

North Township - LaPaz Fire Protection Territory, Public Meeting  
Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 6:00pm  
LaPaz-North Township Fire Station

Present:

Cathy Welch, Town of LaPaz  
Steven Davenport, North Township  
Stephen Barber, appointed by Ms. Haskins, Trustee  
Lisa Knepp, appointed by Town of LaPaz  
**Absent: Roger Ecker, Town of LaPaz**

Also present:

Emily Haskins, Trustee  
Mathew Haskins, Fire Chief  
Please refer to the sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

\*Beginning with this meeting, the reader will note that meetings are now livestreamed. Please refer to our website for a schedule of our meetings, links for the live streams, and additional information:

<https://northtownship.org>

The meeting consisted of the following:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Davenport at 6:00pm.

1. Approval of 6/16/25 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Barber moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. Knepp, and passed 4-0.
2. Billing Service Update: Ms. Haskins reported that she has biweekly meetings with EMS/MC. They are still pursuing Medicaid approval. This seems to be taking longer than normal. Our contact with EMS/MC was able to contact someone from Medicaid who was able to facilitate a visit from Medicaid yesterday. This is the only major approval being sought and it is hoped that approval will be provided soon. The Department of Labor (for federal employees) only approves a provider after sustaining an initial service for one of their covered members. The reader is referred to the attached report of billing. There is one error to report on the form. Instead of receiving \$2,641.51, the Township has received about \$18,000 thus far. EMS/MC reports that the reporting error has been resolved. The first bill was received from EMS/MC for their services in the amount of \$210. Ms. Haskins reminded the Territory that a separate bank account was established in order to receive deposits from the billing. She is awaiting instructions from the state regarding how billing deposited in this manner should be accounted for and managed.
3. Employee Update:
  - a. Ms. Haskins reported that we now have two full-time employees and are currently covering Mondays-Sundays, day shift (12 hour shifts).
  - b. Ms. Haskins explained that one of the FT employees desires health insurance and the other one does not. After speaking with both FT employees, they expressed a desire to have an HSA rather than an HRA. The maximum amount which can be contributed to an individual HSA account is \$4,300 in 2025. She explained that we recently recommended a budget of \$12,000 for health insurance. Therefore, if we wanted to change to an HSA, we would be saving \$7,700 per FT employee per year. Ms. Haskins explained some of the benefits of an HSA. Mr. Davenport moved to recommend to the Township that they adopt the HSA and contribute a maximum of \$4,300. No second yet. If we wanted to include families, the Territory could pay the family maximum amount of \$8,550. Mr. Barber voiced his support for the maximum contribution

(which would be up to \$8,550 for families this year). Ms. Knepp moved that we recommend to the Township that they adopt the HSA with a maximum contribution of \$4,300. Mr. Davenport seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Barber voting no.

- c. Ms. Haskins reported that the quarterly volunteer compensation report is available for review.
  - d. Ms. Haskins reported that Mr. Robertson has been doing a number of administrative tasks. This includes billing, scheduling, reporting requirements, reviewing hours and pay for staff. She asked that the Territory consider paying him out of the budget item for Administrative Assistant. She recommended Mr. Robertson be paid \$7,000 to handle these tasks through the end of the year. Mr. Barber moved to recommend to the Township that Mr. Robertson be paid \$7,000 through the end of the year for completion of the administrative tasks. Ms. Knepp asked that Mr. Robertson provide reports of how his time was spent so that we may have a better idea of how much this position should be paid in the future, which he agreed to do. This was considered part of the motion. Mr. Davenport seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.
4. PERF: Ms. Haskins reminded the committee members of the email she sent out providing information about the two available options the state provides: PERF MyChoice or PERF Hybrid. The Hybrid plan includes a lifetime pension and defined contributions. The MyChoice plan has no option for a lifetime pension. The components of each plan as well as the options within each plan were discussed at length. Mr. Davenport moved to recommend to the Township to adopt the PERF MyChoice plan with the Township paying the employees' mandatory 3% and the employer fixed cost of 4%. The employer's total cost would be 7%. It is important to note that the employee would still be able to contribute an additional amount on their own, up to 10%. Cathy seconded this motion, which passed 4-0.
  5. 2026 Budget Preparation (for the Fire Territory): The reader is referred to the initial draft of the 2026 Budget, prepared by Ms. Haskins (attached). Each line item was reviewed by Ms. Haskins. The total 2026 budget presented to the Committee was \$840,060. Nothing is being budgeted for the Equipment Replacement Fund at this time, which currently has a balance of \$47,841.92. Mr. Davenport references previous discussions about projected needs for a) remounting one of the ambulances and/or b) replacing or purchasing equipment within one of the ambulances. Ms. Haskins explained that these items may require a specific allocation. She also explains that the LIT shares for next year is unknown because a) this varies from year to year and b) it is unclear how recent legislation may impact LIT for next year. It was also mentioned that it appears that we will be required establish a fund for county roads, the proceeds of which will be submitted to the county. The formula and specific guidance for this has not yet been distributed by the state. Mr. Barber stated that he was hoping for a 20% reduction in the budgeted amount, which would be in the vicinity of \$784,058. He suggested that this be accomplished by reducing the request from 6 full-time employees to 5 full-time employees. A lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Davenport reminded the Committee that there will be billing proceeds coming in this year that will offset, perhaps reduce, some of the levy/taxes needed to fulfill the budget needs being considered for next year. Mr. Haskins reported that the county has expressed a desire to continue with the \$50,000 fire department grants (for equipment) in 2026. Mr. Haskins disclosed concerns about the well. He reported that they have a 4" well for their domestic water supply (e.g. bathrooms and kitchen). They also have a 6" well that fills their trucks when they have a fire. This is their only water supply for the fire trucks without going to the Lake of the Woods for example (and there are a couple other options). Mr. Barber moved that we recommend to the Township that we adopt the budget as presented with one less employee (\$72,560) and adding \$20,000 to the Part-time Employees. Ms. Haskins indicated that the benefit numbers will also decrease because of earlier action. The total amount will be figured later. Ms. Knepp seconded the motion which failed 2-2. This will be presented to the Township for their consideration.
  6. Trustee Update: Ms. Haskins presented her report on the Territory expenditures (see attached).
  7. Good of the Order announcements or updates as necessary

