

## **BIWABIK TOWNSHIP ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES**

**Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 8:30 P.M.**

**Call to Order** - Clerk Highland called the meeting to order at 8:30 PM. Present: Emily Highland, Jim Paris, Richard & Doris Freeburg, Kirstie & Todd Hall, Luke Soderling, Yvonne Hines, Walter Hautala, Gordy Imberg, Chuck & Nita Larson.

**Pledge of Allegiance** - Recited

**Nomination for Moderator** - Clerk Highland called for nominations for moderator.

Walter Hautala nominated Gordy Imberg, supported by Jim Paris.

Clerk Highland called nominations two more times. No more nominations were made.

Motion to accept Gordy Imberg as Moderator carried unanimously. Clerk Highland gave Oath of Moderator to Gordy Imberg.

### **2019 Annual Town Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** by Todd Hall, seconded by Luke Soderling to waive the reading of the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes. No Discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion** by Todd Hall, seconded by Luke Soderling to approve the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **2019 Financial & Audit Report**

**Motion** by Chuck Larson, seconded by Walter Hautala to waive the reading of all receipts and disbursements and read only the synopsis. Motion carried unanimously.

Moderator Imberg asked Yvonne Hines to read the synopsis. Hines read the synopsis (attached to the minutes). No questions.

**Motion** by Todd Hall, seconded by Chuck Larson to approve the 2019 Financial and Audit Report. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Proposed 2021 Levy**

Moderator Imberg asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Levy. Yvonne Hines reported there are no proposed changes to the levy from the previous year (\$342,000.00). **Motion** by Todd Hall, seconded by Walter Hautala to approve the 2021 levy for a total levy of \$342,000.00 set by the Board of Supervisors. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **2019 Department Reports**

**Vice-Chairman Supervisor Paris:** Submitted a written report for Road & Bridge and the Management Group (part time employees) (attached to the minutes). He thanked the part time employees, temporary employees, and road & bridge employees. The Clerk and Treasurer are good at their jobs too.

**EMR Director Nita Larson:** Reported the 2019 call volume was down, a total 47 calls. They are now combined with the Fire Department. In the next two years they will be purchasing new AEDs and updating radios. Nita also stated they are happy to serve the public.

**Supervisor Hautala:** Walter Hautala reported on the Recreation and Cemetery departments. Hockey is the most popular recreation service we offer. Over the summer there are plans to level the rink and get a liner for better ice making. During the summer we are going to try a volley ball net inside the rink. There is a weed issue with in the playground area and it will be addressed in the summer of 2020. A town hall dedication will take place in June for the new building. The building committee, Board, residents, politicians, and media will be invited. Hautala asked the residents if they would like to see a paved walking trail made from the Hall to the cemetery. There are grant options available for this. The residents present liked the idea. Todd Hall suggested placing distance markers along the path. Gordy Imberg supports the trail, but is concerned with potential safety risks if there is any deviating from path towards the gravel pit and sand sheds. Planning will take place in 2020. Hopefully the trail will be made in 2021. The cemetery is very important to people. He is happy to report how well it was maintained in 2019. A donated

memorial bench for Joe Yurczyk will be placed this summer. Enforcement of removing memorials is important for winter burials. Finally he thanked Jim Paris and the Road and Bridge crew for ditching in the cemetery. It has removed a lot of water. Hautala enjoys working with the current Board.

**Chairman Soderling:** Submitted a written report (attached to these minutes). In addition to his written report, he explained he would like to maybe see a raise in the levy for saving for long range goals/purchases. No action will be taken on the issue tonight, but he would like the residents to consider this as an option. Soderling thanked Jim Paris for the hard work he put in with the Road and Bridge department this year. Being the Road and Bridge liaison is really a "boots on the ground" position. Gordy Imberg also thanked Paris for his full time presence at the township. There were no questions on the reports. Jim Paris added a comment that there are hopes to finish the family bathroom before the Open House.

**Motion** by Chuck Larson, seconded by Jim Paris to accept the 2019 reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Appropriation of funds for 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Halloween Celebrations and any other donations**

**Motion** by Walter Hautala, seconded by Luke Soderling to transfer \$1,400.00 from General Fund to the Community Celebration Fund.

