

Town of Phelps, Wisconsin
Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 9, 2026
Phelps Community Center – White Pine Room

Present: Chairman – Steve Doyen, Town Board Supervisors – Maureen Robinson, Jeremy Ryan, Steve Waier and Mary Ann (Mak) Holcomb. Also Present: Vilas County Economic Development Corporation – Kathy Schmitz and Tom Chamberlin, Clerk/Treasurer – Sheryl J Ward, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer – Kathleen R Ray, Shop Foreman – Josh Hedberg, Phelps Historical Museum President – Pauleyn Nystrom, and 19 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 September 8, 2026.
5. **Correspondence and Communications:** None
6. **Reports**
 - a. **Chairman Report:** Chairman Doyen thanked the Women's Club for all their time and effort at the Grand Opening and for providing food service and treats.
 - b. **Town Board Supervisors Reports:** None
 - c. **Department/Committee Reports:** Pauleyn Nystrom announced that the Museum is now closed for the season, however they will be open during the Scarecrow Fest event. The Museum is also open by appointment during the closed season. The museum is looking for members so if interested, please contact Pauleyn. Pauleyn also reminded everyone of their on-going fundraising efforts.
 - d. **EMS/Fire Department Reports:** Fire Chief, Jeremy Ryan stated EMS Director, Carole Selin, is on a call and unable to attend the meeting. Carole submitted her report prior to the meeting and reported there were 16 Emergency Calls in August with two (2) being mutual aid to Alvin. There were 4 stand-by fire calls, 2 non-transports, among others. They put on a total of 342.9 miles on the ambulance.

Ryan reported calls have been slow, 11 calls less than last year. In September they will start implementing on-call pay for those that respond to a call between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. There is money in the budget, but this will be monitored to see how it goes.

On the Fire Department side of things Ryan stated at the last meeting we were approved to buy a compressor, and I believe we will be receiving a \$10,000 donation from the Town of Alvin, \$5,000 from the Town and \$5,000 from the firefighters to put towards this compressor. We are grateful for this donation which is about 20% of the total cost. Ryan thanked Dick and Marjorie Hiller for allowing them to use their field for a serious medical call.
 - e. **Clerk Report:** Clerk Ward thanked the Women's Club for recent donations of \$1,000 towards snowflakes, \$500 towards hanging baskets, and \$200 towards fireworks. Ward reported that she is working on closing out and reconciling the FFP Grant. One (1) Picnic License was issued this month for the Midwest Musky Classic Luncheon being held on October 4, 2026. The Budget is in progress. All Department Heads and Separate Entities have submitted their budgets for 2027. Budget Workshops will now take place. Ward stated Next up – Work Comp Insurance Audit is

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due the end of September; November 3, 2026, is the General Election which will be held at the Community Center; Absentee Ballot Requests must be mailed out by September 17, 2026; In-Person Absentee Voting begins October 20, 2026; the Board of Review and Revaluation is scheduled for October 29, 2026, at 6:00 pm and Open Book will be held on October 14, 2026, in the White Pine Room.

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

7. Approval of August 12, 2026, Regular Town Board Meeting

Motion by Waier to approve the minutes of August 12, 2026, Regular Town Board meeting as presented. Second by Holcomb. All voting aye. Motion carried

8. Approval of August 2026 Financial Report

Motion by Waier to approve the August 2026 Financial Report as presented. Seconded by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried

9. Approval of Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions: from August 1 through August 31, 2026, including Check #'s 20771 – 20827

Motion by Waier to approve Checks and ACH/EFT Transactions: from August 1 through August 31, 2026, including Check #'s 20771 – 20827. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

10. Discussion/Action on Request by Keegan Langkau of Hillside Resort to consider allowing an additional timeframe to pay the required room tax or at a reduced late fee. Doyen stated we received an email from Keegan Langkau requesting that the Board allow for additional timeframe to pay room tax or at a reduced late fee. Keegan stated Eagle River is 12% per annum and Conover charges a flat \$25/month in late fees.

Motion by Holcomb to keep the timeframe and late fees as is. Second by Robinson. All voting aye. Motion carried.

11. Acceptance of donation from the Town of Phelps to Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC), Kathy Schmitz: Chairman Doyen presented Kathy Schmitz from Vilas County Economic Development Corporation with a donation of \$7,500 per the 2026 budget. Also present was the Board Treasurer, Tom Chamberlin. Kathy thanked the board and stated it was their absolute privilege and honor to work with all involved. VCEDC was contacted 3 years ago by the Town to see if we could secure grants to help with the hospital site. VCEDC helped in securing two (2) \$25,000 grants. One was used to hire a consultant to help with the marketing analysis and the other grant was used to hire an architect to do the renderings. Now we are in the process of looking for a developer. Kathy stated the Town of Phelps people told us they want a multipurpose use project. Part residential and part commercial. So that is where we are at. We are a non-profit organization, and this donation means the world to us. This helps us “keep the lights on,” so to speak. Thank you again for this generous donation.

