

Oronoco Town Board
Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2025

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Oronoco Town Board held on **Monday, June 9, 2025**, at 5:30pm at the Oronoco Community Center, located at 115 Second Street SW, Oronoco, Minnesota.

Olmsted County Sheriff's Department, Sergeant Rinn was in attendance.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The agenda was accepted with the change to remove Gwen Bourgoyne, Oronoco Township Resident and Oronoco First Responder.

Oronoco First Responders-Joel Johanningmeier

Supervisor Joel Johanningmeier addressed the Board and citizens present. The decision to end contract with the Oronoco First Responders, OFR, was made by a unanimous vote by Oronoco Township Board Supervisors on April 14, 2025. Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that there would be no public hearing or comments at tonight's meeting, June 9, 2025.

The services will not be changing; Mayo Clinic will still be the transporting service for medical calls. Pine Island Fire and First Responders will be secondary for all medical response.

In the fall of 2023, the Township received a letter from then City of Oronoco Administrator, Sunny Bjorklund Schultz. The City's 2023 budget for the OFR was \$31,835, of which the Township contributed \$8,000. For 2024, the OFR was proposing a preliminary budget of \$83,170. There was no supporting documentation as to the increase. Administrator Bjorklund Schultz was let go by the City of Oronoco shortly after the letter was received by Oronoco Township.

Supervisor Johanningmeier began working with Chris Inmann, Oronoco First Responders. Information was provided with call location and who responded to the call. There was no information on call response time. Twenty-five percent of the calls were to five addresses in Oronoco Township. There were roughly 20 calls where Oronoco and Pine Island responded together for fire response. After reviewing information, provided by Mr. Inmann, the Township needed more time to investigate.

Oronoco Township Board proposed a 5% year over year increase, up to \$14,300 for 2024. Oronoco Township approved the wording change in the 2012 agreement. The funds were budgeted at the annual meeting in March of 2024.

Oronoco City Administer Jason Baker started working with Supervisor Johanningmeier. Supervisor Johanningmeier and Administrator Baker met and the 2024 proposed increase was presented to the City of Oronoco. The 2024, proposed increase was not accepted by the City of

Oronoco. Administrator Baker stated that he would begin working on a new agreement for Oronoco Township to consider. Supervisor Johanningmeier requested financial statements, PNL, balance sheet, funding, call times, location of calls and response times and other entities responding from Administrator Baker. To date, Oronoco Township has not received all of requested information.

Oronoco Township did approach Pine Island Fire Department to ask if they would be interested in providing first responder services, these services would fall within the existing agreement.

In the fall of 2024, Oronoco Township was presented with a new Oronoco First Responders agreement from Administrator Baker. There was a significant cost increase, with unsustainable yearly increases. The agreement contained wording for Oronoco Fire Department, which was not in consideration for Oronoco Township. There was still no information provided by Oronoco First Responders.

The Township would be honoring the 2012 contract of \$8,000, for the start of 2025. The City of Oronoco wanted the new agreement signed but they were not cancelling the existing 2012 contract.

There was no new information until March 2025, City Administrator Baker shared some very basic call logs, going back 5 years. In the last 3 years, the number of Township calls has significantly increased and demographics really haven't changed. The general ledgers of expenditures were provided. There was significant increase in all expenditures in the last two years. The average total cost was \$15,400.00, from 2015-2022.

At the April 14, 2025, the decision was made to move all secondary first responder services to Pine Island Fire Department. This change will begin July 1, 2025.

Oronoco First Responders and Oronoco Fire Department created a smear campaign prior to the City of Oronoco receiving notice of cancellation. There was misleading information provided on social media and news media.

A petition, Reinstate Emergency Services for Oronoco Township, has not been received by the Township Board. Oronoco Township has consulted with legal counsel on this; it can be reviewed but no action is required.

Oronoco Township is not cutting any medical services to the Township, the secondary provider responding to all first responder calls will be Pine Island Fire and First Responders. There was a unanimous vote by Oronoco Township Supervisors, April 14, 2025 to go with the entity that showed more professionalism, transparency in communication, financial stability and planning. On July 1, 2025, secondary medical services on all first responder calls will be provided by Pine Island Fire and First Responders.

Supervisor Matzke read a statement issued by the City of Oronoco and Oronoco Township. This statement will be posted on the Oronoco Township website as well as the Oronoco Township Facebook page.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to approve and post, to the Oronoco Township website and Facebook site, the statement issued by the City of Oronoco and Oronoco Township, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.

Guardrail damage, Ryan's Bay Road, May 11, 2025

Supervisor Mergen received quotes for repairs to the guardrails on Ryan's Bay Road, including 7 posts. The quote from H&R Construction was \$5,200. The quote from Madison Excavating and Construction was \$2,925.

Clerk Schroeder contacted MATIT Insurance, the guardrail damage would not be covered by insurance.

Supervisor Matzke will post of Facebook and Treasurer Lind will post to the website that repairs will be coming in the next few weeks.

There was a motion made by Supervisor Matzke to approve repairs to the guardrails of Ryan's Bay Road, to be completed by Madison Excavating and Construction, for the amount of \$2,925, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.

Road Report

Schumacher stated that blading has been done and all chloride is down.

Schumacher has been working on clearing trees on Sunset Bay Road and will begin ditch work next week.

Road Closed Signs on 11th Ave NW and Road Closed to Through Traffic on 85th St

Supervisor Matzke stated that the road closed signs are helping.

Russel Young, 11th Ave NW Resident, stated that the road signs have already been moved.

There is still a good gap between the signs for people to drive through. There have been 500-600 cars per day using 11th Ave NW. Mr. Young is wondering if law enforcement could enforce signs.

