

Town of Duluth

Town Board Meeting August 14, 2025

Call to Order: The regular meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:31 p.m. Supervisors Rolf Carlson, ArMand Nelson, Saprina Matheny, and Jim Ward were present. Supervisor Stacia Grayson was absent. Police Chief Mark Haselow, Fire Chief Bob Engelson, and Treasurer Melinda Peulen. Deputy Clerk Hannah Jurek and Clerk Nicole Chatterson were also present.

Approve Agenda: The agenda was approved as written.

Approve Minutes: ArMand moved to approve the July regular meeting minutes. Jim seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Finances: Treasurer Melinda Peulen provided a report with a beginning balance of \$491,461.35, deposits of \$265,685.83, expenses totaling \$48,257.43, resulting in an ending balance of \$708,889.75. ArMand moved to approve the financial statement and payroll. Saprina seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The payroll net pay account distributions and the claims list for approval were approved and signed.

Public Comment: Charlene Brown presented a draft application for the Don McTavish Community Service Award. Charlene, along with Sue Lawson and Ken Peterson, also provided an update on the progress of the award plaque. Charlene encouraged the Board to have a finalized version of the application prepared in time for the presentation of the first award. A discussion followed regarding the process moving forward. The Board plans to announce at the 2026 Annual Meeting that applications for the award will be accepted through the end of the calendar year. The Board will review all applications and make a decision at the regular January meeting or, if necessary, at a special called meeting. This timeline will ensure that the plaque can be prepared in time for presentation at the following Annual Meeting. Ken Peterson reported that the plaque is progressing well. The seal has been completed, and the plaque is expected to be ready by the Harvest Dinner.

Department Reports

Police: Mark reported that Grand Lake Township has expressed interest in purchasing the squad vehicle that is being retired. He also informed the Board that he responded to a call in Normanna during the past month, during which shots were fired at him but missed. In light of this incident, Mark asked the Board to consider the potential purchase of a rifle for safety purposes. He will research costs and report back to the Board. Additionally, Mark spoke with the property owners who have been parking their vehicles near the center of lower Alseth Road. The owners explained that they are attempting to reduce dust in the area. Jim noted that this section of the road did not receive chloride treatment because, on the day of application, the vehicles were parked in the middle of the road. Jim attempted to contact the owners to have the vehicles moved, but no one answered the door, preventing that portion of the road from being treated.

Fire: Ken presented paperwork that required signatures from Bob and Rolf. The documentation will allow Ken to enter Red Card information into the DNR system, enabling firefighters to actively participate in wildland fire suppression. Mel followed up with the Township attorney regarding compensation for members who assisted during the Greenwood Fire. The attorney's office responded with a memorandum confirming that the Town should not retroactively compensate firefighters for work on the Brimson fires under the DNR Mutual Aid Agreement. The legal opinion also advised against implementing an hourly compensation system for firefighters, as it may conflict with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations. A per-call stipend system could be considered but must be carefully structured to maintain the firefighters' volunteer status under FLSA. Key considerations include: Stipends should not be limited only to mutual aid or DNR-requested calls, as this could result in reclassification. Any compensation must ensure that total pay and benefits do not exceed 20% of what a paid firefighter would earn for comparable work over the same period.

Planning and Zoning: The public hearing has been continued until next month. A large number of permit applications have been received recently. ArMand and Liz are reviewing documents received from SEH. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) has been submitted with modifications and some recommended changes.

Legal: Nothing new to report beyond the memorandum regarding firefighter compensation.

Roads: St. Louis County has invited the Township to participate in the Aggregate Crushing Program. However, the crushing site is at the Vermillion Pit, and Jim raised concerns about transportation costs compared to using local township pits. He will follow up at the September meeting. A culvert was replaced on Nordling Road. Rodda is working on Shonberg Road. Wright Tree Service cleared fallen trees on Swanson Road and Pine Tree Road. Jim is also completing the St. Louis County Winter Snow Contract.

Town Hall: Stacia provided a list of projects to be completed at the Town Hall prior to the meeting. Stacia and Nicole will work to obtain bids on these projects. Two items require immediate attention: water heater repair and replacing the sump pump. During the most recent rain event, the existing pump was unable to keep up, resulting in 8 inches of water in the basement. Roger was able to remove the water and begin drying out the area

Motion: ArMand moved to spend up to \$1,200.00 on repair of the water heater and replace the sump pump. Jim seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): The dishwasher has been fully installed and is ready for use. The ARPA Kitchen Project is now complete.

Materials Management: Everything is running smoothly. Grant paperwork has been signed off on. ArMand inquired whether businesses are still recycling excessive amounts of cardboard. Roger reported that the situation seems to have improved.

Cemetery: Molly reported ongoing issues with the lawn mowing company (Gruff's). It was noted that additional trimming is needed around headstones and other areas in the cemetery.

Communications: The Clerk's office was informed that Microsoft Publisher will no longer be supported beginning in 2026. As a result, a new platform will be needed to create the Township newsletter. Options under consideration include Canva and Adobe. Hannah will look into options and report once a reasonable one is found.

Emergency Management: No new updates at this time.

Supervisor Report: The City of Duluth has sent letters to property owners. The City is working to update GIS maps related to the Congdon Trust.

Personnel: Saprina recommended the Township begin working with Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) to prepare for implementation of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFML). Payroll deductions for the program are scheduled to begin on January 1, 2026.

Old Business: Don McTavish sent a letter accepting the Town's newly created Community Service Award.

New Business: The Township received a letter from City of Duluth RE: Notice of Active Storm Utility fee at 6714 E Superior Street PID 010-2860-00025. Nicole pointed out that this is most likely not the Town's property and that it is owned by the DNSSD. ArMand will reach out to the DNSSD to correct the parcel address as these parcels are not owned by the Township.

Correspondence

- Duluth Township Newsletter
- Road Groom
- Pipeline Safety
- Gnesen Township Newsletter
- Powerlines
- MAT District 10 meeting notice
- Couri & Ruppe Law Office
- Resource Renew-The Brand of WLSSD Notice of Capital Budget and Solid Waste Management Fee Public Hearing

Calendar Events and Meeting Schedule

- Thursday, August 28, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Planning and Zoning Meeting-Continued Variance
- Thursday, August 28, 2025, 6:00 p.m. MAT District 10 Meeting, Grand Lake Town Hall
- Friday, August 29, 2025, Clerks office closed
- Thursday, September 4, 2025, CPR Classes in main Hall
- Thursday, September 11, 2025, 6:00 p.m. Town Board Meeting
- Thursday, October 9, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Town Board Meeting
- Saturday, October 11, 2025, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Harvest Dinner
- Thursday, November 13, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Town Board Meeting
- Thursday, December 11, 2025-Saturday, December 13, 2025, MAT Annual Meeting St. Cloud, MN
- Thursday, December 11, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Town Board Meeting

Adjournment: ArMand moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m. Saprina seconded. The motion passed unanimously.