

**TOWN OF NAMAKAGON
MINUTES FOR ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY April 21, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairman Rasmussen called the annual meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present were Chairman Robert Rasmussen, Supervisors Jack McGregor and Jim Krueger, Treasurer Arlene Skultety, Clerk Laura Bjork and 15 others; Mary D'Andrea, Mike D'Andrea, Amanda Westlund, JoAnn Schultz, JoAnne Cleary, Randy Lueth, Judy Krueger, Dave Haan, Brian Pierce, Tony Litwinchuk, Jackie & Todd Trauba, Dave Gebhand, Sue Rosa and Heather Ludzack.

The agenda was posted at the Town Hall and on the website. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MOTION made by Mike D'Andrea to dispense the reading of the minutes from the April 15, 2025, Annual Town Meeting and approve the minutes as presented. MOTION seconded by JoAnn Schultz and carried.

MOTION made by Arlene Skultety to dispense the reading of the minutes and approve them from the Special Elector Meeting held on November 13, 2025. MOTION seconded by Mike D'Andrea and carried.

2025 Financial Report was presented by Treasurer Skultety.

Account balances as of January 1, 2025, were \$1,352,576.41. Total Revenues for 2025 were \$1,831,237.74 and Advance Tax Collections were \$575,931.65. Total Disbursements for 2025 were \$1,746,868.97. Account balances as of December 31, 2025 were \$1,338,400.80.

2025 Highlights on Finances:

Income:

- 41210 – Room Tax came up from last year (\$143,155.90); however, it still did not do as well as 2023 (\$172,013.08).
- 43221 – We received a Bayfield County Forestry Grant for maintenance on Old Grade Road and were able to replace Ghost Creek Culvert (also in 43790)
- 43529 – This year we again received a DNR Wildfire Grant of \$10,113.71 cleaning up the roadsides on Job Corps Road, Chippewa Landing Road and a small portion of Wilderness Road
- 43790 – We received the reimbursement from the Bayfield County Infrastructure Grant \$4,500 to help with the outdoor bathrooms
- 49100 We took out a loan to purchase a Grader (\$387,000)

Disbursements:

- 51300 The town discontinued Garmisch Landing Road and Mill Road
- 51400/51500/51600/53631/53311 – Raises were given and reflect in the expenses
- 51600 – The new Town Hall sign was installed. We switched email accounts to a .gov email host.
- 53315 – Ghost Creek Culvert was replaced

- 55110 The town sponsored a library room for the building of the new library, paid in 2025 and 2026.
- 57220 – A downpayment for a new Fire Truck was done
- 57324 – A new Grader was purchased
- 57620 – Town Hall Outdoor Privy's were installed

Ambulance Report – Given by David Hanks.

First, we would like to thank all the people who have donated funds throughout the year to support the ambulance service. We received just over \$40,000 in donations. We'd also like to thank those who made efforts to raise support in the community for the service. Great Divide contracted with eight (8) events in 2025; Birkie, Hungry Bear, Epic Bike Fest, La Pointe to La Pointe in Bayfield, Red Bull Skate Project, Chequamegon Mountain Bike Fest, Ashland County Fair and Fat Tire. This brought in \$11,100.

GRANTS:

- We received a Bayfield County Grant in September 2025 in the amount of \$20,000 to help with the cost of the service.
- We received our FAP (Funding Assistance Program) Grant of \$18,303.02, which we apply to and receive each year. This program is designed to assist EMS with equipment, training and operational costs.
- It is great to note that we brought in over \$40,000 in interest from our fund accounts and savings from re-investing in the LGIP (Local Gov't Investment Pool) system and higher interest money market accounts.
- 2025 was the first year that the WI GEMT (Ground Emergency Medical Transport) Program was available to apply for. This is a supplemental reimbursement under WI Medicaid. We were able to backdate the applications and received \$10,573.74 for 2023 and \$10,356.34 for 2024. This is a tremendous help in creating a sustainable service.

