

North Dakota Township Officers Association  
Board of Directors  
DRAFT Minutes

**2026 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Meeting**

February 27, 2026, 1:00 PM Central

KTL Building, Fessenden ND, 600 Railway St. N (SW door)

Dale called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM

**Roll Call:** All members present a quorum was declared, Jayme Tenneson was also present.

**Consideration of Minutes:** December 7, 2025, December 9, 2025, and December 23, 2025

Kim moved to approve the minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lee. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** : Barb presented a printed report as of February 20, 2026, with no specific issues noted.

Assets: \$271,946.40

Year-to-date income: \$35,585.98

Year-to-date expenses: \$75,963.59

Year-to-date net income (loss): \$(40,377.61)

Jason questioned QuickBooks transaction lines (Arthur Township example):

Multiple lines for single transactions due to undeposited funds and accounts receivable.

Internal QuickBooks process explained; acknowledged as confusing.

Plan to provide a different, clearer report next time.

Leon moved to approve the Treasurer's report, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kim. Motion carried.

**Minutes Format and AI Use**

December 23rd meeting minutes used AI-generated format. AI-generated summary, specifics of motions added manually.

Feedback: positive, clean, detailed, easy to read. Plan to continue using AI for minutes.

**Scanner for receipts/invoices:**

Still pending; waiting for scanner delivery. Considering alternatives (Amazon, Brother brand).

Goal: digital spreadsheet of invoices for easier review.

**Attorney's Report:**

**RFP for auditor services** was completed and sent to Larry; all updates made.

National property tax backlash discussed at DC conference:

States (FL, OH, TX) considering eliminating property tax; lack alternative revenue.

Anticipate resurgence of property tax reform efforts in ND.

**Data centers:** National trend; ND catching up, not leading.

Example: VA county with 200 data centers in 10 miles.

Growing pains expected; positive for tax base and some employment.

Power supply concerns: some centers may generate own power (possibly nuclear/natural gas).

Regulatory agencies exploring ways to avoid infrastructure cost burden on public.

Need to monitor and learn from other states' experiences.

**Local representation in USDA:**

Jared Hagert (former ND District 20 Representative) now with USDA, overseeing ARC/PLC/ad hoc programs.

Assisted with bridge payment sign-up; improved local office knowledge.

**Workshop Recap:** Thanks to Barb, Larry, Mark for organizing 16 workshops statewide.

Route for future tours suggested by Roger Olafson, starting in Jamestown, moving east, north, then west to reduce backtracking.

**Technical issues:**

Zoom and mic battery problems; sound issues after IT intervention (Devils Lake site)

Suggest recording first meeting and posting online for accessibility.

Need to use our speaker system more often to avoid venue tech issues.

**Workshop timing:**

Two-hour slots often exceeded; some meetings too long, leading to participant fatigue.

County association meetings before workshops can reduce attendance.

**Attorney's role at workshops:**

Clarify attorney's presence is for education/guidance, not legal representation.

Avoid giving written opinions or drafting documents for individuals/townships.

Suggest three-way calls with district director when township officers seek legal guidance.

Plan to create educational slides/webinars for ongoing training (e.g., Township Tuesday Talks).

Commitment: attorney must attend all workshops in person in future cycles (next in 2028).

*Votes are unanimous unless otherwise indicated*

*(\*indicates abstaining from vote)*

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**Workshop feedback:**

Attendees appreciated attorney access, even via Zoom.  
Desire for more discussion on 3% cap and section line/mineral management topics.  
Flex fund: preference for projects with local match; matching not required but advantageous.

**Legislative Issues:**

Larry to testify on 3% cap effects at March 17th tax reform meeting.  
3% cap may drop some townships below 18 mills, affecting funding eligibility.  
Legislature sending a mixed message; do we restrict tax levies or raise taxes to qualify for state payments.  
Expanding levy authority (e.g., to 36 mills) provides flexibility but can cause confusion.  
Calculations for cap differ for pre-existing and newly added levy authority.

**Legislative handout proposal:**

Plan to create updated, visually engaging "Township 101" handout for legislators.  
Will include basic info, economic impact, and funding needs. Artwork and data compilation assistance requested.  
Reference to previous PowerPoint/packet as a model.

**Communication:**

**Potential Insurance Coverage Change** (this is in a very early thought process only)

Idea from Keith Pic (NDIRF CEO):  
Considering blanket insurance policy for all NDTOA member townships.  
Would require legislative changes and more administrative work.  
Dues would include insurance premium; could improve engagement and officer registration.  
Concerns about collecting dues/premiums, especially from non-participating townships.  
Potential need for dedicated staff to manage program.  
Issues with outdated contact info for township clerks; agents often don't update addresses.  
Suggestion to route mailings through county auditors but concerns about auditor workload and accuracy.

