

Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Biwabik Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, August 10, 2020

Call to Order: 5:30 PM by Chairman Soderling

Present: Supervisors Hautala, Paris, and Soderling, Clerk Highland and Treasurer Hines, and 3 Guests; Kevin Merritt, Darlene Yurczyk, Patricia Undeland

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Special Agenda Request: Darlene Yurczyk and Patricia Undeland were present to talk about the cemetery. Chairman Soderling offered to discuss it early so they had the option to leave if interested. Yurczyk requested the two original benches in the Bertha Hill Memorial get overhauled. Clerk Highland explained that was the original plan when Yurczyk discussed donating a bench. However, due to Covid-19 that project got put on the back burner especially since there was not Memorial Day service this year. Foreman Merritt updated the Board that the dead trees have been removed. Yurczyk requested to pick out a tree to replace the one by her husband's grave site. The Cemetery Beautification Fund will be used for the replacement of trees. Yurczyk and Hautala are thinking of a way to create a plot map with names for up in the cemetery. The Board thanked Undeland for working on the flowers and all agree it looks really nice. She suggested the flowers would look nicer if the wishing well was painted.

Minutes: Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the July 13, 2020 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report: Treasurer Hines went over the June Financial Report with the Board.

Opening Balance 07/01/2020	\$ 503,214.95
Receipts	\$ 90,421.99
Disbursements	\$ 45,569.33
Ending Balance 07/31/2020	\$ 548,067.61
Deposits in Transit	\$ 500.00
Outstanding Checks	\$ 3,022.27
Petty Cash	\$ - 100.00
Total Checking Acct.	\$ 550,491.56
Total Investments	\$ 98,560.79

The Clerk and Treasurer are in balance with the bank.

Clerk Highland explained there was an error of \$1.68 made during the Election Judge payroll. Election Judges do not pay taxes and Highland accidentally took taxes out of an individual's payroll. It has since been fixed. However, because the issue was fixed on July 31, 2020 in CTAS it won't reflect (clear) in the bank until August 3, 2020.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Soderling to approve the financial report for July 2020 and file it for audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Check 28190 from December 2019 has not been cashed yet. It is past the six month threshold for cashing. The check will need to be voided from CTAS. In doing so, the beginning balance for 2020 will change by \$200.00. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Soderling to void check 28190 for \$200.00. Motion carried unanimously. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Soderling to change the beginning 2020 balance from \$545,309.32 to \$545,509.32. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Clerk Highland reviewed the claims with the board. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to pay claims as presented for \$18,685.70. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Road & Equipment- Foreman Merritt reported they are hauling winter sand and mixing it with salt. More class 5 needs to be hauled. The new truck is working well.

Clerk Highland submitted to the Board a request to sign off on the County Road Maintenance agreement. There is an assumption on the Board's end that the paperwork got lost in the shuffle with the county dealing with a strike last winter. Paris requested sending past correspondence with the signed agreement showing we were waiting for the county.

Fire- Chairman Soderling reported there is an issue with the City of Biwabik trying to do a live burn training within our township without properly notifying the chief of our Department. The township may opt out of having simulcast with the City. There is an option to simulcast with Gilbert.

First Responders- No report

Recreation-

Walking Trail – Supervisor Hautala reported the trail estimate came in at \$98,500.00. It would be 10' wide, ADA approved, paved, a whole loop for exercise purposes. He feels we have done a lot of leg work and the trail could be completed this year. IRRRB is offering grants for these types (environmental trail) of projects right now. Hautala thinks Gary Lamppa would be a good resource to use for writing the grant for this project. Chairman Soderling is concerned that if we use IRRRB monies on a trail that there might not be monies available in the future for more needed projects. Supervisor Paris feels a broken down invoice is needed so there can be an accurate in-kind cost. Soderling agreed and thinks it is hard to justify a trail for near \$100,000.00. There was discussion on ways to possibly make the trail cheaper i.e. gravel path and one way trail. Paris suggested asking IRRRB how much they would be willing to offer on the trail. Soderling would like to see a price on the different trail options discussed above. Hautala would also like to see a bocce ball court and gazebo placed where the old hall was if it doesn't get turned into a parking lot. Soderling agreed he would like to see more family orientated options available at the township.

