

Village of Lodgepole
Board Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2025 at 5:30 PM @ Lodgepole Community Hall
730 Bates Blvd, Lodgepole NE 69149

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Roll call was taken. Present: Rod Wilkins, Ken Kepler, Jaime Dykman, Susan Mitchell, and Al Runge.

The Chair informed the public of the location of the Open Meetings Act posted in the Community Hall. Notices were placed at the Village Office, the Lodgepole Post Office, the Nancy Fawcett Memorial Library, and on the Village website. The Board reserves the right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary for any items on the agenda per section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statute.

Community Comments:

The Chair opened the floor for public comment.

Glenda Shellhorn 831 Bates Blvd, spoke about the overall environment within the community, expressing concern that residents no longer feel comfortable greeting one another due to ongoing tensions. She stated that everyone will always have different opinions, but it is a "sad state" when people do not feel comfortable even saying hello because they are unsure how it will be received. She emphasized that everyone has a part to play in improving the situation and stated "it's time to get better." No additional community comments were made.

Approval of Agenda:

Wilkins moved to approve the agenda. Runge seconded.

Voting Yes: Wilkins, Kepler, Dykman, Mitchell, Runge.

No: None.

Motion passed.

Appointment of Village Officials:

Appointment of Village Clerk/Treasurer, Village Attorney, and Village Road and Street Superintendent was presented as follows:

- Village Clerk/Treasurer: Julie Hays
- Village Attorney: Douglas, Kelly, Ostdiek, Vogel & Snyder
- Village Road & Street Superintendent: Anthony Krajewski

Wilkins moved to appoint the Village Clerk/Treasurer, Village Attorney, and Village Road and Street Superintendent as indicated. Runge seconded.

Voting Yes: Wilkins, Kepler, Dykman, Mitchell, Runge.

No: None.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on fixing the tube heater in the Morton building:

The Board discussed the condition of the tube heater in the Morton building. Preston reported that there is a significant issue with the tube heater and that direction from the Board was needed to proceed with repair or replacement. The Board agreed that the heat needs to be restored and that staff should move forward with getting the heater fixed.

Runge moved to move forward with fixing the heater in the Morton building. Kepler seconded.

Voting Yes: Wilkins, Kepler, Dykman, Mitchell, Runge.

No: None.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on contracting with Bishop Business to install a microfiche/digital document management platform:

The Board discussed contracting with Bishop Business to install a digital records management platform for Village records. Mitchell reported that the Bishop Business representative had advised there would be a price increase effective January 1, 2026, but had not provided specific new rates. The Village had previously been quoted approximately \$149 per month for an Essentials package and a separate cost for equipment, with the Village responsible for scanning documents.

Board members agreed that digitizing records is important but expressed concern about the timing due to current financial uncertainty and the ongoing effort to reconcile the Village's books. The Board expressed a desire to wait until the Village's financial position is clearer before committing to a new monthly expense.

By consensus, the Board opted to take no action at this time and revisit the proposal in the future once reconciliation and financial review are further along.

Discussion and action on health stipend for Julie Hays – Clerk; discussion on changing the timeline for the effective date for health stipend:

The Board discussed changing the timeline in the employee handbook for eligibility for the employee health stipend. The current policy requires a six-month waiting period, and the Board discussed whether reducing it to three months

method is significantly more time-consuming and more expensive in postage than postcards. She stated that preparing the envelopes, labels, inserts, and postage can take an entire day, while postcards are quicker and cost approximately \$0.20 less per bill to mail.

The Board discussed options for continuing to share newsletters and surveys with residents while transitioning to postcard billing. Suggestions included:

- Posting newsletters at the post office, office, and other community locations.
- Providing newsletters online.
- Including surveys in envelopes only when necessary, rather than with every monthly bill.

The Board agreed that residents should be notified in advance of any change to billing format. It was proposed that the January billing include a notice that February bills will be sent by postcard only, except in special circumstances.

Runge moved that February's billing be sent via postcard only unless there is a specific need to use an envelope, and that January's billing include a notice explaining the change and where newsletters may be obtained. Kepler seconded.

Voting Yes: Wilkins, Kepler, Dykman, Mitchell, Runge.

No: None.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on the status of the open maintenance position:

The Board discussed the ongoing vacancy in the maintenance position. It was reported that one gentleman had come in seeking an application but no completed application had been submitted. The position is currently posted through the League of Nebraska Municipalities and is being advertised on a rural/municipal platform.

The Board discussed the possibility of re-posting on Indeed, noting that previous postings there had generated the most traction. Board members discussed the cost of posting on Indeed (estimated around \$500 for a more extended posting) versus the need to show active effort toward filling the position, especially under the interlocal agreement with Sidney requiring the Village to actively pursue a permanent maintenance hire.

The Board considered running the posting through December 19th to allow approximately three weeks of exposure, with the understanding that the posting could be paused or ended early if sufficient applicants were received. The Board

No motion was made. Board will revisit training needs as the reconciliation progresses and as Hays identifies additional areas where support is needed.

Discussion and action on Maintenance update:

Preston Richards provided a maintenance update. He reported that corrosion control work in the well houses, which had been identified as a deficiency in the most recent sanitary survey, has largely been completed. Prep work started previously by Steve was finished, and painting in at least one location is nearly complete. Preston also reported the purchase of oil and filters needed for equipment service and noted that he is working through ongoing maintenance tasks on a regular basis.

The Board briefly discussed electrical work that still needs to be completed, including wiring at the water tower/tree dump area and a siren near the office. It was reported that an electrician believed the project had been canceled, but this was not the case. Clerk Hays was asked to follow up with the electrician previously contacted and, if necessary, to reach out to the secondary bidder (Jeff Goble) to move the work forward.

No motion was made. The Board agreed that the identified electrical work needs to be completed and directed follow-up by the Clerk.

Discussion and action on Clerk duties update:

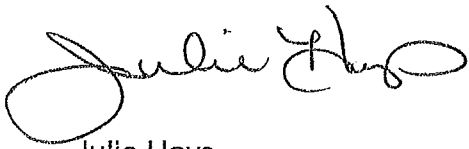
Clerk Hays provided a detailed update on her current duties and recent actions:

- A deposit from a Revitalize Rural Nebraska grant had been mistakenly deposited into the General Fund and has now been transferred into the correct account (11725).
- Seventeen delinquent letters were sent out, totaling \$1,679.04, and as of the meeting, two sanitation services had been shut off for non-payment.
- Chandler, the accountant working with GWorks and reconciliation, has logged approximately 25 hours so far and is about two-thirds of the way through the clean-up and reconciliation work. He is working toward reconciling the balance sheet accounts and producing a mock-up of 2025 finances, with plans to recommend a clean starting point for the new system going forward.
- The Village received the 2026 Nebraska Code of Ordinances books. Clerk Hays has located three copies, but records indicate the Village should have seven. She plans to contact past board members to see if they have copies and request their return so that current board members and staff can each have a copy.
- Issues with positive pay and check verification were reviewed. It was discovered that there is a secondary email/notification process that was not previously understood by staff, which led to confusion regarding one check.

Adjournment:

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 5:30 PM at Lodgepole Community Hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Hays". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Julie Hays
Clerk/Treasurer