

ST. JOHN TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 27, 2026; 6:00 P.M.

**St. John Township Community Center, 1515 W. Lincoln Highway, Schererville, IN 46375
Main Meeting Room**

Meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chairman, Lisa Elder, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lareau made the correction this meeting is not the Annual Meeting as agenda reads. It is the St. John Township Board Meeting.

PRESENT:

BOARD MEMBERS

- Lisa Elder, Chairman
- Michael Quigley, Secretary
- Eric J. Stanich, Member

TRUSTEE

- Cathy J. Lareau

TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

- Adam J. Sedia

NOT PRESENT:

LAKE HILLS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT.

- Steve Michalak, Chief
- Tom VanVleet, Deputy Chief

REPORTS

1. Fire Department Reports

a. Lake Hills Fire Department December 2025 Financial Reports, December 2025 Calls and EMS Reports

Elder stated Chief Michalak and Deputy Chief Van Vleet were not present. Lareau pointed out they are down to two accounts, Chase Bank Savings and Chase Bank Checking. The cash available on both accounts shown on The Fund Balance Sheet does balance. There was a brief discussion regarding the monthly calls.

Elder accepted the Lake Hills Fire Department 2025 Financial Reports, December 2025 Calls and EMS Reports as a matter of record.

b. Dyer Fire Department 2025 4th Quarter Report

Elder stated Chief Martin was not present. Lareau explained the report was broken down by months and how many calls were in St. John Township.

Elder accepted the Dyer Fire Department 2025 4th Quarter Report as a matter of record.

c. Schererville Fire Department 2025 4th Quarter Report

Elder and Lareau briefly went over the report.

Elder accepted the Schererville Fire Department 2025 4th Quarter Report as a matter of record.

d. St. John Fire Department 2025 May – December Reports

Lareau reminded the Board that St. John was having problems with their software and no reports were submitted since April 2025. Full length reports were submitted for these months but the Board received only the last two pages of each of these reports showing calls to unincorporated areas of St. John Township from May – December.

Elder accepted the St. John Fire Department 2025 May – December Reports as a matter of record.

2. Trustee Report

Lareau stated there is currently House Bill 1315 (HB 1315) and Senate Bill 270 (SB 270) in the Indiana General Assembly. HB 1315 is explained by the Indiana Township Association (ITA) as an elimination bill. The bill would direct services provided by the townships to go to the towns or county and voted on by the township boards by June 1, 2026 as to where they would go. Attorney Sedia added the following would be exempted from HB 1315: Marion County, townships that are already consolidating, or townships in a county that have agreed to consolidate into a single township that is coterminous with the county. All other townships would be subject to the provisions of HB 1315, including St. John Township. Sedia explained the terms of HB 1315. There was discussion regarding the guidelines as to which townships could be affected by this House bill. Lareau stated that Senator Niemeyer worked to author SB 270. She stated that it is a commonsense bill because he is familiar with township government. SB 270 is a much better bill than HB 1315 that is based on a point system for townships. The ITA and many trustees support SB 270. If townships get 4 points or higher, those townships would be required to merge. This would work to make those townships more effective. Lareau went over the criteria regarding the 4-point system. This merging is based on efficiency, not population, and townships doing their work. Lareau stated that she had attended the House committee hearing and testified against HB 1315 on Tuesday, 1/13/2026. She was the only trustee who had testified. She provided details to the committee telling them the population of St. John Township of about 70,000 and of Lake County of about 500,000 (half million) people and explained to the committee that she thought it important they hear from a trustee who has a township that is running efficiently. She stated that she understood their issues. However, she emphasized that she not only represented her own township, but that many townships in Lake County and across the state are operating efficiently. She outlined the various responsibilities the township fulfills to comply with state requirements. She stated we understand that there is an issue with townships that are not running efficiently, but urged them to also consider those of us that are doing our jobs well. She explained that

we are here to serve the people, that she works closely with police and fire departments, and that the township has helped prevent evictions.