Open House – Held after Covid - 19

Cemetery-

Replace Dead/Missing Trees – Discussed earlier

Bench – Discussed earlier

Supervisor Paris requested to discuss the Memorial Flags at the Cemetery. If the flags were to be left up from Memorial Day to Fourth of July the policy will need to be changed. Soderling is worried about family members that travel just for Memorial Day. They may not be available to pick up stars after the Fourth of July. He would like to see the policy stay the same. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris to keep bronze flag holders and flags up from Memorial Day through Fourth of July. No second, motion failed.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

New Town Hall Building – Quotes from Floor to Ceiling were submitted for fixtures and plumbing in the family bath. Soderling feels the plumbing items are high priced and Floor to Ceiling would have to hire out a plumber for installation. That price is not included in their quote. Chairman Soderling suggested purchasing plumbing items from Approve Plumbing. Paris feels there may be a conflict of interest since Soderling has already seen the prices from Floor to Ceiling. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to hire Floor to Ceiling to install the counter top, grab bars and mirror for \$1124.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Highland requested to purchase new soap dispensers for all bathrooms and one for the kitchen. The current ones in the bathroom leak and turn the soap rusty.

Sign Retro-Reflectivity – No update

Culvert Policy review/edit – No update.

Resident Yurczyk asked a question about culverts. She believes the one at the end of her driveway may need to be replaced because it is old. Soderling explained the Board is working on a culvert policy. Paris added county road culverts

are a different situation, of which Yurczyk lives on. Merritt explained in the past the township only installs the first culvert and after that it is the responsible of the land owner.

Broadband Info – Cables are being buried in the area. This project was set in place before the coalition started. The speed test for our coverage area went so well that they are opening the test up to the whole state.

ATV Trail – No update

Fire Engine Fund – Supervisor Paris had figured out the break down on returning the Fire Engine funds to both the General Savings account and the Reserve Fund (attached to these minutes). Clerk Highland feels the payment percentages can go back into the funds they came from because that is what Road and Bridge did a few years ago. Chairman Soderling would like to give the total in the Fire Engine Fund to the Reserve Fund so it can be used by any department, important projects, or emergencies. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to move \$111,996.10 from the Fire Engine Fund in the Checking account to the American Bank Reserve Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

CARES Act – Clerk Highland explained she has started an object code to track spending for Covid-19 expenditures. Chairman Soderling feels it is hassle to apply and we won't spend enough to warrant then need of CARES act funding. Supervisor Paris thinks it is a good idea to at least track it.

LED lights in garage and fire hall – We are still waiting for a second quote. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to close window for quotes opportunity by next meeting (September 21, 2020). Motion carried unanimously.

Parking Lot – Chairman Soderling has been working on figuring out the proper spacing in the parking lot per our town hall's occupancy. We need a 5 (people) to 1 (vehicle) ratio, equaling 30 spots. Two permanent handicap spots are needed as well. Paris suggested angled parking in an effort to keep the parking lot size the same. Nemanich's quote for turning the old hall area into a parking lot came back higher than expected. Mesabi Bituminous could possibly be used to stripe the lot. If the parking lot is not extended the old hall area can be used for a bocce ball court and gazebo as discussed earlier.

Dyno Nobel road grading – Supervisor Paris reported the state legislature^{are} allows snowplow contracts, but there is no statute for road grading. We legally cannot provide that service for them.

New Business:

Snowplow Contracts- Supervisor Paris gave statistics on the snowplow rates from last year. The \$200.00 per drive way for residents is not out of line. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to keep snowplow contracts the same.

Discussion- The price for the church is disproportionate to the time it takes to clear the parking lot. The township is also not on call for them. Clerk Highland can add on their contract that if special requests are made they may be charged an overage fee in the spring. Chairman Soderling would like to see the price for residents go down if the price of the church goes up. He doesn't want to see the township making money off of plowing. Paris doesn't agree with juggling prices like that.

Motion carried unanimously.