12. Acknowledgment of donation from the Shotwell Family on behalf of the Wavering Family Foundation: Chairman Doyen thanked the Shotwell Family for their generous donation of \$100,000 for the new department of public works building. A thank you written letter will be mailed to the Shotwell family.

13. Consider/Approve 2-year Operator's License for Courtney A Szuta for the period of September 9, 2026, through June 30, 2028

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Motion by Waier to approve a 2-year Operator's License for Courtney A Szuta for the period of September 9, 2026, through June 30, 2028. Second by Holcomb. All voting aye. Motion carried

- 14. Consider/Approve purchases for the Community Center generator as recommended by the electrician.** Sheryl stated that a cold-weather kit needs to be purchased for the generator however, I do not know how much. I haven't seen a quote yet. The Board agreed to TABLE this item until all information is submitted.
- 15. Consider/Approve ID stickers for residents, including residents on Smokey and Little Smokey, for use of the Phelps Transfer Station:** Doyen explained there is a problem with our site getting full due to other people, non-residents, dropping off recycling. Waier stated he spoke with Geno Wentz, the transfer station manager, about possibly charging for non-residence to drop off. The problem with that is the need for additional dumpsters. Geno and I are still discussing options. In the meantime, the Board discussed providing 2 "dump" stickers for residents and property owners to put in their car windshield and mailing them with the tax statements.

Motion by Waier to approve ordering stickers. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- 16. Consider/Approve increasing the limit on the Credit Card which is currently at \$5,000 and request to add an additional user:** Ward stated there are times when Fire/EMS needs use of the credit card. Currently the Town Office and Town Shop use the card with a combined \$5,000 a month to spend. Also, Ward stated that Fire/EMS is not on the card as a user. Sheryl recommended an additional \$2,500 on the card and adding the Fire Chief as a user.

Motion by Robinson to approve increasing the limit of the credit card from \$5,000 to \$7,500 and approve Fire Chief, Jeremy Ryan as an additional user. Second by Waier. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- 17. Consider/Approve the new Polling Place from the Fire Hall at 4499 Town Hall Rd to the Community Center at 4495 Town Hall Rd**

Motion by Ryan to approve the new Polling Place to be at the Phelps Community Center at 4495 Town Hall Road. Second by Waier. All voting aye. Motion carried.

18. Community Center Discussion/Action:

- **Open/Close hours of the Community Center:** Ward asked the Board direction for possibly having the Main and South entrance doors automatically unlocked from 8 am – 7 pm. This will allow meetings to take place at night without needing to control who has keys to get in.

Motion by Waier to approve programming the main entrance and south entrance doors to automatically unlock from 8 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday. Second by Holcomb. All voting aye. Motion carried.

- **Fee for non-local organizations/non-profit organizations for use of the community center:** Doyen stated an email was received from an organization from the Land O' Lakes/Watersmeet area wanting to have a monthly fellowship event and possibly a bible study in the future. Waier didn't think we were ready to rent on a monthly basis. Ryan stated because they would want to rent monthly and possibly take away from our residents using it, he is not in favor. Holcomb stated, if they wanted to use the space for a special event, but not on a regular basis, we could consider that, but the fee would be at the regular rate because they are a non-local organization.

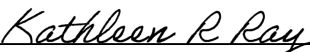
Motion by Doyen to deny this entity using the community center on a regular basis and if they want to use the center for a single event it would be at the regular rate. Second by Ryan. All voting aye. Motion carried.

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- 19. Striping for parking on HWY E across from the museum to include handicap space:** Holcomb stated she added this to the agenda prior to talking with Josh. After talking with Josh, we believe this isn't going to be the best place for handicap accessibility. Holcomb stated that this is an issue we should address in the future for people that want to attend events downtown, we should provide handicap accessible parking.
- 20. Scarecrow Fest Recap:** Holcomb gave an update on the upcoming Scarecrow Fest Event and stated that they have received the Road Closure Permit, we made changes to where vendors will set up based on the Fire Chief's concerns from last year and the ambulance will be set up, standby at the congregational church as it was last year. So, we are all ready to go.
- 21. Data Center Study:** Holcom stated she added this topic to open conversation about preparing the Town to respond to any request for a data center in the Town of Phelps. Doyen agreed we should take responsibility for educating ourselves as a Town to be prepared. Ryan stated because we gave Vilas County Zoning authority, any concerns should really be expressed to Vilas County. Ryan recommended reaching out to the two (2) County Board Representatives for Phelps and the Vilas County Board Chairman.

Sheryl stated we received a notice from the Vilas County Zoning & Planning Committee that they will be holding a public hearing on September 23rd at 9 am at the courthouse. This is open to the public.

- 22. Adjournment at 6:47 p.m.**



Kathleen R Ray, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

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