

Princeton Township Board Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2026

Opening and Agenda

Meeting called to order at 7 pm; Pledge of Allegiance; and agenda were reviewed adding 50th Avenue and ARPA money. Motion by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Whitcomb, Carried 5-0.

Approve the Minutes

Motion by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten to approve the April 21, 2026 Town Board minutes; Carried 4-0, Supervisor Duden abstains.

Motion by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Knutson to approve the April 21, 2026 Town Board LBAE minutes; Carried 4-0, Supervisor Duden abstains.

Open Forum

Joel Minks raised concerns about the recent **Planning Commission member appointment process**, advocating for greater transparency. Recommended that future appointments be placed on the official agenda to allow public discussion. Noted increased public interest in Planning Commission compared to past years. Observed that **secret paper ballots** for appointments were a new, undocumented practice.

Brittany Jirik requested more accessible historical records and better categorization of major topics online. Praised recent website updates that now provide access to agendas and minutes back to 2013, noting Planning Commission minutes need to be uploaded rather than the agendas in that dropdown tab. Raised concerns about a **Montana-based investor applicant** using a proxy during Planning Commission proceedings; recommended clarifying and documenting proxy representation rules. Questioned The **\$109.98 food expense** in the Clerk-Treasurer report was clarified as reimbursement for a group training session (~14 election judges), not per diem.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

As of April 30, 2026, total township funds amounted to **\$730,487.10**, distributed as follows: General Fund: \$24,761.51; Roads and Bridges (incl. CD): \$595,919.98; Park Dedication CD: \$63,000.00; Fire Services: \$46,805.61. Accounts Receivable (Code Enforcement + Escrow) amounted to **\$13,540.32**, Code Enforcement \$4,400.78; Escrows Receivable \$9,139.54; Road Share \$0.

Payroll for April/May 2026 totaled \$7,070.18 (\$6,045.18 for supervisor/staff, \$1,025.00 for commissioners/supervisors) Head Election Judge for \$178.10, includes \$60 wages, \$8.12 Mileage; and \$109.98 election judge training food for 14 individuals.

Claims of **\$15,334.29** (split between General Fund \$6,506.79 and Roads & Bridges \$8,827.50)

Cleanup Day (May 2, 2026) generated \$1,845 in revenue. Bills received: approx.~\$2,800 from **Jim's** for waste disposal; no bill yet from the tire hauler; the electronics were picked up with no charge to the Township.

A **\$63,000 CD** was purchased from the Parks and Recreation Fund at **3.75% interest**, maturing on **August 26**, with interest returning to the same fund

Park dedication fees accumulate **\$1,230 per new home built**

The Township owns the copier; currently public copy fee is 50 cents per page (updated to 25 cents for first 100 pages, over 100 pages is staff, paper, and mailing costs)

Fire Department budget was reviewed.

ARPA funds were fully expended in 2023 after road repairs, though recent state reporting requests have triggered follow-up correspondence

Motion by Supervisor Duden; Second by Supervisor Patten to approve the Clerk-Treasurer; Carried 5-0.

Old Business (Reminders)

City of Princeton continues to delay payment of owed annexed property revenue despite completed paperwork; contact has not yielded progress.

Mille Lacs County is working on the paperwork for the traffic fine revenue that the Township is entitled to.

Per MS Statutes, Chapter 13 – MN Government Data Practices Act for Charging Member of the Public for Copies was reviewed. Motion by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson to align the Township's copying charges to match this document. made and seconded to revise copying fee policy: **25 cents per page for the first 100 pages**. Beyond 100 pages, charges include staff time for locating and compiling documents.

Fee Schedule Revisions and Policy Updates

Discrepancies identified between current fees and those listed on outdated forms:
Driveway/culvert permit listed as \$300 (correct) but previously may have been \$350.

Special events permit shows \$50 on form but should be \$75. Outdated permit forms still bear former staff as contact.

Motion by Supervisor Patten, Second by Supervisor Knutson to update internal documents to reflect changes in copies, culverts, and special events; Carried 5-0

Town Law Review

Supervisors Stoeckel, Whitcomb, and Knutson plan to attend the Town Law Review on June 5. Registration is on-site the day of the event.

Resolution 2026-08

Motion by Supervisor Knutson; Second by Supervisor Whitcomb to adopt this resolution to display the Historical Minnesota State Flag in the Town Hall was made; Carried 5-0.

Resolution 2026-09

Motion by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Whitcomb to adopt this resolution regarding retention of electronic notes for assistance in drafting minutes was made; Carried 5-0.