INCOME:

- Our patient income was \$1,575,683.75 (patient income minus refunds). A \$400,000 increase from 2024. This was due to a two-phase fee increase that was approved by the Board in order to be in alignment with surrounding EMS services.
- In the miscellaneous income, we sold 3 of our older ambulances for \$23,000. The other \$6,400 came from miscellaneous refunds/rebates.
- In 2025, Great Divide Ambulance went on 1,243 Runs. Previous years: 2024 - 1,074; 2023 - 1,052; 2022 - 1,256; 2021 - 1,259. The runs were billed out for a total of \$2,725,079.20. The patient income was \$1,575,683.75. This reflects a 57.8% deduction in what we bill. A breakdown of the runs has been presented to you.

EXPENSES:

- We purchased a new chassis (New Ambulance expense) for one of our older trucks in September (\$94,059.65; vehicle fund) plus the necessary power loader (\$56,900.71; equipment fund/Supplies:Equip expense).
- The ambulance service made the final payment on their building loan. The service made its third payment on the ambulance vehicle loan; two (2) more to go.

➤ Costs that have exceeded our 2025 budget were due to new hires, uniforms and vehicle expenses that continue to be our biggest expenditures.

➤ While patient income increased in 2025, so did our payroll costs. In 2025, the Board implemented pay increases, Health Benefits and ICI/Disability benefit. With the 168-call increase from 2024, we have welcomed some new employees. (2025 GREAT DIVIDE AMBULANCE REPORT cont'd)

STAFF:

- There have been several changes in employees this past year.
 - o Rob Puls retired in May.
 - o Monica Bigo has done a wonderful job as Rob's replacement along with her counterpart, Tony Lang; especially with recruiting qualified EMS personnel to our service.
 - o Laura Bjork resigned as Business Manager and began training Amanda Chaon as her replacement in August.
 - o One of our new hires from June 2025 began attending Paramedic school to continue building his skills and experience so that he'll be even better equipped to serve and care for our community.

The ambulance service began 2023 with 4 Paramedics (3 full-time and 1 part-time), and 3 EMTs. To date we have 10 Paramedics (4 full-time and 6 part-time) and 9 EMTs (4 full-time and 5 part-time).

We continue to serve our communities to the best of our ability providing Emergent 911 ALS Service to the area on call 24/7. Thank you all for your ongoing support to the ambulance service.

Fire Department Report – Submitted by Dave Haan, Fire Chief.

- Membership – There are 11 members. One interesting note is that there is only 1 active member on the Fire Dept. That resides in the township of Namakagon
- There were 22 Calls for Service in the last 12 months. No structure fires this past year.
- All NFRS reports up to date for 2% dues and completed audit DSPS and have passed the audit with some minor adjustments to record keeping of meetings and in-house training.
- In the last year we were involved with the normal events: Wienie Roast, Northend Ski Classic, Fat Tire.
- The Pancake Breakfast will be on Sunday May 24th, 2026
- The annual FD open house with Fire Extinguisher service will be Saturday June 6th

Projects:

- Yearly Hose testing was completed in June 2025 and will be done again this year although I have not been updated on a date.
- Through the Bayfield and Ashland co. Communications Dept. being combined we will be using eDispatches to our phones as a backup to pagers. We will be adding a computer at both halls to show on screen the location of incident and later add real time location of responding units.

Some things that are still on the radar for action in the near future:

- The money set aside for a high flow well should be kept in place as we are still researching the strainer bought for reloading tenders and engines.
- Replacement of 1985 Tanker/Tender Completed with the purchase of the New 2025 Midwest Pumper/Tanker giving much more capabilities on incidents and safety features for members. A big Thank You to the town for helping us require important updates to apparatus.
- Replacement of 1994 Chev. Suburban looking at putting this unit and old tanker on the State Surplus auction with reserve bids?.
- Looking for funding for the replacement of a crowded and inefficient main station fire hall.
- Proposed changes to OSHA recommendations that could change required equipment and personnel. Still being reviewed by the State.

Airport Commission Report – Submitted by Chairman Robert Rasmussen.

The airport continues to develop new hanger sites. Of the eleven new hangar sites we expect to have nine occupied by the end of the summer.

The terminal building collapsed 3 years ago to heavy snow. The building is constructed on the footprint of Libby's original hangar that stood for more than 70 years and is nearing completion.

The airport continues to work with the FAA to remove trees to clear the runway.

The residents of the Gordon Correctional Facility continue to be a cost-effective source of labor for clearing trees on airport property, keeping wildlife further from the runways. A Hamburger Fly-In will be held on June 23rd.

