

Sandstone Township
Sandstone Town Hall – 55044 Poplar Rd.
April 3, 2025, 7 p.m.

Open meeting - followed by pledge

Recess regular meeting. Open Reorganizational Meeting

Reconvene

Public Comment - Please hold your comments to 3 minutes. **Board members will not respond to questions during public comment** but may add issues to the current agenda or schedule them for a future meeting. The board will not take questions or comments during the meeting.

Minutes – Minutes of March 20 regular meeting.

Treasurer's report –

Affidavits -

Pay bills –

Clerk updates –

Unfinished business

1. SCable permit/If Scott is here
2. Beaver Bounty

Zoning/building site permit reports

1. E Melzark – permits

Roads

1. Road reports Jon, Linda
 - a. Road conditions -Jon, Linda, Brian
 - b. Road conditions – Jon, Linda, Brian
2. Quotes for gravel
3. Have operators been informed of their roads

New business

1. Letter to City of Sandstone i.e. fire contract, trail funding, orderly annexation
2. Payroll timesheets, bills/claims for April due to Erin no later than April 29, 10 a.m.

3. ECE letter of support and financial letter of support
4. April 12, 2025 is the Saturday for road review. Do you want to meet after the review at the town hall? If so, I need to post it as a special meeting. Otherwise, you can make decisions about the roads at the April 17 meeting, i.e. loads of gravel, culverts, ditches, etc. You are not required to include residents on this review.
5. Signatory approval for Brian Williams – **motion** - for minutes for the bank. Fill out paperwork

Planning Committee –

Supervisors – 5 min. each if time allows

Adjourn –.

Upcoming meetings

April 3, 2025 – Regular Bi-Monthly meeting

April 10, 2025 – Planning Committee meeting

April 12, 2025 – Road Review. This is not a formal meeting and decisions will not be made.

Board of Appeal and Equalization April 15, 2025 6 p.m. Do not miss this meeting because we must have a quorum.

April 17, 2025 – Regular Bi-Monthly meeting

Supervisors

Linda Thomson, Chair – 320-515-1734

Jon Dorau, supervisor– 320-630-1231

Brian Williams, supervisor – 320-372-0171

Township email sandstonetownship@gmail.com

Website: sandstonetownship.com

Staff

Ailene (Gussie) Croup, clerk 320-279-3513

Erin Hoxsie, treasurer 408-646-1885

Ed Melzark, zoning contact 612-390-3568

Chair nomination and Appointments

Nominate chair - motion

Chair makes appointments - motion

Pay as follows:

Chairman -\$90 regular meeting; **Changes?**

Supervisors - \$80 regular meeting; **Changes?**

Clerk – \$28//hour, \$80 regular meeting; **Changes?**

Treasurer - \$21/hour, \$80 meeting; **(Erin is making \$22/hour/when was hire date and review) Changes?**

Deputy Clerk and Treasurer - \$80 regular meeting, \$20/hour; **Changes?**

Zoning Officer - \$10.59 per hour plus mileage; **(new state minimum wage \$11.13/hour)**

Supervisors – non-affidavit work such as checking on roads and getting quotes \$8.63/hour; **(Federal Minimum Wage is \$7.25/hour not \$8.63. Do you want to change this or go with state \$11.13?) Changes?**

Attending all day meetings – Supervisors meeting fee \$10.59/hour; **(new state minimum wage \$11.13/hour) Changes?**

Election Judge - \$19/hour plus mileage; **Changes?**

Head Election Judge - \$20/hour plus mileage; **Changes?**

Planning Committee pay - \$52.50/hour plus mileage. **Changes?**

Motion by _____ to set fees as stated, second _____

Operating grader, and maintenance work:

Maintenance Worker/Operator - \$20/hour **Changes?**

Regular Operator - \$27/hour; Assistant Operator - \$27/hour; Supervisor Operator - \$25/hour. **Changes?**

Traveling for parts – current state minimum wage plus mileage - \$10.59/hour. General Labor - \$10.59/hour. **MN state minimum increased to \$11.13/hour on 1.1.25**

Mileage – current federal rate - **.70/mile. New as of Jan. 1, 2025**

Mower – subject to available operator rate – assistant operator - **\$27/hour. Changes?**

Use of Personal Equipment (tractors, bobcats, etc.) \$60/hour pay to operate those machines.