**NDIRF Board Election**

Burdell Johnson (township rep) up for re-election; park districts also fielding candidate.  
Lee moved to draft and send a letter encouraging townships to vote for Burdell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom. Motion carried.  
Election in May at annual meeting.

**Zoning Authority Questions:**

Inquiry from McLean township about regaining zoning authority after reorganization.  
Must enter joint policy agreement with county; auditor provides voter numbers for petitions.  
Reference to recent similar cases; process clarified.

**Reminder from ND State Treasurer:** Certifications for organized township general fund balances due March 13, 2026.

Required for prairie dog and flex fund funding; non-compliance results in loss of funds

**Old Business:**

**Standing Committees:**

Dale handed out his list of nominations for the standing committees for 2026.  
Tom Moe remains for educational/workshop roles. Payment for Tom is on an as-needed basis, per budget.  
Lee moved to confirm the standing committee nominations. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Leon. Motion carried.

**Auditor RFP**

Jayne revised the RFP, incorporating suggestions and AI reviews.  
Some members have not received latest version; will resend.  
Leon moved to accept and send out the auditor RFP; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tim. Motion carried.  
Discussion on email distribution lists and technical issues with Gmail/Outlook.  
Suggestion to create group email lists for efficiency.

**Benafica:**

Materials received but not reviewed; Kim moved to table action until next quarterly meeting; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jason Motion carried.

**Livestock Summit:**

Dale, Lee, and Larry attended; discussed potential for zoning commission/conditional use hearing training at annual convention.  
Amber Wood (Livestock Alliance) is interested in collaborating.  
Goal: to prevent litigation by improving township zoning process knowledge.

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Possible NDIRF funding for training.

Booth presences are valuable for recognition, though traffic was light.

**County Engineers Conference**

Jason and Larry attended; discussed flex fund and flood plain administration.

Counties want compensation for administering these programs.

Engineering firms can bill for their work; counties currently cannot.

Suggest pursuing legislative solution for county administrative fees.

Some counties lack highway superintendents; auditors handle all related tasks.

**NDDOT Transportation Conference:**

Need to confirm a township officer to participate in roundtable on contracting through counties.

Gerald Miller was the original candidate but is stepping down; Leon or Tom are willing to sit on the round table.

Larry will coordinate with Jenny at ND Counties (organizer).

**Scanner for Bills:**

Already discussed; scanner not yet purchased. Larry will secure a scanner and set it up.

**New Business:**

**District Two Director Appointment** - There are two candidates:

Christi Jaeger (Impark Township, Benson County)

Debbie Reinowski (Anamosa Township, McHenry County).

Julie moved to appoint Debbie Reinowski as District Two Director. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lee.

In discussion it was pointed out that it had been many years since the western counties in the district had been represented.

The motion carried on a roll call vote: Voting Aye: Kim, Tom, Leon, Julie, Lee, and Dale. Voting Nay: Tim and Jason.

Districts 2, 4 and 6 are up for election at the next annual meeting this December.

**Public Service Commission (PSC) Hearings – Power Lines**

Tim attended PSC hearing on power line siting (Gen X line, Applied Digital):

Hearings dominated by scripted Q&A; opposition focused on loss of trust, township self-governance.

HB 1258 requires haul road agreements but leaves townships with little recourse if contracts are broken.

PSC has authority to override township zoning on setbacks; some townships enacting moratoriums.

Legal challenges to PSC authority (HB 1258) anticipated.

Power line easement sign-up rates: 77% signed, remainder (41% negotiating, 10% non-responsive, 49% asked to stop contact).

**Public Service Commission (PSC) Hearings - Battery Storage**

Kim attended PSC hearing on battery storage siting (Bowbells):

PSC approved with hesitation due to fire/toxin risks and lack of emergency planning info.

Setbacks: 40 ft gravel, 80 ft vegetation; concern over fire spread and inability to fight battery fires.

Suggestion to address buffer requirements legislatively; companies are likely open to negotiation.

Multiple battery projects proposed in various counties.

**Director Qualifications – Oath of Office**

Lee moved, new directors must submit oath of office and minutes of nomination/appointment from their township. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kim.

Applies to all directors; nominating committee to verify qualifications. Nominations from the floor will complicate this.

The documents are to be sent to Barb. Motion carried on voice vote.

**Bills and Vouchers:** Leon moved to pay all bills and vouchers. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Julie. Motion carried.

Scanner for the bills is not yet purchased; pending.

**Question on Equipment – the Owl Meeting Device;** Larry owns the Owl; it is not for the association to purchase.

There were issues getting it set up today (first time out of the box).

**Next Meeting:** June 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM, Carrington

**Adjournment:** Kim moved to adjourn 2<sup>nd</sup> by Julie.

Dale adjourned the meeting.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

Larry A Syverson

NDTOA Executive Director

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