

BELLEVUE TOWNSHIP BOARD MINUTES

SUPERVISOR: Don Chase
CLERK: Lisa Lawitzke
TREASURER: Vickie Madry

TRUSTEE: Kyle Lang
TRUSTEE: Don Malinowski

DATE: December 16, 2025

Bellevue Township Board Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Don Chase.

Present: Don Chase, Vickie Madry, Kyle Lang, Don Malinowski, Lisa Lawitzke

Guests: Jim Mott (County Commissioner)

Public Comment: None

County Commissioner: Mott reports that it may be possible to use the grant money awarded for doing an update to the Master Plan, for training members of the new Joint Townships Planning Commission. He has met with Jason Ball from the consulting company hired to work on the Master Plan update, as well as Justin Vedder (Chester Twp. Supervisor) and Doug Thering (Walton Twp. Supervisor). Mott will be asking the County Board of Commissioners to extend support of the County Planning and Zoning Dept. through June 30, 2026, to give the townships as much time as possible to complete the project of getting the Joint Commission up and running. The \$8.4 million cut from the county budget was all cuts to support for outside agencies. The budget as it stands now may be stable enough to get through the next 5 years. Both EATRAN and the EC Road Commission will be putting millage requests on the November 2026 ballot. EATRAN's will be a continuation of the current millage. The Road Commission's will be a renewal of the 10-year road maintenance millage that will expire in 2027. The county jail millage and rehab center millage may both be ending in 2026, too. Among the items cut from the state budget by the House was the funding for the Fire Training Center that was planned. It was going to be available for use by all area fire departments and now will not happen unless the funding gets restored. The Bank Intercounty Drain Project grant funding was also cut by the state House. Unfortunately, funds have already been spent by the Drain Commission on land purchases. The project may continue, but it will need to be re-bonded due to the change in funding.

Minutes: **A motion was made by Chase, seconded by Malinowski, to approve the minutes of the Nov. 18, 2025, board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

Treasurer: The list of bank account balances for Nov. was missed due to the Winter Tax season getting underway. Madry reported that she will be doing training for use of the new credit card payment system and will soon be able to start taking tax payments by credit card.

Expenses: December Bills to be Paid report was submitted. **A motion was made by Chase, seconded by Malinowski, to approve the expenses for December 2025. The motion passed unanimously.**

Assessor: The Property Transfers report for October and November was presented. There were 14 transfers over the 2-month period.

Library: Lawitzke reported that she and the library director will be trained on the new Atrium system next Monday and Tuesday. The new system has a ‘reports module’ that should be able to provide more information on library patron visits.

Fire: Chase reported that there are still issues holding up the start of the new fire barn. They are waiting on the property survey. Lang reported that ground may be broken on the project by mid-2026 if everything is approved. We should receive the invoice for 2026 Fire Board payments soon. Our portion will be around \$106K for the year.

New Business: Chase reported that he has spoken with the current Board of Review members about remaining on the board and scheduling the biannual training due in 2026 before the first BOR meeting in March. Nyle VanSickle has agreed to stay for one more year. His son, Nick, may be interested in becoming a board member after that. Earl Carpenter will stay. Dwayne Bishop is willing to stay for another year. And Frank Brownell will stay. Chase has spoken with Tracy Shick about being a BOR member and she’ll think about it. **A motion was made by Chase, seconded by Lawitzke, to appoint Nyle VanSickle, Earl Carpenter, Dwayne Bishop, and Frank Brownell as regular members of the Bellevue Twp. Board of Review for 2026, and to appoint Nick VanSickle and Tracy Shick as alternates if they agree. The motion passed unanimously.**

Lawitzke presented the list of proposed regular board meeting dates for 2026. Meetings will continue to be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. **A motion was made by Madry, seconded by Chase, to approve the regular meeting dates for 2026. The motion passed unanimously.**

Supervisor/ Cemetery: Chase reported that 26 burials have been done in this calendar year so far, about half full burials and half cremains burials. He asked the Board to consider whether we wish to continue funding for the replacement of all flags on veteran graves. This has been done in the past, but the cost is up to about \$1500 each year. We are only obligated to place a flag on the grave when a veteran is first buried. He also asked us to consider whether we wish to continue funding the repair of old foundations. We are obligated to repair any foundations placed by the township from 2016 onward. Old foundations have been being repaired to keep the cemeteries tidy and attractive, and to prevent possible injuries to visitors from broken or collapsing monuments. But the cost has increased since the repair project was first undertaken by Chase, to approximately \$3000 per year. The consensus was to pause flag replacement for a year and see if there’s any response from the public. Previously purchased flags will be used for the initial flag placement on new veteran burials in the meantime. Further discussion about repair of old foundations is tabled until the January meeting.

Old Business: 2026-27 Budget planning—Chase asked if any Board members wished to receive a raise in the 2026-27 fiscal year. All declined. Lawitzke pointed out that the MI minimum wage is being raised to \$13.73 per hour. She requested that, to remain in compliance with state law, the pay rate for Election Inspectors be raised to \$14/hr., and for Election Chairs and the Clerk and Treasurer Deputies be raised to \$15/hr. **A motion was made by Malinowski, seconded by Chase, to increase**

the pay rate for Election Inspectors to \$14/hr., and for Election Chairs and the Clerk and Treasurer Deputies to \$15/hr. as of Jan. 1, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Further discussion included changes expected to revenue sharing income, the need to account for costs related to the Joint Planning Commission, the fact that Bruner is training his son to potentially take over as assessor when he retires, and the need to increase the township operating millage from the current 0.79 mill back up to 1 mill at the next opportunity. Lawitzke requested that she be appointed to the new Joint Planning Commission when the time comes, due to her continuing work attending meetings on the matter as well as her experience on the county planning commission. She may end up being the most experienced person on the new joint commission. The question was raised about how to fund ongoing Fire Board/Dept. operations for the long term. If we need to do a millage, we'll need full backing from all Board members, to present a united front to residents on the matter. The consensus was that cutting funding for the library would be preferable to raising taxes as a way to provide increased fire dept. funding. For now, we'll hold off of doing a fire millage this coming fiscal year (2026-27), try to collect more data on library usage by the Feb. meeting, and then consider the steps necessary to put a fire millage on a ballot in 2027. **A motion was made by Chase, seconded by Malinowski, to pay any additional funds required toward the proposed Bellevue Fire Dept. building out of money set aside in savings for future use. The amount of funding required is anticipated to be approximately \$300K out of the \$400K estimated to be our portion of the total cost of the project, with the first \$100K already paid to the Fire Board from the ARPA funds obligated to that purpose, A roll call vote was held with Malinowski, Madry, Lang, Lawitzke, and Chase voting Aye. There were no Nay votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

Clerk/Correspondence: None

Treasurer: None

Public comment: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Lawitzke
Bellevue Township Clerk