An ad will be placed in the East Range Shopper encouraging to mail in contracts.

MAT District 10 Meeting via Zoom, Aug 27, 2020 @ 6:00 PM – Just informational.

Truck Sale/Purchase – Supervisor Paris reported the truck was put on MinnBid with a reserve of \$14,000.00, but only reached \$7,000.00 this time. A private buyer contacted Foreman Merritt and offered \$13,000.00. Supervisor Hautala would like to see the truck go for more, but realizes we would be out the \$750.00 admin fee to MinnBid. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to sell the dump truck for \$13,000.00. Motion carried unanimously.

In regards to purchasing a different dump/plow truck, Supervisor Paris has a single axel truck available for \$25,000.00 that has plow, wing, and box sander. It came from City of Mt. Iron and Merritt had maintained it through Skubic's. Supervisor Hautala feels that we already purchased a tandem and should get a second one to haul more gravel and it would be beneficial in the winter for plowing because it would be heavier. Soderling asked Merritt if there are any benefits for using a smaller truck. Foreman Merritt needs a smaller truck for the smaller roads, especially those around the lakes. Hautala feels over all the township would be better off in the summer with two tandems. Soderling iterated that Merritt would know best what kind of equipment the township needs. Merritt replied a single axel is best for the smaller roads, there is more time in the summer to haul so multiple loads in a single axel truck is not out of line. He also knows the history of the truck and it is a good option. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling to purchase truck from Jim Paris for \$25,000.00. Hautala would not second the motion until he sees a price on a tandem truck. Discussion ensued about validity of using a smaller truck on smaller roads, time frame of truck being available, and Hautala researching the price of a tandem. The meeting will be recessed in order for Hautala to do research.

Election Payroll – Clerk Highland reported payroll for Election Judges will be processed after the Primary Election on August 11, 2020. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the Election Judge payroll. Motion carried unanimously.

Covid – 19 - No update

Other Concerns –

Clerk Highland submitted a Resolution to approve the 2021 Levy set during the Annual Meeting. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to adopt Resolution 2020-06 setting the 2021 Levy at \$342,000.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Highland has been receiving calls and correspondence regarding a SAMS renewal. It is so we can obtain federal funding. However, when she has looked into renewing it she discovered it is in Treasurer Hines' name and there is a fee to renew. She never remembers going through a process to even set up a SAMS account.

Supervisor Hautala reported on Class 5 availability. Jacobsen's pit does not have any Class 5. Uland said the township can get Class 5 from them for \$8.61 - \$9.50 per yard. We would be able to keep a loader on site as well. Currently we are able to get Class 5 from Nemanich for \$8.50 per yard and they load us. There is a potential price break after 1,000 yards.

Correspondence: Clerk Highland reviewed correspondence with the Board.

- MAT
 - District 10 Meeting Notice
 - Township Magazine – Cares Act Article
- Eagle Waste & Recycling – Garbage service request
- St. Louis County email
 - Public Health Emergency Communications (weekly email to clerk)
 - County Road Maintenance Agreement

Hall Rentals: None

Comments from the Audience: Darlene Yurczyk asked Clerk Highland if she has a named map in the office for the cemetery. There is not a named map for the cemetery.

Adjourn: Chairman Soderling recessed the meeting at 8:34 P.M. The meeting will continue on Monday, August 24, 2020 at 5:30 P.M.



Chairperson:

9/21/2020 

Date:

Attest by Clerk:



Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, August 24, 2020

Call to Order: Chairman Soderling reconvened the meeting at 5:30
Present: Supervisors Hautala, Paris, and Soderling, Clerk Emily Highland and
2 guests; Richard & Doris Freeburg

Recessed Items:

Truck Purchase – Supervisor Hautala reported he originally wanted a tandem for more power to push snow on the roads. However, since the last meeting he went on a ride along with Foreman Merritt and realized a smaller truck is a much better option for the smaller roads in the township. He recommends purchasing the truck from Supervisor Paris because the truck has been well maintained, Merritt knows the history of the truck, and it has low miles. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to purchase the 1999 single axel dump/plow truck from Jim Paris for \$25,000.00

Discussion- Paris requested the purchase is made from ALJ Enterprises LLC, his company rather than him personally. Motion carried upon the following vote:

Supervisor Hautala	Aye
Supervisor Paris	Abstain (conflict of interest)
Chairman Soderling	Aye

Motion by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to pay for the truck out of the Road and Bridge Checking account.

