

Call To Order / Roll Call - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. A roll call was conducted confirming the presence of Supervisors Brennan, Larson, Mathwig, Chair Staber and Clerk Konwinski. Supervisor McIlquham was absent.

Public Hearing - Review and Discuss the Proposed 2026 Budget for the Town of Lafayette - Chair Staber presented the proposed 2026 budget, noting that the proposed levy for next year is \$1,791,244 compared to \$1,733,217 last year, representing an increase of about \$60,000. He reviewed key revenue changes, including an increase in shared revenue of about \$15,000 and an increase in state transportation aid of approximately \$30,000, bringing it to \$266,161. Chair Staber explained that while this amount would cover about two miles of road work, it was insufficient for maintaining the township's 90 miles of roads. He noted there would be no TRIP (Transportation Road Improvement Program) money this year, as that funding comes every other year, with the next allocation expected in 2027 at approximately \$35,000. Chair Staber proposed a budget carryover of about \$40,000, noting that the township currently has around \$650,000. He indicated he would prepare a list of items to pay down prior to year-end to bring the carryover closer to \$400,000, with final approval of the exact carryover amount to occur at the January 5th meeting. The total proposed income for 2026 was \$3,529,329.15. During discussion, it was clarified that the franchise fee from cable companies does not grant exclusive rights to any particular company, with the township receiving fees from multiple providers including Charter Communications, TDS, and Bloomer Telephone.

On the expense side, Chair Staber highlighted allocations including \$20,000 for law enforcement, \$225,000 for equipment purchases/leases (including \$147,000 for a new plow truck, \$24,492 for lease payments, and \$5,000 for a skid steer lease), and \$2,500 for salt/sand. It was noted that the township would likely need to purchase additional salt/sand in 2026 at a cost of \$12,000-\$15,000 after emptying the current supply and resealing the storage building in summer 2025. Regarding road maintenance, Chair Staber indicated that the \$650,000 allocation would cover approximately 5 miles of road work. He identified several areas for improvement including subdivisions on 190th Street off 40th Avenue, 50th Avenue near the Sandbar, 67th Avenue with duplexes, and West Side Road Lane. Mark noted that most of these are short sections with many driveways, which increases costs. Chair Staber reported that debt service would include final payment on 50th Avenue this year of \$179,000, with the fire station debt continuing until 2030 at \$84,000 per year.

Resolution for Electors to Adopt the Town Tax Levy at a Special Town Meeting of Town Electors to be Collected in 2026 - A motion by Supervisor Neil Mathwig to approve the town tax levy of \$1,791,244 to be collected in 2026. Seconded by Mark Brennan. Motion carried.

Following the approval, a motion was made by Supervisor Brennan and seconded by Larson to close the special hearing.

Approval of Town Board Minutes - Supervisor Larson made a motion to approve the town board minutes from Nov 17, 2025, and the consent agenda for tonight's meeting. Brennan seconded the motion.

FINANCIAL REPORT - None

New Business

Adoption of the 2026 Town Budget by the Town Board - Following the approval of the tax levy by the town electors, the town board formally adopted the 2026 budget. Motion by Supervisor Larson to adopt the town budget for 2026 as approved earlier with the public. Seconded by Supervisor Mathwig. Roll call vote all voting Aye. Motion carried.

Eckwright CSM and Preliminary Plat - Chair Staber explained that there would not be a preliminary plat at this time, as Eckwright would be submitting that in January, likely for the February agenda. He presented a Certified Survey Map (CSM) for approval, which proposes 4 lots on the corner of 72nd and 203rd Street, off Highway K. Chair Staber noted they have already started building on Lot 2 and will be bringing a preliminary plat and rezone for the other 20 acres later. Motion by Supervisor Mathwig to approve the CSM. Seconded by Supervisor Brennan. Motion carried.

