



Regular & Board of Audit Meeting
February 25, 2026, 7:00PM

The Orrock Township Board met in regular session, on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at Orrock Town Hall, 26401 180th Street NW, Big Lake, MN.

In attendance were Chair Anne Felber, Supervisors: Paul Ellinger, Bryan Adams, Peter Owen, Treasurer Kellie McConville and Clerk Shelley Erickson. Also, in attendance were Sergeant Alex Dehn, 6 members of the audience and the Patriot News.

A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chair Anne Felber at 7:00 PM.

Call Meeting To Order And Pledge Of Allegiance

Chair Anne Felber called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval Of February Meeting Agenda

One addition was made to the February agenda under treasurer's business item 11, adding item F for additional disbursements for approval. No other additions or corrections were requested.

Motion by Supervisor Ellinger, seconded by Supervisor Adams, to approve the February meeting agenda with item 11F added. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Consent Agenda

No changes were requested to the consent agenda items.

Motion for approval of the consent agenda made by Supervisor Adams. Seconded by Supervisor Ellinger. Motion carried.

Sheriff's Report

Sergeant Alex Dehn reported that the sheriff's office had 149 calls for service in Orrock Township during January, which was slightly more than the previous January but fairly consistent. Notable calls included a trespassing complaint that was resolved at a private residence, two fraud complaints related to online scams where residents were advised before monetary loss occurred, and a lost/found person call involving a juvenile runaway that had returned.

The sergeant reported a motor vehicle accident involving property damage where a vehicle went off the roadway and struck a power pole with minor damage and no injuries. There were animal complaints including one involving goats, where concerns were raised about proper care, and another dog complaint. A death investigation was conducted regarding an unnatural death in the township.

Traffic complaints involved driving conduct and suspected intoxicated drivers. Five snowmobile complaints were handled, which were actually enforcement stops rather than citizen complaints. A garbage littering call turned out to be a dehumidifier that had fallen from someone's truck in the middle of the roadway. The sergeant noted fewer garbage dumping issues in winter due to snowed-in parking lots.

A parking complaint involved someone asking about rules for parking at Eagle Lake Landing. Several suspicious activities and vehicle calls were related to an abduction that occurred in Zimmerman, with residents calling in different vehicles they thought were involved. The sergeant noted this case had a rare happy ending through collaboration of different law enforcement agencies.

Open Forum

Vanessa Attencourt from 17195 242nd Avenue Northwest announced she is running for state house representative in the district. She outlined three main platform items: adding additional tax brackets above the current top bracket of \$338,000 so high earners pay more than the current 9.85%, requiring AI data centers to pay for infrastructure costs upfront rather than passing them to residents, and getting corporations out of politics by noting that only 6.1% of the current representative's funding came from small donors under \$200.

Approval Of Meeting Minutes

Motion for approval of January monthly and reorganizational meeting minutes made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

Regular Business

Sherburne County 2025 Annual Building And Population Report - Information

Board members reviewed the report noting that population had decreased from 4,737 to 3,868 using the same calculation formula. One supervisor expressed surprise at the decrease and had asked the county about it, confirming they were using the same calculation method. The report included information about new home permits, multi-family permits, and new home evaluations year over year, with detailed historical data available on the township website.

Annual Meeting Agenda - Approve

The board discussed additions to the annual meeting agenda. One member suggested adding informational material about the proposed hamlet district including a map and explanation of what the planning commission is examining regarding commercial and residential development. The board also considered adding discussion about the Sherburne County History Museum's request for township

participation in digital initiatives, though they wanted clarification on whether monetary assistance was being requested. Cemetery matters were also mentioned as a potential addition that would involve costs.

Motion to approve the annual meeting agenda with additions made by Supervisor Adams. Seconded by Supervisor Ellinger. Motion carried.

Ratification Of Annual Meeting Notices To Be Published Feb. 21st & Feb. 28th, 2026

The board discussed having leftover food from a previous meeting and proposed inviting township residents to come an hour early before the annual meeting to share sloppy joes and other food.

