



Lynden Township

Lynden Township

# Winter 2025 Newsletter

## Annual Meeting and Election Tuesday, March 11

Mark your calendar and plan to attend Lynden Township's annual meeting Tuesday, March 11—**the meeting begins promptly at 8:15 p.m.** after the polls close for the annual township election. Be sure to vote for candidates for township treasurer and township supervisor. **You can vote that Tuesday at the township hall between 2-8 p.m.**

The annual meeting will include highlights of the past year's business in Lynden Township including general ordinance updates, road reports, and a review of township spending in 2024. The most important agenda item is the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2026 operating levy, i.e. the township portion of your 2026 taxes payable. The levy directly impacts the township portion of your property taxes. Whether you are new to the area or have lived here for years, the annual meeting is a great way to stay informed.

The election results will be announced at the end of the meeting. Please plan to vote and attend this important once-a-year meeting.

## Voting for Open Supervisor and Treasurer Positions

Two positions are on the ballot for Lynden Township, town supervisor and town treasurer. No one has filed to run for the open position of town supervisor vacated by the retirement of Supervisor Tom Plaggerman. One name will appear on the ballot for the town treasurer position. The election will take place Tuesday, March 11 at the Lynden Township Hall; the polls are open from 2 to 8 p.m. Please exercise your right to vote.



*Township residents line up during last spring's cleanup day.*

## Township Cleanup Day

Saturday, April 26 from 8 – 11 a.m.

**Clearwater Township Hall**

MN Hwy 24 - 3 miles south of Clearwater

## Tax Equalization Meeting April 9

If you disagree with the assessed value of your home or property, you can schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns by contacting Mitch Determan at the Stearns County Assessor's office. If you disagree with the valuation and classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may meet with the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization on April 9, 6:00 p.m. at the Lynden Town Hall.

# Township Cleanup Day Saturday, April 26

This year Lynden Township will be conducting its spring cleanup day on **April 26 from 8-11 a.m. at the Clearwater Township Hall** and maintenance facility south of Clearwater on MN Hwy 24. Open to all Lynden Township residents; you must be in line by 11 a.m. *Only cash or check will be accepted as payment.*

One free pickup size load of garbage and/or recyclables is allowed per household (IDs will be checked) -- other items such as appliances, tires, e-waste, etc. are accepted for a fee (see below). Trailers with garbage/recycling material will be charged extra, so plan accordingly. Please check the township website for an announcement of the final details closer to the date.

We have made some minor changes to flow of things this year. After checking in you will proceed to the garbage compactors and unload the refuse first. If you still have items to get rid of, you will proceed up to the large dumpster. If there any fees associated with your load, this is when we will collect it. Then we will unload appliances, electronics and tires into the dumpster. The last stop will once again be the scrap metal pile. We recommend loading your load in the following order for ease of unloading; scrap metal, appliances, electronics, tire and garbage on last.

Pickup size load of garbage	Free
Garbage load larger than pickup size	\$20
Passenger vehicle sized tires or smaller	\$5 each
Commercial vehicle tires	\$20 each
Large tractor tires	\$60 each
Appliances	\$15 each
TV/Electronics	\$30 each
Scrap Metal	Free

*No household garbage, shingles, paint, oil, concrete blocks, or brush will be accepted.*

## 200<sup>th</sup> Street East Reconstruction Project

Lynden Township is pleased to announce the reconstruction project for 200th Street East, made possible by a generous LRIP (Local Road Improvement Project) grant from the State of Minnesota, which will cover a significant portion of the project's cost.

To ensure the success of this project, the township is collaborating with Moore Engineering Firm, Stearns County,

and the State of Minnesota. The reconstruction is planned to address critical infrastructure needs and improve safety and accessibility for all users.

Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2025, with completion targeted for September 2025. The township is committed to keeping residents informed throughout the process and appreciates everyone's patience as we work to enhance our community's infrastructure.

With the receipt of this grant, Lynden Township will only need to pay for the engineering of the project and other expenses not associated with the rebuilding of the road itself.

The 200<sup>th</sup> St. E. project has been in discussions for several years. To help make it a reality, in August 2023, now retired Road Manager Dennis Niemi, with the help of Stearns County Highway Engineer Jodi Teich, filed a grant request application for an LRIP grant to completely rebuild 200<sup>th</sup> St. E. from 21st Ave. to County Rd. 145.