Township Equipment use **(only with full board approval using Sandstone Twp operator):**

Grader - \$150/hour **Changes?**

Truck - \$125/hour **Changes?**

Motion by _____ to approved the charges, seconded ____ approved.

Fees for:

Photocopies, time and mileage – requested copied of minutes, etc., \$.50 for one-sided copies, \$1 for two-sided copies. Copies, time mileage estimated at \$50 or more must be paid in advance. (the township is a non-date practices body and not required to supply copies at township meetings) **Changes?**

_____ made a motion to approve the photocopy fees, seconded by _____ and unanimously approved.

Site permits - \$80 (increase discussed at several meetings?) Do you want to set a penalty for work done/started before an approved site permit?

_____ made amotion to approve the site permit fee, seconded by _____ and passed _____.

Interim (IUP), Conditional use permits (CUP) and Variance \$650 Application Non-refundable Fee, \$500 escrow fee payable (unused portion refunded) to Sandstone Township. Applicant is responsible for all fees above the escrow fee.

Designations

1. **Hold the Board's regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month at Sandstone Town Hall, at 7 pm. The mid-month June meeting falls on Juneteenth Holiday...pick new date**
2. **Planning Committee at Town Hall second Thursday of the month at 7 pm.**
3. North Pine County News as the official newspaper to print notices and post notices as appropriate at the Town Hall and, if possible, the Victory Station and the website.
4. Northview Bank, Sandstone, MN as the official depository.

Motion was made by _____ to accept the designations, seconded by _____ and _____ approved.

Policies

1. Snowplowing Policy – Plowing of the Township roads will be done on the normal route schedule and will be at the direction of the Board of Supervisors. In addition, pursuant to the snowplowing policy for the Township roads there will be a charge of \$150 per hour with the grader and \$125 per hour with the truck for any request for snowplowing of a township road. However, there will be no fee for special requests for snowplowing of a township road for ambulance or fire truck calls or a life threatening or property damage situation. **Changes?**

2. Culvert Policy – The planning commission will design the culvert policy. The supervisor assigned to the planning commission will bring the culvert issue to the commission. Land owners must purchase and install the minimum of a 15” x 30’ corrugated steel culvert, for their driveways at their own expense. However, if the township damages the culvert when it rebuilds the road, the township will repair and /or replace the culvert as appropriate. **(There is now a required culvert permit fee of \$50) Changes?**
3. Fire Call Policy – Will charge \$750 for each fire call and if not paid then will put it on the individual’s property taxes. Amendment: whereby the individual may come to the board within 30 days after notification from the board to establish a reasonable time period to repay the fire call bill.
4. Sandstone Township Equipment – Equipment will be kept at the town hall. The storage site must be accessible by the supervisors and equipment operators. A temporary storage or parking area may also be used when necessary. When using a temporary parking area for four (4) or more days the supervisors are to be notified. The storage or parking location roadway to, turn around, and parking area is to be maintained as follows: The equipment operator shall use the township equipment to grade or snowplow these areas. When township equipment cannot do the type of maintenance needed then the township supervisor must be notified.
An equipment usage report is to be filed with the treasurer at the end of the month of all the hours and work locations. Also, an equipment usage report is to be filed with the treasurer for equipment usage on each service agreement/contract with billable hours such as those for Little Sand Creek Road. **Has this been done?**
5. Grader and truck use for other townships’ roads will be charged \$150 an hour for grader use and \$125 per hour for the truck. **Changes?**
6. Towing of a township vehicle must have a supervisor’s approval and must be done by a licensed, insured company.
7. Mailbox policy will copy Pine County’s policy. **(I cannot find a replacement policy)**
8. All utilities installed along Sandstone Township’s roads will be placed on the backside of the township’s ditches. Prior to installing new/replacement utilities, abandoned utilities must be removed. **(a permitting ordinance is being created by the planning committee)**
9. Beaver bounty. Request to remove must be made to supervisor and approved prior to trapping. \$75 **There is a form that was created for the beaver bounty that must be turned in to the treasurer as a claim for payment. Changes?**