Special Event and Temporary Liquor License

Motion by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson to approve the special event permit and temporary liquor license for Outlaw Grass Drags event as applied (7:00 AM to 11:00 PM, August 28–29) was made; Carried 4-1.

Consideration of allowing Residents to log in with a live feed for public viewing

Discussion, request further research on options.

Updated Zoning Maps

Discussion, requesting further inquiry with Todd at Loucks.

Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Spaces

Discussion on pages 32-33 of the Comprehensive Plan, noting need for update in the language and committing to future planning. Proposal to use community service workers (e.g., court-ordered service) for park maintenance. Recommendation to review outdated ordinances and trail-related policies. Potential park sites were discussed.

Zoning Administrator Replacement

An RFP (Request for Proposal) will be drafted and sent to the Association of Townships for distribution.

Only one applicant, **Ben Wickstrom**, has applied for the zoning administrator position. Ben's references include Becker Township, St. Bonifacius, and Haven Township. Decision needed by **June** to ensure smooth transition before current administrator on **August 28**.

Section 27 Running Bear Final Plat from Doug and Janis Astle was considered. Applicants **Doug and Janice Still** received unanimous approval for the **final plat** of *Running Bear Pines*, a four-lot single-family subdivision in **Section 27 at County Road 1 and 76th Avenue**.

Project includes slight extension of existing cul-de-sac to accommodate four lots.

Preliminary plat approved by Town Board on **October 21, 2025**; Planning Commission reviewed final plat on May 4, 2025, recommending approval with conditions. No public hearing required for final plats; process moves directly from Planning Commission recommendation to Town Board approval. Final plat consistent with zoning and subdivision standards, including cul-de-sac length requirements. Township engineer reviewed civil plans through letters dated April 15, 16, and May 8, 2025; all issues resolved. Septic systems comply with **Mille Lacs County** requirements. Utility coordination with gas and electric providers underway **Park dedication fee of \$4,920** must be paid before plat recording. Draft development agreement prepared by town attorney **Jason Hill**. Stormwater maintenance agreement added based on Township Engineer. Added seal coat fee increased from \$2,751.15 to \$3,000 (inflation adjustment). Concern was raised about precedent for future development on landowners' **98.47 contiguous acres** with R1 zoning and two access points. Ghost plat shown during preliminary review indicated potential future development, but only four-lot plat currently approved. Rezoning does not equate to plat approval; town retains control. Concerns about road system capacity and potential upgrades if large-scale development occurs.

Resolution 2026-10 was read approving the final plat, development agreement, and stormwater maintenance. Motion by Supervisor Duden; Second by Supervisor Stoeckel to adopt this resolution was made; Carried 5-0.

Roads Report

Roads recently **graded** with **dust control applied** on previously identified routes.

Roadside mowing expected to begin in late May. **Tree removal** planned for next

year's RFQ, focusing on three locations, particularly the DenHi area where trees (6+ inches diameter) are within 10 feet of road edges. Awaiting response from **Baldwin** regarding annexation of **200 feet of 156th Street**; contact with **Green Bush Township** pending, Coordination on **County Road 1 improvements**. Work begins on 50th Avenue **June 15**, anticipated completion of **August 30**.

Fire Report

Supervisor Duden and Supervisor Knutson attended the last meeting with the Princeton Fire Department. The 2026 contract, based on 2025 expenses for Princeton Township will be \$45,943.

Supervisor Working Meetings

Time may be set aside for the Supervisors to have a couple of work meetings soon.

Permit/Other Enforcement

Some residents have installed **non-compliant driveways and culverts**. Recommendation for the Clerk to send compliance letters to notify property owners of violations. References for **TR 13000 Culverts & Approaches** were discussed. Property owners who installed culverts without permits should receive official letters giving them **42 days to correct violations**.

An unregistered vehicle on the right-of-way has reappeared. Township ordinance refers to abandoned or junk vehicles as public nuisances but **does not specify a numerical limit**. Example cited: a **semi-truck (26,000 lbs)** on 33rd Avenue near 87th Street remains unresolved.

Need for clear, written policies—especially regarding junk vehicles—to ensure consistency and fairness.

Some rules may not be worth enforcing if they provoke significant conflict, especially in rural areas where farm implements (often unlicensed) are commonly stored long-term. If certain rules aren't enforced, they should be removed from official policy to avoid inconsistency and loss of credibility.

Compile educational materials for residents (snowplowing, speed limits, mailbox placement, emergency contacts) for website postings.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment at 8:45 pm

Loucks are celebrating 50th anniversary on **June 11** at 755 Highway 55 Plymouth.

Motion by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten to adjourn; Carried 5-0.