

**NORMAL TOWNSHIP
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, January 22, 2026, AT 6:00 PM
304 MULBERRY, NORMAL, IL**

1. **Call to Order** – The Board meeting was called to order by Supervisor Able at 6:01pm.
2. **Land Acknowledgement** – The Land Acknowledgement was read by Trustee Hile-Broad
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. **Roll Call**

Trustee Dylan Hile-Broad	Present
Trustee Tanner Starr	Present
Trustee Natasha Syed	Present
Trustee Jodie Slothower	Present
Supervisor Krystle Able	Present

Additional Elected Township Officials Present

Dayna Schickedanz	Clerk
Arin Rader	Road Commissioner
Kent DePew	Assessor

Others Present

Eliccsha Sanders	ARC Member Services Manager (via Zoom)
Molly Camper	ARC Director of Programming
Sammi Scott	ARC Communications Coordinator
Lori Kerns	ARC Director (via Zoom)

5. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.
6. **Consent Agenda**
 - A. **Approval of October 23rd regular meeting minutes**
 - B. **Approval of November 20th regular Meeting Minutes**
 - C. **Approval of December 18, 2025 regular meeting minutes**
 - D. **Approval of December 22nd Truth in Taxation Hearing minutes**
 - E. **Approval of January 6th Special Meeting with Managers meeting minutes**
 - F. **Approval of General Town Expenditures**

G. Approval of Road and Bridge Expenditures

H. Approval of Senior Fund Expenditures

I. Approval of General Assistance Expenditures

Motion to Approve All Presented Items, with the exception of 6c and 6e due to Microsoft outage: Tanner

Second: Dylan

Discussion: Trustee Slothower asked questions regarding the amounts presented, which show a variance because taxpayer dollars are not applied until the audit has been processed. The township is still waiting on the audit service to complete their responsibilities.

Aye: All

Nay: None

7. Highway Commissioner Report –

There was a Highway Commissioner meeting at the McLean County Highway meeting was held at the McLean County Highway Department to discuss annual procedures, including the implementation of sheriff's patrols. From January 15th to April 15th, seasonal weight limits are posted on township roads to prevent damage during freeze-thaw cycles. Although current ground moisture levels suggest minimal freezing and thawing this year, the patrols will proceed as usual. Sheriff's patrols focus on high-traffic areas, particularly Raab Road in Normal Township, issuing driving citations to discourage repeat violations. This program has proven effective over several years, with costs typically ranging from \$600 to \$1,200. Participation has been confirmed for the current year.

Additional topics included project bids for road maintenance, specifically tar and chip (seal coat) applications scheduled for March. Preparations are also underway for an upcoming winter storm, with salt procurement coordinated through the county to secure favorable pricing. Salt stocks have been replenished in anticipation of the event.

8. Assessor Report

All 2025 board review actions have been finalized and balanced with the candidate. The final Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) for 2025 is \$1,476,280,194, reflecting an increase of \$111,370,788 over the previous year. Fieldwork is underway for new construction completions as of January 1, 2026, as well as for value changes related to additions, garages, and finished basements. Updated residential photographs are being taken, with over 12,000 new images to replace those from 2019 in preparation for the quadrennial review

in 2027. Detailed history reports for mobile homes are being compiled and will be submitted to the county clerk's office by February 6. The Assessor's office is responsible for providing ownership and specifications for the three mobile home parks in the township, as required for tax billing. There is an update regarding senior freeze exemptions: the income threshold has increased, and further details will be distributed electronically and posted on the website. These changes will affect tax bills issued next year. In 2025, 79 new homes were completed, and 46 homes began construction and were valued accordingly. The Assessor's office budget will be submitted next week, with efforts underway to streamline the submission process. A review of the December 2025 personnel manual revealed concerns about compliance with township ordinances GT-04-01 and RD-04-01, specifically the omission of Article 2 from the ethics ordinance. Clarification is needed regarding which version of the personnel manual should be used to ensure compliance.