_____ made a motion to approve policies 1-9, seconded by _____ and _____ approved.

Sandstone Township

Annual Meeting Minutes at ~~Cross Church~~ *Town Hall*

March 11, 2025

Clerk Ailene Croup convened the meeting at 8:10 m.

Present were clerk Ailene Croup, maintenance operator Scott Trenholm, deputy clerk Theresa Dawson, residents Linda Thomson, Jon Dorau and Matt Gebhart, Scott Heller, Jan Heller, Patrice DeMarrett, James Rausch, Jeannie Rausch, Don Eaton, John Pitts, Gary Thomson, Chris Nathan, Joel Barr, Keith Carlson and Ruth Carlson.

Keith Carlson nominated John Pitts as moderator, seconded by Linda Thomson and unanimously approved.

Clerk Croup read the agenda. It was approved on a motion from Matt Gebhart and seconded by Linda Thomson.

A motion was made by Linda Thomson to forego reading the minutes of March 12, 2024 and Sept. 5, 2024. It was seconded by Jennie Rausch and unanimously approved.

Election results were read by election judge Theresa Dawson.

Jon Dorau won the 3-year seat and Brian Williams won the 1-year seat. There was a motion by Matt Gebhart to accept the election report, seconded by James Rausch and unanimously approved.

Theresa Dawson read the financial report.

A motion to accept the financial report was made by Jeannie Rausch, seconded by Linda Thomson and unanimously approved.

Ruth Carlson had questions about interest on the bank account.

Keith Carlson had questions about the payroll.

Matt Gebhart said the township roads look pretty good for now. He said there was a card from a resident on Government Road thanking the board for the great work and condition of the road. Gebhart said the township spent \$90,000 on the road in 2024.

Jon Dorau said the most important thing in the budget is the roads, culverts and ditches. The township needs decent money to maintain them.

Keith Carlson said he agreed as long as they were going to spend more money on gravel.

Matt Gebhart made a motion to send \$150 to the Askov History Museum for storage of the township's records. It was seconded by Chris Nathan and unanimously approved.

Requests for money from New Pathways and the City of Sandstone to fix the bike trail west of the city were unanimously denied on a motion from Matt Gebhart, seconded by Jeannie Rausch.

Linda Thomson said the planning committee has been working on a sign ordinance and a ditch ordinance that must be sent to the attorney once it is complete.

James Rausch said he heard rumors that grader operators were avoiding plowing some roads because there is someone on that road they do not like.

Linda Thomson said when the grader is paid off, she would like to see the levy go down and it was something she said was talked about at board meetings. She also said there were big increases to cover all the years when the levy never increased and it left the township in a place where they could not keep up with road maintenance.

The board approved selling the dump truck, Linda Thomson said, and it decreased the insurance and maintenance budget. She also said Supervisor Matt Gebhart found a place to purchase cutting edges for the grader which will last longer and at a huge savings.

As a board, we have found ways to be more financially responsible, Linda Thomson said. We budget and I would like to see a reserve pot of money for disasters.

Chris Nathan asked if the township needed another grader.

Supervisor Matt Gebhart said the dump truck needed lots of costly repairs. He also said the current grader is one that was meant for building roads not maintaining them. He said the township grader should have a steering wheel and less electronics.

The township's grader was used to pull in the shoulders on Government Road, Linda Thomson stated.