- a. Mr. Haskins reported that there are three people in Driver Operator class. These are potential OSHA required classes. Mr. Haskins and Mr. Robertson are instructors for this. He has been discussing Advanced EMT classes to improve service. A pump test is scheduled for July 30. Three sets of turn out gear have been ordered. SCBAs are in the final stages of being prepped for delivery. Masks will be fitted to each person. Mr. Haskins provided three different reports describing the types of calls they respond to. Mr. Robertson asked the committee to let Ms. Haskins know which one of these is preferred (so that he can provide one report at every meeting).
  - b. Mr. Haskins presented a quote from MacQueen for a remount of the 2016 ambulance in the amount of \$251,886. It may take about 16 months for the project to be completed and the ambulance could be out of service about 4 months. An explanation and discussion ensued. Mr. Barber moved to recommend to the Township to pursue remounting the 2016 ambulance. Ms. Knepp seconded the motion which passed 4-0.
  - c. Ms. Haskins informed the Committee that pending litigation may require a response from the Committee to assure all equipment for full functioning of the 2016 ambulance is present. Ms. Knepp moved that if needed, a special session of the Territory be called to address any arising issues. Mr. Barber seconded the motion which passed 4-0.
8. Public Comment: Patron voiced her support for the effort to lower the budget.
9. Next Meetings:
- a. Monday, July 28, 2025 at 6:00pm.
  - b. Monday, September 22, 2025 at 6:00pm.
10. Adjournment: Mr. Davenport moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Knepp, and passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned about 8:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stephen Barber, Secretary

Approved:



As written



As Amended



As Corrected



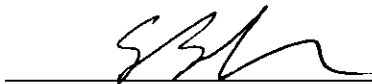
Steven Davenport, President

7-28-25

Date

Roger Ecker, Vice President

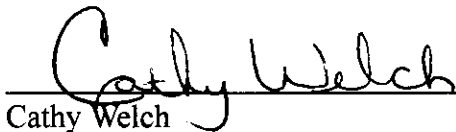
Date



Stephen Barber, Secretary

7-28-25

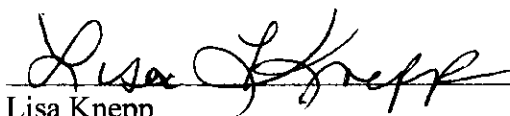
Date



Cathy Welch

7/28/25

Date



Lisa Knepp

7-28-25

Date

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LaPaz-North Township Fire Station

## Sign-In Sheet

1. Lisa Krupp
2. Steve Anglin
3. Sandy Robertson
4. AQ Robertson
5. Jerry Hays
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- 1. Approval of 6/16/25 Meeting Minutes**
- 2. Billing service update**
- 3. Employee Update**
- 4. PERF**
- 5. 2026 Budget Preparation**
- 6. Trustee update**
- 7. Good of the order announcements or updates as necessary**
- 8. Public comment (Limited to 2 minutes)**

**Online Streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/live/GkoXg0EyEQE?si=3LyU0isbarIIIguj>**