The only updates to the personnel handbook were the policies passed by the board in December, which have been incorporated into the April edition. The omission of Article 2 from the ethics ordinance appears to be an unintended result of reformatting, rather than a deliberate deletion. A summary of changes was not prepared, so a thorough review is needed to confirm what was added or removed. Minor changes were also made, but the most significant concern is ensuring compliance with all ordinances. The board did not vote to remove any content, so all provisions should remain, though formatting issues may have affected the document's structure. The formatting will be reviewed and corrected promptly to ensure the handbook is accurate and compliant.

9. Clerk Report

Nothing to report

10. General Assistance Case Manager Report

In December, the Township received 73 applications for assistance. Of these, 17 General Assistance (GA) clients were approved, with most grants utilized for rent or groceries. Emergency Assistance (EA) was provided to 10 clients, primarily for back-due rent, and one client received support for a past-due water bill. During the third quarter (October–December), total assistance expenditures decreased by \$18,588.47 compared to previous years. This reduction is attributed to the implementation of case management, which has resulted in fewer clients served. Clients are referred to external resources such as LIHEAP for utility assistance. Applicants must apply to LIHEAP for electricity and gas heat support before

seeking township aid; the township acts as the payer of last resort. LIHEAP has been highly effective, with no recent denials, and continues to assist clients with their utility needs. General Assistance grants may also be used for utilities, including water, electricity, and gas. While LIHEAP often covers past balances, some clients require ongoing support for regular monthly bills. The hygiene pantry remains in high demand and is currently low on supplies. Efforts are underway to solicit additional donations through community outreach and social media.

11. Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee recently held its first full meeting, reviewing income statements and the current budget. Progress on next year's budget is pending completion of the audit. The committee recommended implementing monthly internal budgets to improve organization and ensure consistent adherence to budgetary limits. Committee members Tori and Chris Lobdell have volunteered to assist with this initiative. Current fund balances are healthy, though a few line items may require adjustment before year-end. For example, the Senior Citizen Fund's 2025–2026 budget does not allocate funds for building supplies and maintenance; the committee discussed transferring up to 10% from other line items to address this need. Further recommendations will be presented at the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, February 17th at 6 PM. Completion of the audit is delayed due to an unresolved \$50,000 fund transfer between the Senior Fund and General Town Fund in March of the previous year, which lacks documented board approval. If this transfer was not properly authorized, it will be noted as non-compliance in the audit. However, no fines are anticipated. The committee determined that, despite minor adjustments needed, no budget amendment is required at this time, as all funds remain within budget. The annual budget must be finalized by the end of June, made available to the public within 10 days of approval, and submitted to the county clerk within 30 days of adoption.

12. Policy and Procedure Working Group Report

The working group has been inactive since mid-November but will resume activities on February 3rd. Members should expect an email with the agenda in advance. During the hiatus, notes have been compiled regarding various policies discussed previously. Please reach out with any questions.

13. ARC Management Report

At the end of December, the Living Memorial Fund Board reported two gifts equaling \$1,435. This brings the 2025 total to over \$80,000. Program participation remains strong, with most offerings achieving 50% or higher attendance. Special events and classes, such as glass art and Smart Meals, continue to be popular, often resulting in waitlists. Free programming consistently attracts higher attendance, and new evening programs between 4 and 7 PM are being introduced to better serve members who work during the day. Instructor compensation is based on registration numbers, ensuring cost-effectiveness. The newsletter publication costs are covered by ad sales through LPI; if ad space is fully utilized, the township receives a percentage of sales. The contract renews every three years. Member Services recently held its first management session, with plans to present new initiatives to the board. Silver Sneakers payments are auto deposited into the Senior Fund, and a new insurance program is pending, which will expand fitness benefits for members without Medicare. Board members are encouraged to coordinate attendance at management meetings to comply with the Open Meetings Act. Meeting schedules have been distributed via email.