A Pancake Fly-In will be held the Saturday of Fall Fest.

Ten airplanes are stationed at CUA, and there needs to be ten airplanes to get federal funding.

Comprehensive Planning Report – Submitted by Randy Lueth, Comp Plan Chair.

The CPC members for 2025 were Dave Hanks (Chair), Jim Krueger, Linda Kraft, Randy Lueth,, Jerome Malmquist, Larry Pribyl and P.C. Rasmussen. Dave Hanks resigned his position as he joined the Town Board. Randy Lueth joined the CPC in April and will become chairman for 2026. Linda Craft has completed two terms on the Commission and will be resigning. Jack McGregor will also be joining the CPC as of January first. The Commission desires several additional members for 2026.

In 2025 the Commission met in March, April, May, October and November.

The CPC continues to work on updating the Comprehensive Plan and respond to the revisions being proposed to the Zoning Code by the County staff.

The CPC has been concerned with pedestrian safety at several eating and drinking establishments along County Highway D. These include Yellow Dog Saloon, Pla-Mor and The Loon Saloon. We urge the Board to continue discussions with the County

Highway Commissioner to formulate ways to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts at these locations.

The CPC continues to monitor the planning and design of the future biking and hiking trail proposed from the Namakagon Town Hall to the Rock Lake Trailhead.

As always, we will continue to address land use issues as they arise and continue to be a resource for the Town Board as needed.

Road Report – Submitted by Clay Burditt, Road Foreman.

- An area was cleared at the Town Hall, and an outdoor privy was installed in 2025. A county grant helped to purchase and install the privy.
- With the help of the Forest Service, Ghost Creek Culvert was replaced with town funds, county funds and USFS funds.
- The new Town Hall Sign was installed.
- Maintenance was done on Old Grade Road with funds from the county.
- The 2025 Wildfire Grant was completed by reducing vegetation along roadsides in key areas, netting the town a reimbursement of over \$10,000. Many hours were spent cutting, limbing, chipping, mowing and hauling to reduce the fire hazard along Job Corps Road, Chippewa Landing Road and a small portion of Wilderness Road.
- A new Case 150 was purchased to replace our aged 2001 John Deere 7210 Mower Tractor. The new tractor has attachments for faster mowing of roadsides as well as mulching of trees and brush to help with work for Wildfire Grants in the future.
- A new Grader was purchased through a loan this last year.
- This year, 2026 the town received a grant on Bear Point Road and Bay Drive, and future tackle Circle Drive. 2026 Wildfire Grant was received as well. Garden Lake Landing will be fixed and Chicago Ave – then waiting for grant funds to help repair completely.

Walleye Fish Project Report – Submitted by Mike D'Andrea.

The natural recruitment for 2025 was average, similar to 2024. Very good years of recruitment were 2018, 2020 and 2022. This year we stocked 6,630 at \$3.60 a fish. Commercial prices for 6-8" walleye are \$7 a fish, with a delivery fee of \$1,000. This year our fish will be raised in 2 lined ponds at the Red Cliff hatchery. None of our fish will be raised indoors, therefore our cost per fish will go up. We have committed to \$40,000 in minnows, and would like to get 10,000 fish this year.

Habitat requires direct work with individual landowners, and we have 28 projects to accomplish, but need that one-to-one contact. Tree drops are planned by the USFS, but their resources are limited.

This Week GLIFWC is conducting a Walleye survey. I received notice that 2019 stockings have been recorded, which was our first year of stocking. Looking for full results.

Lake Association Report – Submitted by Kevin Wiersma, Namakagon lake Association President.

Walley Stocking Program

Last year brought continued progress on several fronts. Our walleye stocking program released over 6,000 fingerling walleyes into the lake, reinforcing the long-term health of the lake's fishery and ensuring continued opportunities for anglers. In partnership with Wisconsin DNR, we also advanced lake structure improvement projects utilizing tree drops—to enhance habitat for both fish and aquatic plants that sustain our ecosystem.

Hybrid Watermilfoil

We continued targeted treatment of hybrid watermilfoil. Areas of the upper lake were treated last year. Our current WI DNR Grant is exhausted and we will be reapplying for this grant again. NLA also shares part of the cost for AIS treatments. NLA membership can help support the AIS effort by completing Inspection Reports following a boat outing. We are compensated for inspection reports submitted and ~\$15K was generated for NLA in 2025.

