

# *New Haven Township*

OLMSTED COUNTY, MINNESOTA – EST. 1858

PHONE: 507.356.8330 EMAIL: NHTOWNSHIP@BEVCOMM.NET

9024 COUNTY ROAD 3 NW, OROCOCO, MN 55960

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## **Annual Town Meeting Minutes March 11, 2025**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the 2025 Annual Town Meeting of New Haven Township was called to order by Clerk Bonnie Kosmicki at 3:00 PM. Approximately 23 township electors and two visitors were in attendance, including all current Town Board officers Thomforde, Andrist and Fahy-Gust as well as, Clerk Kosmicki and Deputy Treasurer Walters.

After welcoming comments, Clerk Kosmicki called for nominations for a moderator. Butch Owens, 12001 New Haven Rd NW, Pine Island, nominated Ann Fahy-Gust. No other nominations were put forward and nominations were closed. The motion carried by hand count, with none dissenting.

Ann Fahy-Gust took responsibility for the moderating the meeting for the duration.

**Voters set the agenda** – Butch Owens made a motion to set the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Vince Fangman, 11724 110<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Pine Island. Motion carried with a voice vote.

**Review and approve 2024 Annual Town Meeting minutes** Mark Gunderson 8649 85<sup>th</sup> St NW, Pine Island made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Mike Frost 10101 85<sup>th</sup> St NW, Pine Island. Motion carried via voice vote. A motion to approve 2024 meeting minutes as written was made by Jerry Berg 13040 New Haven Rd NW, Pine Island. Butch Owens seconded the motion. Motion carried via voice vote.

**Reading of Board of Audit Report** – Clerk Kosmicki read the February 11, 2025 Board of Audit meeting minutes. A copy of these minutes was included in the packet handout provided to the electors. The Board of Audit was attended by the Town Board Supervisors, Clerk Kosmicki and Deputy Treasurer Walters. A minimum of 2 disbursements per month of 2024 were selected at random from a CTAS disbursement log for audit and review. The recording of these disbursements was compared between treasurer's, clerk's and CTAS record. One discrepancy was noted. Check number 4691 was not on the treasure's record but was accounted for in the bank statement. Board of Audit meeting minutes have been posted and were made available in the annual meeting packet. A financial summary for the year 2024 was also reviewed and signed by the Town Board during the audit. No one offered questions or concerns regarding the Board of Audit report.

**Rural Fire Association Report** – Supervisor Ann Fahy-Gust reported on the Rural Fire Association which consists of five townships. Costs for services are shared between participating townships. Total costs for 2024 were \$186,871.13. New Haven's share is \$61,490.00. This is a decrease from 2023 expenditures which were \$67,349.00. This decrease in cost is accounted for due to being fully staffed thereby reducing training costs. The Rural Fire Association decided that 50% of total dues owed will be paid in April, and the remaining portion held in reserve by the townships until such time the Rural Fire Association deems it necessary to utilize the funds. There is no expectation to need additional equipment in the near future as the 1993 tanker was replaced in 2024. A program was purchased by the association to track data in order to provide a more thorough analysis of resources (personnel) used during calls, what type of calls, day and time of calls, response time, etc. The need for lift assist is trending

upward, there is no billing back for these calls. This will be a data point that will be tracked. Other item of note, in 2024, due to the amount of funds held by the Rural Fire Association, the association met the threshold to be deemed a special district by the State Auditor thereby requiring an audit be submitted. The cost of an audit ranges from \$11,000.00 to \$25,000.00. There were five checks written in 2024. An extension was requested and granted. Another advantage of townships holding funds until needed is that the Rural Fire Association will then be under the financial threshold triggering an audit and subsequent cost. The Pine Island Fire Department was approximately 3% under budget in 2024.

**TCPA (Township Cooperative Planning Association) Report** – Supervisor Andrist gave a report of the planning and zoning activities of 2024 performed by TCPA for the township. A copy of a draft of the Cannabis Ordinance was provided in the packet. Andrist will inform TCPA at their next meeting that New Haven Township Board had no edits or further revisions to the proposed ordinance. There is only one commercial property in New Haven Township that would be eligible for a cannabis wholesale/retail license. In the event it is sold and a license is ultimately granted, New Haven Township would be responsible to grant a conditional use permit outlining the conditions. After the fifteen townships have reached agreement on a final version of the ordinance, a public hearing will be held.

