



Meeting Minutes: Friends of Townsend Fire

Membership Meeting

Date: Saturday July 18, 2026, 9:30AM

Attendees:: John Zeller, Wanda Laste, Anita Szyszkiewicz, Donna Fischer, Linda Ziegler, Duane Benn, Don Fischer, Gary Birr, Dawn Herlache, Kathy Karagianis, Dacon Frazen, Linda Vander Heiden, Dean Vander Heiden, Kevin Osadjjan **Guest:** Bob Strazishar (Nicholet Express)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by Chairperson Wanda Laste

2. Review and Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from June 20, 2026, Membership Meeting were reviewed.

Motion: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dean V. seconded by Linda Z.
The motion was approved.

3. Treasurer Report

The budget report was passed around for internal use. It is only up to date through June 31st. Because of significant financial motions occurring in early July, the current printout does not reflect real-time numbers.

Funds Requests Action by Board:

Chief Dawn submitted a funds request for two "RIT Packs" (Rapid Intervention Team packs used for firefighter low-air or structural collapse emergencies) cost of \$10,240. One of the department's current primary packs is terribly out of date, and the second is merely an old SCBA cylinder in a duffel bag. Chief Dawn previously applied for FEMA and Firehouse Subs grants but was denied. The Board raised questions regarding the 5-year expiration/30-year cylinder shelf life. Responses have been received and sent out, but because Vice Chair Joe is in Alaska, the request remains under review until a full board vote can occur.

4. Donations

Wanda reported a spike in miscellaneous donations coming in alongside returned raffle tickets (e.g., people sending \$50 instead of the required \$30). Notable major donations include:

- Forest County Potawatomi: \$2,500 (unsolicited annual support for protecting tribal land within Townsend borders), and Tom M. / GP: \$1,000.

5. Grant Writing Committee Report:

Grants: A decision on a State Farm grant application is expected by August 31st. Gift card requests have been submitted to FleetFarm.

6. Public Relations Committee

- **Website & Social Media:** Website traffic spikes occurred over the 4th of July. Facebook page reach is up **234%** over the last 28 days.
- **Committee Meeting Reset:** Due to a Thursday emergency, the committee meeting was rescheduled to **July 30th at 10:00 AM** at the Chair's house.
- **Scholarship Article:** Gary confirmed a 5-paragraph feature regarding the scholarship winners will run in the upcoming edition of the Nicolet Express.
- **Recognition Plaque:** The complete plaque has arrived and will be displayed in the Town Hall. Chief Dawn plans to put an official presentation on next month's Town Meeting agenda.

7. Can Collection Report

- **Discussion:** A collection run was completed in June with \$368 received. This run had a deduction of 300 pounds due to our last run having glass, and no aluminum cans in the bags.

8. Fire Department Report:

- **Call Volume:** 25 emergency page-outs/calls to date, including structure fires, alarm calls, motor vehicle accidents, and vehicle/brush fires.
- **Safety Reminder:** Debris burning remains the number one cause of local wildfires; residents are reminded that burn permits are required. The current fire danger is moderate. Check WISBURN.Com for the latest fire danger update.
- **Storage Unit Reorganization:** Plans are underway to clean out and shelve the drive-through storage unit to improve access to items. Wanda is working on a date.

9. Scholarship Committee Report

- **Media:** Photos of the recipients have been received and will be uploaded to the website and Facebook.

10 . Old Business:

- **4th Celebration**
 - The event was a huge success again this year. Thank you to everyone who participated.
 - **Parade & Volunteers:** Wabenol band students assisted during the day in exchange for a donation toward their upcoming trip to Hawaii. 5 students volunteered after the parade and assisted with food and garbage detail. It was decided that FoTF would make a \$500 donation to the band for their assistance.
- **4th Celebration Follow-Up Meeting**

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for July 23 at 6 PM at the TFD to discuss what worked well, and what could be improved for next year.
- **Round Up:** A reminder that the month of July will be FoTF round up month.

11. New Business

- **Proposed "Deer Hunter's Widow's Craft Fair" (Guest: Bob)**

Key Points: Bob proposed a co-sponsored craft fair with the Nicolet Express at the town hall on **Saturday, November 21st, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.**

- **Logistics & Marketing:** Bob will manage vendor applications (\$30–\$35 fee) and fund a full-page ad in the paper for 3 consecutive months. He will restrict vendors to authentic, local handmade crafts (no imported goods).
- **Fundraising Hook:** Vendors will donate an item (\$25 minimum value) to a bucket raffle benefiting Friends of Townsend Fire. The organization could also sell food/beverages or 50/50 raffle tickets.
- **Discussion & Concerns:** Members discussed potential calendar conflicts with open houses and competing craft shows nearby. However, consensus was that the date gap is sufficient, and the heavy marketing support from Nicolet Express ensures high foot traffic.

Decisions Made: The Chair requested two weeks to email the full 50+ membership body to gauge commitment and ensure 2 to 3 volunteers can sign up for shifts that day.

- **Mission Scope Expansion: Fire Victim Assistance**

- **Context:** FOTF was approached by a local organization asking if the group provides direct assistance to displaced fire victims (following a recent local house fire resulting in a 3-to-4-month displacement).
- **Discussion:** The current bylaws state the primary purpose is supporting the fire department and the communities they serve (primarily through offsetting department budget costs to lower property taxes). Dedicated groups like the Northern Oconto County Coalition and the Red Cross typically manage victim relief. The board had length discussion regarding this topic, which included it is a worthy cause; it loosely ties to our mission; what protocols should be placed around the fund (only Townsend, business and/or resident; permanent home versus vacation home; committee creation; needing more input from membership before determining if this is warranted). Chief Dawn voiced several concerns regarding moving forward with this fund.

Action Item: Due to the importance of this topic no action was taken. The items will be included in email for membership seeking further input and ideas and will be on the agenda for the next board meeting to gather more membership input regarding boundaries, scope, and whether to create a dedicated relief subcommittee, etc.

12. Announcements:

FoTF Online Store: Remember the FoTF Online Store is available on the FoTF website. Order gear, dishware, hats, etc.

13. Adjournment:

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Linda V, second by Dawn. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.