

OXFORD TOWNSHIP
Regular Board Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2025

Pledge, Call to Order – 6:30

Town officers present: Supervisors Jennifer Perkins, Ryan Hondlik, Mike Miller;

Treasurer- Peggy Nelson, Clerk- Danielle Wiener

Public Forum

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mike requested to add culvert/sign post update, two driveway permits, road restrictions, alarm service cancellation, and clerk compensation to the April regular meeting agenda.

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

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Peggy read the claims for approval:

East Central Energy (Electric service)	\$152.07
E.C.M. Publisher's Inc (Annual mtg notice)	\$ 48.00
Couri & Ruppe (lawyer, email on officer pay)	\$ 68.75
Connie T (Annual mtg moderator pay)	\$100.00
Jennifer Perkins (reimburse, postcard)	\$325.80
Isanti Fire District (1 st quarter 2025 fire protection)	\$10,765.77
Isanti County Auditor (special assessment tax)	\$175.91
Quality Tree & Snow (salting, tree removal)	\$418.50

Peggy read the receipts:

Money Market Interest	\$53.36
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FUND TOTALS (before claims)

General	\$21,807.94
Road & Bridge	\$126,536.07
Fire	\$123,339.52

After some discussion on the claim from the town lawyer, Jennifer reminded the board of their agreement to share any information/communication solicited from paid consultants.

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

Jennifer made a motion to remove former clerk Linnea Lentz from the town bank account and to add supervisor Ryan Hondlik & clerk Danielle Wiener to the account as authorized signers; seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Compensation – Mike read a statement sharing his understanding of town officer training allowed by the board and concern at the clerk's request for payment of the unclaimed salary wages from January/February. Jennifer clarified her motion from January's regular town board meeting was made to provide the newly appointed clerk with paid training hours for January and February (up to 15 hours/month). The training would be in addition to the clerk's monthly salary, as the normal duties of town clerk also needed to be completed in that time frame. There was some discussion, and Ryan confirmed this was his understanding of the January motion as well. The board further discussed town officer roles and improving communication among the officers.

ROAD REPORT

Supervisors did not note any issues when out driving their road zones.

Oxford received bulk gravel prices from four vendors, and will discuss further at the May meeting after the township road evaluation is completed.

Jennifer made a motion to extend the 2025 grading contract to Gustafson (price remains the same as 2024), including an offer from Jennifer to be their board liaison, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Mike passed along information from the county engineer on spring load restrictions and mentioned not every township posts load limits in spring. Jennifer recommended we continue posting load restriction signs in the spring on the newly paved township roads.

A culvert on 259th near Danube is over 20 years old and may require replacement, there was some discussion about sizing of a new culvert, erosion control, and cost. Jennifer requested the board gather quotes and repair options to present at the May meeting.

FIRE REPORT

Assistant Fire chief Zach gave an overview of the proposed change to the Isanti Fire District Joint Powers Agreement to allow them to charge for services. The fire district board, made up of an elected supervisor from each member township (& city of Isanti) has discussed only charging for catastrophic incidents. If each township board approves this contract change, and the members of the fire district board are unanimously in favor, the district can begin to work with insurance companies to recover costs. For example, higher costs from large fires at private businesses requiring longer than average response times and/or specialized equipment could be reimbursed. The state of MN could also be asked to cover costs if the fire district responded to fires in highway rights-of-way or natural areas managed by the DNR. There was some discussion, and Zach clarified billing rates and details would be decided by the fire district board if the JPA is amended.

Jennifer made a motion for Ryan to get a quote from Couri & Ruppe on the cost of reviewing the amended JPA contract, and to get feedback on the contract from other township supervisors on the fire district board, to be discussed further at the May meeting; seconded by Mike, motion carried unanimously.