14. Supervisor's Report

The Supervisor's report contains several informational updates. Following this report, the agenda will be suspended for an executive session with a special guest at 7:15 PM. **Audit Update:** A new auditor is reviewing previous audits and will provide a price and letter of engagement for approval at the February board meeting. The current auditors are expected to complete the audit by the end of the month. Supplemental materials regarding government audit sustainability are included for board review. **Office Management:** The township is considering returning to a full-time office manager model for bill payment, bookkeeping, and case management. Tori is shadowing Dawn to assess interest in the role, and her performance and training are progressing well. If Tori accepts, the board will vote on her salary. **Employee Reviews and Compensation:** The board plans to transition from blanket 3% raises to merit-based raises, with formal reviews conducted in executive session at the start of the fiscal year. Elicsha will implement monthly goal setting and reviews for hourly employees, and the board will review Elicsha's performance in March to determine the permanent ARC operations director position. **Capital Improvements:** Recent walkthroughs identified needs for interior painting, wall repair, carpet replacement, and roof resealing. Bids are being solicited for roof work. Security cameras have been restored, and a new time clock and purchase order approval process will launch

by February 1st. The website is scheduled for launch at the February board meeting, pending branding approval. **Silent Auction:** The silent auction begins on Valentine's Day. Additional donations are welcome, with a deadline of January 31st for item submission. The community room is generating revenue and receiving positive feedback. **Budget Preparation:** The annual meeting is April 14th. March 1st is the deadline for agenda item submissions by township electors, and March 30th is the deadline for agenda adoption and public notice posting. Notices will be posted at the ARC, post office, and library, and published in the local newspaper. **Statements of Economic Interests:** These are due by May, with the filing window opening February 1st. Elected officials and managers must complete the statement. Additional information and links are available in the packet. **Professional Development:** Several training and development opportunities are available in February and March. Registration fees are covered by the township; interested board members should contact the supervisor for enrollment. **Legislative Guidance:** A PowerPoint presentation outlining legal guidelines for elected officials regarding referenda and public statements was included in the Board packet. Board members are encouraged to review and direct questions to the supervisor or the presenting attorney. **Scholarship Announcement:** The Township Officials of Illinois scholarship program is open, with \$403,500 awarded to 236 students since 1989. Board members are encouraged to promote the opportunity to local high school students. **Election Site:** The township building will serve as a polling site for the November general election. Staff are reminded not to schedule the community room for other events on election day to maintain voting integrity.

15. Executive Session for discussion related to personnel

Motion to Enter Executive Session: Tanner

Second: Dylan

Discussion: None

Aye: All

Nay: None

Motion to Exit Executive Session: Tanner

Second: Jodie

Discussion: None

Aye: All

Nay: None

Continued Discussion about the Supervisor's Report. The board recognizes Tori's exceptional performance in elevating the General Assistance (GA) program and expresses confidence in her ability to take on additional responsibilities. To ensure sustainability and prevent burnout, the board will monitor workload and consider restructuring roles if necessary. Should the need arise, adjustments to Adam's and Tori's positions may be discussed to maintain progress and support for both staff members. The employee handbook allows for updates to job descriptions at any time, and the board is responsible for creating new positions as needed. Recent policy changes, such as allowing utility bills to be paid as received and subsequently audited, are expected to streamline bookkeeping and reduce workload. With the reduction in GA clients, the current structure is manageable; however, if client numbers increase, the board will revisit staffing arrangements. Tori is actively pursuing professional development and is enthusiastic about implementing new processes, including adopting reporting styles from previous staff. The board remains committed to supporting both Tori and Adam and will add staffing discussions to the agenda as needed. Additional updates include the appointment of Clifton Larson Allen, a local and nationally recognized auditing firm, to conduct the township audit. Their familiarity with larger government entities and local presence is expected to benefit the township. Technical issues with security cameras have been resolved, and ongoing professional development opportunities are available through Township Officials of Illinois.

16. Old Business

a. Branding Update – Kristi Starr

Kristi presented four logo mock-ups, each available in two color palettes: navy with green accents and navy with blue accents. The deliverables will include the finalized logo file, an illustrative asset in both color and grayscale, simple typography guidelines, color palette information, customizable business card templates for employees and board members, and a letterhead. Feedback from the board highlighted a preference for the green palette, particularly the third logo design featuring the cupola element. While the fourth design was appreciated for its detail, it was considered too busy for official materials but suitable for special items like t-shirts. Suggestions included experimenting with upper and lowercase typography for improved readability and possibly exploring alternative accent colors to further distinguish township branding from the Town of Normal. Kristi will revise the third logo mock-up to incorporate upper and lowercase options and additional color palettes, and provide printed

samples for review at the next meeting. Any further requests for deliverables or adjustments are welcome.