Boat Landing Inspection Program

In addition to monitoring and treating the lake, the NLA emphasizes prevention efforts to protect our waters from invasive species through the boat landing inspection program. This project is funded by the state Clean Boats, Clean Waters Grant (CBCW) - and is managed by the Town of Namakagon. Special recognition is due to Laura Bjork for her diligent work in scheduling, documenting, and managing wages for the lake monitors.

Stewardship and Courtesy on the Water

Recognizing the impact of wake activity, the Association updated the Lake Courtesy Code to include clearer guidelines for wake boats operating with full ballast tanks. These updates promote safety, shoreline protection, and respect for all who enjoy the lake.

Membership

2025 was another year of membership growth. Currently we have 265 households and 501 individual members.

Our social events helped promote awareness of the Lake Association, grow membership and strengthen the sense of community that makes Lake Namakagon special.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting took place in August at Lakewoods Resort with over 75 members in attendance. It was a successful event where we conducted a "Split-the-Pot" raffle, raising approximately \$800 for the NLA.

The NLA is committed to preserving and protecting Lake Namakagon as an ecologically healthy watershed. We sincerely appreciate the time, energy, and resources that the town dedicates to supporting our initiatives.

Please note that the Lake Monitoring program is in need of workers. The work that is done on the lake monitoring boats helps contamination of other lake and invasive species into our lakes. Currently we have only 5 workers for the 3 landings that we monitor. This is not sufficient for the amount of time that is needed. We will run short in hours for the grant and ultimately short in getting the word out for clean boats/clean waters if we do not get more workers. The rate of pay for Lake Monitors is \$18/hr. Workers can choose

their hours from one weekend a month to every weekend a month. Please consider helping to keep our lakes clean by becoming a Lake Monitor.

Library Report – Given by Amanda Westlund, Director for Forest Lodge Library.

Library Collection

- Physical collection number (books, subscriptions, audio, video, other items)
 - 11260 (in process of deep assessment of collection to prepare for move)
 - -582 items from 2024

Library Services

- Total Circulation: 17553 circulations (+248 overall circulations from 2024)
 - 7989 physical books
 - 1390 children's materials
 - 20 'other' items (library of things)
 - -177 circulations from 2024
 - Interlibrary Loans
 - 2096 loaned out from our library to other libraries (-247 circulations from 2024)
 - 2256 borrowed from other libraries to our patrons (+167 circulations from 2024)
 - E-circulation (Libby, Kanopy)
 - 5212 circulations
 - +505 circulations from 2024

Library Users

- Total registered users: 1101 (778 residents, 323 non-residents) +82 users from 2024
- Total library visits: 8932 (+267 visits from 2024)
- Patron Computer Use: 201 (-160 uses from 2024)
- Wireless Internet Uses: 1830 (-1494 uses from 2024; in late 2024, internet connection changed from being automatic to needing patrons to specifically choose to sign on to the library's wifi network)

Library Programs

- Total programs offered in-person, on-site: 56
- Total programs offered in-person, off-site: 35
 - **Total programs offered: 91 (+40 from 2024)**
- Total program attendance in-person, on-site: 676
- Total program attendance in-person, off-site: 171
 - **Total program attendance: 847 (+308 from 2024)**

Highlighted programs from the year:

- Groundbreaking Ceremony
- Tech Support Days to 3 years)
- Centennial Celebration
- Puzzle Challenges
- Historic Fiction Book Club
- Adult Makerspace
- Jolabolkaflod and Stories with Santa
- Hosted Business After 5 activities
- Dungeons and Dragons ages
- * Story and Craft time for children
- * Teaching is Talking Program (birth to 3 years)
- * Cookbook Club
- * Get A Clue Mystery Book Club
- * Silent Book Club
- * Author Visits
- * Make Music Day
- * Senior Meals program support and
- * Summer Reading Program for all ages

New Library Building Activity in 2025

- Moved forward with construction and floor plans
- Made changes and updates to original plan
 - No longer connecting the log cabin to the new building
 - Extending the size, due to funding from the Flexible Facilities Grant
- Had Groundbreaking Ceremony in June
- Construction started happening and moved along quickly
- A Community Walk Through was held in November to allow community members to see the inside of the newly constructed building and how work inside was progressing
- Funding was provided by the Flexible Facilities Grant administered by the Department of Administration; Katie Flowers Endowment fundraising efforts; generous donors and supporters of the library in their giving and support of the library; and Bayfield County through the Building Stronger Libraries Grant.