Lareau concluded her testimony by saying that she understands action may be necessary, but she asked them to vote against HB 1315 and wait to see if SB 270 comes out of the Senate because it is a good bill that solves the problem. A former DLGF employee hired by the ITA as a lobbyist also testified against this bill and stated SB 270 is a better bill. After the hearing, Representative Smith showed Lareau a report from HB 1315 author, Representative Shonkwiler. They discussed the numbers he was given. Lareau explained to him that the numbers on that report were true but did not represent the entire picture. Lareau went into detail explaining the cause of the discrepancy. Representative Smith suggested Lareau email Representative Shonkwiler with these details letting her know he recommended sending the email. Lareau also sent this email to Representative Smith, Representative Slager, Senator Dernulc and Senator Niemeyer. Lareau stated she spoke with Representative Slager who told her that he believed SB 270 was much better than HB 1315. SB 270 did pass in the Senate. Lareau briefly explained the process each bill must go through to pass. She then discussed two articles she was quoted in regarding her testimony at the hearing for HB 1315. One article misquoted Lareau and the other article accurately quoted her. Lareau recommended the Board contact the representatives and senators to let them know they are aware of these two bills and ask them as a township board member to vote in favor of SB 270. Attorney Sedia added he believes the Township would qualify under HB 1315 to be dissolved due to the 51% population threshold and recommends to oppose this bill. He believes its effects would be a disaster, to which Lareau agreed. There was discussion regarding HB 1315. Quigley commented weighing the pros and cons, getting opinions from all sides, and collecting all the correct data did not seem to be taken into account when producing HB 1315. Attorney Sedia briefly explained who can propose bills and how bills can be advanced and amended. He then stated the continued steps HB 1315 must go through to be passed. There was a brief discussion how the bill continues if it passes the House and the ongoing process.

Lareau announced beginning May 7, 2026, the Township will be a site for a mobile lung screening in the parking lot at no cost to the Township.

3. Attorney Report

Attorney Sedia stated the tax court appeal is proceeding. The brief will depend when the record is ready. He will provide updates as they occur.

4. Board Reports

None

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of December 15, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Lareau stated the wording in the minutes regarding the Nepotism Certificates is incorrect. She stated incorrectly at that meeting that the certificates get uploaded to Gateway. It is not required they get uploaded into Gateway, but rather, they are put in each of their individual files and are available to State Board of Accounts for audits. There were no questions.

Quigley made a motion to approve the December 15, 2025, Board Meeting minutes as submitted. Stanich seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

2. Approval of January 6, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

There were no questions.

Quigley made a motion to approve the January 6, 2026, Board Meeting minutes as submitted. Stanich seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. December 2025 Financials

Lareau pointed out the two accounts, Trust Indiana and Centier Bank, have the same ending balance. There were no questions.

Elder accepted the December 2025 Financials as a matter of record.

2. Township Assistance Report December 2025

Lareau stated the Benefits Provided to Recipients of Township Assistance was lower than the Total Value of Benefits Provided Through Efforts of Township Staff from Sources Other than Township Funds. She added the assistance requests are much higher than usual. The Township needs to rely on the assistance of other organizations and churches to help the qualified applicants. Quigley commented that township assistance employees also spend much time and effort with applicants who have been denied township assistance. There was a brief discussion regarding these denials and giving applicants direction to possibly avoid their current situation in the future. It was agreed that it would be a disservice to the applicants if county or municipalities were to take over as directed by HB 1315. There was discussion regarding the figures on the Township Assistance Report and understanding how these numbers were calculated along with the time and effort that were devoted by the employees. It is believed the author of the HB 1315 voters for this bill did not have a clear picture of the Township Assistance Report figures. It was discussed how to provide clarification on these numbers in the future.

Elder accepted the Township Assistance Report December 2025 as a matter of record.

3. 2025 Year End Township Assistance Summary Report

Lareau stated the Annual Report was adjusted to provide more accuracy. The Executive Financial Assistant stated the Township is going to reach out to the software company due to a belief in discrepancies in their programming. It is believed all the money dispersed from the township assistance funds is not being included in the Year End Township Assistance Report. She gave examples of additional figures that were not being transferred to the Year End Township Report. The Executive Financial Assistant briefly went over the numbers in red that were changed from another handout included in the Board's meeting folders. There was also supporting documents to these changes included in their folders. Lareau reviewed some of the supporting documents. Elder pointed out the red changes on line 19 on the copy was not changed to the correct number but the final copy did have the correct number on line 19. Lareau stressed the importance of these Township Assistance Reports.