Minnesota Legislature funded the LRIP program to allow for cities, counties, and townships to do expensive road projects that are more than small units of government can afford.

## August Storm Damage

At the end of August, a strong storm moved through the township, bringing high winds that caused significant damage. Many trees were down across roads, and the township building also sustained damage.

Lynden Township worked quickly to clear debris and restore affected areas to ensure minimal disruption for residents. The town board appreciates everyone's patience and support as the cleanup efforts were completed and extended a thank you to all who assisted in the recovery process.



*Lynden Township received significant damage from an August storm.*

## Recycling Schedule

[www.lyndentownship.net](http://www.lyndentownship.net)

Recycling is picked up every other Thursday.  
Visit the township website to see the next scheduled pick up.

## Tarring Fund

Lynden Township's last major road project was in the summer of 2019 when 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 189<sup>th</sup> St. were resurfaced. Since that time, the town board considered different road projects, including repairing and upgrading 200<sup>th</sup> St. E. and chip coating 200<sup>th</sup> St. and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. to reduce the cost of maintenance on those sections of road. Every year, although the board thought money had been factored into the road maintenance budget for major road projects, it was instead consumed by the rising costs of simply maintaining the roads.

At the 2024 Lynden Township Annual Meeting, the board asked residents to begin setting money aside in a tarring fund for future road projects. The goal is to set aside a portion of the levy that can be used to fund larger improvement projects. By doing this, levying the entire amount of a major project in one year is avoided.

Late last fall when residents received their tax statements payable in 2025 from Stearns County, both the county and the township received multiple calls from residents questioning the increase. They were informed the residents who attended the March 2024 Annual Meeting had thoroughly reviewed and discussed the two proposed budgets the board had prepared and voted to increase the levy by just over \$200,000. This increase included starting a tarring fund to begin addressing the township's road improvement needs.

Later this year these funds will be put to use as the reconstruction of 200<sup>th</sup> St. E. in the industrial park is set to begin. As reported, in 2024, Lynden Township applied for and received an LRIP road grant. This state-funded grant will cover the costs of the road reconstruction. The township's obligation is to pay for engineering costs and other expenses not associated with the rebuilding of the road itself. This number was projected to be around \$200,000.

The hardest part of doing things differently is starting. We have a good start with obtaining a Lynden Township 5-year road plan and with receiving the LRIP road grant. The board appreciates and relies on residents' continued support of the new tarring fund at this year's annual meeting. It is all residents' shared responsibility to help ensure safe and properly maintained roads in Lynden Township.

## Stearns County Explorer Program

The Stearns County Sheriff's Office provides local youth the opportunity to explore the career of law enforcement through their Explorer Program. Teens and young adults between the ages of 15-21 are provided a rare opportunity to get a hands-on first-person point of view of law enforcement.

This program allows participants to take part in realistic scenarios law enforcement faces daily. It teaches members self-confidence, teamwork, selflessness, and overall character building. Furthermore, upon completion of required training, such as first aid and use of force, members are issued a uniform and allowed to participate in the Sheriff's Office ride-along program, as well as assist with traffic and security at various public events.

Participants will meet weekly to train on various topics from traffic stops to burglary response and take the knowledge and skills they learned to compete against other posts from across the nation! If you are interested or have questions, please reach out to Deputy Tyler Johnson at [tyler.johnson@co.stearns.mn.us](mailto:tyler.johnson@co.stearns.mn.us)



*Lynden Township Supervisor Tom Plaggerman hands a check to Stearns Co. Deputy Tyler Johnson to thank the county's Explorer Program for its help during the township's spring cleanup day.*



# A Letter From the Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf:

Dear Lynden Township,

Many of you already may be aware that our Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf is under construction, and we will soon be able to move into our own building. Going from just a little over 400 square feet to 1,280 square feet of shopping area will be so appreciated.

Our new building has handicap-accessible parking, entrance, and restrooms. It features a large receiving area, meeting room, and rough in-kitchen that will someday become a commercial kitchen. Food shelf volunteers would like to offer cooking classes to individuals who could use some help in that area. This vision will be sometime in the future. For now, we are just happy to have more space to serve individuals who are faced with food insecurities in our area.

We still have a few bumps in the road to master. The swale that is required by the city is an additional expense that we didn't anticipate, so we are trying our best to come up with the least expensive way to accommodate these requirements.



*Mary and Ken Abraham in the newly constructed food shelf building.*

As far as the individuals we serve, it has steadily been increasing. We have been close to serving 350 individuals in just one month. We can never thank Lynden Township enough for the donation to purchase the 3-door freezer and cooler. I don't know what we would have done without the generous donation. Thank you again.

Sometime in June, we are planning our open house. We look forward to showing off what was able to be built with all the generous donations from the community and beyond. We are

proud to show you how we are able to serve those in need. We hope everyone can attend.

Hopefully by the time this goes to print the Clearwater-Clear Lake Food shelf will be located at 1135 County Road 75, Clearwater. Phone number 320-558-2954. Hours of operation are Mondays 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.; Tuesdays 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

The food shelf supplies its clients with an emergency food supply. We serve residents from Clearwater, Clear Lake, and surrounding areas. If you are in need, clients will need to fill out an application form. Donations can be made to the Food Shelf by mailing to P.O. Box 324, Clearwater, MN 55320, or by drop off during food shelf hours. Donations can also be dropped off in the food shelf bin located in the entryway of Coborn's in Clearwater. Please call to arrange an alternative time.

Best Regards,  
*Mary Abraham*  
*CWCLFS President and Project Chairperson*

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## New 2025 Minnesota Laws

Numerous new laws were enacted in Minnesota in 2023 and 2024, including the ones below. Citizens should become familiar with those that may affect them.

### **Elections**

#### ***College campus voting locale, candidate residency proof***

Effective January 1, 2025, a law will require designation of an additional polling place for the state general election, or off-year city general election, for at least one day on the campus of a post-secondary institution that provides on-campus housing for at least 100 students, if requested by the institution or the student government organization. The location can be within one-half mile of the campus provided it is "reasonably accessible" to students.

The secretary of state's office will reimburse local election officials for operational costs.

Also in the 2024 election law, there is a requirement taking effect January 1 that a candidate, when filing an affidavit of candidacy, must present to the filing officer a valid driver's license or state identification card containing their current address or documentation of proof of residence authorized for Election Day registration.

### **Employment**

#### ***Salary ranges required in job postings***

Effective January 1, 2025, "a person or entity that employs 30 or more employees at one or more sites in Minnesota" must disclose in each job posting the starting salary range or fixed pay rate and a general description of all benefits and other compensation. A salary range cannot be open-ended.

Also in the law and taking effect with the start of the new year is a requirement for healthcare employers to adopt and implement policies to prevent exposure to surgical smoke by requiring the use of a smoke evacuation system during any surgical procedure that is likely to generate surgical smoke.

And the law moves the definition of large and small employers from inclusion in the minimum wage statute to the general definitions section contained in the Minnesota Fair Labor Standards Act. It also modifies several minimum wage provisions by removing the distinction between large and small employers, for hotels and resorts with summer work travel exchange employees, and minor employees of large employers.



Lynden Township's 2024 Cleanup Day at Clearwater Township Hall.

## **Public Safety**

### ***No binary triggers***

Effective January 1, 2025, guns with binary triggers will be prohibited.

A binary trigger allows a firearm to shoot one shot on the pull of the trigger and a second shot on the trigger release without requiring a subsequent pull of the trigger.

### ***Office of Emergency Medical Services established***

Provisions of a new law that creates the Office of Emergency Medical Services to replace the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board take effect January 1, 2025.

The law calls for the new office to be led by a governor-appointed director who may license and regulate ambulance services in the state, establish and modify primary service areas, register and regulate medical response units, certify emergency medical technicians and paramedics, approve their education programs, and investigate complaints about and impose disciplinary action on ambulance services and their personnel and emergency medical responders.

The law also creates division for medical services, ambulance services, and emergency medical service providers, each headed by a deputy director, and three

advisory councils to provide recommendations on emergency medical services, physicians involved in such services, and providers of labor and ambulances.

### ***Automatic expungement process established***

Included in the 2023 public safety and judiciary finance and policy law is establishment of an automatic expungement process for certain non-violent offenses that will remove a requirement that expungements be approved by a prosecutor and go through a court process.

A person will be eligible for automatic expungement relief – removing the record of a person's conviction – if charges were dismissed based on a finding that the person was incompetent to proceed, the proceedings were dismissed pursuant to certain drug offenses, or all pending charges were resolved in favor of the person.