Supervisor Matzke stated that a traffic study was completed in April. A comparison will be done and taken to MNDOT. Supervisor Matzke will see if the preferred route on Google can be changed. The preferred route is currently 11th Ave NW with the current closures for the roundabout.

Supervisor Mergen stated that MNDOT has been out to blade 11th Ave NW once, they will continue blading monthly until the roundabout project is complete.

Supervisor Mergen stated that there has been law enforcement present.

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125th St

We are waiting for the contract from Rochester Sand and Gravel. They will begin work on 125th after they are finished with County Roads 118th and 114th, near 125th St. The contract will be signed before work begins, approved up to \$180,000 for 125th St.

Kruisle Ln NW and Fitzpatrick Ln NW

Rochester Sand and Gravel will get Kruisle Ln NW and Fitzpatrick Ln NW on their schedule. This will be done the same time as Frederick's Dr, also not yet scheduled. There will be more discussion about this at the July 14, 2025 meeting.

LTAP Funding, Widseth Engineering

Supervisor Mergen got a call from Gail Leverson, Widseth Engineering, regarding grant for LTAP. The bonding bill has not been approved yet. Once approved, the Township will need to submit documents by August or September. Ms. Leverson will get a current estimates and engineering plans for the Townships three biggest priorities, dead end roads.

Supervisor Johanningmeier asked Scott Schumacher if he had noticed any spots that contained noxious weeds. Schumacher will ask Tom Rathman, blade maintenance, if there are areas of concern. Supervisor Johanningmeier will begin weed inspections next week.

Rubbish Removal

Supervisor Mergen stated there were two claims for rubbish removal this month. One, a dead deer, was picked up by Rochester Sweeping, and the other, a mattress, was picked up by Supervisor Mergen and taken to Olmsted County Recycling Center.

Postier's Point Dr NW

There is concern from citizen Ray Roman over heavy construction traffic and home building on Postier's Point Dr NW. Mr. Roman is inquiring about building permits. There have been 50-60 trucks traveling to the construction site per day. Supervisor Matzke will contact TCPA to see if a building permit has been issued. Supervisor Mergen will reach out to Olmsted County Appraiser Josh Denisen for assessments.

Minutes Approval

There was a motion by Supervisor Mergen to approve the minutes for Monday, May 12, 2025, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report-Brandi Lind

The YTD Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances as of June 9, 2025 shows: receipts \$486,503.74, disbursements \$455,242.78 with an ending balance of \$907,604.01.

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

Approval to pay payroll and claims including electronic transfer

There was an invoice included in the Supervisor packets for Gopher Septic. This was included in error, the invoice was not paid by Oronoco Township. The invoice was for the City of Oronoco.

The snow and ice invoice from Jason Ottman was considerably less than has been paid to the City of Oronoco in past years. Supervisor Mergen will keep record of snow/ice events next year to help track expenditures for winter road maintenance.

The invoice from Quality Propane, for chloride, was less than the total approved amount. The total invoice was \$72,619.94. The Board approved up to \$85,000.

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

OTPAC

Supervisor Matzke stated that OTPAC was disappointed to learn that Olmsted County would not be giving back planning and zoning funds, to Townships, that have been kept by Olmsted County. This will cause an increase in all zoning fees of around 20%.

As the building moratorium expires in August, it is important to watch for developments with private waste water treatment facilities. All homes should have private septic systems so they do not need to be managed by the Township.

Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that the road right of way for new construction along County Roads is changing, the easements are changing. This will be something for OTPAC to consider moving forward.

Clerk Notes

The Board reviewed the 2024 population and household estimate and agrees with the numbers.

Clerk Schroeder received a citizen email for dogs at large in Crescent Ridge Rd NW. Citizens are encouraged to contact Olmsted County; there is currently no County ordinance for dogs at

large. MN State Statute 347, was also cited in the return email from Clerk Schroeder. Citizens would need to take action in civil court.

Board Member Comments

Treasurer Lind has been in contact with Ms. Kay Kuster, Olmsted County, to see if the rural broadband fund can be removed. Ms. Kuster stated that she needed to check with the state. The original resolution for the broadband project would need to be submitted. Clerk Schroeder was not able to find the resolution and will reach out to Deputy Clerk Shonyo to ask if a resolution was signed.

The MAT District meeting will be held on August 5, 2025, in Wykoff.

The MAT Annual meeting will be December 12-15, 2025, in St. Cloud.

The OCTOA dates are as follows: July 24, 2025, New Haven and High Forest Townships, September 25, 2025, Salem and Farmington Townships, November 25, 2025, Pleasant Grove and Haverhill Townships, January 22, 2026, Eyota and Quincy Township.

Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments, ROCOG

ROCOG is reviewing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Olmsted County Bridge Report

The bridge report for Olmsted County and Townships was presented at the OCTOA meeting. If the bridges inspection falls below 60, the County looks at repair or replacement. Oronoco Township has a culvert on 85th St and bridge on 11th Ave NE.

Oronoco Auto Parts

Supervisor Matzke attended a court hearing for Oronoco Auto Parts. Braun Intertec is doing soil boring. They have found high levels of benzene and butadiene in the soils; this comes from tires and oil. Braun Intertec is working with the MPCA. Supervisor Matzke will reach out to City Administrator Baker to discuss this, as there are residential properties near this site.

Excel Energy Transmission Line Project

The plan for Excel Energy Transmission Line Project is still to use the alternative route. Citizen Lynn Koenig stated that they are seeking approval for 2 lines, the second line would go on the existing pole. The two lines each have 345KW of electricity.

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There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Clerk Jody Schroeder

Tammy Matzke

Ken Mergen

Joel Johanningmeier