*Discussion* – There was no transfer made in 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Old Business**

**Broadband** – Discussed during the Chairman's 2019 report. Luke Soderling encouraged residents to show interest in the broadband study. There were no questions on this topic.

#### **New Business**

**New Fund for Equipment** – Luke Soderling explained that at the March Board Meeting the Board decided to stop the interfund debt the Fire Department has for their fire engine that was purchased in 2015. Currently there is \$111,996.10 saved in the checking account as pay back. There are thoughts of taking this money and put it towards equipment. The topic of where to put the money is currently tabled. Jim Paris said he would like to set a fund up like Harvey did for the new town hall building. That was done during an annual meeting. Moderator Imberg suggested making a motion to allow the Town Board to appropriate the money as needed when necessary. **Motion** by Kirstie Hall, seconded by Chuck Larson give the Board the authority to create equipment fund(s) as needed. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Report of 2019 Township Election**

Election Judge Kirstie Hall read the Election results of the 37 total votes casted (attached to these minutes).

Supervisor for a Term of 3 years:	Jim Paris	36
	Write-In	0
Clerk for a Term of 2 years:	Emily Highland	37
	Write-In	0

The results will be canvassed after the annual meeting.

#### **Comments**

Kirstie Hall explained she works from home and needs internet to do so. She feels getting broadband in the area would be a great asset.

Emily Highland explained the trophies and pictures from the old hall are available for the taking. Anything remaining will be given to the historical society. Gordy Imberg suggested putting an ad in the East Range Shopper notifying residents that are not in attendance.

Moderator Imberg asked for anymore comments. No other comments.

**Set Reconvened Meeting** – No reconvened meeting needed.

#### **Set date, time and place for the 2020 Election and Annual Meeting**

Election tentatively set for Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Polls open from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Emily Highland requested to lower voting hours due to two consecutive years of low voter turnout. She explained the polls legally have to be open from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Nita Larson suggested reminding residents absentee voting is available. **Motion** by Kirstie Hall, seconded by Nita Larson to set voting hours from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM with an emphasis on absentee voting available the Saturday before the election. Motion carried unanimously.

Annual Meeting Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 8:30 P.M.

**Motion** by Luke Soderling, seconded by Jim Paris to hold the Annual Meeting following the election at 8:30 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn**

**Motion** by Todd Hall, seconded by Yvonne Hines to adjourn the annual meeting at 9:36 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

\*All attachments are located in the minute book.

Emily Highland

Attest by Clerk:



3/12/2020

Date:

Gordy Imberg  
Moderator: Gordy Imberg

At 9:38 PM the Board of Canvass was called to order.

Clerk Highland issued the Oath of Canvass to the Supervisors.

**Motion** by Supervisor Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to accept the election results. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board of Canvass adjourned at 9:41 PM.

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF SAINT LOUIS  
TOWN OF BIWABIK**

The Board of Audit was conducted on Monday, January 13, 2020 consisting of the Biwabik Township Officials, Saint Louis County, Minnesota.

The following report is in detail of accounts audited and allowed, and contains the statements of the fiscal affairs for the Township:

The total amount of taxes levied for the **GENERAL FUND** and **ROAD & BRIDGE FUND**, and also money paid into the **GENERAL FUND, ROAD & BRIDGE FUND, PUBLIC SAFETY FUND, COMMUNITY CELEBRATION FUND, CEMETERY BEAUTIFICATION FUND, SPECIAL FUNDS** and **PETTY CASH** from all sources during 2019 was **\$342,000.00** ♦

As of January 1, 2020, the account balances (totaling \$645,186.94) at the designated depositories are as follows:

**AMERICAN BANK OF THE NORTH, BIWABIK, MINNESOTA**

The balance is the sum of the all accounts:

Business Interest Checking Account	\$546,955.93
Business Savings Account (Reserve Fund)	\$15,586.22
Business Savings Account (General Fund)	\$5,762.97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$568,305.12</b>

**FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF GILBERT, GILBERT, MINNESOTA**

The balance is the sum of the all accounts:

Certificate of Deposit Account (FD)	\$43,529.55
Certificate of Deposit Account (RF)	\$11,458.34
Certificate of Deposit Account (EMR)	\$21,893.93

**TOTAL \$76,881.82**

As of January 1, 2020, the cash balance in the Petty Cash Fund is \$100.00.

