



Regular Board & Reorganizational Meeting
Wednesday January 14, 2026 6:00 pm

The Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors met in regular session, at 6:08 PM, on Wednesday January 14, 2026, at the Town of Big Lake Town Hall, located in the Big Lake Township's Lions Park Community Center, at 21960 County Road 5 NW, Big Lake Township, Sherburne County, State of Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Aubol and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Supervisor Dean Brenteson, Supervisor Laura Hayes, Vice-chair Mark Hedstrom, Treasurer Kenneth Warneke, Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Deputy Clerk Debbie Workman, Deputy Treasurer Becky Guthrie, Sargeant Derek Barrett - Sherburne County Sheriff's Department, County Commissioner Raeanne Danielowski. Supervisor Larry Alford was absent, due to telecommunication difficulties.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to accept the presented meeting agenda by: Hayes/Hedstrom. All Present Supervisors Approved. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. Motion Prevailed. The meeting proceeded in accordance with the agenda presented.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consisted of: A) Approval of Minutes; Regular meeting of 12/10/2025. B) Ratify claims and payroll paid between 12/11/2025 and 01/13/2026 and approval of claims paid on 01/14/2026. C) Call for Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting: Thursday April 9, 2026 at 9:00AM – Big Lake Town Hall. It was noted that Supervisor Hayes was the only supervisor who was certified in Local Board of Appeal and Equalization. The remaining supervisors requested the training link be sent to them when reviewing the consent agenda.

Motion/Second to Approve consent agenda by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None Opposed. Motion Prevailed.

Sheriff's Report

Sergeant Derek Barrett reported 213 calls in the township, for the month of December 2025. Sergeant Barrett informed the Board there was a school bus stop-arm violation in the 20300 block of County Road 14. The driver was able to be identified and cited. There were several weather related crashes and spinouts. Chairman Aubol inquired if the department had seen any protesting related to the Federal Government's ICE activities. Sergeant Barrett stated the Sheriff's department has seen minimal issues. However, the City of Elk River police department responded to some in that jurisdiction.

Open Forum

NONE

Town Business

MN Paid Leave Employer Size Determination

Chair Aubol asked the clerk to update the Board regarding the State's determination of the Town's employer size, regarding MN Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML). Clerk Maas noted that during the November 12, 2025 meeting, staff presented information regarding MN Paid Family Leave. The presumption was the Town would meet the criteria of a small employer. Those criteria are less than 30 employees in each quarter during the basis period, average employee quarterly wage equal to or less than 150% of the statewide average quarterly wage of \$27,745.88 and meet all reporting requirements during basis period. Because the Town employee count was 9 for all four quarters of 2025 - five (5) elected officers and four (4) appointed officers, the town employee average quarterly was for those four quarters was \$3,890.00, and all reporting requirements were met.

On November 28, 2025, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) sent the Township of Big Lake two Determinations of Paid Leave Premium Rate dated December 5, 2025. One for the elected officers (supervisors) and one for the appointed officers. Both determinations assigned a 2026 Paid Leave premium rate of 0.61 percent for Medical Leave and 0.27 percent for Family Leave. For a combined premium rate of 0.88 percent. Which is the regular employer premium rate.

On January 5, 2026, Clerk Maas filed an appeal of the Determinations. Through the Determinations Appeal process, it was learned the State is using 4th calendar quarter through 3rd calendar quarter as the Basis Period (fiscal year). The initial Basis Period is Oct. 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2025. Because the initial basis period included the date of the 2024 general election, the 27 election judges who worked were included in the employee count. This brought the total employee count for the first quarter of the basis period to 36, disqualifying the Town from the first element of small employer eligibility. The State's Appeal Decision is confirmed that the Town is a regular employer and will be required to pay the standard premium rate of 0.88%. Regular Employers are required to pay at least 50% of the regular premium, and the Board had made the decision to split the premium evenly between the Town and its employees.

Clerk Maas stated it is unlikely the State would allow the Town to switch between regular and small employer status. Regardless, she will need to train at least 27 election judges to conduct the 2026 State elections. Which will continue to keep the town's employee count over the small employer threshold.

No action was required or taken.

Roads

Supervisor Brenteson reported the Road Committee has identified 2026 overlay project areas and roads. The town's engineer is in the process of compiling estimates for a reclaim project for roads in Aspen Hills and overlay of 215th Ave. NW in Wild Run. Those estimates should be ready for Board review and authorization for bid letting at the next regular meeting. The town and city will be working on plans and estimates for the shared road of 172nd St. north of State Highway 10 to Prairie Drive.