Motion to ratify the annual meeting notices to be published, made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

Sheriff's Press Release - Information

The sheriff's office asked the township to share information about a community input session. The press release had been posted and emailed to board members. There was mention of both in-person and Zoom participation options, with the ability to provide feedback online through a URL. One date had been changed from the original notice.

Ann Lake Club, Loon Nesting Sign – Discuss/Action

Ann Lake resident Steve Mockenhaupt explained this was the first time implementing loon nesting signs as part of the DNR loon watch program. Despite participating in the program, no loon babies had survived for the last 7-8 years. The signs would be put up in March when frost is out of the ground and ice is out, as suggested by the DNR as a last resort before more drastic measures.

Motion to pay the handyman Darryl Waletzko to install the signs that were purchase by the Ann Lake Club, to be installed when frost is out of the ground made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Adams. Motion carried.

Big Lake Food Shelf - Discuss

The board discussed a request from Big Lake Food Shelf but noted Orrock Township doesn't have suitable space. The old corner building was mentioned but deemed hazardous due to mold from being closed too long, and that building is scheduled for demolition. The board agreed to communicate that while they support the cause, they cannot offer space, but would consider other forms of support if requested.

2026 Recycle Day Participation – Discuss/Action

The board discussed continuing their longstanding participation in the recycle day event scheduled for May 16th from 8 AM to noon. They saw no reason not to continue participating and would reach out to the community about the event. Supervisor Ellinger volunteered to help that day.

Motion to participate in 2026 recycle day made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

Accessor Video – Information

The board received information about a video available on the assessor's web page to help the public understand the assessor's role. The assessor encouraged property owners with questions to review it. The board was reminded of their Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting scheduled for April 8th at 6 PM.

BLFD Contract – Discuss/Action

Supervisor Ellinger, who attended the Big Lake Fire Department contract meeting along with Supervisor Keiderling, the clerk, and a community member, reported on discussions about projected cost increases for 2027. The fire department contract costs hadn't increased significantly in recent years with only small amounts, but major equipment purchases were driving projected increases. Orrock Township averages 19-22 fire runs per year by the BLFD. Orrock Township is served by two fire departments, covering different areas.

Supervisor Ellinger expressed concerns about the projected increases but felt the fire department was trying to work with the township. He recommended continuing with the contract for one more year while having ongoing discussions with the fire board, planning to start reviewing the contract in fall rather than waiting until the following year. The increases were attributed to equipment purchases as well as general cost increases. The first half of the year's payment had already been made. The board decided to maintain the current contract while planning for future budget discussions.

Planning & Zoning

Proposed "Hamlet District" - Discussion

The board discussed ongoing planning and zoning initiatives that had been presented at previous meetings. The township's planning and zoning representative was absent but had provided written comments opposing multifamily housing due to concerns about shared septic systems and maintenance issues. He also opposed reducing minimum lot sizes from 2.5 acres to 1.5 acres, feeling this would compromise Orrock Township's rural character given the amount of state and federal land in the area.

Board members discussed specific questions from the planning commission: whether to support multifamily housing, townhomes and patio homes in the hamlet district; whether to support mixed-use housing and businesses; and whether to support reduced setbacks. One member opposed reducing lot sizes to 1.5 acres, agreeing it would detract from reasons people move to Orrock Township, especially given that neighboring townships have tighter residential areas.

Regarding multifamily housing, board members expressed concerns about large apartment complexes but were more accepting of duplexes on 2.5-acre lots. There was discussion about whether townhomes would be individual units on 2.5 acres or multiple units sharing acreage. The board was

generally supportive of mixed-use development and reduced setbacks but wanted to maintain the 2.5-acre minimum lot size. They expressed approval for duplexes but were divided on quad-homes, with some members undecided or opposed to larger multifamily developments.