**Note:** **GENERAL FUND** includes: **General Government** (*Supervisors, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Elections, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Attorney, Town Hall and Grounds*), **Recreation, and Cemetery. PUBLIC SAFETY: FIRE/EMR. SPECIAL FUNDS** includes: **Fire Special Fund, First Responders Special Fund, Fire Engine, Reserve Fund, Town Hall Building Fund.**

The Board of Supervisors and Residents of Biwabik Township approved the following 2019 Budget and Levy for Biwabik Township at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

	Approved Budget 2019	Approved Levy 2019
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$143,091.00</b>	<b>\$91,930.00</b>
Government	\$129,200.00	\$81,410.00
First Responders	\$7,800.00	\$4,150.00
Recreation	\$5,000.00	\$3,870.00
Cemetery	\$6,000.00	\$2,500.00
<b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>	<b>\$301,862.00</b>	<b>\$220,480.00</b>
<b>FIRE FUND</b>	<b>\$43,400.00</b>	<b>\$29,590.00</b>
FIRE ENGINE	\$12,000.00	
TOWN HALL (Capital Fund)	\$10,000.00	-----
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$498,353.00</b>	<b>\$342,000.00</b>

The Board of Supervisors and Residents of Biwabik Township approved the following 2020 Budget and Levy for Biwabik Township at the 2019 Annual Meeting:

DEPARTMENT	APPROVED 2020 BUDGET	APPROVED 2020 LEVY
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$148,611.00</b>	<b>\$91,930.00</b>
Government		
First Responders		\$4,150.00
Recreation		\$3,870.00
Cemetery		\$2,500.00
<b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>	<b>\$307,992.00</b>	<b>\$220,480.00</b>
<b>FIRE</b>	<b>\$43,400.00</b>	<b>\$29,590.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,003.00</b>	<b>\$342,000.00</b>

### Proposed 2021 Budget and Levy

The Biwabik Township Board of Supervisors are proposing the following 2021 Budget and Levy at the 2020 Annual Meeting:

DEPARTMENT	PROPOSED 2021 BUDGET	PROPOSED 2021 LEVY
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$142,108.00</b>	<b>\$91,930.00</b>
<b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>	<b>\$307,992.00</b>	<b>\$196,480.00</b>
Road & Bridge Truck		\$24,000.00
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY (FIRE/EMR)</b>	<b>\$49,900.00</b>	<b>\$29,590.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000.00</b>	<b>\$342,000.00</b>

As in the past several years, the Levy will not be increased.

### Township Officers

**Supervisors:**  
Walter Hautala  
Jim Paris, Vice  
Luke Soderling, Chair

**Clerk:**  
Emily Highland

**Treasurer:**  
Yvonne Hines

# Annual Meeting for Biwabik Township, March 10, 2020

## Road & Bridge:

### 2019 In Review:

Purchased a new 2020 International tandem axle dump truck in December of 2018. We had hoped to have it for use during the 2019/2020 winter but it is tied up at the vendor installing the dump box and snow plow package equipment.

Utilized our 2 Road and Bridge employees for routine snow removal during normal snow events. Main roads opened and then driveways. Utilized an additional 2 temporary employees for big snow events. Main roads and driveways done at the same time.

Ditching project on Cypress Lane with 1 temporary employee.

Significant repairs to the 1-ton truck: new fuel pump, injectors & lines, & turbo; 4x4 vacuum shift controls on wheel ends. R&B installed new brakes.

Purchased pallet forks and post hole auger for the Bobcat Skid steer in March.

Large scale brushing project on Hutter side of Township in June.

Culvert replacement as needed.

Addition of Class 5 on parts of Walnut Lane, Judd Road, Balsam Lane, & Pettit Road and all of Ash Lane. Stockpile of Class 5 in the Township yard. The Township's low bid supplier of Class 5 did not have any available. Township purchased Class 5 from the next bidder.

On-site grader training for employees.

Purchased new "stinger" blades for grader for routine grading of Township Roads.