We are truly so grateful for such a wonderful, generous community that continues to support the library and the services we provide by coming to utilize the library with its variety of services; attending programs; giving donations of money or resources; volunteering at the library and at fundraising events; and spreading the word about all of the great things we do!

We look forward to continuing to provide the high-quality library materials, services, and programming to our communities as we move into the future and into the 'Next Century'.

The Grand Opening of the new Forest Lodge Library building is set to happen sometime in the late summer or early fall 2026. We can't wait for you to join us!

For updated information and to access online resources, please visit our website:
www.forestlodgelibrary.org

Many thanks to our library Board of Trustees, Katie Flowers Endowment Board of Directors, and staff for their hard work and dedication in helping the library have a successful year, as well as all of the work on the new library building as we move closer to our move in and opening that will be happening in the late summer/early fall of 2026. For a current list of trustees, KFE directors, and staff – please visit our website at www.forestlodgelibrary.org.

Cable Area Chamber of Commerce Report – Presented by Heather Ludzack, Cable Area Chamber of Commerce Director.

There are currently 187 members. We are continuing to get lots of new members, young members and young business members - very exciting.

The chamber was a co-host to the Birkie Jr Nationals March 8th through 14th. The chamber secured grant for that which resulted in 1.2 million dollars in direct spending in the area. Over 600 people came to the area within a week when not much is going on. Over Fall Fest 5,000 people came to the area. The biggest feedback from vendors is that there are more people in Hayward, but more spenders in Cable. There are already 40 vendors signed up for 2026.

The chamber has spent conservatively for a while and it is now time to invest in some marketing (after COVID and bad winters).

Sue Rosa was asked by Birkie to partner with them during the Bentonville Big Sugar week Bike Fest at their Booth. The chamber might participate and be able to contact people who will come to new areas – marketing this area.

The collected room tax for 2025 was only \$900 short of record room tax!

Friends of the Forest Foundation – raise money to open Forest Lodge property to learn more about it.

The Fire and EMS appreciation picnic will be May 19th from 5pm to 7pm. Everyone is invited. At the end of the evening, the chamber will make donations to the departments. Cable Lions help to sponsor this event. (145 years ago fire that burned down Cable).

The chamber booked a full episode of Discover Wisconsin featuring just the Cable/Namakagon area. This is very exciting and will be focused on Fall - Fall fishing, touring Lake Namakagon, touring restaurants, trails, fall fest, fun in the forest ATV, CAMBA trails, Birkie Trail Run, etc.

There is something fun for everyone in this area!

Town update – A grant is currently being applied for permanent pickleball courts to be placed across the road from the Slat Shed/Namakagon Trail Groomer building.

The Town Hall floors will be re-finished in May.

The cell tower will be increasing in height, hopefully to be completed by June.

The Road Crew will be purchasing a new lawnmower.

Road Clean-up letters have gone out and the fish boil will be at the Town Hall on April 25th, cocktails at 4:30pm and dinner at 6pm. There are about 100 volunteers helping to clean up roads.

Old Business – None.

New Business –

Sue Rosa – information sessions for the county for zoning re-write.

Laura Bjork stated that there is an EMS County-wide service meeting on April 22nd at 6pm at the EOC building in Washburn. There is a concern about how the county is funding this service. Residents should be concerned. Cable, Namakagon, Drummond and part of Grand View have ALS service in their area. Who will be paying for this county-wide service? Also, the county has voiced that they will be pilfering employees to service their service. Dave Haan mentioned that the county looked to fire fighters to get an EMR certification to be able to respond. There is a lot of training. In what other business (hospitals) does someone go out and pick up a customer and not pay for that service? Why aren't the hospitals putting out for that or having their own ambulances?

Public Comment – None.

Date set for next Annual Meeting: Tuesday April 20, 2027 @ 7pm.

MOTION made by Mike D'Andrea to adjourn the Annual Town Board meeting at 8:21pm. MOTION seconded by Judy Krueger and carried.

Respectfully Submitted by

Laura Bjork, Town of Namakagon Clerk