

Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the North Township Advisory Board

Held at the Fire Station in Lapaz, IN

March 23, 2026 (scheduled to begin following the Fire Territory meeting)

North Township Advisory Board Members Present:

Steven Davenport, President

Steve Barber, Secretary

Judy Fisher

Emily Haskins, Trustee, North Township

Mathew Haskins, Fire Chief

For other community members present, please refer to the attached sign-in sheet.

*The reader will note that meetings are now livestreamed and available for viewing thereafter. Please refer to our website for a schedule of our meetings, links for the live streams (available for viewing thereafter), approved minutes, and additional information: <https://northtownship.org>.

The meeting consisted of the following.

Mr. Davenport called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

1. Approval of 1/14/26 Joint Meeting Minutes (with the Town of LaPaz) and the 1/14/26 regular Township Advisory Board Meeting Minutes: Mr. Barber moved to approve these minutes, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.
2. Territory Recommendations:
 - a. Renewal for Malpractice Insurance: Last year it cost \$10,762.50. This year (with the increase in number of runs) it will cost \$12,735.63. The Territory recommended approving the additional cost. Mr. Barber moved to adopt their recommendation, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.
 - b. The Territory recommended that the Township adopt the following pay schedule, effective beginning with the next pay period.

i. 1 st class Firefighter (FF I/II and Advanced EMT)	\$62,500
ii. 2 nd class Firefighter (FF I/II and Basic EMT)	58,000
iii. 3 rd class Firefighter (FF I/II and Basic EMT)	55,000

Mr. Barber moved to adopt their recommendation, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.
 - c. Ms. Haskins reported that based on a discussion in the Territory meeting, she will be reaching out to NFP to discuss Short-Term Disability insurance and/or Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance not only for the full-time employees but perhaps for the volunteers as well. Mr. Davenport agreed to attend that meeting.
 - d. The Territory recommended that the Township approve a grant application with Marshall County for new communication equipment (as presented by Mr. Haskins), including radios and pagers, in the amount of \$50,000. Mr. Barber moved to adopt the recommendation, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.
3. Library Card Policy for 2027: Ms. Haskins explained that historically, the Township has paid for half of the cost for the Plymouth Library card. This has been done because North Township does not have a library. The reader is referred to an email (attached) from Mr. Buras, Library Director, Plymouth Public Library in which he reported recent usage data. Ms. Haskins added that this past year a constituent requested that the Township consider paying the full cost and indicated that Polk Township pays the full cost for library cards for their constituents. Ms. Haskins spoke to Mr. Lamb, Polk Township Trustee. He

reported that they budget \$9,000 per year to cover the cost of one library card per household. They have identified that \$9,000 is the maximum they will cover per year. Ms. Fisher reported she spoke with the head librarian. She learned that there have been people who were denied a card because they did not have the money to pay for half of the cost for the library card. Ms. Fisher speaks in favor of paying 100% of the library card. Mr. Davenport explained that historically, the Board felt that there should be some participation and that many of the people who would take advantage of this opportunity were more than able to pay the money. He felt that if a household did not have the resources to pay the fee, then the Township Trustee could be contacted for assistance. Mr. Davenport expressed support for the current policy of paying half the cost and not paying the full amount. If this were changed he would hope that there be a cap on the budget amount and that the cards be limited to one per household. He said that the money for this would come from the General Budget. Mr. Davenport informed the Board that the Township Trustee *may* pay for a card. [Therefore, the reader may surmise that if a household did not have the funds to pay their half, they could request that the Township Trustee pay that for them – at which time the Trustee could make a determination to pay the constituent’s portion.] Mr. Barber asked where the money comes from for this expenditure. Answer: from property owners. Mr. Barber asks if there are any constituents who do not pay property taxes. Answer: Those who are in mobile home parks, those who rent their living quarters, or those who live on property owned by religious organizations or non-profit organizations. Mr. Barber asks if it is a safe assumption that most of the property owners of mobile home parks or rental properties would make an effort to recover the cost of property taxes from their tenants. Answer: yes, that is a safe assumption. Mr. Barber asks if we may conclude that all residents/tenants in North Township directly or indirectly contribute to the Township coffers, unless they live on property owned by a religious/non-profit organization? Mr. Barber makes the point that every property owner *and* tenant is already contributing to the cost of paying for half the cost of library cards. Some may pay a very small amount and some may pay a larger amount. He also reasons that property owners *and* tenants have contributed to emergency services and roads. Ms. Fisher moved to begin paying 100% of the cost of library cards beginning with the 2027 Budget. Mr. Barber seconded the motion recognizing the budgeted amount will be determined during budget season later this year. Ms. Haskins stated that the library already verifies residency and provides only one card per household. Motion passed 2-1.