Matt Gebhart said the town board needs to make a plan for those accounts to purchase equipment.

Chris Nathan made a motion to set the 2026 levy at this meeting, Keith Carlson seconded the motion. Moderator John Pitts called for discussion.

James Rausch said the township would be better equipped to make that decision later in the year.

Chris Nathan said they should just move ahead because the board spent more than they budgeted.

Linda Thomson said the board has never overspent. Spending on things like disasters are not normal spending.

Gary Thomson asked if they were saying set the budget in March and not in September.

Chris Nathan said every year we come back in September and there is a huge levy increase.

Linda Thomson said she stayed committed when she wanted an increase. She asked clerk Ailene Croup what would happen if they ran out of money.

Ailene Croup said the board would have to get a certificate of indebtedness through a meeting of the electors and there is a statute driven deadline to have the whole process done by five working days after December 20.

Jon Dorau said he had the same concerns as Chris Nathan. If they wait to set the levy in September, people will fill the room and raise the levy.

Linda Thomson said she was not opposed to setting the levy tonight.

Jon Dorau said setting the levy tonight holds the board accountable for the levy.

Chris Nathan said there should be money set aside for a new grader. He also said he was not looking for a reduction in the levy.

Joel Barr said it sound like you want to set the levy and stick with it.

Moderator John Pitts repeated the motion to set the levy tonight by Chris Nathan, seconded by Keith Carlson. The motion passed with 10-yes and 3-no votes.

Chris Nathan made a motion to set the levy at \$238,000 for 2026. It was seconded by Matt Gebhart and approved.

A motion was made by Gary Thomson to dispense with the second half of the annual meeting in September, seconded by James Rausch and unanimously approved.

Keith Carlson made a motion to set the 2026 annual meeting on March 10, 2026, at 8:15 p.m., at the town hall. It was seconded by Gary Thomson and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by Ailene Croup on April 3, 2025.

Moderator

Sandstone Township Regular Meeting Minutes

Sandstone Twp Hall

March 20, 2026

Chair Linda Thomson opened the meeting at 7 p.m. followed by the pledge.

Present were Supervisors Thomson and Matt Gebhart and Jon Dorau, Clerk Ailene Croup, Zoning Contact Ed Melzark, resident George Castonguay.

Matt Gebhart made a motion to accept the minutes from 3.6.25, seconded by Linda Thomson and unanimously approved.

Clerk Croup talked about purchasing a new computer for the treasurer and clerk.

Linda Thomson said there should be comparison prices on computers. She said she would do the purchasing and the clerk and treasurer should get their software needs to her.

Croup reminded the board of the reorganizational meeting to be held during the April 3 meeting.

Linda Thomson made a motion to send the newly elected supervisor, Brian Williams, to the Minnesota Association of Townships' Spring Short Courses. It was seconded by Gebhart and unanimously approved.

Linda Thomson reported that the planning committee was working on an ordinance to address utilities placed in the ditches and they are also addressing a sign ordinance.

The board discussed the recent placement of SCicable's communication lines in the township's ditches. The board wants to know what depth and where they were placed and have Scott Savage from SCI come to the meeting to explain.

Jon Dorau reported that Steve Volk wants to come to our meeting and wants to get straight with the county over the concerns for additional buildings on his property.

Ed Melzark said the county is going out to look at the Kukuk property and the building and will send the information to him.

Matt Gebhart said the roads are doing pretty good. He has a plan set up for operator Keith Carlson to grade and plow the roads west of the town hall and Keith Petry will do the roads east of the town hall. That way the grader will always come back to the town hall. He said someone should be put in charge of when operators go out.

Linda Thomson said the grader operators should go out after it rains. It will be a little more work for the supervisors.

Gebhart did not think it would increase the supervisors' work load.

If there is a complaint driven request for grading or plowing, the supervisor can go out and check that it is a valid request.

