

Town of Phelps
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
Phelps Town Hall

Present: Chairman – Steve Doyen, Town Board Supervisors – Maureen Robinson, Jeremy Ryan, Steve Waier, David Selby. Also Present: Clerk/Treasurer – Sheryl J Ward, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer – Kathleen R Ray, Shop Foreman – Josh Hedberg, and 18 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:** Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Ray verified the agenda was posted at the Phelps Town Hall/Community Center, Phelps Post Office, Phelps Convenience Center, Town Website, and emailed to the Vilas County News Review August 11, 2025.
5. **Correspondence and Communications:** Doyen welcomed everyone in attendance and asked if anyone had anything to discuss that is not covered under the agenda. Gene Hojan had an update on the fire tower project and stated the inspection was completed yesterday. Once those results are in they can begin the next phase.
6. **Reports**
 - a. **Chairman Report:** Doyen stated the demolition at the hospital is moving along and the crusher should be coming in soon. We have 2 projects going on right now and will be discussed further on the agenda. Doyen stated the Food Pantry sent a thank you note in their appreciation for our donation and always supporting them.
 - b. **Town Board Supervisors Reports:** Waier stated Spectrum is busy laying cable and residents should start getting something in the mail advertising hook up rates.

Supervisor Ryan stated he has been talking with Cedar Corporation, and they have a road division that would look at our road plan for free. If you want help in that area. Ryan stated WTA said the State is setting aside funding specifically to help small communities pay for grant writing. This is something we could investigate. Also, Ryan stated he met with a developer for affordable housing and they are working on finding land to be able to provide much needed affordable housing in Phelps.
 - c. **Department/Committee Reports:** Pauleyn Nystrom, Museum President was present and stated the Museum will be extending their hours later into the fall season on the weekend. Of course, we are always open by appointment at any time.
 - d. **EMS/Fire Department Reports:** EMS – Carole Selin was not present so Fire Chief Ryan gave Carole's report. The month of July was the busiest month so far with 24 emergency calls. Two (2) mutual aid to Conover and two (2) mutual aid to Eagle River. There was a total of 587 miles on the ambulance. Carole also wanted the Board to know the total number mutual aid calls to date are Alvin 10, Eagle River 3, Conover 4, and Iron County 4.

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Fire – Chief Ryan reported this month the fire calls were slow however they did have significant calls with car accidents. The ISO Review was done this year and Ryan thanked Norm Mesun, Tony Campion and Rob Anderson for their help with that. We are potentially trying to lower our ISO rating on our non-hydrant areas which would save homeowners within 5 miles of the fire station 20 – 25% on their fire insurance premiums. It will take about 6 months before people will see their rates lowered. One step in lowering our ISO rating was made possible with the purchase of a \$100,000 brush truck that can pump 600 gallons per minute, purchased entirely through donations and the hard work of our firefighters. Fire Inspections have started with a new company we hired who is significantly cheaper than we paid for last year. I am still waiting to hear about the FEMA Grant. We were awarded the WE Energies 50/50 match grant to replace all of our gas monitors.

Discussion/Action on the Following Agenda Items (Public Comment will be Allowed on Each Agenda Item):

7. Approval of the following Meeting Minutes:

- July 7, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting
- July 9, 2025, Regular Town Board Meeting
- July 15, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting

Motion by Waier to approve the Minutes of July 7, July 9 and July 15, 2025 meetings as present. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

8. Approval of July 2025 Financial Report:

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

9. Approval of Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions: from July 1 through July 31, 2025, including Check #'s 20080 – 20138

Motion by Waier to approve Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions: from July 1 through July 31, 2025, including Check #'s 20080 – 20138. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

10. Consider/Approve the hiring of Kristin Ludwig to the Library staff as Youth Services Assistant

Motion by Waier to approve the hiring of Kristin Ludwig to the Library staff as Youth Services Assistant. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

11. Consider/Approve the hiring of Anthony Gifford and Anthony Hudzinski to the Fire Department as volunteer fire fighters

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Motion by Robinson to approve hiring of Anthony Gifford and Anthony Hudzinski to the Fire Department as volunteer fire fighters. Second by Waier. All voting aye. Motion carried.