4. Township Assistance Guidelines update: Ms. Haskins provided a brief review of the guidelines and provided copies of sections where changes are noted (attached). We use 100% of the 2026 Federal Poverty Guidelines as the threshold. We adhere to SNAP guidelines. Ms. Haskins reported that there are options for those who need to meet the requirements for workfare. This could include work for the Township around the fire station, but additional insurance may be needed. A better option (from the vantage point of the Township) may be for the workfare recipient to do volunteer work for a local non-profit organization. Mr. Barber moved to adopt the Township Assistance Guidelines as presented, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.
5. Cemetery Maintenance Guidelines: Ms. Haskins reminded the Board that the State requires fencing around cemeteries. She has reached out to get quotes, including a local fencing company. She asked the board for their input. Ms. Fisher stated her preference to complete it all this year and be done with it. Mr. Davenport asks if the new fencing installed by adjacent property owners on the south side of Fairmount would satisfy the requirements of the State. Ms. Haskins stated inasmuch as the State set forth no guidelines, then any fencing would be acceptable. There are three cemeteries in the Township. Mr. Barber indicated his preference is to complete one cemetery every 1-2 years. He also suggests that we consider doing Mt. Zion first because it is near the high school and County Line Brethren Church. Mr. Davenport informed the Board that a small corner of this area is owned by County Line Brethren Church. Mr. Barber wonders if the church would be interested in divesting themselves of this small lot. He also expresses his desire to do something aesthetically pleasing for the fencing at Mt. Zion.

6. Trustee Update:

- a. Ms. Haskins informed Ms. Fisher, Financial Secretary, that there is a CD with the bank that is maturing and tasks were delineated.
- b. Ms. Haskins informed the Board that Marshall County has applied for a grant for home improvements for qualifying property owners in Marshall County. Ms. Haskins has given the County permission to make applications available to property owners in North Township. She stipulated that the applications would be made available during her office hours.
- c. Ms. Haskins reported so far this year, she has received 5 applications for assistance. Four were approved. Three of the applications were for utility assistance and one was for cremation.
- d. Ms. Haskins reported as of 3-19-26, expenditures are at 11% of the General Fund; 10% of the Township Assistance Budget; and 9% of the Fire Budget. And we are at about 25% through the year. Current cash balances are:
 - i. Township Fund = \$538,022.78
 - ii. Fire Territory Operating Fund = 1,083,064.25
 - iii. Township Assistance Fund = 33,626.59
 - iv. Equipment Replacement Fund = 81,995.67

7. Good of the Order announcements or updates from Fire Department:

- a. Mr. Haskins reported that he did approve the Marshall County Election Board's request to use the facilities for both primary and general elections this year.
- b. Mr. Haskins reported that some drain grates have deteriorated over time. He has been working to obtain a quote for satisfactory replacements and estimates the cost for 10 grates will be in the range of \$1,200-\$1,500 (and will be within the budget for repairs/maintenance).
- c. Mr. Haskins will be replacing a faucet and will need to tear out some drywall to accomplish this.
- d. Mr. Haskins and Mr. Robertson have met with the architects regarding the housing options for emergency staff. The architects have indicated that the project will be "conservatively between \$650,000 and \$750,000." This would be a 40 foot addition to our current building and include:
 - i. Two dorm rooms with two beds in each room
 - ii. Two bathrooms
 - iii. Meeting room
 - iv. Washer/dryer, utility room
 - v. Storage room off the side of the meeting room
 - vi. The living quarters would be in the current Township meeting room


Next steps would include:

- vii. Continued development of the schematic designs for approval, including floor plans, site plans, exterior elevation, mechanical & electrical engineering, tests to assure that the renovations would serve the needs of the Fire Department, and prepare a code analysis which is needed for special construction.
- viii. A vestibule is required for the main exterior entrance for the public.
- ix. Ventilation because of the attached vehicle bays
- x. Site restrictions
- xi. Additional utility locations
- xii. Contact metal roof manufacturer to obtain specs.
- xiii. Refine design, choose materials and finishes
- xiv. Select mechanical electrical systems
- xv. Produce all documents, drawings, and specifications which can be used by contractors to bid and construct the project.
- xvi. Ms. Haskins adds that we do plan to seek a grant to help pay for this project.

- xvii. Mr. Haskins indicated that this is a one-story project. He adds that he has had two emergency workers stumble coming down the steps in response to a call. No serious injuries were noted.
 - e. Mr. Haskins reported that the State may have raised the car and clothing allowance for volunteers. He will check into this. Ms. Haskins anticipates that this may be covered in the upcoming DLGF Trustee update that she will be attending.
 - f. Ms. Haskins expressed her hope to work with her successor.
8. Mr. Barber moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephen Barber, Secretary


Approved: As Written/Printed As Amended As Corrected



Steven Davenport, President

4-22-26


Date



Stephen Barber, Secretary

4-22-26

Date



Judy Fisher

4/22/26

Date

North Township Marshall County Public Meeting
Monday, March 23, 2026 at 7:00pm
LaPaz-North Township Fire Station

- 1. Approval of 1/14/2026 Meeting Minutes**
- 2. Territory Recommendations**
- 3. Library Card Policy for 2027 calendar year**
- 4. Township Assistance Guidelines update**
- 5. Cemetery Maintenance Update**
- 6. Trustee Update**
- 7. Good of the order announcements or updates from Fire Department**
- 8. Public Comment (Limited to 2 minutes per person)**

Sign-In Sheet

1. Sarah Klingeman
2. Steve Barber
3. The Dumb
4. Alice Ayler
5. Judy Fisher
6. Ed Roberts
7. Chad Roberts
8. Sandy Roberts
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