TWP Soil Separation-Lot Size – Discussion

The board discussed reducing soil separation requirements from 3 feet to 2 feet. One member with relevant expertise indicated this reduction wouldn't cause damage and would make development easier for home builders. Another member abstained stating lack of knowledge about soil separation requirements. The board agreed to support the reduction with the agreed upon comments to be added before submission.

2025 Sherburne Co. Violation Report – Information

The board reviewed the planning and zoning violation report showing Orrock Township had 5 active violations, 12 closed violations, 12 carryover active violations, and 2 carryover closed violations. Violation types included septic, solid waste, zoning, and shoreland. The closed violations involved building, solid waste, and septic issues. A map showing violation locations was displayed as public information.

Veterinarian Clinic - Update

The board received an update on confusion at the planning and zoning meeting regarding a proposed veterinary clinic ordinance. The planning and zoning board discovered the ordinance proposal was written by the applicant rather than planning staff, explaining why it was vague and inconsistent with existing county ordinances. Issues included inconsistency with horse/equine business requirements (currently 10 acres vs. proposed 5 acres), animal setback inconsistencies (proposed 10 feet vs. required 500 feet for kennels), and agricultural building setback inconsistencies (current 50 feet vs. proposed 10 feet).

Planning and zoning staff was asked to rewrite the ordinance and return it to townships for additional input, believing township feedback wasn't fully informed due to the inadequate original proposal. Key questions included appropriate acreage requirements for large vs. small animal veterinary clinics, setback requirements, distinctions between clinic types, and language about employees and animals on-site.

The board's previous recommendations remained unchanged: 10 acres for large animal clinics, 2.5 acres for small animal clinics, with setbacks consistent with agricultural buildings (50 feet). They suggested leaving detailed employee and animal calculations to planning and zoning staff expertise.

Roads

Bryan Coons, Sealtech – Asphalt & Paving Co. – Introduction

Bryan Coons from Sealtech Incorporated introduced his company, explaining 18 years in business with 28 years of industry experience. He described consulting work with townships, cities, counties, and

North Dakota's state highway system, helping transform their maintenance programs over 11 years. His goal is providing information on proper road maintenance materials and timing to extend road life to 30-40 years instead of the typical 10-15 years before rebuilding.

When asked about infrared patching capabilities, he confirmed his company could provide this service though noted it's designed for specific applications. The board thanked him for the information and indicated their road authority would follow up if services were needed, noting that more detailed technical discussions would be appropriate with road committee members rather than the full board.

Board Business/Updates – Committee Reports

Adams

No report provided.

Ellinger

Passed due to time constraints.

Felber

Also passed due to time.

Keiderling

Not present.

Owen

Reported a conversation with Matt Leaf from MP Asphalt and Concrete in Becker as another option for pothole patching and infrared work. He indicated this company might be cost competitive with existing contractors and provide better communication, including firm scheduling commitments for patchwork timing.

Treasurer Business

Cash Control Statement And Investment Update – Approve

The treasurer presented account balances, reconciliation with the accounting program, receipts, disbursements, and interest received. She requested transferring \$438.15 to cover debits and \$6,580.71 from money market to cover claims and payroll.

Motion to approve transfers as requested made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Adams. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report - Approve

The treasurer presented fund balances for approval.

Motion to approve the treasurer's report made by Supervisor Owen. Seconded by Supervisor Adams. Motion carried.

Report Of January Sherburne State Bank Securities Pledge Validation – Review

The board reviewed the securities pledge validation, confirming adequate coverage. One member noted the major road project might be delayed until fall if a wet spring condition were to occur, suggesting this could provide opportunities for better investment returns on reserved funds over a 4-month period if the delay occurs.

Adoption Of 2026 Budget Framework

The treasurer presented the budget framework showing general fund receipts of \$134,250 and disbursements of \$144,135, requiring use of reserve funds. Fire fund receipts were projected at \$140,000 with disbursements of \$155,000, also requiring reserve funds. Road and bridge fund showed receipts of \$942,800 and disbursements of \$985,425, with the difference covered by reserved funds.