Oxford Lake Discussion

Tiffany from Isanti Soil & Water Conservation District gave a summary of the 2024 Oxford Lake Report. Six of Oxford's seven lakes continue to show exceptional water quality. West Twin Lake does not, but is host to rare aquatic plant species, so the turbidity is not currently being addressed. The back page of the report has advice on protecting water quality, and the SWCD is always available to answer questions or work with residents to learn more about protecting natural environment lakes.

Barbara, researcher for lower St. Croix water partnership, spoke next on why shoreland protections matter. Oxford township is in the western corner of the St. Croix watershed, and as metro crawl creeps into the watershed there are efforts to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce pollution and maintain water quality. The suburban aesthetic is now coming to local lakes, but not all lakes are created equally. Natural environment lakes are too shallow and small to absorb the large changes which can occur when recreational & aesthetic changes to the shoreline (rip rap, more impervious surfaces like large docks, etc).

Mike made a motion to renew the lake monitoring in 2025 for a 9th year, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Website Update

Leslie is hard at work on the new website, it will be basic but should have everything we need. Jennifer asked for more photos from residents of Oxford township (scenic property, community events, historical pictures, etc). We would also appreciate more feedback on any website features residents want to see, to further the discussion at the May meeting.

Town Hall Update

Resident Deb gave a short summary of current issues at the existing hall, as identified by three contractors and their subcontractors who visited the hall in March. She relayed that most of the problems stem from roof leaks and inadequate attic insulation; a new roof and better insulation & ventilation in the attic was recommended. A comprehensive scope of work wasn't given to the contractors, so each gave an estimate of work they recommended. ServPro and Pure Breathing Solutions gave quotes to remediate the existing mold & water damage in the kitchen/bathroom area of \$7,800 and \$14,800, respectively.

All contractors noted the building was in good condition other than the issues noted. A new HVAC system is also recommended, as the sub slab ductwork is cracked (not repairable), and the current downdraft furnace can't be converted to updraft.

The board was also given a brief overview of the options currently available, which include refurbishing the town hall, renting long term at a facility in/close to the township limits, or pursuing a new building. There was much discussion about the options and comments from the building committee.

Jennifer made a motion to sunset the town hall task force, and bring all future planning & discussions back under the direction of the board; Ryan asked for clarification on what "sunset" means, Jennifer clarified it meant the task force would not be meeting or taking independent action anymore. Mike requested the task force continue until the May meeting, after additional discussion, the motion was seconded by Ryan; discussion continues.

Ryan and Jennifer both expressed concern some committee members had additional meetings with the county beyond the approved March 25 parks board meeting. Resident committee members have represented Oxford township in favor of the Anderson Park nature center idea without being asked to by the board. After additional dialogue between residents and the board, Jennifer and Ryan vote in favor of the motion to sunset the town hall task force/building committee, Mike votes opposed, motion carries 2-1.

Driveway Permits

Mike brought up there are two driveway permits on the table, one on Pigeon Loft Road which has not been returned, and one for the Meadow Acres development on 257th Ave NE. The board voted unanimously to approved the Meadow Acres driveway permit and Jennifer signed it after Mike said there were no issues with the site.

Town Hall Security System update

Mike requested the clerk cancel the monitoring service, Danielle clarified the alarm.com online account was set up with Mike as sole administrator. The service has been canceled, and the connected thermostat is no longer working. Jennifer made a motion to address the thermostat, she will contact some to get a new thermostat installed, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Snowplowing & General Maintenance Contract

Jennifer requested the board review the contract for snowplowing and general maintenance at the May meeting, as the current agreement with Josh will be completed by then.

Town Hall, continued

Jennifer nominated Ryan to serve as the board liaison and project manager for future town hall discussions and activities; included in the motion is a request for town hall task force notes, documents and action items be turned over to Ryan; motion seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.

Town Mail and Upcoming Events

Residents were reminded that ECE will be conducting right of way clearing.

May board meeting – supervisors will be going over their township road assessment results

June – Isanti County Board of Adjustment hearing, please contact the assessor's office now if you wish to contest the valuation of your property.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made by Mike at 9pm, seconded by Ryan, motion carried unanimously.