

**Minutes of the October 16, 2025 Meeting of the
Sawyer County Board of Supervisors
Sawyer County Courthouse/Virtual**



Voting Committee Members Present (X)	Roll Call	Dis- tric- t	Wards
☒ Steve Kariainen	01	T Lenroot W-1, T Hayward W-7, C Hayward W-5	
☒ Kay Wilson	02	T Lenroot W-2, T Round Lake W-1	
☒ Tweed Shuman- Virtual	03	T Hayward W-1 & 2	
☒ Stacey Hessel	04	T Hayward W-3 & 4	
☒ Randy Neumann	05	T Hayward W-5 & 6	
☒ Marc D. Helwig	06	C Hayward W-1 & 2	
☒ Thomas W. Duffy	07	C Hayward W-3 & 4	
☒ Marshal Savitski	08	T Bass Lake W-1 & 2	
☒ Jim Evans	09	T Bass Lake W-3 & 4	
☒ Chuck Van Etten	10	T Sand Lake, T Edgewater W-1	
☒ Jeff Hoehne	11	T Edgewater W-2, T Bass Lake W-5, T Meteor, T Couderay, V Couderay	
☒ John Righeimer	12	T Spider Lake, T Round Lake W-2, T Winter W-1	
☒ Ron Kinsley	13	T Hunter, T Radisson W-1, T-Ojibwa W-1, V Radisson	
☒ Ron Buckholtz	14	T Radisson W-2, T Ojibwa W-2, T Weirgor, V Exeland, T Meadowbrook	
☒ Dale Magnuson	15	T Winter W-2, T Draper, V Winter	

Also present: Mike Markgren, Liz Klein, Jay Kozlowski, Doug Mrotek, Rhandi Ehn, 24+ citizens

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance— Chair Kinsley called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call was taken; quorum was met.

Certification of Compliance with the open meeting law was met.

Meeting Agenda – Set

2026 Administrator's Budget Presentation—

Mr. Markgren opened the Public Hearing on the 2026 Budget with a presentation that included highlights, the Levy Calculation, an overview and detailed breakdown of revenue and expense projections, wages and FTE positions, a list of outside partner organizations that receive county funding, CIP and departmental requests, the debt repayment schedule, and a comparison of Sawyer County tax rate history to surrounding counties.

The opening dollar amount of requested funds was \$3.2M before departmental adjustments were made to arrive at a \$382,985 fund balance draw.

Recommended funding to outside organizations was allocated at or above the 2024 Budget. The Weiss Library and Senior Resource Center are requesting greater amounts than proposed; Mr. Markgren reminded the board that courthouse departments were asked to make cuts. The proposed 2026 County Fee Schedule was reviewed. Mr. Markgren turned the 2026 Budget over to the County Board.

Budget Hearing Public Comments—

Ann Larson, Weiss Library

Donna Knuckey- Winter Library
Joey Johnson- Senior Resource Center
Kathy McCoy- Weiss Library
Barbara Kelly- Weiss Library
Eileen Timmerman- Weiss Library
Tish Keahna- Weiss Library
Danielle Wheeler- Weiss Library
Mindy Simons- Hayward Lakes Visitor and Convention Bureau
Jeni Wergeland- Winter Library
Jan Snider- Sawyer County Agricultural Fair
Lynn Fitch- Senior Resource Center

Public Comments (Regular Business) – None

Minutes from the previous meeting dated: September 18, 2025

Motion to approve by: Mr. Evans Second by: Mr. Duffy
Motion carried without negative vote.

Strategic Plan Update--

Mr. Markgren updated the board on Strategic Plan steps discussed at the Department Head meeting; staff will select two areas of focus and set measurable goals and strategies by Nov. 17. The completed plan will be presented to the board by January for next steps.

Zoning Committee –

Mr. Buckholtz reported that Zoning Committee approved 3 CUPs and reviewed 1 preliminary plat. The next meeting will review town input on the percentage of park models, citations, and an amendment of the MDH committee.

Public Works Committee—

Mr. Van Etten reported that the committee reviewed Maintenance, Airport and Highway projects.
Mr. Kinsley stated that the request to open all roads to ATV/UTV traffic is tabled until he can meet with the Tribal Governing Board, but will be revisited on a future agenda.

