

Princeton Township Board Meeting

July 21, 2026

Opening and Agenda

Meeting called to order at 7 pm; Pledge of Allegiance; and agenda was reviewed adding a Secretary Update to new business. Motion to approve the agenda by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson, Carried 4-0.

Approve the Minutes

The minutes from June 16th Town Board meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten; Carried 4-0.

Open Forum

1. Joel Minks raised concerns about potential data centers and cell tower placements, encouraging proactive policy measures.
2. Lucas Jirik raised concerns about cameras going up in the Elk River area and it is not something he wants to see in this Township
3. Melissa Griswold addressed the Supervisors regarding a court-ordered variance approval, detailing financial and personal impacts from delayed processing and proposing a settlement.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

4. As of June 30, 2026, total Township funds amounted to **\$1,693,323.70**, distributed as follows: General Fund \$27,509.23; Roads and Bridges \$1,569,313.70; Fire Department Services \$33,500.77; Parks Dedication CD \$63,000.
5. As of June 30, 2026, roads' cash flow is projected with a year end balance of \$167,640.84, with \$771,500 of the \$900,000 road project loan expected to remain outstanding.
6. July 21, 2026, Gross Pay for Supervisors and Staff is **\$6,217**, General \$5,567 and Roads \$650
7. July 21, 2026, Claims for Approval are **\$141,223.10**, General \$13,740.87 and Roads \$127,482.23

Motion to approve the Clerk-Treasurer reports by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson; Carried 4-0.

Old Business

SLFRF Funding Closeout

The final report for federal SLFRF funding was completed on June 23, 2026, after resolving access issues related to two-factor authentication. The five-year reporting obligation is now fulfilled.

Trails, Parks, and Open Spaces – Pause for New Zoning Administrator

Proposal for Appointing Future Planning Commission Members

Motion to approve the process for appointing future Planning Commission members by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Knutson; Carried 4-0.

Renew C.D. at ONB for 122 days, 3.93%, Pr/Capitalized Interest \$101,564.41

Website Redesign Proposal

A proposal from MuniBit offering website services, including design, hosting, migration, .gov domain setup, and support was discussed. Key considerations included:

8. No legal requirement for townships to maintain websites, but strong practical need for public access to information.
9. ADA Title II compliance is critical.
10. Board members expressed interest in self-updating capabilities.
11. Encouragement at a recent legal seminar suggested not having a website.
12. Mille Lacs County will include some basic information for township on its website.
13. A demo will be scheduled for further evaluation.

Building Air Quality

A dehumidifier has been operating continuously, removing **12–15 gallons of water daily** from the air, significantly improving indoor air quality. Motion to purchase a second dehumidifier appropriate to the room size by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten; Carried 4-0.

New Business

Zoning Administration

14. Motion to hire Ben Wickstrom as zoning administrator, with an effective start date immediately to allow overlap with outgoing administrator Scott Richards by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson, Carried 4-0.

Resignation of Steve Pflgebraar, Planning Commission Member

15. Due to moving outside of the Township, Steve resigned as of July 15, 2026.
16. Motion to accept this resignation by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten; Carried 4-0.
17. Interested parties are encouraged to submit a letter of interest before August 14, 2026, and plan to attend the next town board meeting on August 18, 2026.

Unidentified Parcel

A **1.8-acre parcel** near Long Siding was discussed. Concerns included: Potential flooding; Unknown environmental contamination (e.g., fuel tanks); Historical ties to railroad

Motion to table until more information could be gathered by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson; Carried 4-0.

Property Inquiry Form

A standardized intake form was discussed for use in-office and online to streamline public inquiries, reduce errors from verbal messages, and improve workflow. Motion to approve this form by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Whitcomb; Carried 4-0.

Upcoming Events

Wyanett Township Block Party on August 4th, 5–8 PM; **MAT District Meeting** on August 12th (\$15 meal); **Township Legal Seminar** on September 12th from Couri & Ruppe; **MAT Legislative Research Committee** on September 15th; **MAT Annual Conference** December 10–12 in Nisswa

Primary and Election Judges

Motion to accept the election judges by Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten; Carried 4-0.

Ditch 14 Assessment

Mille Lacs County addressed the upcoming assessment. For comparison, in 2026 \$15,000 was assessed on the entire ditch system and the Township was responsible for \$269.27 and similarly in 2025 for around the same \$270. (This information is from an email from Brenda Eklund to Gene Stoeckel/Dan Whitcomb on Friday July 17, 2026)

Secretary Update

Clerk-Treasurer Creasy reported a resident had called and was concerned about a one-year-old in a suspected hoarding situation. Supervisor Knutson clarified that the complaint did not originate from Bill Whitcomb or his family, dispelling rumors. The case has been referred to county social services, ending Township involvement.

Zoning Updates

18. PID #16-021-0901 8114 33rd Street did not require a permit for the small project underway. Building inspector Rosenau did an onsite visit.
19. Griswold's variance via Resolution 2026-10, subject to staff-recommended conditions was discussed. Motion to approve Resolution 2026-10 by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Knutson; Carried 4-0. Role: Supervisor Knutson AYE-Supervisor Stoeckel AYE-Supervisor Patten AYE-Supervisor Whitcomb AYE.
20. Township's legal counsel advised that Griswold lacked legal basis for damages. Motion to accept counsel's advice by Supervisor Patten; Second by Supervisor Whitcomb; Carried 4-0.

Supervisor Reports

21. **Illegal gravel removal:** A resident used a skid steer to take gravel from Township roads for personal driveway use. The supervisor contacted law enforcement and will request the resident cease the activity.
22. **Unauthorized business:** A log carving business is operating alongside an auto dealership without a known conditional use permit. Staff will investigate compliance.
23. **Weed control:** Thistles and wild parsnip (a toxic, invasive species) are spreading, particularly along 1 near Moonshine. Follow-up with county weed inspectors are planned.
24. **50th Avenue** construction has begun. Anticipated completion 08.30.2026.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn Supervisor Whitcomb; Second by Supervisor Patten; Carried 4-0.