A person who completes a diversion program or the term of probation for a stay of adjudication will be eligible for expungement if they are not convicted of a new offense other than a petty misdemeanor for one year immediately following completion of the diversion program or one year before a subsequent review.

The law establishes that a person is eligible for expungement if they were convicted of a qualifying offense and have not been convicted of any other offense in Minnesota during the applicable waiting period – 2-5 years depending on the offense – and not be charged with an offense at the time of the review. Qualifying offenses include:

- petty misdemeanors, other than traffic and parking offenses;
- misdemeanors, other than DWI and offenses related to domestic violence; and
- gross misdemeanors, other than DWI and offenses related to domestic violence.

A court must notify a defendant of automatic expungement eligibility when dismissing charges. Ad, to an extent possible, prosecutors, defense attorneys, supervising agents, and diversion program coordinators or supervisors must notify eligible individuals.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension must identify individuals eligible for automatic expungement and make an initial determination of eligibility within 30 days of the end of the applicable waiting period.

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## ***Find a Stray Dog or Cat?***

If you find a stray dog or cat, contact the Tri-County Humane Society at 320-252-0896. The township has an agreement with the humane society to accept animals found in our township. Tri-County Humane Society is located off Highway 10 at 735 8th St. NE in St. Cloud. There is no cost to you to drop animals off, but transportation is not provided.

## New Town Hall Voting Booths



Lynden Township's new voting booths.

Our Town Hall received a much-needed upgrade! A huge thank you to Barry Hample, Luci Hample, Dennis Niemi, and Len Fruth for volunteering their time and orchestrating the effort to upgrade and improve our voting experience by installing new voting booths. ARPA Funds were used to fund this project.

## Website Changes Coming

Lynden Township is making changes to its website and email format as required by Minnesota Law. Throughout the next few months, the website domain and email addresses will move to a .gov domain. The township is asking for patience and understanding during the transition time, as some of the links may get broken. Emails will be forwarded to the new domain for a period of time to avoid any disruption in processing or responding to items.

The new website will be found at [www.lydentownship.gov](http://www.lydentownship.gov). Until it goes live, continue visiting [www.lydentownship.net](http://www.lydentownship.net).

The website will still be regularly updated with important announcements, meeting dates, and public notices. The site is mobile-friendly and easily navigable from your smartphone. Be sure to bookmark it for easy access.

The home page always shows the date of upcoming township meetings and the next date for recycling pickup. In addition, there are many helpful resource links for area information.

The township website has forms and applications that can be filled out directly online, streamlining the processes. You can enter information from your computer without having to print and manually fill out applications. Whether you need a building permit, are applying for a variance, or simply want to rent the town hall, take advantage of the updated format. **Please note**, after filling out a form online, the form must be digitally signed or printed and signed before submittal.

## Town Hall Available to Rent

The town hall is available to rent for private events for a \$50 fee (plus a fully refundable \$100 security deposit).

Application and fee must be submitted to the town clerk at least 14 days before the event. Please note that smoking and consumption of alcohol in the town hall or on the grounds is prohibited. Contact Pat Voigt or Town Clerk. Applications and the complete policy can be found on the "Applications" page at [www.lydentownship.net](http://www.lydentownship.net).

## Great River Regional Library in Clearwater

Lynden Township financially supports in part the Great River Regional Library branch in Clearwater in conjunction with the City of Clearwater, Clearwater Township, City of Clear Lake, Clear Lake Township, Haven Township, Palmer Township, and Silver Creek Township.

For more detailed information visit Great River Regional Library's website at: [griver.org/locations/clearwater](http://griver.org/locations/clearwater)

CLEARWATER LIBRARY INFORMATION	
<b>Monday:</b> 1:00 - 4:00	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> 10:00 - 1:00, 3:00 - 6:00	740 Clearwater Center Box 335
<b>Wednesday:</b> 3:00 - 8:00	Clearwater MN 55320
<b>Thursday:</b> 10:00 - 1:00	320-558-6001
<b>Friday:</b> 3:00 - 6:00	Contact Clearwater Branch
<b>Saturday:</b> 10:00 - 1:00	Holiday Closures
<b>Sunday:</b> Closed	

## Permit Applications

If you're looking for applications for driveway/approach permits, construction site permits, or variance and conditional use permits, contact Lynden Township Planning & Zoning Administrator James Kantor at 320-281-9339. Construction site permits are a *prerequisite* to a building permit. If you require a septic permit, please complete that process with Stearns County Environmental Services *before* starting a construction site permit application.