Scout Donation from PRTLUI General Account to Help Fund Project – PRTLUI Chair Faris reported that the PRTLUI board had approved up to \$1,500 for the Eagle Scout project. The Scout was asked to submit receipts for materials in a timely fashion. The project is expected to be completed by spring 2026. Motion by Supervisor Brennan to allow up to \$1,500 from the PRTLUI account to help fund the Eagle Scout project. Seconded by Supervisor Larson. Motion carried.

Chippewa Humane Association Annual Contract Renewal - Chair Staber presented the annual contract renewal for the Chippewa County Humane Association. The cost is based on the township's population which is close to 6,780. The contract amount is \$7,535.95. Motion by Supervisor Mathwig to renew the contract with the Chippewa County Humane Association. Seconded by Supervisor Brennan. Motion carried. There was brief discussion about the township population signs, with Supervisor Larson suggesting they should be white with black lettering for better visibility rather than the current green and yellow.

Approval of 2026-2027 Election Inspectors - Clerk Konwinski presented a list of election inspectors for the 2026-2027 election cycle, noting that most came from the Republican party with 2 coming from the Democratic party. Motion by Supervisor Brennan to approve the 2026-2027 election inspectors. Seconded by Supervisor Mathwig. Motion carried.

Set a Consultation Hourly Rate for Laura Konwinski for Training and Office Duties - Chair Staber reported that he had discussed with current clerk Laura Konwinski a rate of \$25 per hour for helping train Jami on office duties and assisting with elections. The budget includes \$20,000 for this purpose, which would cover up to 800 hours of work. The clerk noted there would be four elections in the coming year, and budget books would need updating with mandatory changes. Motion by Supervisor Larson to pay Laura Konwinski \$25 per hour for training and office duties. Seconded by Brennan. Motion carried.

Updating of Jury Duty Section in Employee Handbook - Chair Staber brought up the need to update the jury duty section of the employee handbook based on a recent situation with staff being called for jury duty. The board discussed several changes:

1. Changing the daily maximum from 8 hours to 10 hours
2. Removing the 2-week maximum per calendar year to allow for jury duty until completion
3. Clarifying that employees will report to work at their normal start time, leave for jury duty, and return to work if not selected or when through with the interview process
4. Maintaining the requirement that employees must return any compensation received for jury duty to the township

Discussion on Possible Community Funded Project for the RR Bridge on Hwy X - Chair Staber reported on a conversation with Brian Westrate from Congressman Van Orden's office regarding a "community funded project" (formerly known as "pork barrel projects") for the railroad bridge. Each representative can submit six projects per year, with applications due in April. The congressman's office staff reviews submitted projects and selects which ones to forward to the appropriations committee. Chair Staber has been in contact with Susan Gerber, the new CNN Railroad contact, who seemed more positive about the project than previous contacts. The estimated cost was previously \$405,000 (up from an original \$268,000), but current costs are unknown. If awarded, the township would have one year to complete the project and would need to initially fund it before being reimbursed. It was suggested having township residents contact their representatives in spring to show support for the project.

Town Communications from Board & Road Supervisors, Town Clerk & Town Chair

Supervisor Mathwig reported on a conversation with the county economic development corporation about beautifying the entrances to the township near the roundabouts. He noted issues with lack of maintenance around the roundabouts, including weed growth.

Road Supervisor Sedlacek reported that the first snowfall went well except for one truck being temporarily out of service. Chair Staber mentioned they would be submitting the towing bill to insurance.

It was discussed adding a plaque to the Sandy Harvey Recreation Area sign to identify who she was (town clerk for many years and lifelong resident of Lafayette).

Supervisor Brennan reported that he would be attending a meeting at the courthouse for the Chippewa County comprehensive plan on the following Wednesday.

Motion to Adjourn was made at 7:50

Respectfully submitted by: Laura Konwinski / Clerk

These minutes are intended to reflect the discussed topics and propositions during the Lafayette Town Board Meeting, ensuring transparency and providing a clear understanding of the deliberations and decisions made.