

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

Present: Town Board Chairman – Steve Doyen, Town Board Supervisors – Dave Selby, Steve Waier, Maureen Robinson and Jeremy Ryan. Also Present: Clerk/Treasurer – Sheryl J Ward, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer – Kathleen R Ray, Shop Foreman – Josh Hedberg, EMS Director – Carole Selin, Diane Moline, Jim Kuchenbecker, Jay and Jackie Rosenbecker, Chamber Director – Laura Richart, Mak Holcomb, Jan Petrick, Museum President – Pauleyn Nystrom, Phelps Sanitary District Secretary – Courtney Szuta, and 15 citizens.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Doyen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call/Quorum Call:** A quorum of board members was present.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited.
4. **Verification of Public Notice by Town Board:** Clerk/Treasurer, Ward verified the agenda has been posted at the Phelps Town Hall/Community Center, Phelps Post Office, Phelps Convenience Center, Town Website, and emailed to the Vilas County News Review July 8, 2025.
5. **Correspondence and Communications:**
 - **Recognition to Diane Moline for 20 years of service** – Chairman Doyen recognized Diane Moline for her 20 years of service and Diane was present to accept an award.
 - **Phelps Women's Club Donation to the Phelps Area Community Foundation for the new Community Center/Library building** – Mak Holcomb and Women's Club members at the meeting presented Jim Kuckenbecker with a check of \$10,000 donation from the Women's Club to be earmarked for the Community Center project. Jim was present to accept the check.
6. **Reports**
 - a. **Chairman Report** – Doyen stated we just had the groundbreaking ceremony for the new community center/library. He thanked everyone who attended. You can see progress on the demolition of the hospital building. We had a few snags at the Dept of Public Works building site, but we are back on track with that.

Mak Holcomb asked Doyen if he had any update on the litigation of the hospital property. Doyen stated TomCat's request for a Mistrial was denied. However, they still could file an appeal. So, we are keeping an eye on that.
 - b. **Town Board Supervisors Reports** – Waier stated that Mastec is busy in the area laying conduit for Spectrum. It is possible the Poh-Wah-Gom properties could hook up as early as September if all goes well. Approximate cost for installation will be \$59.95 for the first \$1,000 feet.
 - c. **Department/Committee Reports** - None
 - d. **EMS/Fire Department Reports – EMS** – Carole Selin reported they had 17 emergency calls in June. Two (2) mutual aid to Alvin and one (1) mutual aid to Iron County. They put 550.6 miles on the ambulance.

Fire – Jeremy Ryan stated they had one mutual aid call for a house fire in Eagle River. We had one structure fire in Phelps and the guys did a remarkable job. They saved the house and all the belongings. We applied for a grant for new gas monitors and the announcement will be made by August 31st. The grant for \$192,000 we applied for that we were supposed to hear about in May was put on hold by Federal Gov't. It is now back on the table, and they are starting to review those grant applications now. Ryan said he will be finalizing a grant for new radios, which are over 20 years old

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

and now out of compliance. This grant is for \$320,000 and would put us back in compliance with all radio systems we have. If we are successful in receiving this grant the Town's obligation is only \$16,000.

7. Approval of the following Meeting Minutes:

- June 11, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting
- June 11, 2025, Regular Town Board Meeting
- June 18, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting

Motion by Waier to approve the Minutes of June 11 and June 18, 2025, meetings as presented. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

8. Approval of June 2025 Financial Report

Motion by Robinson to approve the June 2025 Financial Report as presented. Second by Waier. All voting aye. Motion carried.

9. Approval of Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions: from June 1 through June 30, 2025, including Check #'s 20009 – 20079

Motion by Waier to approve the Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions from June 1 through June 30, 2025, including checks 20009 through 20079. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

10. Consider/Approve Appointment of Chad Schiessl-Moore as Citizen Member of Planning and Development Commission. Maureen stated Chad is very valuable with his knowledge of parks and his vision to develop the parks.

Motion by Selby to approve the appointment of Chad Schiessl-Moore as a Citizen Members of the Planning and Development Commission. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

11. Consider/Approve Operator's License for the Period of July 9, 2025 through June 30, 2026, for Michelle R. Rudnik-Peterson

Motion by Waier to approve the Operator's License for Michelle R Rudnik-Peterson for the period of July 9, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

12. Consider/Approve Private Road Name Request – Roadrunner Ct off State Hwy 17

Motion by Waier to approve the private road name of Roadrunner Ct located off STH 17. Second by Selby. All voting aye. Motion carried.