**Planning and Zoning** – Supervisor Andrist provided a summary of permits and zoning requests submitted in 2024. A chart of all permit requests was provided. There were 48 building permits issued, 14 zoning permits and 13 dwelling permits.

#### **Cemetery Reports –**

Center Grove Cemetery provided a written report. They were able meet all their planned goals including routine maintenance, removal of two large trees, tree trimming project, and updating records. Their website has been effective to increase inquiries about the cemetery and increase growth. Burial sites cost has increased from \$300.00 to \$500.00. 2024 income was \$8616.50, expenses were \$6592.28 for a net profit of \$2044.22. New Haven Township was thanked for the continued support. Center Grove Cemetery Board requests \$3000.00 for 2025 payable to Center Grove Cemetery

Othello Cemetery – Mike Frost, representing Othello Cemetery Board reported expenses of \$4060.00 for lawn care. A dead oak tree needed to be removed. Appreciation was expressed for the continued support of the township to help with expenses and keep things going.

St. Michaels Cemetery – Vince Fangman thanked the township for the continued donation to support the cemetery. There were no unexpected expenses.

Fahy-Gust thanked the cemetery boards for maintaining upkeep and records and keeping everything looking nice.

**Road Report** – Michael Wood was not present but did provide a written road report. Fahy-Gust provided a summary. New Haven Township maintains 31.68 miles of road, there are 1285 residents and 507 households. Not all live on a township road, not all rocky roads are maintained by the township and some are the responsibility of the county. Seven roads were rocky in 2024. There is usually a three-year rotation to rock each road. Mr. Wood's report included the location of tree removal and ditch clean out. Andrist serves as the supervisor overseeing road maintenance and other reported issues. Mike Wood LLC's quote was accepted and is the primary road maintenance company for the next two years. Kory Weis's quote was accepted as the primary company for mowing and plowing at the townhall. Andrist reported that

a new gate will be installed in order to prevent anyone from dumping in the quarry. The neighbor is amenable to a gate being installed. Vince Fangman suggested having Mike blade the edges of 110<sup>th</sup> Ave in order to crown the road to prevent erosion. Mark Gunderson asked if there is an ordinance regulating where a driveway can be placed to prevent water erosion. Andrist stated there is no ordinance providing guidance for this. There were several letters sent to residents this year informing them that their asphalt driveway is subject to damage due to being too high and extended out far enough into the road ROW that the wing of the plow could catch it and that the township would not be responsible for the expense should damage occur.

**Treasurer's Report** – Deputy Treasurer Hannah Walters gave a detailed report of the financial standing of the Township at the end of December 2024. This information was also included in the Annual Meeting packet. The following were the account balances as of December 31, 2024.

**Frandsen Bank and Trust**

Checking Account	\$	3,861.99
Money Market Fund	\$	160,953.43
Less Outstanding Checks	\$	152.50
Total Bank Balance	\$	164,815.42

**LPL Investments**

Frandsen Bank	4.4% 08/22/2025	\$	100,000.00
Wells Fargo of South Dakota,	5.2% 3/04/2025	\$	50,000.00
Flagstar Bank	4.7% (semi-annual) 7/25/2025	\$	100,000.00
Total Investments		\$	250,000.00
<b>Total Deposits</b>		<b>\$</b>	<b>414,662.92</b>

**New Haven Township Financial Summary** – Walters presented the Township Financial Summary which showed the year end summary for the past 3 years. The total cash reserves at the end of December 2024 were \$414,662.92. This resulted in a deficit \$32,850.01. The 2024 budget was set to result in a deficit of \$50,495.00 thereby bringing the final total to \$17,644.99 under budget. They voter approved levy was \$193,692.00. The levy was voted to increase in 2025 by 10% at the last annual meeting.

**2025 Budget** – Thomforde presented a thorough report for the breakdown of expenditures and income for the last 3 years. Property taxes are budgeted to increase in 2025 based on the levy increase of 10%. Some 2025 budget line items are exact amounts as they have been accounted for, some items are estimated as best can be based on trends. Cropland rent is set until next year when quotes will be requested again for rental in 2026. There are no known annexations at the time. Expenses for street maintenance have been consistent; snow and ice removal has fluctuated significantly over the last several years due to amount of snow. Total expenses are expected to increase by 5.4%. An elector asked a question regarding line 23, Gopher Bounties, and whether this was something townships were obligated to pay. Thomforde responded that each township sets their own gopher bounty and are not required to pay. Adults and kids participate in collecting gopher feet or tails. The bounty is set at the upcoming reorganization meeting. Clerk Kosmicki commented that the board had previously decided to limit rental of the townhall to New Haven Township residents only. Carl Mancilman, 12408 Cty Rd 3 NW, asked if the townhall would be available to the Pine Island Lions Tractor Club when they have the tractor parade. This was available to them last year, as long as there is a township resident present, it will be available to the club again. There were no additional questions regarding the budget.

