



# Island Mud Lake Property Owners Association Board Meeting Minutes

Date: July 25, 2026  
Time: 5:30PM  
Meeting called to order by: Chuck Pettipiece  
Board attendees: In-person: Patrice Bogart, Morgan Buetow-Staples, Linda Ferdelman, Jerry Finnerty, JoAn Miller, Pam Nordahl, Chuck Pettipiece, Tom Stremski, Kim Swatosch  
Minutes by: Kim Swatosch; published July 30, 2026

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## 1. Welcome & Introductions

President Chuck Pettipiece opened the meeting and introduced the current IMLPOA Board: Chuck Pettipiece (President), Morgan Buetow-Staples (Vice President), Jerry Finnerty (Treasurer), Kim Swatosch (Secretary/Communications) and Directors; Tom Stremski, Pam Nordahl, Patrice Bogart, Linda Ferdelman and JoAn Miller.

## 2. Guest Speaker: Blair Mileski, Emily Fire Chief.

Emily Fire Chief Blair Mileski presented an overview of local fire protection and safety operations serving the Ross Lake Township community including Island and Mud Lakes. Ross Lake Township is served by both the Emily and Aitken Fire Departments to help provide faster service.

The Emily Fire Department operates on a paid-on-call structure and provides robust coverage for a small town. For example, among its resources are; two water-pumping engines, 3,000-gallon water tender, rescue truck for small grass fires, off-road ATV, and EMS-equipped Ford F-150.

Blair explained how fire response works. When emergency calls come in, the full department is dispatched. The Fire Chief (or an officer) drives immediately to the scene, evaluates the situation and coordinates resources – including getting assistance from other departments or the DNR.

The department works closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) during wildfire threats; the DNR provides specialized tracked vehicles, air support (planes and helicopters), and deep seasonal wildfire resources.

### Key Recommendations & Safety Tips from Chief Mileski:

- **Emergency Dispatch:** When reporting grass or brush fires, specify the proximity to structures to ensure the appropriate rapid response resources are sent.
- **Property Accessibility:** Ensure house numbers are clearly visible from driveways and posted on cabins. This is critical for both fire and medical emergency responses. Keep driveways clear for large emergency vehicles.
- **Fire Prevention:** Check the DNR website for daily burning restrictions and follow them.
  - Clear dry, dead vegetation from around homes.
  - Trim branches higher on trees to help prevent fire spreading.
  - Keep outdoor bonfires within a 3'x3' ring. Control them and always keep a hose ready. Put out bonfires completely by dumping water on the burning logs and ashes.

Chief Mileski was presented with a 2026–27 IMLPOA calendar in appreciation for his presentation.

### 3. Memorials & Community Recognition

- **In Memoriam:** The association honored members who passed away during 2025–2026: Theresa Offerman, Ann Caspers, Stan Nelson, Kathy Nelson, and Ken Nyquist.
- **Annual Memorial Donation:** The Board announced an annual \$100 donation in memory of deceased IMLPOA members. This year's donation will go to *Lakes Area Heroes* recognizing the organization's support of local firefighters during the Flanders Fire. The board will decide which charitable organization to support each year.
- **Outgoing Leadership:** Chuck Pettipiece was recognized for his 10 years of service as IMLPOA President. Vice President Morgan Buetow-Staples and Treasure Jerry Finnerty presented Chuck with a gratitude plaque for his service. Long-time member and past president Buck Brothers thanked Chuck for his dedicated leadership and work building community.

### 4. Business & Financial Reports

- **2025 Minutes Approval:** A motion to approve the 2025 meeting minutes as posted on the website was made by Cathy Matzke, seconded by Judy Brothers, and approved unanimously.
- **Treasurer's Report as of 7/24/26 (Jerry Finnerty):**
  - **Starting Balance:** \$9,973 | **Current Balance:** \$11,405.
  - **Revenue to Date:** \$4,908 (primarily dues) | **Expenses:** ~\$3,476.
  - **Membership:** As of 7/25/26, 98 paid members out of 118 total properties (a few properties are vacant).
    - Typically, over 100 residences pay dues which is >85%. This far exceeds the 25–50% range several of other area lake associations achieve.

### 5. Association Initiatives & Updates

#### Pontoon Trailer Program

The community pontoon trailer experienced strong adoption this season, with 30 members taking advantage of the free benefit. Recent structural upgrades include a new winch, coupler, cable, and repositioned axles to improve towing stability and support a broader variety of pontoon sizes.