13. Discussion of plane flying over Big Sand / Long Lake area

Jackie and Jay Rosenbecker stated they noticed something flying very low around the area for probably 2 weeks. As we investigated further we were told geological surveying was conducted in Vilas and other surrounding areas to look for minerals. We just wanted to alert the Town.

14. Consider/Approve Budget Amendment to pay for Archaeological Survey at the shooting range. Selby stated as part of the \$14,000 grant we received, they determined we needed this survey to comply with the grant requirements, but they will increase the grant amount by \$5,000 to help cover costs. Selby stated there is approximately \$54,000 in Parks Reserve LGIP Capital Outlay that can be used to pay for the survey.

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

Motion by Ryan to approve the archaeological survey and pay for it out of the Parks Reserve LGIP Capital Outlay account. Second by Doyen. All voting aye. Motion carried.

15. **Consider/Approve Budget Amendment for the purchase of a replacement Oxygen Probe Sensor Cap previously provided by the WI DNR at no charge.** Sheryl stated there is money in the LGIP Town Lakes Account that can be used to pay for this expense.

Motion by Ryan to approve the purchase of the oxygen probe sensor cap using LGIP Town Lakes Account money to pay for it. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

16. **Consider/Approve Budget Amendment to use \$300 ± of the Incredible Bank CD that was cashed out on June 5, 2025, to purchase a desk top printer for Sheryl and put the remaining CD money in the LGIP General Account**

Motion by Waier to use \$300 ± of the Incredible Bank CD that was cashed out on June 5, 2025, to purchase a desk top printer for Sheryl and put the remaining CD money in the LGIP General Account. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

17. **Consider/Approve Budget Amendment to add \$1,000 donation from the Women's Club earmarked for purchasing additional snowflake decorations to Revenue Donation Acct 48506 Flowers-Tn Beautification then moved to Festive Lighting/Flowers Expenditure Acct to help cover the purchase of 4 snowflakes**

Motion by Waier to add \$1,000 donation from the Women's Club earmarked for purchasing additional snowflake decorations to Revenue Donation Acct 48506 Flowers-Tn Beautification then moved to Festive Lighting/Flowers Expenditure Acct to help cover the purchase of 4 snowflakes. Second by Selby. All voting aye. Motion carried.

18. **Consider/Approve creating a Resolution for the Town Electors to approve the elimination of the Town Constable position and create an appointed Animal Control Officer position to comply with State Statutes.** Doyen stated that our current Town Constable, Brett Petrick, brought to our attention that the description we have for our town constable does not meet State Statute requirements. Doyen stated it requires 600 hours training and equal pay to that of a Vilas County Sherrif Deputy. Doyen stated that isn't going to happen so a solution would be to create an animal control officer that takes care of our stray animals.

Motion by Waier to approve creating a Resolution for the Town Electors to approve eliminating the Elected Town Constable position and create an appointed Animal Control Officer position. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

19. **Consider/Approve Authorizing Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Chairman to approve signing cemetery deeds without prior Town Board review/approval**

Motion by Waier to approve authorizing the clerk, deputy clerk and chairman to approve signing cemetery deeds without prior Town Board review/approval. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

20. Consider/Approve the hiring of a private company for the fireworks display starting in 2026

Ryan stated the Board allocated \$17,500 in the fireworks budget but they spent \$20,000. Then, they came back and asked for more money for equipment that supposedly melted. I did not see any melted equipment. I saw additional equipment, not replacement equipment. Ryan went on to state that after this year's fireworks display, the pontoon trailers were just dropped off at the Fire Station 2 property with nothing cleaned up, garbage everywhere, and the equipment just sitting out in the weather. If they cannot take responsibility for taking care of the equipment, we just need to hire a private company.

Waier stated he takes full responsibility in the lack of communication on the budget. The problem with hiring a private company is 1) we will not be able to afford the display we put on due to additional costs and 2) we will have a hard time finding a private company that isn't already booked at other locations.

Waier stated he will look into the current situation and follow up on it.

21. Consider Grant and Other Funding Opportunities:

- **WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** Application materials for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) 2026-2030 Program Cycle are now available on the WisDOT website. Applications are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 31, 2025.
- **WisDOT Surface Transportation Program (STP-Local) Grant**
- **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant**
- **WisDOT Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)- Discretionary and Supplemental Funding**

Selby stated he is working with Gayle at REL on the FLAP Grant requirements. LRIP is done through the Highway Commissioner, Tory Schalinske. Dave stated he will contact Troy regarding the STP-Local Grant.

Waier and Dave will work with Josh on which roads would be eligible for these grants.

22. Consider/Review General Liability Insurance Proposals for policy period August 1, 2025 through August 1, 2026

Doyen stated that we have received a proposal from R&R Insurance and Rural Mutual Insurance Company.