A meeting with the city of Big Lake is being planned to discuss maintenance agreements for other shared roads. City Engineer Layne Otteson will be attending the next regular meeting to give the Board information about current and future shared road projects and maintenance agreements.

The rain/ice event which occurred on Christmas through December 26th made a mess of the roads. The town's vendors were out treating them to the best of their ability.

Vendors are out trimming when weather conditions allow.

Business from the Board – Committee Reports/Updates

Supervisor Aubol reported he will be attending the Planning Advisory committee meeting and Supervisor Hedstrom will attend the Joint Community Meeting. He'd also attended the city's public hearing regarding the 172nd Street project but will wait for Layne Otteson to brief the Board, on the project.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Warneke presented the Board with a historical look at snow and ice control costs. The report included 3-, 5-, and 10-year averages, all of which showed the cost to treat ice and snow have been under budget. In 2025 the snow and ice control budget was set at \$350,000. The town spent \$43,366.55 on ice control products. The labor and equipment cost to plow is split 50% to plow and 50% to place product on the roads. This is because generally the vendors put ice control products on the roads when they are out plowing. The total cost for this activity was \$155,887.26 or \$77,943.62 to put product on the roads, and \$77,943.63 to plow them.

Treasurer Warneke informed the Board the fiscal year was closed in the town's accounting software, CTAS. In reviewing the Treasurer's Report and financial statements he noted the town had received another property tax payment from the County. Fund balances at the end of 2025 showed the shouldering budget to be overspent by roughly \$10,000, plowing and ice control was under budget by roughly \$150,000, general road maintenance and crack filling was \$79,000 over budget, sweeping budget was under spent by the full budgeted amount of \$15,000 because the activity was forgone. In all the road fund was underspent by roughly \$465,000.

Balances highlighted in the report included the general fund (\$493,277.26) and road fund (\$1,699,611.69). January 10, 2025, ending balances (less escrows) after payment of approved claims, town funds: \$3,424,036.71; escrow funds balance: \$124,914.43; total town treasury balance: \$3,548,951.14.

Motion/Second to approve the Treasurer's report by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Financial Reports are retained as part of the Official Minutes, which are available in the Clerk's Office.*

Treasurer Ken Warneke presented a 2026 Preliminary Budget. He informed the Board that members of all the committees and staff worked together on the budget and the numbers presented. He requested the Board review the preliminary budget and note any changes they would like to discuss at the next regular meeting. He would like to have the budget adopted at the next regular meeting on January 28, 2026. Supervisor Hedstrom again mentioned using the underspent road funds to purchase new E911 signs for residences where current signage is in poor condition. He stated the Town's Ordinance requires residences to have these signs and including a line item in the road fund would be one way to purchase these signs. Officials commented there have been many signs purchased by residents and not all the signs need replacement. To accurately assess which residences need new signs a special tour of the township would be required, and this would be a significant cost. Treasurer Warneke stated the E911 signs are accounted out of the fire fund not the road fund. If the Board would like to change the accounting of the signs, Board action would be necessary.

Reorganizational Items

Resolutions Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers Under MS § 471.88 Subd. 5

Motion/Second to adopt Resolutions 2026-01 Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers – Larry Alford by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to adopt Resolutions 2026-02 Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers – Bruce Aubol by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. Aubol Abstained. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to adopt Resolutions 2026-03 Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers – Dean Brenteson by: Hedstrom/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Hayes, and Hedstrom. Brenteson Abstained. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to adopt Resolutions 2026-04 Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers – Laura Hayes by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. Hayes abstained. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to adopt Resolutions 2026-05 Authorizing Contract with Interested Officers – Mark Hedstrom by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, and Hayes. Hedstrom Abstained. Motion carried.

Election of Chairman of the Board & Vice-Chairman of the Board

Supervisor Hayes nominated Supervisor Bruce Aubol to remain as Board Chair. Aubol accepted the nomination. Motion/second to elect Supervisor Bruce Aubol as Chairman of the Town Board by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Aubol abstained. Motion carried.

Supervisor Aubol nominated Supervisor Hedstrom to remain Board Vice-Chairman. Hedstrom accepted the nomination. Motion/second to elect Supervisor Mark Hedstrom to the position of Vice-chair of the Town Board by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, and Hayes. Hedstrom abstained. None opposed. Motion carried.

Appointment of Clerk, Treasurer, and Treasurer Assistant

Aubol called to re-appoint Kenneth Warneke to the position of Town Treasurer. Seconded by: Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Treasurer Warneke re-appointed Becky Guthrie to the position of Deputy Treasurer.