#### Upcoming Program Changes:

- **Maintenance Transition:** Mark Caspers is stepping down from managing reservations and maintenance. Tom Stremski will take over trailer maintenance. Mark was presented with a gift card as a thank you for all his work on the pontoon trailer over the years.
- **New Reservation System:** A new digital reservation system (via app or online spreadsheet) is being developed for late summer/2027 rollout. Details will be posted on the IMLPOA [website](#).
- **Feedback Request:**
  - Mark reminded us to report any mechanical issues with the pontoon right away to help make sure they are addressed before the next use.
  - Mark is evaluating an attachment for pontoons over 24 feet and asked users to share size measurements.

#### Invasive Species (AIS)

IMLPOA has contracted Freshwater Scientific Services for \$3,990 to conduct a comprehensive AIS baseline survey in late July/early August. While no invasive species are currently known in the lakes, establishing this baseline positions the association for future support.

#### Other Programs & Reminders

- **Apparel:** Gear/shirt sales will transition to an every-other-year schedule. [Shirts Plus Signs and Designs](#) in Aitkin printed a few extra shirts and hats. Call or stop in to purchase them on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Emily Food Shelf:** \$400 will be given to the food shelf. IMLPOA matched picnic donations (\$200 match limit). \$200 was donated at the 2026 picnic.

- **Little Library:** A request was made for more children's books and games. Thanks were expressed to Tricia Murray for acting as unofficial librarian.
- **Community Safety & Courtesy:** Property owners were reminded to slow down on lake roads to protect pedestrians, pets, and property.
- **Photo Submissions:** Members are asked to submit photo entries for the 2027–2028 calendar drive.

**Photo Specs:**

- High-resolution (300 DPI at 11" x 8.5" or better).
- JPG or PDF format.
- Landscape orientation, no zoom.
- Please email photos to: [implpoawebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:implpoawebmaster@gmail.com).

**Website Photos:** Please send photos for consideration for the [Area Photos page](#) of the IMLPOA website to: [implpoawebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:implpoawebmaster@gmail.com).

**6. Board Elections & Renewals** – The current Board offered the following slate of candidates based on the interest they expressed in joining the Board. The IMLPOA present at the annual meeting approved the recommendation.

**NEW Board Directors:**

- Mike Pearson (4-year term)
- Alan Offerman (4-year term)
- Lora Strey (4-year term)
- Mark Matzke (2-year term filling unexpired term for Pam Nordahl)

*(Motion: Tony Levi; Second: Mark Matzke; Approved unanimously)*

**NEW Officer Elections (2-Year Terms):**

- **President:** Morgan Buetow-Staples
- **Vice President:** Tom Stremski

*(Motion: Cathy Matzke; Second: Rick Henderson; Approved)*

**Existing Board Members (Terms not expired):**

- Jerry Finnerty (Treasurer), JoAn Miller and Kim Swatosch (Secretary/Communications)

**7. Upcoming Summer/Fall Events**

- **Ice Cream Day at the Lake:** August 8, 2026 (1:00 PM – 4:00 PM) at the sandbar.
- **End of the Road Concert 2026:** Sponsored by Jonathan Geiger & Donna Hastings on Saturday, September 5, 2026 from 3 – 5 PM at 36205 Whitewater Road.
- **Hunters Booya & Winter Fishing Contest:** Sponsored by Morgan & Cullum Buetow-Staples. Information to come this Fall.

## **8. 2026 Game, Prize Drawings and Raffle Winners**

- **Custom Cribbage Board Raffle:** Won by Judy Brothers (raised \$222 for IMLPOA).
- **Guessing Games / Sawdust Treasures:** Karen Gallagher (Emily Meats), Jeff Portner (Sweets 'n Such), Anniston F. (Sweets 'n Such).
- **Geocache Participation Certificates:** Javon C., John C., Shokes family, Kenny P., Bonnie P., Brian N., Karen G.
- **Member Door Prizes:**
  - \$25 Emily Meats: Tony Levi
  - \$25 Emily Ace Hardware: Mark Matzke
  - \$25 Emily Ace Hardware: Donna Hastings
  - \$50 Emily Meats: Amy Offerman
  - \$50 Emily Ace Hardware: Tammy Aubrey
  - \$75 Emily Meats: Linda Ferdelman
  - \$75 Emily Ace Hardware: Mike Pearson
  - Fire Starter: Leo Offerman

**9. Closing Remarks** – Chuck reflected on the Association's focus on building community and thanked volunteers. The meeting was adjourned.