Board members explained their long-standing goal of maintaining 100% funding for each year due to timing issues with fire payments due in January/February while tax receipts don't arrive until June/July and December. They emphasized this provides security against economic disruption while maintaining the township's core responsibilities of fire protection and road maintenance.

The treasurer noted the capital fund was set at zero pending an April siren meeting with other townships to develop a coordinated plan. Any decisions about siren funding would require unanimous board approval to transfer money between funds.

Motion to adopt the proposed 2026 budget framework made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

Consideration Of Levy Recommendations For Taxes Payable In 2027

The treasurer presented levy recommendations totaling \$1,155,000, representing a 2.7% increase. General fund levy was proposed at \$105,000, fire fund at \$150,000 (reflecting increased fire costs), and road and bridge at \$900,000. The committee targeted staying under 3% increase to match inflation rates while acknowledging difficult economic times for residents.

Charts showed levy history and tax rates, demonstrating relatively stable taxation despite levy increases due to growth in the tax base from new construction. For a \$300,000 home, taxes would remain approximately \$500, similar to previous years, meaning actual taxpayer burden remains consistent even with levy increases due to expanded tax base.

Board members clarified that while they approve the budget, the levy must be approved by township electors at the annual meeting on March 10th. The board makes recommendations but voters have final authority over levy amounts.

Motion to recommend the proposed levy for taxes payable in 2027 made by Supervisor Adams. Seconded by Supervisor Ellinger. Motion carried.

Additional Disbursements For Approval

The treasurer requested approval for additional disbursements paid through debit card: \$28.07 for Office Depot and \$156.78 for postage.

Motion to approve additional disbursements made by Supervisor Ellinger. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

Board Of Audit

Introduction By Treasurer

The treasurer introduced the annual board of audit requirement as an internal check and balance system.

Review Of Receipts And Disbursements Registers And Confirmation Of 12/31/2025 Cash Balances

Board members reviewed receipt and disbursement registers in their packets.

Selection Of Three Receipts For Board Review

The board randomly selected and reviewed three receipts: July 31, 2025 4M fund receipt #07312025 for \$579.97; July 8th Sherburne County receipt #448233 for \$183,450.30; and August 20th Sherburne County wildlife refuge payment receipt #448244 for \$5,559.58. All receipts were verified as accurate.

Selection Of Three Disbursements For Board Review

The board randomly selected and reviewed three disbursements: April 23, 2025 check #12200 for \$11,268; February 26, 2025 check #12137 for \$13,512.50; and July 30th WSB engineering check #12263 for \$3,067.00. All disbursements were verified as accurate.

During the audit, one board member commented on the relatively small amount the township receives from state payments for refuge and other properties compared to local taxpayers, noting this creates a burden on residents despite the township having minimal expenses for those state lands, though roads and fire services are still required.

Announcements

Annual Meeting – Tuesday March 10th - Commences @ 7PM, Town Hall

The annual meeting will include a 6 PM sloppy joe feed on a first-come, first-served basis, with the meeting commencing at 7 PM. The board clarified they do not run the annual meeting; electors elect a chair to conduct the meeting.

League Of MN Cities, Day On The Hill – March 11th

March Regular Meeting –March 25th @ 7PM

2026 MAT Spring Courses – March To April

Board members were reminded about MAT spring courses available for continuing education, with township payment for attendance. Members should sign up according to course requirements and notify staff if they didn't receive course information in the mail.

LBoFAE Meeting – April 8th @ 6PM, Town Hall

The Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting procedures for citizens will be posted on the township website with instructions for those wishing to appear before the board.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Supervisor Adams. Seconded by Supervisor Owen. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelley Erickson
Orrock Township Clerk

Accepted on this **25th day of March 2026**, by the Orrock Township Board of Supervisors.

Anne Felber, Chair

Attest: _____
Town Clerk