12. Consider/Approve Women's Club requests:

a. Scarecrow Fest assistance from Town Crew and Parks and volunteer opportunities

Mak Holcomb sent a letter asking for help from the town crew, and parks employees and any volunteers for scarecrow fest. Josh stated they always help.

b. Permanent dumpster in Lakefront Pines Park

The women's club would be in favor of a dumpster at Lakefront Pines Park if the Board chooses to do so.

13. Spectacle Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District petition the Town of Phelps to expeditiously pursue and enact legislation regulating the operation of boats in a manner that produces artificially enhanced wake, which has been determined to cause significant damage to natural resources, and further restrict operation of wake enhancing boats on inland lakes of less than 250 acres of total surface area.

Bob Minot, Chairman of the Spectacle Lake Protection & Rehab District, was present to discuss. Bob stated they had a unanimous vote of the membership to ask the Town to take action to regulate wake boating on their lake by creating an Ordinance restricting certain artificial wake enhancement to enforce compliance. Bob stated they would put up sign at the boat landing informing people of this Ordinance. Jeremy Ryan asked how it would be enforced. We have no law enforcement officer to do this.

Steve Kessler was also present and stated that voluntary compliance is at about 95%. As far as the 5% that will not comply, you will then have the ability to go through the process of writing them a citation and taking them to court.

Ryan stated this request is the wrong forum. He sympathized with the issue and wanted them to have results, however felt the Town Board is not the right avenue to achieve their goal. The DNR regulates the waterways, so you need to reach out to your State Representatives to discuss your concerns.

Kentuck Lake residents were also present and stated they would definitely be back to request the same type of Ordinance on their lake. They did request it to be place on the September 10th agenda.

Motion by Waier to table this issue until we are able to discuss this with the Town's attorney. Second by Ryan. Roll call Vote: Doyen, Robinson, Ryan and Waier voting Aye and Selby voting Nay. Motion passes on a 4 to 1 vote.

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14. Consider/Approve Resolution 2025-05 to Adopt the Most Current Edition of National Fire Protection Associations NFPA 1 – Fire Code for Fire Inspection purposes

Motion by Waier to approve Resolution 2025-05 to Adopt the Most Current Edition of National Fire Protection Associations NFPA 1 – Fire Code for Fire Inspection purposes. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

15. Consider/Approve Amendment to Ordinance 2015-03 FIRE PROTECTION

Motion by Waier to approve Amendment to Ordinance 2015-03 FIRE PROTECTION. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

16. Consider/Approve proposed Road Plan for grant application process

Dave stated the road plan involves budgeting for match grants on all the grants we propose to apply for. The plan also involves using that budgeted money on other roads if any of the grants are denied. The actual budgeted dollars will be about \$200,000. Dave stated, in essence, approving to apply for the grants proposed below, you are approving the road budget.

17. Innovation Grant Opportunity: - Doyen stated he would like separate motions for each grant we are applying for and the corresponding road for each.

- **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant – Application deadline is August 29, 2025**

Motion by Selby to approve submitting an application for the FLAP grant for road improvements to Mail Route Road and Livingston Road. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- **WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – Application deadline is 5:00 pm Friday, October 31, 2025 – not applying for this grant.**
- **WisDOT Surface Transportation Program (STP-Local) Grant – Application deadline is 5:00 pm on Friday, October 31, 2025**

Motion by Waier to approve applying for the STP Grant for road improvements to West Shore Road. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- **WisDOT Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) – Discretionary and Supplemental Funding – Application deadline approximately November 2025**

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Motion by Ryan to approve applying for the LRIP funding for improvements to Volkmann Road. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- **Wisconsin Dept of Revenue (WDOR) Innovation Grant – Application available September 2025 and due March 31, 2026** – Steve Waier will look into eligibility of this grant.

18. Volkmann Road – Chip Sealing request

Selby stated Mark Grmick called and said the dust has been unbearable on Volkmann Road. Selby stated Volkmann Road would be eligible for Local Road Improvement Project (LRIP) which does not open until September 2025 with funds available in 2026. The funding for LRIP is guaranteed money but is not significant enough to do the project. It would cost approximately \$245,000 to blacktop Volkmann Road. There are other supplemental and discretionary funding sources that piggyback the LRIP monies that could be applied for simultaneously to hopefully get the money we need to blacktop Volkmann Road. The thought was for a temporary fix to chip seal the road. Waier stated he is not in favor of a temporary fix. It is a waste of money.

