



Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday March 11, 2026 6:00 pm

The Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors met in regular session, at 6:00 PM, on Wednesday March 11, 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 Larry Alfords – via telecommunications, per MN Statute Stat. 13D.02, 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, Sherburne County Senior Planner Mitch Glines, Craig Wensmann – WiDSETH Engineering, several scouts and their families, a township resident, and newspaper reporter were in attendance. Per MN Statute 13D.02 all voting was done by rollcall.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to accept the presented meeting agenda by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried. 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 02/25/2026. B) Ratify claims and payroll paid between 02/25/2026 and 03/11/2026.

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

Sheriff's Report

Sergeant Derek Barrett reported 210 calls in the township for the month of February 2026. Sergeant Barrett informed the board of a theft from a storage unit in the 18000 block of 198th Ave. The theft was of e-cigs and no other units were breached.

Town Business

Proposed zoning ordinance amendments

Mitch Glines, Sherburne County Senior Planner and Craig Wensmann, of WiDSETH engineering (formerly Bogart, Pederson & Associates) were in attendance to present some proposed amendments to the current zoning ordinances and subdivision standards for lot soil separation, lot size and 75% wooded requirement. The topics were discussed at length at the January 15th Planning Commission meeting, and the County Planning & Zoning Department was now seeking township feedback on the required soil separation for subdivided residential properties, minimum residential platted lot sizes, and 75% Wooded requirement.

Mitch informed the board the proposed changes are the result of conversations during ordinance rewrite steering committee meetings. Townships in the western area of the county have many agricultural parcels where the farmers may want to separate the homestead from the tillable land. Current zoning ordinances make this undesirable as the minimum acreage that is allowed to be split off is 5 acres, which ends up taking some of the tillable land. Current zoning ordinances also require 75% wooded coverage on lots. This makes it difficult to plat out tillable agricultural land. Reducing the wooded requirement and/or including non-tillable acreage to the 75% requirement would allow the agricultural lands to be developed. Reducing the minimum lot sizes in the townships would create inventory which would be more affordable to people who want the rural feel of the area. Lot sizes of 1.5 acres generally would accommodate a house, two areas where septic systems could be installed and room for decent sized accessory storage buildings. Current zoning ordinances allow for smaller lot sizes in shoreland areas. Reducing the soil separation from 3' to 2' from the seasonal high water table (SHWT) would not change the requirement for the lowest elevation of the structure to be built 1' above the SHWT. It was pointed out that since these requirements were set, there have been many ditches installed to collect and move water out of the mottled soil areas. And 90% of soil borings done now, show the water tables are much lower than where the mottling is found. Any structure built would need to meet the state guidelines for footings below frost lines and insurance for this.

Board members discussed the proposed amendments and their opinions differed on the proposed amendments. For this reason, it was decided that each supervisor will send their individual comments to Mitch. Those comments will be added to other town board's comments for the March 30th steering committee meeting and future Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment meetings.

Personnel Committee update

Supervisors Hayes and Hedstrom presented the board with some suggestions for office guidelines. Meeting packets including claims to be sent by Friday the week prior to regular meetings; allow normal bills to be processed and paid between meetings; contacting of the town's attorney for special circumstances be pre-authorized by the board; adopt business casual dress code during office hours, meetings, and events when representing the township; overtime required to be approved; approved overtime to be for hours worked – holidays, PTO hours are not used for overtime hours; all normal township business work to be done at the town hall; PTO to include all appointed officials removing the need for ESST; reinstate QSEHRA or other pre-tax health reimbursement benefit; wages and benefits be combined as compensation package for appointed officials; use compensation package information for comparison to surrounding local governing agencies when conducting wage and benefit increases; perform wage adjustments at the same time annually and have adjustments effective with current payroll cycle; recommendation to increase appointed officials wages 3% with increase to be applied to the current payroll cycle – hours being worked and to be paid at the next regular meeting. The board discussed each suggestion and made the following motions:

Motion by Hedstrom and seconded by Aubol to amend the town's paid time off (PTO) policy to allow part-time employees to accrue PTO hours based on years of service. The following accrual schedule shall be implemented effectively with the pay cycle beginning March 1, 2026:

Service years	Monthly PTO Hours	Annual PTO Hours
0-3	4.17	50 hours

3-14	6.25	75 hours
14+	8.33	100 hours

Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/second to increase the clerk and treasurer wages by 3% effective with the pay cycle beginning March 1, 2026 by: Hayes/Aubol. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Deputy officers' compensation

The clerk and treasurer are responsible for recommending their deputy's pay compensation rates for the board's consideration.

The process includes review of Sherburne County townships (SCAT) pay rates and other compensation, for comparison. Clerk Maas informed the board, Debbie has taken on more responsibility and continues to develop in her role as deputy clerk and recommended the deputy clerk's hourly rate be set at \$29.93/hour - a 5% increase. Treasurer Warneke echoed this sentiment for his deputy treasurer, Becky and recommended a 5% increase in her wages, as well.

Motion/second to increase the deputy clerk's wages 5% effective with the pay cycle beginning March 1, 2026 by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/second to increase the deputy treasurer's wages 5% effective with the pay cycle beginning March 1, 2026 by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Roads

2026 Road Improvement Projects

Supervisor Brenteson reported with the break in plowing, trimming and clearing work is again being performed. 2026 overlay bids will be opened the following day – Thursday March 12, 2026, at 11:00AM. There are nine (9) plan holders. And spring road restrictions have gone into effect. Signs have been installed on the few roads where 7-ton and 9-ton per axel limits are permitted.

Business from the Board – Committee Reports/Updates

Chair Aubol noted the March Planning Commission meeting was cancelled. But he will be attending the Board of Adjustment meeting scheduled for Thursday March 12th.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Warneke informed the board that his office has submitted the town's final ARPA report, closing out the account with the Federal government. He anticipates a response acknowledging the closure. The town received the 2026 gas tax allotment. Funding is down 22% even with Baldwin no longer receiving any gas tax funds. He recommends the supervisors lobby state legislators to reevaluate the distribution of these funds.

Treasurer Warneke presented the interim financial report. The general fund (\$471,408.34)

and road fund (\$ 1,592,236.84).

March 10, 2026, cash balance report ending balances (less escrows) after payment of approved claims, town funds: \$ 3,168,141.40; escrow funds balance: \$ 124,271.62; total town treasury balance: \$ 3,292,413.02.

Motion/Second to approve the Treasurer's report by: Aubol/Alfords. Approved by: Alfords, 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.*

Open Forum

Resident Bret Collier inquired about when plows are dispatched. He noted the recent snow fall didn't seem to warrant the removal of the snow. Supervisor Brenteson stated the vendor and he are in communication for all snow and ice events. Snow depth – generally 2" threshold, snow quality, road conditions, and future forecasts are all considered when dispatching. The recent 2" snowfall was removed to ensure it didn't become compacted and turn to ice as temperatures were expected to fall. Additional snow is also forecasted for the upcoming weekend.

Announcements

- 2026 Road improvements bid opening Thursday March 12, 2026 at 11:00AM – Town Hall
- Next Town Board Meeting Wednesday March 25, 2026 commencing at 6:00PM
- Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting commences at 9:00AM, on Thursday April 9, 2026, in the Town Hall Board Room
- Big Lake Lions Fish Fry – Friday March 20th with food service beginning at 4:30PM and ending at 7:00. The event will be held at the town hall and banquet area.

Chair Aubol acknowledged and thanked Deputy Clerk Workman and Deputy Treasurer Guthrie for their work in conducting the Town's Annual Meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion/Second to adjourn Regular Board Meeting at 7:35PM by: Hayes/Aubol. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Approved this 25th day of March 2026, by the Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors.

Bruce Aubol, Chairman

Recorded by Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk