

Oronoco Town Board
Monthly Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2025

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Oronoco Town Board held on **Monday, May 12, 2025**, at 5:30pm at the Oronoco Community Center, located at 115 Second Street SW, Oronoco, Minnesota.

Demarino Driveway

Mr. Thomas Demarino spoke with Supervisor Mergen and provided a site map of the driveways to be installed. The second driveway will be moved 55' to the North, this has been approved by WES Engineering and meets all MDOT criteria.

Supervisor Ken Mergen called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

The agenda was accepted as presented with the removal of Demarino Driveway, Mr. Demarino spoke with Supervisor Mergen prior to the meeting. Text Amendments to Articles 4& 10 of Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance to include Interim Use Permits (IUP) and Regulate Short Term Rentals will be first on the agenda with the Cannabis Ordinance following. Melissa Griggs will replace Demarino Driveways on the agenda.

Text Amendments to Articles 4& 10 of Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance to include Interim Use Permits (IUP) and Regulate Short Term Rentals

Mr. Jered Staton, TCPA, provided the report to the Board.

Supervisor Johanningmeier asked if all cannabis businesses will require an interim use permit, (IUP). Mr. Staton stated that all cannabis business will need an IUP on these changing and evolving cannabis businesses. Other businesses will be case by case, and have the same review period as CUP's, annually.

Mr. Staton stated that section 10 of the Oronoco Township zoning ordinance, is kind of the catch all area. Mr. Staton is suggesting removal of section 10.55, vacation and short term rentals, b. "In order to reduce community impact, short term rental stays are restricted to one (1) per every seven (7) day period." The Board agreed with removing this section.

The Board will remove section 10.55, t. "The owner must post a sign in letters no less than four inches in height stating, "SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK". At the water edge or on a dock, one (1) United States Coast Guard approved Type IV throwable personal flotation device shall be conspicuously displayed and available for emergency response. Flotation device shall be serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations."

The Board will also remove section 10.55, s. "A minimum of two outdoor security cameras equipped with high definition video must be installed. Data must be stored for at least 30 days."

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adopt Resolution 2025-06, Text Amendments to Articles 4& 10 of Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance to include Interim Use Permits (IUP) and Regulate Short Term Rentals, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

Request: The Oronoco Township Planning Commission initiated a Text Amendment to Articles 4 & 10 of their zoning ordinance to further include Interim Use Permits (IUP) and regulate Short Term Rentals.

Background:

The current version of Oronoco Township's Zoning Ordinance, updated May 19, 2022, does not include provisions for the issuance of IUPs and is silent with respect to short term rentals.

Oronoco Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 21, 2025, reviewed the proposed changes, took public comment, and has recommended approval of the proposed changes.

Amendment Findings: (staff recommended findings in *italic*)

1.The proposal is consistent with the policies of the Olmsted County General Land Use Plan.
The proposed changes to the Ordinance are consistent with the goals and policies of the Olmsted County General Land Use Plan. The purpose of the text amendment is to allow the township to issue interim Use Permits and enforce nuisances created by short term rentals.

2.The amendment is in the public interest.
Amending the ordinance provides the township an opportunity to protect their constituents by restricting uses that may negatively impact the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties.

3.The proposed development is timely based on surrounding land uses, proximity to development, and the availability and adequacy of infrastructure.
This finding does not pertain to the specific text amendment.

4. *Proximity to development, and the availability and adequacy of infrastructure.*
This finding does not pertain to the specific text amendment.

5. *The proposal permits land uses within the proposed district that are appropriate on the property and compatible with adjacent uses and the neighborhood.*
This finding does not pertain to the specific text amendment.

6. *The proposal does not result in spot zoning.*
This finding does not pertain to the specific text amendment.

7. *The proposal is consistent with a General Development Plan for the area, if one exists.*
This finding does not pertain to the specific text amendment.

Conclusion:

TCPA staff has considered the proposed changes consistent with County regulations and recommends consideration and adoption of said changes.

This information was taken from the Township Cooperative Planning Association, TCPA packet and is only a proportion of the document. The entire document can be found at TCPA or the Oronoco Township Clerk, Jody Schroeder.

Cannabis Ordinance

Mr. Jered Staton, TCPA, presented this packet to the Board. He stated the Township would be responsible for regulating the ordinance.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adopt the Cannabis Ordinance, Resolution 2025-05, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.

Request: To establish a standalone zoning ordinance regarding cannabis operations in Oronoco Township.

Background:

Minnesota's cannabis law, passed in 2023, established a regulatory framework for the state's new cannabis industry. Minnesota is the 23rd state in the nation to legalize adult-use cannabis.

The Office of Cannabis Management (OCM), a state office created by this new law, is tasked with several duties including providing for the licensing, inspection, and regulation of cannabis and hemp businesses. At the time of this writing, the OCM has not finalized these procedures, nor have state rules been adopted to regulate the emerging cannabis market. The OCM anticipates finalization of these procedures and rules before the end of Q1 2025.

Olmsted County passed Resolution 24-125 on September 17, 2024, amending several sections of Chapter 1400, Olmsted County Zoning Ordinance, to include provisions for cannabis related activities.