Waier stated that the match funds for the road work projected next year will have to be budgeted for and if we do not receive the grant funding, those match funds can be used on other roads, such as Volkmann Road. There is not a match fund for the FLAP Grant, it pays 100%. However, the STP Grant is 90/10, so that 10% we will owe will be in our roads budget. Also, the supplemental and discretionary grants are 60/40, so we will have to budget the 40%. Doyen told Mark Grmick, Volkmann Road will have to wait until 2026.

19. Update on former Lillian Kerr Health Care Center property:

- **Demolition project** – Doyen stated the rest of the concrete is coming down as we speak and being piled up for the crusher. The crusher will come in, crush the pile down to 1.5" gravel, sell the gravel right on site and then level the area and seed it. We hope this will be completed by the end of August or close to that.
- **Future Development Strategies** – Ryan stated one issue that might come up is the property needs to be surveyed. Doyen and Waier both said that has been done. Ryan said there is a DOT survey of the road not the property. The County cannot find a property survey, so Ryan said he doesn't know where to find it. David Konopacky should have a survey.

Ryan stated another issue is that the property is currently split-zoned. It is possible the property might have to be rezoned to one zoning district. It will be better for the Town to request that rather than putting that on the developer to do.

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Ryan met with Cedar Corporation who is doing the rendering, and they presented 2 options. Option 2 focused on the split-zoning scenario and is not as desirable. The first option is a 3-tier structure. The lowest tier, level with STH 17, would be 2 larger structures for a hardware store or grocery store option and then a coffee shop option with roof-top seating overlooking the lake. The second or middle tier would be a “live/work” concept of small business/living quarters. The third tier would enter from the back at the highest level and would be garages/condo units with balcony decks overlooking the lake. Cedar Corporation has already met with zoning officials for their review, so as soon as they have the renderings done, Jeremy will submit them for Town review.

Gene Hojan asked Jeremy to attend the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss these plans with them. Jeremy asked Gene to send him an email reminder so he could put that on his calendar, sooner than later.

20. Update on Solid Waste and Recycling Collection for 2026:

- **Discuss Price Increase from Republic Services** – Doyen asked if Republic could extend running the center until April 2026 to give time to hire someone. Kathy Linville said she can certainly ask. It would require signing an extension of the renewal so it doesn't lapse. Kathy said possible options would be 1) to ask for an extension to operate the site for an additional 4-6 months or 2) to renew the 5-year contract with an extension clause to operate the site for 4-6 months and then that piece will end and the 5-year contract will continue. Kathy will propose both options to the company and will get back to us on that. Kathy stated a new 5-year contract will reflect the services you currently have with the price increases. If you want to add a dumpster at Lakefront Pines Park, we can add that. The dumpster size, location, how many lifts per week, etc. will all be spelled out in the new contract with the monthly/annual cost locked in 5 years. Kathy stated if you decide if you want to enter into a new 5-year contract, let her know and she'll have it drawn up.
- **Discuss future employee at the Phelps Recycling Center at 4351 DNR Vista Ln** – Doyen tabled this discussion until the next budget workshop scheduled for Wednesday, August 20, 2025.
- **Discuss COM2 Agreement for Electronic Collection and Recycling date and time** – Doyen stated COM2 approached the Town about holding an electronic collection recycling event at no cost to the Town. We agreed on a date and time of Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 9 am to 1 pm. The Town will post the event on the website and provide a list of items they will accept.

Motion by Waier, to approve signing the contract agreement with COM2 to hold a one-day recycling event on Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 9 am to 1 pm at no cost to the Town. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

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21. **Update on new Community Center project** – Selby stated the community center continues to progress. General Contractor, Hoeft Construction is doing a great job, their software system is very useful, they are moving along, and they seem to be running under budget. We reached out to IT suppliers to get bids. I wouldn't be surprised if they complete this project in May 2026.
22. **Update on new Town Shop project** – Gene Hoyan stated they are moving along on the Department of Public Works (DPW) building. The groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for this Friday, August 15 at 9:00 a.m. On August 18th they will be delivering 5 semi-loads of steel and start erecting walls in mid-September. Concrete will go in starting September 1st and I would think the building will be done by the first of the year.
23. **Update on Hwy G Landfill issue** – Selby stated the Lakeland Times is covering the story, but the Town of Phelps didn't get much recognition. The Town of Conover is rocking the boat. Not much information is getting out there for the public to be made aware.
24. **Adjournment at 7:53 p.m.**

/s/ Kathleen R Ray, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

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