Public Safety Committee —

Mr. Buckholtz reviewed the October Jail, Code Enforcement, Emergency Management, Dispatch, Child Support, and Ambulance reports for the board. The Clerk of Courts has requested an increase in juror per diems for the next agenda.

Land, Water and Forest Resources Committee--

Mr. Kariainen reviewed the October Register of Deeds, Land Records, Surveyor, Forestry, Zoning Conservation and Trails reports. The committee approved the sale of an unsold in rem parcel at a lower price and the 2026 USDA deer donation program, and deadlines, prices, and a budget for the Wildlife Damage to Crops program.
There will be an upcoming public hearing on the Land and Water Resource Management Plan.

HHS Report—

Ms. Wilson reported on the October meeting of HHS. Board member Carol Pearson has retired. ADRC and Behavioral Health reports were reviewed, Children, Youth and Family Services, Economic Support, and Public Health updates were provided; pertussis and measles continue to be a concern. An electronics collection is planned again for spring.

Resolution 2025- Authorizing the Sawyer County 85.21 DOT Grant Application for the Senior Resource Center was approved on a motion by: Mr. Righimer Second by: Ms. Wilson
Motion carried without negative vote.

Finance Report -

Mr. Righeimer provided an update on county finances and department budgets.

Establish County Board Salary for 2026-2027 Term—

Motion to keep the 2026-2027 County Board of Supervisors Salary per diems as is by: Ms. Hessel

Second by: Mr. Evans

Motion carried without negative vote.

Economic Development and UW Extension Committee—

Mr. Righeimer gave the Economic Development and UW Extension Committee report.

Resolution 2025- Supporting the Forestry Revitalization Act--

Mr. Markgren introduced Resolution 2025- Supporting the Forestry Revitalization Act, which would create 350 timber industry jobs and bring \$210M in tax incentives and bonding to Sawyer County and the NW region.

Resolution 2025- Supporting the Forestry Revitalization Act was approved on a motion by: Mr. Buckholtz

Second by: Mr. Kariainen

Motion carried without negative vote.

Mr. Markgren stated that the Act has to go before a joint legislature meeting, committee meetings and Governor Evers for approval, hopefully by the end of 2025.

County Administrator Report—

Mr. Kinsley reported that the Administration Committee met and heard reports from the County Clerk, Veterans, IT, and HR departments, and the County Administrator. The Veterans Tribute environmental study will be moving forward with Phase 2 soil bores at the site.

Mr. Markgren provided a written report and gave updates on the Department Head meeting, the Strategic Plan, and work on the 2026 Budget. He spoke in Madison in support of the Forestry Revitalization Act and attended the Economic Development mixer. The transfer of ownership to Hayward Aviation has occurred; no update from the FAA on the Master Plan. He is working on contracts for service for outside entities in conjunction with the budget. He attended the WCA conference and met Senator Mary Felzkowski who spoke about the Forestry Revitalization Act and issues in northern Wisconsin. There are weekly meetings with GenComm on the communications project; still waiting to hear on the WOJB tower lease. A tower in Edgewater will provide a good reliable option in that location.

CJCC met. Mr. Markgren reviewed the Jail Report, updated the board on an MOU with LCO for the Medically Assisted Therapy program, Justice Point submitted the Deflection and TAD grants, Youth Justice reported that there are 15 kids in the program with 100% attendance this year. Tall Cop will give a presentation on November 12. The 2026 Opioid Budget was presented, a \$100,000 investment in the community.

Board Appointed Committee Updates—

Mr. Kariainen provided a printed CEP Report; Indianhead Community Action Agency is working on their needs assessment and budget.

Mr. Buckholtz reported on Namekagon Transit ridership and buses to be auctioned; Cranberry Fest rides brought in more money than 2024; staff attended a transportation conference.

Mr. Kinsley attended a NWRPC meeting in Superior on potential federal Block Grant funding cuts.

Ms. Wilson asked the board to approve the requested amount of County funding for the Weiss Library.

Mr. Savitski reported on the Senior Resource Center board resignations, \$21M in cuts to Meals on Wheels, and challenges to fundraising with the loss of board members. Ms. Hessel clarified that the SRC is a non-profit organization.

Correspondence, Reports from Conferences and Meetings- None

Future Agenda Items- 2026 Budget

Adjourned at 7:58 pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 2025 Time: 6:30pm Location Board Room

Minutes recorded by Liz Klein, County Clerk