3 through T-Mobile: setting up a business internet account, equipment would be mailed if connectivity is deemed adequate. The price would be \$60/month, with a 15 day return window if it doesn't work out. T-Mobile also advised hotspots can be hit or miss, and Isanti Fire District isn't interested in having permanent internet access at Station 3. Starlink was also suggested by a resident as an option.

Ryan proposed the board try using audio-only Zoom during the February regular board meeting, Jennifer is willing to utilize her personal hotspot to test it.

Township Website Update

Request For Proposal (RFP) sent out already to multiple vendors to get pricing on a new township website, a copy is also available to residents/public, anyone interested may submit an RFP. Jennifer has sent to Gary L (current web designer), revize (North Branch Township's site designer), and Daniel P (designed Athen's website). Jennifer is hoping for a website that's easy to use, mobile friendly, preferably hosted by WordPress or another platform that allows the town officers to keep it updated (rather than relying on an outside contractor). She has received resident feedback and questions on the current website; the cost of upgrading it could be a worthwhile investment.

CTAS Update

Peggy has the year-end processing reports and bank statements ready for the February Board of Audit meeting. Mike commented the residents are welcome to attend the Board of Audit portion of the meeting, where the supervisors verify the checks and ledgers of 2024.

Danielle will take over the clerk's portion of CTAS and work on training & data input for the Board of Audit meeting.

2025 REORGANIZATION MEETING

Assign roles to Supervisors Jennifer Perkins, Ryan Hondlik, and Mike Miller

Chair: Jennifer

Vice Chair: Ryan

Fire Representative: Ryan

Town Hall Maintenance: Mike

County Representative: Jennifer

Technology: Jennifer (Danielle will assist)

Road Responsibility Breakdown

Mike will be the first point of contact for snowplow operator, Ryan for the grader

Snowplowing, trash removal, lawn mowing, brush mowing/cutting: Mike

Road Grading: Ryan

Invasive Weeds: all supervisors

Signage: Mike

Permits (driveway, utility): Mike

Jennifer also suggested each supervisor take a zone of the township roads, dividing up and checking their portion before each monthly meeting.

Mike made a motion to approve the above roles, seconded by Jennifer, motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Approvals

Regular town board meetings will be 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm, except for March regular board meeting, which will be the 1st Tuesday (3/4/25) at 6:30pm.

Newspaper for official published notices will be decided at February meeting, once a quote from the County News Review is received.

Document sharing via a Google Doc folder will be used going forward for town officers to drop information & files into between meetings.

Mileage rates increased to \$0.70/mile (it is compensated separately from payroll).

Town officer compensation rates to be discussed at February and/or March regular town board meetings, after examination of the yearly payroll totals from 2023 & 2024.

Designated posting place for township notices (those not required to be published in the legal newspaper) is the bulletin board on the exterior wall of the Town Hall. Minutes, agendas, and notices can also be found on the township website.

Mike made a motion to approve all of the decisions above, seconded by Jennifer, motion carried unanimously.

2025 Budget Draft

Jennifer made a motion for Ryan to draft a 2025 budget using the 2024 actuals, to present at the March regular board meeting, seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously.

Worker's Comp Audit

Peggy sent the document in at the beginning of January, coverage document made available at the meeting.

Jennifer made a note the insurance coverage on the town hall was never lowered, Danielle will follow up on whether the document was submitted.

2025 Board Agendas

Jennifer suggested the “Roads” portion of the meeting agenda contain only the update on road conditions and maintenance performed, and move any discussions or decisions on road expenditures down the agenda to “Old Business” or “New Business”.

She also would like to post the monthly schedules of Isanti County meetings, fire district meetings, and other public meetings which may relate to Oxford township business at the Town Hall & on the website. Danielle will post a list dates for residents with a notice that a quorum of town officers may be present at such meetings.

Additional Discussion

Resident Donna S inquired about the status of the service contracts for charitable donations decided on at the 2024 annual meeting. There was some discussion, including concerns about making donations on a more limited township budget. Peggy read a list of the organizations which requested donations to resident Connie T, who will cross check if any are also being given charitable donations by Isanti County. Donna clarified Oxford usually distributes charitable donations in January. Danielle will try to find the contracts and verify the correct forms are being used. The board will make a decision on how much to give and to which organizations at the March regular board meeting.

Peggy submitted the Certificate of Indebtedness earlier this month.

ADJOURN 8:47pm, Jennifer made a motion to adjourn, Mike seconded, carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Wiener, Clerk