Probationary employee had probation extended up to 6 months. Conditions did not work out and employee was able to resign prior to completion of second 6 month period.

New employee hired in October. On probation until April 21, 2020. New employee is working out well.

An increase in maintenance contract with St. Louis County for 2020 from \$1300.00 to \$1600.00/mile for a total of \$12,000.00/year payable in January of 2021. We received \$9,750.00 in January of 2020.

An increase in snowplowing rates from \$150.00 to \$200.00 (\$200.00 to \$250.00 after 10/31).

### 2020 Preview:

Receive our new dump truck in time for Class 5 hauling and for the 2020/2021 winter season.

Continue adding Class 5 on Township Roads that need it.

Continue brushing, ditching and culvert replacement/addition where needed.

Evaluate and purchase 2 attachments for the grader: straight plow for the front & roller for the back.

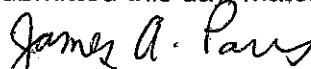
Management policies: Culvert Policy, Sign Reflectivity/Breakaway Posts, Road Plan

Establish an equipment fund (similar to New Town Hall Fund) to help fund equipment replacement

### Management Group (Part time employees):

3 part time employees (Josh Jarvala, Zack Jackson, and Gordy Imberg) were all utilized for lawn mowing, trimming, snow shoveling, painting, and other jobs.

Submitted this day, March 10, 2020

  
James A. Paris, Board Supervisor

This has been good and productive year. Great improvements to the road system have been made by Jim and the road crew through brushing and addressing sections of the roads that need to be improved. Long range planning is being worked on to ensure we don't get behind as far as we have in the past on maintenance projects. I can't think of someone better for this position and am thankful to Jim for his dedication and hard work. The Recreation and Cemetery have been well organized and kept up by Walt and the crew. Improvements to the recreation areas are always in the works.

The old hall is gone! This was the second to last step in completing the new hall project. With the old hall gone the parking lot can be expanded and that will complete the new hall project. The new hall has been very well used and well received. It is certainly a blessing for our community.

The merger of the Fire and EMR has been completed and new bylaws are in place. This allows each department to operate as one fiscally yet remain autonomous in leadership.

I have been serving as a member of the LTE broadband coalition. This group has pooled resources and has received matching funds from the Blandin Foundation. The group is comprised of cities and townships from all over the Range. The goal of this coalition is to contract with a consultant to create a feasibility study which we can present to internet providers. We hope this will lure one in to provide better internet for our communities. This is a good first step in a long road in securing faster internet for the township.

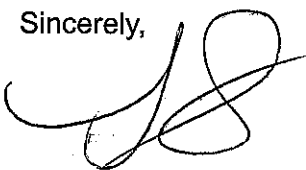
It is a personal goal of mine, and one I feel is shared by my fellow board members, that we spend the money the township has wisely and effectively. This is leading us to work to set aside money for future large expenditures, like equipment and building repairs. We also see the importance of long range planning for our road system. Much maintenance has been deferred in the past and as left us with a backlog of projects. Little by little we are working to improve the infrastructure of the roads. This started with the brushing that was done last summer and will move into ditching and adding gravel to road sections one area at a time.

Supervisor pay. I know this is a sticky wicket but it needs to be addressed. My big project with the new town hall is nearing the end, so I feel I'm in a good position to address this as I won't be personally impacted by this in the near future as best as I can see it.

Much of the deferred maintenance on the roads is directly tied to the sheer number of hours needed to be invested by the supervisor liaison for the road and bridge. This last year Jim spent many, many hours on the road flagging for the brusher and planning the best and most cost effective ways to brush the road right of ways. I feel this is an area where the compensation for a supervisor is insufficient for the amount of work required. To do the job properly this supervisor will be taken advantage of. We understand this is not a paid position and I don't suggest changing the supervisors stipend. I think a pay rate for special projects is in order and would be regulated by the members of the board not directly involved in the project. I have been asking for the last few months for a citizen committee to be formed to investigate this and give the board a suggestion as to how we should go about this. I again put this to the citizens of Biwabik Township and ask for your input.

I'm optimistic for the future of the Township. I see investments being made in our community and look forward to this next year and all the exciting things that are coming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JL' or similar, written in a cursive style.