## District 742 Special Election

District 742 will be holding a special election on April 8. Visit [www.isd742.org/referendum](http://www.isd742.org/referendum) to learn more about Referendum 2025 and voting information.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing address for all correspondence is as follows:

**Lynden Township**  
**c/o Clerk Jenny Schmidt**  
**20517 Woodbine Road**  
**Clearwater, MN 55320**



*Lynden Township Hall located at 21367 Co. Rd. 44, Clearwater*

### Clerk

**Jenny Schmidt**, Clerk, 320-774-8507 (Leave a message or text); or email [Clerk@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Clerk@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact Jenny for general inquiries, including rental of the town hall. Term expires 2026.*

### Township Board of Supervisors

**Tom Plaggerman**, Board Chair, 320-266-1561 or email [tom.plaggerman@lydentownship.net](mailto:tom.plaggerman@lydentownship.net)  
*Contact Tom for general ordinance/zoning inquiries, subdivision and platting questions, and animal control issues. Term expires 2025.*

**Scott O’Konek**, Vice Chair and Winter Road Manager, 320-558-7766 or email [Scott@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Scott@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact Scott for right-of-way permits, winter road-related issues, weed inspections, and signage issues. Term expires 2026.*

**Jaime Shultz-Ludenia**, Supervisor and Summer Road Manager, 320-282-7971 or email [Jaime@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Jaime@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact Jaime for any summer road-related issues. Term expires 2027.*

### Treasurer

**Jean Schermer**, Treasurer, 320-241-2738 or email [Treasurer@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Treasurer@LyndenMN.gov). Term expires 2025.

**Lori Creamer**, Deputy Treasurer

### Burning Permits

Pat Voigt, 320-252-9349 (across County Road 44 from the township hall) Burning permits can also be obtained online from the DNR. [Webapps15.dnr.state.mn.us/burning\\_permits](http://Webapps15.dnr.state.mn.us/burning_permits)

### Building Permits

**Township Building Official** Nancy J. Scott, CBO#2099, AllSpec Services, LLC; 320-293-5298 or email [Building@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Building@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact Nancy Scott for any building permit questions.*

### Construction Site Permits

**Planning & Zoning Administrator** James Kantor, 320-281-9339 or email [Planning@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Planning@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact James with any construction site permit questions.*

### Environmental Services

**Stearns County Environmental Services**  
320-656-3613

*Contact Environmental Services for county ordinance inquiries, shoreland/lakeshore/ riparian questions, and septic system permits.*

### Lynden Planning Commission

**James Kantor**, Planning & Zoning Administrator  
320-281-9339 or email [James@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:James@LyndenMN.gov)  
*Contact James for driveway/approach permits.*

**Jeff Westrum**, Planning Commission Chair, 320-274-6067 or email [Jeff@LyndenMN.gov](mailto:Jeff@LyndenMN.gov)  
Term expires 2028.

**Greg Halverson**, Planning Commissioner, 320-274-3970  
Term expires 2026.

**Gary Stang**, Planning Commissioner, 320-558-2112  
Term expires 2027.

**Todd Voigt**, Planning Commissioner, 320-241-7575  
Term expires 2029.

**Monte Helget**, Planning Commissioner, 612-735-7008  
Term expires 2025.

## **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>9-1-1</b>
<b>Sheriff,</b> <b>non-emergency</b>	<b>320-251-4240</b>

## LYNDEN TOWNSHIP

c/o Clerk Jenny Schmidt  
20517 Woodbine Road  
Clearwater, MN 55320

### ***Friendly Mailbox Reminder***

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Please make sure that your mailbox post is in good condition. Pressure from plowed snow can knock over a rotted mailbox post, and often, the plow driver gets blamed for it when it's really not their fault. Lynden's long-time policy is that you will be responsible for the repair if it's not a swing-away metal post. If you have a swing-away post and the plow hits it, it will be repaired or replaced at no cost to you.

If interested in replacing your mailbox post, the FAQ section of the township's website lists multiple places where they can be purchased. Remember, the swing-away post should be installed 42"- 48" from the ground to the top of the post so the wing of the plow can clear the snow out from under it. If you're installing, call 811 first so all utilities can be located. This is a free service, so please take the time to make the call.

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