Olmsted County adopted Ordinance 24-08 on November 21, 2024, amending and reenacting several sections of chapter 2150, Olmsted County Code of Ordinances, to regulate the use and display and sale of cannabis and cannabis derived products in the county.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 342.13(c), the township has the authority to adopt reasonable restrictions of the time, place, and manner of the operation of a cannabis business provided that such restrictions do not prohibit the establishment or operation of cannabis businesses. The proposed cannabis ordinance exercises this authority and further restricts cannabis related activities allowed by state and county laws.

Oronoco Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 21, 2025, reviewed the proposed ordinance, took public comment, and has recommended approval of the proposed ordinance.

Amendment Findings: (staff recommended findings in italic)

1. The proposal is consistent with the policies of the Olmsted County General Land Use Plan. *The proposed Cannabis Ordinance is consistent with the goals and policies of the Olmsted County General Land Use Plan. The intent of the proposed ordinance is to abide by state and county requirements while adding reasonable restrictions to ensure responsible growth of cannabis related activities.*
2. The amendment is in the public interest. *The proposed ordinance provides the township an opportunity to protect their constituents by restricting uses that may negatively impact the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties.*
3. The proposed development is timely based on surrounding land uses, proximity to development, and the availability and adequacy of infrastructure. *This finding does not pertain to this ordinance.*
4. Proximity to development, and the availability and adequacy of infrastructure. *This finding does not pertain to this ordinance.*
5. The proposal permits land uses within the proposed district that are appropriate on the property and compatible with adjacent uses and the neighborhood. *This finding does not pertain to this ordinance.*
6. The proposal does not result in spot zoning. *This finding does not pertain to this ordinance.*
7. The proposal is consistent with a General Development Plan for the area, if one exists. *This finding does not pertain to this ordinance.*

Conclusion:

TCPA staff considers the proposed ordinance consistent with County regulations and recommends consideration and adoption of said ordinance.

This information was taken from the Township Cooperative Planning Association, TCPA packet and is only a proportion of the document. The entire document can be found at TCPA or the Oronoco Township Clerk, Jody Schroeder.

Melissa Griggs, Oronoco Township Resident

Ms. Melissa Griggs, Oronoco Township resident shared with the Board her family's tragedy with carbon monoxide poisoning. She shared that Oronoco First Responders was the first team to respond. Ms. Melissa Griggs is concerned with the Township Boards decision to end the contract with the Oronoco First Responders. She is concerned with response time from the Pine Island

Fire and First Responders. Ms. Griggs feels that Township residents should have been notified of the change from Oronoco First Responders. She has heard that there are financial concerns, from the Township, in regards to substantial increases from Oronoco First Responders in the last two years. Ms. Griggs would like to opportunity to review any documents provided to the public that lead to Board to their decision.

Supervisor Johanningmeier spoke with City Administrator, Jason Baker and told him of the decision by Oronoco Township to end the contract with the Oronoco First Responders. The contract will end on June 30, 2025. This goes back prior to City Administrator, Jason Baker when Oronoco Township was asked to renegotiate the contract. Oronoco Township did propose an increase that was never ratified in contract. Supervisor Johanningmeier was told that he needed to go through the City of Oronoco for information and financials for the Oronoco First Responders. The request from Oronoco Township, was financial statements, PNL, balance sheet, funding, call times, location of calls and response times. Supervisor Johanningmeier received number of calls going back 5 years. In the last 3 years, the number of calls has significantly increased and demographics really haven't changed, no call log was provided by the City of Oronoco or Oronoco First Responders. The GL and number of calls was the only information that was provided to the Township. There is a significant increase in all expenditures in the last two years, up over 350%. The average total was \$15, 400.00 cost from 2015-2022.

Oronoco Township currently has a contract with Pine Island Fire Department for fire and first response services. Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that he would have liked to continue working with Oronoco First Responders. Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that the services provided have been great but Oronoco Township Board has a fiscal responsible to residents. The financials are not being provided by Oronoco First Responders or the City of Oronoco. Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that he would be open to a working relationship with Oronoco First Responders in the future.

Supervisor Matzke stated that is the Boards responsibility to make sure residents are safe but also be fiscally responsible to the Township. First responder services are already being provided by Pine Island Fire Department with no additional cost to residents.

Director Dan Sundt and Mr. Johann Sonnenberg Oronoco First Responders addressed the board stating that the City of Oronoco did not provide financials to Oronoco Township, maybe Oronoco First Responders should have been helping Administrator Baker provide information to the Township. Mr. Sundt stated that he thinks that the proximity to residents in Oronoco Township definitely helps with response times. He stated Oronoco First Responders is doing all the right things, staffing has never been higher. The Board was presented with packets from Mr. Sonnenberg. Mr. Sundt said they would be willing to answer questions or provide more information if needed.

Supervisor Johanningmeier again said service has been great. He went in the direction he was told to get information. The information requested was not provided to the Township.

Pine Island Fire Responders

David Friese, Fire Chief Brandon Sather and Deputy Chief Sather presented a slide show to the Board.