Motion by Waier to accept the proposal from R&R Insurance contingent upon reviewing the proposals closer to make sure they are comparable. Second by Selby.

Discussion - Doyen suggested scheduling a meeting next Tuesday, July 15th at 9:00 am to go over the proposals.

Motion Rescinded by Waier. The Board will have a Special Town Board Meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. to review/accept a proposal for General Liability Insurance.

23. Consider/Approve enforcement action for property located at 2528 STH 17 for the following:

- **Unlicensed vehicles**
- **Potential health hazard**

Doyen stated this is a property we have enforced in the past and it is getting bad again. Doyen stated he is asking for a motion to approve sending a letter to the health department to look into this again.

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

Motion by Waier to approve of sending a letter to the Vilas County Health Department to investigate the issues at 2528 STH 17. Second by Doyen. All voting aye. Motion carried.

24. Update on Former Lillian Kerr Health Care Center Property:

- **Demolition project** – Doyen stated the demolition is on track and we could possibly see it gone by the end of July.
- **Future Development Strategies** – Ryan stated there is a meeting scheduled with Vilas County Zoning on July 16th.

25. Update on Solid Waste and Recycling Collection for 2026

- **Review Republic Services Proposal – Price Increase** - The Board reviewed the price increases as presented by Republic Services. Doyen stated these will be discussed during budget workshops.
- **Consider Compactor at 4351 DNR Vista Ln** – off the table
- **Discuss future employee to man site at 4351 DNR Vista Ln** – Doyen stated this will need to be considered during budget workshops. Waier stated he talked with Town of Land O' Lakes and they have a part-time employee they pay \$17.50 per hour who works 20 hours per week at their transfer station.
- **Electronics Recycling opportunity – COM2 Recycling Solutions** – The Board agreed this would be a benefit to the constituents at no cost. A date of September 20th was agreed upon. Sheryl is to reach out to COM2 to see if this day will work in their schedule.

26. Update on new Community Center project – Selby stated the Community Center Committee is working on furniture bids from several companies and working with Spectrum for internet service and IT equipment proposals.

- **Discuss tentative start date of July 10, 2025, for Builders Risk Insurance** – Doyen stated he thinks the Board should consider starting Builders Risk Insurance for the community center right away. The Board agreed.

Motion by Doyen to approve starting Builders Risk Insurance on July 10, 2025, for the new Community Center. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

27. Update on new Town Shop project – Gene Hojan stated he talked to the foreman for Howard Brothers who said the footings are being installed and the excess material is being disposed of on-site as requested.

28. Update on Hwy G Landfill issue – Town to consider sending a letter to County to hold off on selling property – Dave Selby stated he and Jeremy worked on a letter to send to Landfill Venture Group (LVG) expressing our concerns to the rest of the LVG members as this is an agenda item on the LVG meeting scheduled for July 16th. The hope is that other Towns will get behind the Town of Phelps by holding off on the purchase of the property from the County due to the concerns of long-term financial liability. The letter is formatted so all board members can sign it. We will then email a copy to the LVG Secretary, Debra Brown to add to the packets for the July 16th meeting and email a copy to Vilas County Board of Supervisors Chairman, Jerry Burkett. Selby is unable to attend this meeting, so Ryan has offered to attend and take the original signed letter to submit.

Motion by Doyen to approve and sign the letter to the Landfill Venture Group expressing our concerns with the purchase of the Hwy G landfill property. Second by Waier. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

29. **Move into closed session Pursuant to Wis. State Statutes 19.85(1)(c) for purposes of considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility – Budget preparation regarding Employee Health Insurance and Wages for 2026**

Motion by Waier to move into closed session at 7:30 pm pursuant to Wis. State Statutes 19.85(1)(c) for purposes of considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility – Budget preparation regarding Employee Health Insurance and Wages for 2026. Second by Selby. All voting aye. Motion carried.

30. **Adjourn closed session pursuant to Wis. State Statutes 19.85(1)(c) and Return to Open Session**

Motion by Waier to adjourn closed session at 8:20 pm pursuant to Wis. State Statutes 19.85(1)(c) and return to open session. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

31. **Board May Consider Any Action Taken in Closed Session – No action taken.**

32. Set Dates for 2026 Budget Workshop meetings – The Board set the following dates and times for the 2026 Budget Workshop meetings:
- Wed, August 6, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
 - Wed, August 13, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
 - Wed, August 20, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
 - Wed, August 27, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

33. **Adjournment at 8:27 p.m.**

/s/ Kathleen R Ray, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Minutes are subject to approval at the next Regular Town Board meeting