17. New Business

a. Approve new scheduling policy for MSR's

A new scheduling policy for MSR's was developed by Elicssha and Lori and presented to the board for approval. The policy eliminates Saturday shift differential pay and introduces a rotating schedule, ensuring all MSR's work both morning and closing shifts, as well as rotating Saturday shifts—typically one Saturday every six weeks. If an MSR is unable to work a scheduled Saturday, they are required to arrange for substitute coverage, and cannot consistently avoid Saturday shifts by trading with others. For weekday shifts, finding a substitute is encouraged but not mandatory. The MSR schedule will be posted in the management area for visibility and accessibility. The policy was designed to ensure fairness and equal distribution of responsibilities among staff. After discussion, the board unanimously approved the new MSR scheduling policy by roll call vote, expressing appreciation to Elicssha and Lori for their efforts in creating a balanced and effective approach.

Motion to pass new scheduling policy for MSR's: Tanner

Second: Natasha

Aye: Tanner, Dylan, Natasha, Jodie , Krystle

Nay: None

b. Approval of new assistant manager at ARC position

To improve evening and weekend coverage and provide support for managers, the board considered creating two assistant manager positions. After feedback from Molly, Sammy, and Elicssha, the proposal was revised to a single assistant manager role, deemed more appropriate for current needs at the ARC. This part-time position (20–25 hours per week) qualifies for paid time off, sick leave accrual, and IMRF retirement contributions if annual hours exceed 1,000. The assistant manager will receive a paid ARC membership and flexible scheduling, including nights and weekends. Physical requirements and educational qualifications are outlined, with a focus on strong communication, organizational, and technical skills.

Responsibilities span multiple departments, including supporting programming, communications, and member services. Duties include

assisting with events, content creation, membership maintenance, and serving as manager on duty for opening and closing the ARC. The role requires decision-making, conflict resolution, and adherence to personnel policies. The board agreed to start with one assistant manager, with the option to add a second if future needs arise. The position will be posted for hire, with department heads empowered to interview and select candidates. The hiring process includes a background check and onboarding at the township office.

Motion to create the new assistant manager position at ARC: Tanner

Second: Dylan

Aye: All

Nay: None

c. 250 Year Celebration discussion

Normal Township previously signed a resolution to participate in the 250th anniversary of America, with plans to celebrate throughout the year rather than solely on July 4th. Any activities requiring funding should be included in the upcoming budget. One proposal is to host an artist reception at the ARC, inviting members to create artistic representations of what Normal Township means to them. The event could feature visual art, poetry, and community engagement, showcasing the talent of ARC members. Costs would be minimal, primarily for refreshments. Additional ideas include collaborating with the McLean County History Museum for a program on Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence, integrating the art exhibit with historical presentations. The event could be expanded to include workshops, speaker series, and contributions from quilting and gardening groups, emphasizing local history and community involvement. Written testimonials and stories from residents could also be collected and displayed. Suggestions were made to coordinate with other local institutions to avoid overlapping events and explore opportunities for collaboration. The board will continue to brainstorm and refine plans, with further discussion scheduled for February.

18. Executive Session for discussion related to personnel

Motion to approve the attorney's letter regarding the Township personnel issue:

Tanner

Second: Jodie

Aye: All

Nay: None

19. Board Good and Welfare

Tanner announced the following: This Sunday at the VFW, there will be a fundraising event for the Bloomington-Normal Community Land Trust, where participants—including myself—will compete by eating increasingly spicy hot wings, similar to the "Hot Ones" challenge. Each contestant is raising money both before and during the event for the organization, which provides affordable housing through long-term, 99-year ground leases to qualifying residents. Homeowners purchase the house while the organization leases the land, reducing housing costs by approximately 30% on average. The event aims to help raise funds for their first house, with a goal of \$54,000. Donations can be made online by selecting a specific contestant, or at the event through a silent auction and other activities. Attendees can also participate in the wing challenge or purchase "liquid lifelines" such as milk or beer for contestants. The event is free and will take place from 4:30 to 6:30 PM at the VFW. Thank you for your support, and I hope to see you there!

20. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:23pm: Tanner

Second: Natasha

Aye: All

Nay: None

Dayna Schickedanz - Normal Township Clerk

____/____/____
Date