Pine Island Fire and First Responders covers approximately 141 square miles. They serve 10,300 residents and provide service for 5 Townships; Oronoco, New Haven, Milton, and Roscoe. The call volume is increasing with approximately 450-500 calls annually. There are currently 28 members.

There are 13 vehicles to serve the Townships. The Rural Fire District was established in 1898.

City of Oronoco Mayor Ryland **Eichhorst** asked if the decision had been made to part ways with Oronoco First Responder. Supervisor Matzke said a decision was made at the April 14, 2025, meeting to end the contract with Oronoco First Responders. Mayor Eichhorst said that from a community standpoint there is a lot to be said about the City of Oronoco and Oronoco Township working together.

Road Report

Roberson is almost done hauling rock.

Supervisor Matzke confirmed with Tom Rathmann, Schumacher Excavating, that chloride will be applied around the end of May.

Supervisor Mergen will reach out to Quality Propane, to ensure chloride application does not exceed \$85,000, approved by the Board, April 14, 2025. Chloride will be limited this year to 300' on either side of residents' and 500' at intersections. High traffic roads would be chloride: King's Park, Cedar Beach, Ryan's Bay, 60th Ave, 115th St, 14th Ave NW, and 11th Ave NE and 11th Ave NW.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve \$180,000 to resurface 125th St, second by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

Supervisor Mergen noted of guard rail damage to the south side rails on Ryan's Bay Road. Officer Rinn was at the meeting, he will go to the site and will draft a state accident report. Clerk Schroeder will reach out to MATIT and see if a claim can be submitted for this damage.

Gold Rush Crossings

There was a motion made by Supervisor Matzke to approve payment to Couri & Ruppe for legal expense for Gold Rush Crossings, \$1,100.00, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution 2025-04, Replacing existing polling place combination agreements between the City of Oronoco and Oronoco Township

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adopt Resolution 2025-04, replacing existing polling place combination agreements between the City of Oronoco and Oronoco Township, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.

Minutes Approval

There was a motion by Supervisor Mergen to approve the minutes for Monday, April 14, 2025, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization Meeting Minutes

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting minutes from April 14, 2025, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reorganizational Meeting Minutes

There was a motion made by Supervisor Matzke to approve the Reorganizational meeting minutes, from April 14, 2025, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report-Brandi Lind

The YTD Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances as of May 12, 2025 shows: receipts \$483,602.46, disbursements \$315,059.96 with an ending balance of \$1,044,885.55.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the treasurers report, in written form, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer Lind stated that she is very frustrated with First Farmer's Bank. She has had to provide an ERI number

There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to purchase a 6-month CD from Eagle Rock Bank, at an interest rate of 4.19% and rescind the motion made at the March 10, 2025 meeting to purchase a 6-month CD from First Farmer's Bank, at an interest rate of 4%, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval to pay payroll and claims including electronic transfer

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the payroll and claims, including electronic transfers, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

OTPAC

OTPAC has been working on reviewing the zoning text amendments for articles 4 & 10 which were presented to the Board tonight.

Attorney Ruppe has reviewed the River Overlay Corridor District. These changes will be reviewed by OTPAC at the meeting, Monday, May 19, 2025.

OTPAC will also begin reviewing solar farms at the Monday, May 19th meeting.

Supervisor Mergen spoke with a resident concerned with rubbish pick up times. She suggested an ordinance with pick up times beginning at 7am. Supervisor Mergen contacted Alex Kromminga, Solid Waste Assurance Coordinator for Olmsted County. Mr. Kromminga provided a draft ordinance proposal establishing residential refuse collection standards for the Township of Oronoco. At this time, the Board is not interested in implementing this ordinance. The board suggested the resident contact the garbage company and find out if pick up times can be adjusted.

Clerk Notes

Oronoco Township received reimbursement from the State for the flooding disaster in 2024, reimbursement is 75% of the total claims submitted, \$11,469,71. Total payment is \$8,602.28.

Clerk Schroeder spoke with Matt Lee, sales development representative for TextMyGov. He would like to help provide citizen communication with a two-way texting tool. This would to limit phone calls, send mass text alerts (emergencies, information, reminders, etc.), and send customized automated responses to residents 24/7. This tool has not yet been used in our area. Mr. Lee would like an opportunity to discuss with the board if this is something that they would like to consider. The Board is not interest in looking into this further at this time.

Clerk Schoeder received an email from a citizen inquiring about installing a community book exchange. The Board thinks this is a great idea. Homeowners are free to do this if they choose, it would be at the homeowner's expense and maintenance.

Clerk Schroeder and Treasurer Lind met on Wednesday, April 23rd to make updates to CTAS and set up the new fund for the Pine Island Fire and First Responder District. Clerk Schroeder and Treasurer Lind were also able to correct the \$8,000 fire fund error from 2023!

Clerk Schroeder received a gathering permit application and special event fee check from Denise Frey, 4 Youth LLC. They will be hosting an event the end of July, in Oronoco. The property listed in the application is not in Oronoco Township. Clerk Schroeder will contact Ms. Frey to return check and contact New Haven Township about this event.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.

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Respectfully Submitted:

Clerk Jody Schroeder

Tammy Matzke

Ken Mergen

Joel Johanningmeier