**Property Tax Mill Rates** – Supervisor Thomforde noted that the levy set in 2024 for 2025 will be reflected in property tax bills for 2025. Thomforde presented expert, educational information

on how property taxes are calculated. The county sets the mill rate based upon taxable market value. The levy amount is spread among all taxable properties. As in previous years, Thomforde provided a table depicting 2024 Property Tax Mills rate for all townships in Olmsted County and several cities. New Haven has the lowest mill rate in the county. Ninety percent of property taxes go to schools and the county, only about 10% actually goes to the township. 2025 mill rates have not been made available yet, however, New Haven township will most likely remain the lowest in the county. Valuation of property was significantly increased in 2024 which accounts for the mill rate dropping by 13% even though the levy remained constant. Thomforde provided a line chart depicting historically mill rates of New Haven, Oronoco, and Kalmar townships. Thomforde provided a thorough overview of fluctuations of mill rates depicted in the line graph. The goal is to set the levy so that expenditures and income balance and match from year to year.

**Voters set the 2026 levy** – Fahy-Gust opened discussion regarding setting the 2026 levy.

The Town Board recommends a total 2026 levy of \$226,000 (+\$12,939 - +6.1%)

- Continue General Fund Levy of \$30,000 (+\$0)
- Increase Road and Bridge Levy to \$125,000 (+\$17,461)
- Decrease Fire and First Responders Levy to \$62,000 (-\$4,522)
- Continue Cemetery Levy of \$9,000 (+\$0)

Floor opened for discussion and motion to approve or amend the recommendation. Dave O'Brien, 12702 Cty Rd 3 NW, Pine Island, made a motion to approve the recommended levy. Mark Gunderson seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion carried by voice vote with no dissenters.

A question was raised regarding compensation for the work done to by township officers and if raises are ever given. Compensation is set by the township supervisors. Compensation for the officers for the year was reviewed. Changes in compensation for officers and supervisors are discussed and set at the annual Reorganization Meeting.

**Voters set the time and location for the 2026 Annual Town Meeting** – By law, the meeting must be held on the second Tuesday of March, with a bad weather date being the third Tuesday of March. By resolution, the Town Board set the hours for the Annual Town Election from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Town Board recommends that the 2026 Annual Town Meeting begin at 3:00 PM. Vince Fangman made a motion for approve the 3 PM start time and to hold the meeting at the townhall, Mike Frost seconded, motion carried.

**Special Events** – Voters set a maximum that the Town Board can spend to commemorate an event, recognize volunteers, service efforts of town officers, or to host a community celebration, under Minn. Stat §365.10, subd. 12. In 2024, \$500 was spent for 4-H clean-up in the township cemeteries, and \$117.02 for memorial flowers. The Town Board recommended an authorization of a maximum of \$2500 for 2025 for the above items. Mark Gunderson made motion to approve, Carl Mancilman seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote.

**Other items of Township Business for discussion and possible action:**

**Fire Permits** – If someone is wanting a yearly permit, these can be obtained on the DNR website for \$5.00. Otherwise, a permit can be granted by Fire Warden Thomforde who can issue 1 or 3-day fire permit.

**Solar Farm Ordinance** – The Township Board and Planning and Zoning Advisory Commission has been working on a Solar Energy Farm Ordinance for the last six months. Revisions will be further discussed at the April town board meeting. Andrist is the supervisor who has been representing the board at P&Z Commission meetings. A public hearing will be scheduled before the ordinance is approved and implemented.

**Motion to adjourn** – With no further business before the electors and no further comments or questions, Mark Gunderson made a motion to adjourn, Butch Owens seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned by Moderator Ann Fahy-Gust at 4:30 PM.

Approved by the Moderator,

Attest:

Date:

Date:

*/Signed copy on file/*

Ann Fahy-Gust – Moderator

Bonnie Kosmicki – Town Clerk