Matt Gebhart talked about the improvements made in 2024 on Government Road. He said operator Keith Petry went out and cut that road many times and it made a big difference.

Gebhart said maintenance personnel Scott Trenholm has had some time in the grader with Keith Petry and is a backup. Gebhart added that a letter should be drafted to the operators outlining their grading/plowing duties.

Jon Dorau said sometimes Dupuis and Government Road have to get plowed twice a week.

Gebhart said he believed that was a problem created by the grader operators not cutting the road deep enough.

Dorau said the roads are getting too wide.

Gebhart said Government Roads' shoulders were pulled in last year and the operator plowed them back out.

Jon Dorau said he has been down some of his roads already and he is seeing rocks coming up.

Matt Gebhart made a motion to have Keith Petry grade/plow the roads east of the town hall and Keith Carlson grade/plow the roads west of the town hall. It was seconded by Linda Thomson and unanimously approved.

Gebhart said if Keith C. is busy, maybe Trenholm can do some of the roads.

Dorau talked about having Gus Roberts pull in the shoulders on another section of Government Road.

The first bid for the stretch on the road was \$25,000, Gebhart said but it ended up being \$19,000.

Dorau reported that beaver are coming in on Tenquist Road and Bear Lane. He said trappers must get a permit from a conservation officer. He talked about the bounty being open to anyone.

Gebhart said Keith Petry can do maintenance at the town hall and Gene Kroschel needs to know the township is no longer purchasing Ziegler blades. Gebhart said he would also take the filters and oil and dispose of it for the township.

When the blades are changed, they can keep the outer blades that get less wear and mix and match with the new ones, Gebhart added.

Linda Thomson asked what happened to all the used blades.

Add to Gene Kroschel's letter that maintenance will be done at the town hall and he needs to contact Linda Thomson for a performance review.

Matt Gebhart said he would be happy to help change the cutting edges, and he will pass on the information for H&L Mesabi where the blades were ordered.

Linda Thomson made a motion to have payroll done by direct deposit, it was seconded by Gebhart and unanimously approved.

Gary Thomson will drive his van for the road review on April 12, 2025. The board will meet at the town hall and no decisions will be made.

At 8:30, a motion was made by Thomson to adjourn, seconded by Gebhart and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by Ailene Croup on April 3, 2025.

Chair

Sandstone Township

Utility Maintenance and Construction Permit Application

Owner/Applicant: Savage Communications Inc (SCI)

Contact Name: Scott Savage

Contact Phone: 320-384-7442 Ext. 708 (Office) 651-492-8412 (Cell)

Business Address: 115 Tobies Mill Pl / PO Box 810 Hinckley, MN 55037

Project Description: Install of Fiber Optic cable to provide Fiber Internet services
to residences.

Sandstone Township hereby grants applicant a permit for utility maintenance or construction to occur within right of way or utility easement within Sandstone Township subject to the following conditions:

1. Applicant shall restore premises by filling any holes and trenches and will sod or seed any area disturbed by construction.
2. Upon request, applicant will provide Map of Project Area
3. Applicant will contact Township and advise them of project completion and right of way restoration.
4. Township will inspect the premises and advise applicant of any further restoration necessary, if applicable.
5. A signed copy of the permit application must be returned to the Township before the Permit is valid.
6. Upon request, Savage Communications Inc shall provide a certificate of Insurance.

Sandstone Township

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Savage Communications Inc

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

City of Sandstone
PO Box 641
Sandstone, MN 55072

Administrator Kathy George,

The electors of Sandstone Township voted not to participate in Sandstone Junction Trail mill and overlay project stating their road maintenance needs all the township's attention.

Also, the board would like to review the fire contract for 2026 before they consider it for approval. Let us know when it would be a convenient time for you to attend a meeting of the town board or to meet with the fire committee. The board would carve out a block of time at a meeting with advance notice. Contact Ailene Croup, clerk, at 320-279-3513 or email at sandstonetownship@gmail.com

In addition, Sandstone Township would like to plan a time to address orderly annexation. Clerk Ailene Croup spoke with Administrator Kathy George about two years ago, at Sandstone Township Board's request, to get the orderly annexation talks started.

