

Tofte Township Board Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2026

Present: Chair Craig Horak, Supervisor Sam Crowley, Supervisor Teresa Schmidt, Treasurer Gordon Engstrom, Clerk Amy Brugge, Rescue Chief Kim Jahnke, Beverly Flood & Lori Erickson of Tofte Community Garden, & HRA Executive Director Jeff Brand. All attended virtually due to inclement weather

Absent: Fire Chief Rich Nelson

A. Call to Order: Supervisor Horak called the board meeting to order at 7:03pm.

B. Agenda Approval:

MOTION- Chair Horak moved to approve the agenda with the additional of Sawbill Canoe Outfitters liquor license, Birch Grove floor plans. Supervisor Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Minutes Approval:

MOTION – Supervisor Crowley moved to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2026 meeting. Supervisor Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Clerk’s Report:

1. Mail – Limited Use Permit for trail by Surfside, Request from Lion’s Club, ARDC Engagement
 - a. Clerk to email Bluefin & Surfside about pouring concrete with ADA dimples to inquire if they are willing to do that; discussion of a subcontract with Surfside regarding maintenance.
2. MNDOT Hwy 61 Corridor Study Committees & Open House on 2/26
3. MAT Training in Cloquet on 4/3/2026

E. Treasurer’s Report:

1. Treasurer Engstrom, presented the Treasurer’s Report that showed ending balances as follows:
 - a. Grand Marais State Bank Checking Account: **\$104,507.35**
 - b. North Shore Federal Credit Union Combines Accounts: **\$66,462.13**
 - c. Charles Schwab Investment Account: **\$1,125,748.60**
 - d. Total Cash & Investments: **\$1,244,671.53**

Treasurer Engstrom noted that some CDs are coming due & will be placed in the money market account.

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to transfer \$263 to Community Garden Fund from General Fund; Supervisor Crowley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION- Chair Horak motioned to accept the Treasurer’s report as presented. Supervisor Schmidt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Receipts registered for the past month totaled **\$20,087.49 & \$2,555.84 of interest**

F. Claims, Payroll, and Transfers of Funds/ Transaction Report:

1. Review and approval of Unpaid Bills. Presented claims totaling **\$20,693.46**

MOTION- Supervisor Horak moved to approve the claims lists. Supervisor Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval of payroll register – Gross regular monthly pay of **\$9,914.22**

MOTION- Supervisor Horak moved to approve the payroll register. Supervisor Schmidt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

G. Fire Department Report – 1 mutual call with Lutsen for a grass fire; was canceled; Rick responded in a personal vehicle; property had been burning scrap and no one action was required of the department; there was a 3-vehicle accident at Surfside – which will result in \$250 billings to each vehicle this month.

H. Rescue Squad Report – 2 medical calls – 1 ambulance went halfway into the ditch going into the driveway; 3 vehicle accident previously mentioned near Surfside resulted in 6 patients; ordered safety vests with Tofte Fire/Rescue logo – EMS will also be getting safety jackets; new electric rechargeable razor for LifePac and more cannisters for electric suction. Discussion of EMS contract between the Schroeder & Tofte for Rescue Services – will review draft language in next month's meeting

I. County Commissioner – N/A

J. Birch Grove Community Center

1. Roof Replacement Bids – LionHeart Building & Consultants; pay upcharge to remove skylights and deck/roof that area

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to award of the Birch Grove Roofing project to LionHeart Building and Consultants at the bid amount of \$178,769.00. Second by Supervisor Crowley. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Exterior Doors & Bathroom addition – waiting on the drafting company to provide a floor plan
3. Bathroom update – no update at this time
4. Warming House spigot – Messages have been left for contractor with no reply
5. Floor plans request – communicate to Diane that we do not have current floor plans

K. Old Business

1. Billboard Lease from Cook County HRA –

Southeast portion of the property from driveway south to include the driveway

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to approve lease with proposed redlines from legal counsel and additional description of property to include to driveway & including driveway. Supervisor Crowley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Secondary discussion with HRA Executive Director about Birch Grove & preserving the campsite their and the school's access; Chair Horak requests for a copy of what the existing easement is so the board knows if that covers the campsite and then there would not be any need to lease.

2. Snowmobile Route Options in Tofte – update from Clerk given in Mail agenda item
3. Town Hall Roof Repair – Contractor is out of town & will stop in to talk once he returns to town
4. Heat in Town Hall – Rich Nelson thinks it is now working as temperatures have improved.

L. New Business

1. Community Garden Bylaw Updates & Questions for Board – Beverly Flood inquired about budget to manage the community garden plots at Birch Grove. Board responded that if there are expenses, they can submit them to the township, which would then pay reasonable expenses; Collected \$263.67 in 2024 & in 2025 it was \$370.47; one expenditure was \$15.78 for paint for sign was previously submitted. Beverly Flood explained that they would like to plant a vine on the backside of garden to act as wind block; Question about the Orchard – reviewed the history of the donation of 60 dwarf Honeycrisp apples trees; questions on fencing spacing between the garden and the orchard; township will replace the hose; asked them to charge it to the township account at Isak Hansen's. Same could be done for compost & have it delivered; Chair Horak discussed the 10 yds of compost previously from the dairy barn and identified that the remainder of it is likely still alongside the garden.
2. Funding Requests
 - a. Lutsen Drone Purchase – Chief Duclos has asked for financial support for drone purchase; Chair Horak suggest \$5000
 - b. Sugarbush Trail Association - \$1500
 - c. West End Garden Club - \$300
 - d. Timberwolves Sportsman's Club - \$2000
 - e. Alpine Ski Club - \$2000

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to approve \$5000 to Lutsen for drone purchase; Supervisor Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to approve all other funding requests at the designated amount. Supervisor Crowley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Treasurer Position – Jenny Yeary met with Treasurer Engstrom and has received clearance from her employer for outside employment. Supervisor Schmidt asked about investments & Treasurer Engstrom stated that Jenny Yeary was unsure at the time if her employer would have issues with her making decisions about township investments. She may take an online class to understand the Schwab investments portfolio and she is hoping to attend the MAT training. **Treasurer Engstrom is formally appointing Jennifer Yeary as Tofte Township's Deputy Treasurer.**

4. Sawbill Canoe Outfitters Liquor License

MOTION – Chair Horak motioned to approve the 2026 liquor license renewal for Sawbill Canoe Outfitters. Supervisor Crowley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Supervisor Position – Supervisor Crowley is moving out of Tofte Township and therefore is giving immediate notice of his resignation. Tofte Township will need to appointment a new supervisor to finish the final year of Supervisor Crowley’s three-year term, which will then go up for election in March 2027.

6. Facilities/Maintenance Position – current employee will be starting a new job at the end of April. Chair Horak stated he will author a position description to be posted by the town clerk in both the Cook County Herald and the Northshore Journal. Supervisor Crowley inquired if the position should be split into 2 part-time positions.

M. Citizen Comments – Judy Mort initially joined the meeting via Zoom but had to depart. Instead submitted an email regarding a property complaint. Clerk will respond instructed the resident to contact Cook County Land Services.

N. Next Meetings: April 9, 2026 at 7pm

O. Adjourned at 8:56pm