Chair Aubol called to re-appoint Brenda Kimberly-Maas to the position of Town Clerk. Seconded by Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Clerk Kimberly-Maas re-appointed Debbie Workman to the position of Deputy Clerk.

Appointment of Supervisors to Committees

Board members discussed current appointments to the various committees within the township and others where the township has representation. No changes were recommended.

Motion/Second to maintain committee membership as established in 2025 by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

The agreed upon 2026 Committee List is retained as part of the Official Minutes, which are available in the Clerk's Office.

Establish Monthly Board Meeting Dates/Time/Location; Legal Holiday Observation; Office Business Hours

A list of the twelve federal holiday and proposed regular meeting schedule were presented to the Board. Clerk Maas noted Veteran's Day falls on the second Wednesday in November, which would normally be the date the Board meets in November. Options presented for observance of the holiday were to hold the November meeting on the third Wednesday or maintain the normal meeting schedule and allow appointed officers to use the time on December 24th or December 31st, which are dates when the town offices are normally closed but are unpaid. Board members asked what the preference was of the appointed officials who suggested observing Veteran's Day on its official date of November 11th and hold the November meeting on Wednesday November 18, 2026.

The meeting schedule presented to the Board listed regular meetings to be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month except for November and December, when only one meeting will be held. The November meeting was slated for the third Wednesday, November 18, 2026. The December meeting was slated for the second Wednesday, December 9, 2026. It also included the first meeting of 2027 as Wednesday January 13, 2027.

Motion/Second to establish the town office hours as Monday – Thursday 9:00AM – 4:00PM and Friday 9:00AM – 12:00PM and closure dates as presented unless otherwise posted. The office will be open on Columbus Day – Monday, October 12, 2026 and staff will be paid for the Friday after Thanksgiving November 27, 2026, in lieu of closing on Columbus Day by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/second to establish the 2026 meeting schedule as presented by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Adopted 2026 Meeting Schedule and Office Calendar is retained, as part of the Official Minutes, which are available in the Clerk's Office.

Legal Counsel

Motion/Second to retain Peter Tiede, of Geck, Duea, Olson, PLLC (GDO Law), as the town's general legal counsel and allow hiring of other legal firms to represent the town based on the town's need and firm's expertise by: Hayes/Aubol. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Set 2026 Gopher Bounty

Motion/Second to maintain the Town's payable gopher bounty at \$3.00 per pair of front feet by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Ratification of Treasury items:

Motion/Second to authorize staff to pay normal bills received and due between normally scheduled meetings by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to authorize the treasurer to make Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs) – PERA Contributions, Payroll withholdings, tax deposits, and transfer funds between town

banking institutions by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to authorize the clerk to make Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs) – PERA Contributions, Payroll withholdings, tax deposits, and between Town banking institutions by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to authorize the chair, vice-chair, treasurer and clerk to open banking accounts by: Hedstrom/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second to authorize the chair, vice-chair, treasurer and clerk as authorized signors on town banking accounts by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second naming the depositories of town funds by adopting Resolution 2026-06 – First Bank of Elk River; Resolution 2026-07 – Sherburne State Bank, and Resolution 2026-08 – US Bank, PMA/4M Fund by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second naming the depositories of Big Lake Fire Department funds by adopting Resolution 2026-09 – Old National Bank, and Resolution 2026-10 – US Bank, PMA/4M Fund by: Aubol/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second establishing town notices legal posting area as the outdoor posting board at the Big Lake Townhall by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second establishing official newspaper as Patriot News by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/Second confirming mileage reimbursement at current federal rate – mileage traveled for town or election business by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Announcements

- Municipal yard waste site changes – get new cards for Big Lake yard waste site, at Big Lake City Hall.
- Annual Joint Community Meeting (third Thursday of January) – Thursday, January 15, 2026, commencing at 6:00 PM, in City of Big Lake Council Chambers.
- Town Hall will be closed Monday January 19, 2026 to observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Sherburne County Association of Townships (SCAT) meeting Wednesday, January 21, 2026 – dinner served at 6:00PM, meeting commences at 7:00PM.

Supervisor Brenteson informed the Board he will be absent from the February 25, 2026 meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion/Second to adjourn Regular Board & Reorganizational Regular Meeting at 7:14PM by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Accepted this 28th day of January 2026, by the Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors.

Recorded by: Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk

Bruce Aubol, Chairman

Attested by: _____
Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Clerk