Thank you for your attention to these requests.

Respectfully,

Ailene Croup, clerk

Sandstone Township
320-279-3513
sandstonetownship@gmail.com
PO Box 564
Sandstone, MN 55072



a croup <sandstonetownship@gmail.com>

MN BEAD Letter of Support Request

1 message

Amy Bergloff <Amy.Bergloff@ecemn.com>

Fri, Mar 28, 2025 at 10:26 AM

To: "sandstonetownship@gmail.com" <sandstonetownship@gmail.com>

Cc: Fayet Turitto <Fayet.Turitto@ecemn.com>, Kris Pearson <Kris.Pearson@ecemn.com>, Mark Nelson <mark.nelson@ecemn.com>

Hello,

My name is Amy Bergloff, a Business Accounts Specialist at East Central Energy. ECE is on a mission to bring low-cost world class fiber internet access to the communities in which we serve. Many of these communities have faced economic challenges, and as a result, have been overlooked by traditional internet service providers for many years. ECE has embarked on a 5 year, \$350M Fiber-to-the-Home construction project, and has been awarded \$38M in grant funding thus far.

As you may be aware, the MN BEAD application window opened on March 24 and will be closing on April 21. ECE is intently preparing an application to submit on April 19.

For high-scoring applications, DEED will be looking to see that we have a good relationship with the Townships, and that the Townships are willing to support us financially. We recognize that this is a tight timeline, and that Townships Board meetings are already happening soon.

In the interest of strengthening our grant application, ECE is requesting a letter of support and, if possible, a minimal financial commitment from the Township. **Is it possible for this request to be included in the next Board meeting?** Any amount of financial support would be greatly appreciated, as this would ensure we receive the full 10 points available for Community Engagement in our grant application. I've also attached a template for a letter of support for your convenience. We kindly ask that all letters of support **be returned to ECE by Wednesday, April 16.**

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Bergloff

Business Accounts Specialist | East Central Energy

T: 763-691-2016 | C: 320-364-0937 | amy.bergloff@ecemn.com

412 Main Avenue N | PO Box 39 | Braham, MN 55006



<Insert Township Letterhead here>

{Date}

Minnesota Office of Broadband Development
180 E 5th St Suite 1200
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: ECE Letter of Support

{Township Name} would like to express our support for East Central Energy's Broadband project in {Township Name} for Minnesota's Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant.

ECE's efforts will provide access to high-speed internet for many of our community members that currently do not have adequate internet access, or no internet access at all. These residents currently struggle with slow internet speed and poor connectivity—some residents have NO access to broadband—which adversely impacts school, work, and healthcare for these families.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for {Township Name}. {Insert any other language you'd like to add here}

{Township Name} strongly supports this project and would appreciate your consideration of ECE's Minnesota BEAD grant application.

Thank you for your consideration

{Name}

{Title}

{Township Name}

<Insert Township Letterhead here>

{Date}

Minnesota Office of Broadband Development
180 E 5th St Suite 1200
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: ECE Letter of Support

{Township Name} would like to express our support for East Central Energy's Broadband project in {Township Name} for Minnesota's Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant.

ECE's efforts will provide access to high-speed internet for many of our community members that currently do not have adequate internet access, or no internet access at all. These residents currently struggle with slow internet speed and poor connectivity—some residents have NO access to broadband—which adversely impacts school, work, and healthcare for these families.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for {Township Name}. {Insert any other language you'd like to add here}

{Township Name} strongly supports this project and commits to providing \$___ in support. {Township Name} would appreciate your consideration of ECE's Minnesota BEAD grant application.

Thank you for your consideration

{Name}

{Title}

{Township Name}