

ECKLES TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES – February 10, 2026

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mel Milender at 7:00 pm. Supervisors Beth Hendricks, Darren Bumgardner, Cory Wilson, deputy treasurer, Joyce Thompson, clerk, Colleen Oestreich were present. Sup. Milender led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Others present:** John Schocker, Dale Wilson, Merlin Vold, Gary Coen, Georgia Halverson

**Northern Township** – Received notice that Northern Township has won their legal effort to become a city. City of Bemidji has 30 days to appeal.

**Agenda** – Addition to the agenda include: 8c City of Wilton. Motion by Sup. Wilson, second by Sup. Bumgardner to approve the amended agenda. M/C

**Consent Agenda** – 1/13/26 Regular Board Meeting Minutes; 1/20/26 Board of Audit Report; Claims 7003-7012, CO, MM, CW, DL, DB Reimbursement, EFT = \$10,151.90 Motion by Sup. Hendricks, second by Sup. Wilson to approve. M/C

**Comprehensive Plan** – Dale Wilson asked status of township limiting congested housing developments. Board discussed the proposed comprehensive plan and indicated that it will be further discussed at the upcoming annual meeting.

**Records Retention** – Clerk, Oestreich provided board with an update. Highlights include a proposed archive inventory, potential missing tax records and equipment gaps. Roads and fire records still need to be reviewed. Clerk will obtain cost estimates on a fireproof file cabinet and work on completing the project. Board also may want to consider renting a safe deposit box to store CD records.

Clerk will check to see if nonprofit MN-Pine is still operating and pass on records as appropriate. Treasurer will follow-up on the 1<sup>st</sup> National CD found and missing tax records.

**Township Election & Annual Meeting 3/10/26** – Clerk, Oestreich has posted/published notice and sent out 38 absentee ballots. Draft agenda was provided for the annual meeting.

**Treasurers Report** – Joyce Tompson provided a status summary of accounts.

**Woodcrest Rd Petition** – Sup. Milender is working with an attorney to develop the resolution. Signatures on the petition have been verified by the clerk. Motion by Sup. Wilson, second by Sup. Sup. Bumgardner to move forward with paving project. M/C

**Bemidji Rural Fire Assn** – Sup. Milender reported that the annual meeting was held in January. They set the levy and budget of \$114K. There will be a joint meeting on 2/26/26 at Northern Townhall at 7 pm.

**Eckles Community Center** – Township was notified recently that it will be charged each time it uses the community center instead of the prior use agreement. Sup. Milender outlined the history of the community center including the liability reason that the nonprofit organization was formed rather than having the center as a townhall. The liability factor has been resolved.

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Sup. Milender articulated appreciation for the center as a resource in the community and the efforts the nonprofit board has made to maintain the center. He also researched potential solutions to the current dilemma.

1. Continue to operate as is – where township board has no input on fees charged
2. Formal written contract
3. Establish a Center Management Team – with both nonprofit & township board members
4. Township Board moves to another location
5. Dissolve the nonprofit & transfer community center to township.

Nonprofit chair, Merlin Vold read letter from their board. They are operating at a deficit and seek an increase in support to \$1,900. Their next meeting will be held on 3/5/26 at 7 pm at the community center. Sup. Milender and Sup. Wilson plan to attend.

**Road Report** – all roads have been plowed timely. Board discussed issue of mailboxes on Eckles/Scribner. Board also discussed upcoming request for quotes for gravel. Contract term will be from 5/1/26 – 4/30/26. Clerk will post/publish with selection being made in April.

**City of Wilton** – Board discussed the need to review & update agreement.

**Payroll** – timesheets collected were circulated to supervisors for review.

**Eckles Township Regular Board Meeting** – 3/11/26, Eckles Community Center @ 7 PM;

**MAT Short Course** – 4/1/26, Bemidji, Sanford Center

**PFML** – discussed board decision and staff’s responsibility to implement. PFML January adjustments were approved in the consent agenda.

**Adjourn** – Motion by Sup. Bumgardner, second by Sup. Hendricks to adjourn at 8:55 pm. M/C

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Colleen Oestreich, Clerk

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Mel Milender, Chairman