Elder accepted the 2025 Year End Township Assistance Summary Report as a matter of record.

4. 2025 100R Report and Unit Questions

Lareau explained this was the report the author of HB 1315 used incorrectly. She used the total compensation for all employees rather than using only the compensation for township assistance employees. She explained the Executive Financial Assistant uploads this report into Gateway along with the Unit Questions.

Elder accepted the 2025 100 R Report and Unit Questions as a matter of record.

5. 2025 Annual Financial Report

Lareau explained this report is uploaded from TOMS into Gateway once it has the Board's approval. Then it becomes public record. After it is signed off by the Board, a copy is delivered to the Auditor's Office. This report along with portions of all check stubs is retained at the Auditor's Office. Lareau explained the Cash Change Bar Fund. Lareau also explained that the three disbursements to the Committee to Elect David Crane were due to the return of his security deposit and hall rental payment because his event was cancelled. She stated that there is documentation in the hall rental file regarding these three disbursements. There were no questions.

Stanich made a motion to approve the 2025 Annual Financial Report Review, Accept and Approve. Quigley seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

6. Correction from 12/15/2025 Meeting: 1782 Notice Notes Report Pay 2026

Lareau stated the agenda, motion and minutes said 1782 Notice Notes Report Pay 2025. The supporting documents states it was written, motioned, moved and voted on stating it was a 2025 report when it was actually for 2026.

Elder accepted the Correction from 12/15/2025 Meeting: 1782 Notice Notes Report Pay 2026 as a matter of record.

7. Resolution 2026-01 Resolution Adopting Revised Township Assistance Guidelines

Lareau explained Township Assistance Guidelines need to be updated every January. Lareau went over the revised allowances for 2026 and how they were calculated. A copy of the Board approved guidelines is given to the County Commissioners Office.

Quigley made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-01 Resolution Adopting Revised Township Assistance Guidelines. Stanich seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

8. Resolution 2026-02 Amending Salary Resolution for Budget Year 2025

Lareau stated the Board approved the Salary Resolution for Budget Year 2026 in December 2025. In January, she realized that they needed to make an amendment to include a pay rate line for Custodial Plus Hall Coordinator and Weekend Custodial Plus Hall Coordinator. That was the only change.

Stanich made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-02 Amending Salary Resolution for Budget Year 2025. Quigley seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Sedia stated that there needed to be a motion to amend the vote for Resolution 2026-02 was for Budget Year 2026 as embodied in the written resolution. Stanich so moved the motion. Quigley seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

9. Resolution 2026-03 Ratifying Emergency Services Contracts

Although copies of the contracts were not included in the Board folders, the Board had previously viewed them. Sedia confirmed they are not required it was not necessary to be in their folders.

Quigley made a motion to approve the Resolution 2026-03 Ratifying Emergency Service Contracts. Stanich seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

10. Resolution 2026-04 Ratifying Community Service Agreements for Blue Envelope Program

Lareau stated that she had explained the Board the Blue Envelope Program previously at the December meeting. The last of the agreements were passed last week and once the Board ratifies the agreements, the Township can move forward with printing and distribution. St. John Township will be the second township in the State to be doing the Blue Envelope Program.

Stanich made a motion to approve the Resolution 2026-04 Ratifying Community Service Agreements for Blue Envelope Program. Quigley seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

CITIZEN INPUT

None

ANY AND ALL OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE TOWNSHIP BOARD

1. The next scheduled meeting of the Township Board to be held Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

2. Other

None

ADJOURNMENT

Quigley made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Stanich seconded the motion.

Elder called for a vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Lisa Elder, Chairman

Michael Quigley, Secretary

Eric J. Stanich, Member

Submitted and attested by Cathy J. Lareau, Trustee