Discussion- The payment for the truck we just sold went into the checking account so the township is only covering about half of the payment. Motion carried unanimously.

Family Bathroom – Chairman Soderling submitted prices for plumbing fixtures. There were multiple options for a faucet and toilet. He suggested going with a Zurn faucet and the Board agreed to a comfort height toilet. Fixture prices came in at \$1324.00 from Approve Plumbing and \$1486.00 from Floor to Ceiling. Approve Plumbing's install price would be \$875.00. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to accept Approve Plumbing for \$2199.00 to plumb the family bath with fixtures, paid out of the Town Hall Building Fund. Motion carried upon the following vote:

Supervisor Hautala	Aye
Supervisor Paris	Aye
Chairman Soderling	Abstain (Conflict of interest)

Walking Trail – Supervisor Hautala has contact Gary Lamppa for suggestions on getting a grant for the trail. There are monies available for an environmental trail and Lamppa feels the parking lot edition could be tied into the trail project. There are no monies available for a gazebo and bocce ball court. Vermilion Township did a lot of fundraising for their gazebo. Chairman Soderling has measured off the current parking lot and believes 30 spots should fit in it. Soderling would like to see a quote for striping the lot. He still really likes the idea of gazebo/shade area. There was discussion as to who should head the parking lot project. Foreman Merritt seems to be the one that can get a hold of Nemanich so Paris will be the lead supervisor for this. Chairman Soderling likes the idea of a walking trail, but still feels it is really expensive. He would hate to see the Township miss out on other grant opportunities in the future (fire hall additions) because we decided to use them for a trail that may or may not get used heavily. Hautala would still like to inquire about how much money they township could possible get for a trail. Further discussion was had about future grants, itemizing the quote for in-kind, community input on

trail, and how often it would actually be used. Soderling finished discussion by saying regardless of how much funding is available he will vote against the trail. It is just not fiscally responsible to spend township money on it. The price needs to be brought down. Hautala will ask for a price variation of a gravel trail vs tarred. He will also contact Lamppa about grants available now and ones that may be available in the future for the Township.

County Roads – When Clerk Highland sent back the signed agreement she had also sent back the original correspondence explaining we will wait for a contract to sign. The message also entailed that the township planned on staying at the rate for one year and will ask for another increase. The county reached out to her concerned about this. They feel the contract should be set for a few years at the agreed upon rate and would like to know sooner rather than later if the township plans to continually ask for more money so they can make a plan to take back their roads. Supervisor Paris explained that in his meeting held with Commissioner McDonald and Maintenance Supervisor Foldesi there was an agreement that a 2.5 annual increase was not out of line. Clerk Highland feels that since we are already past the June cut off to ask for an increase we are covered through 2021. Paris discussed asking in June 2021 asking the county for a 5% raise (2.5 for each year). Soderling feels the county doesn't need to know our future plans. As of right now the agreement will stay the same. No action taken.

Other Concerns –

Road Signs: Clerk Highland received a request for a children at play sign on Hemlock. There has been fast traffic on the road. **Motion** by Chairman Soderling, seconded by Supervisor Paris to purchase children at play signs. Motion carried unanimously. Foreman Merritt and Paris will look for legal placement of signs on the road.

Comments from the Audience:

Richard Freeburg asked about the supervisor positions. Chairman Soderling explained the charimanship is no longer on a rotation. Liaisons will get set yearly and the Road and Bridge liaison gets a special stipend for the extra hours it takes to lead that department.

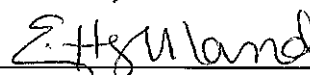
Adjourn: Chairman Soderling adjourned the meeting at 6:49 P.M.



Chairperson:

9/21/2020

Date:



Attest by Clerk:

