

Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes (Reorganization)
Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, April 12, 2021

Call to Order: 5:31 PM by Vice-Chairman Paris

Present: Supervisors Hautala, Paris, and Hall, Clerk Highland, Treasurer Bluhm and
Five guests: Richard & Doris Freeburg, Gordy Imberg, Kevin Merritt, and Kirstie Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Designation of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Township Attorney:

Supervisor Paris introduced new officer's Bluhm and Hall. He thanked them for coming on and thanked outgoing officials Hines and Soderling. Supervisor Hautala agreed and thanked Clerk Highland for the extra work she has been doing getting Hall and Bluhm acclimated.

Supervisor Paris would like to see Hautala as Chairman especially if there is an open house this year for the new building.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to designate Supervisor Hautala as Biwabik Township's Chairperson and Supervisor Jim Paris as Vice Chairperson. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Chairman Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to designate Couri & Ruppe as the township attorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Special Agenda Requests: Eshquaguma Country Club (ECC) is planning on holding a raffle on July 3, 2021. They contacted the office to get a permit, but according to Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) we do not designate gambling permits. Supervisor Hall explained the state gives out gambling permits for raffles. ECC also submitted their liquor license for renewal. **Motion** by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the 2021 liquor license for ECC. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to approve the January 28, 2021 Board of Audit Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve the February 8, 2021 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Chairman Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve the March 8, 2021 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report: Treasurer Hall went over the March Financial Report with the Board.

Opening Balance 03/01/2021	\$ 462,046.80
Receipts	\$ 1,507.85
Disbursements	\$ 33,720.31
Ending Balance 03/31/2021	\$ 429,834.34
Deposits in Transit	\$ 350.00
Outstanding Checks	\$ 1,349.18
Petty Cash	\$ - 100.00
Total Checking Acct.	\$ 430,733.52
Total Investments	\$ 210,883.50

The Clerk and Treasurer are in balance with the bank. Clerk Highland reported there were a few special claims that were sent without a treasurer signature because we don't have a valid treasurer on the signature cards (Treasurer Hines chose not to stay on to train Treasurer Bluhm). Bluhm and Highland have been in contact with the bank and they only require two signatures. Clerk Highland requested that all necessary officers make it into the Bank to sign off on the signature cards as soon as they are made available.

Signature cards will be changed to reflect the following:

Remove Yvonne Hines, Luke Soderling, and Linda Ott
Add Julie Bluhm, Jessica Forsline, and Walter Hautala

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve the financial report for March 2021 file it for audit, adopt signature card changes, and acknowledge checks 28629 – 28635 were not signed by a treasurer, but are approved payments. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Clerk Highland went over claims with the board. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to pay claims as presented for \$6,102.47. Motion carried unanimously.

Adopt Schedule of Town Board Meetings:

Meetings will be held the second Monday of the every month at 5:30 PM. Due to a schedule conflict, the July, September, and October meetings will be held on the third Monday at 5:30 P.M. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to adopt the meeting schedule from May 2021 to April 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

Set Compensation and Mileage Reimbursement:

Due to the 2020 re-organizational meeting being held so late in the year (August), Supervisor Paris suggested not increasing any pay rates at this time. There was discussion about the part-time hours cap. All current employees have not worked the first quarter of 2021. In order to not exceed the PERA cap of \$5,100.00 it was figured that for the remainder of 2021 employees cannot work more than 43 hours per month. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to keep rates the same as the previous year and increase the part-time monthly hourly cap at 43. Motion carried unanimously.

The township follows the federal mileage rate, which gets set in January.

Designate Official Newspaper, Official Bank(s), and Posting Places:

Treasurer Bluhm reported the depositories are American Bank (checking and savings) and First National Bank of Gilbert (CDs). Clerk Highland has received a publication bid from Hometown Focus. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to acknowledge American Bank and First National Bank of Gilbert as township banks, use the town hall and Lakeland Store as posting places, and accept the Hometown Focus as the legal paper for Biwabik Township. Motion carried unanimously.

Designation of Deputy Officers (Clerk and Treasurer):

Clerk Highland appointed Kirstie Hall as Deputy Clerk.

Treasurer Bluhm appointed Jessica Forsline as Deputy Treasurer.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to acknowledge the deputies for payroll purposes. Motion carried unanimously.

Designation of Department Liaison:

The Supervisors picked the areas they would like to be liaison for. The Department Liaison List for 2021 that is attached to these minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Special Claims Payments:

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to pay recurring bills and special claims list, adding Pete Johnson for \$150.00 (Medicare reimbursement) (attached to these minutes). Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Road & Equipment- Roads are getting graded when able. It has been too wet to do them lately. All roads are getting very rough. The east side of the township is getting brushed. The reclaimer attachment will be available in May. The John Deere tractor could be traded in for about \$8,000.00. Supervisor Paris would like to see both tractors set up with separate attachments (mower and reclaimer) so both can be used at the same time. The Walk-N-Roll has been ordered, but there are ongoing negotiations about where to install it at.

Fire- No report. Clerk Highland received a coop agreement for wildfires from the DNR. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to allow Chief Nygaard to sign the agreement if he agrees with it. Motion carried unanimously.

First Responders- A written report was submitted

Recreation- Chairman Hautala would like to see the rink get some attention this summer.

Cemetery- As new liaison, Supervisor Hall will contact the American Legion and VFW in regards to having an outdoor Memorial service.

Old Business:

Culvert Policy – Clerk Highland received a phone from a resident about a driveway culvert on a County Road. The county is claiming culverts are covered under the Maintenance agreement. There was discussion about past practice and how to move forward with a real policy. The Board was given a copy of Town of White’s culvert policy. They are to make edits for the next meeting. **Tabled**

Open Contract – A special closed meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 5:30 to review the union’s first contract proposal. Supervisor Paris will contact BA Dan to see if he is available. Supervisor Hautala would like to have the Union send us their proposal first.

Sign Retro Reflectivity – No update

Broadband Info (Infrastructure) – Supervisor Hall requested to be liaison for Broadband. Supervisor Paris wondered if broadband funds are covered by the American Rescue monies coming from RAMS.

Brushing Ajax Corner - This project has been taken care of by the Road and Bridge crew. More brushing may be required if there are still blind spots.

New Business:

AWAIR- **Tabled** for discussion in May.

Open Willow Lane – **Motion** by Chairman Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to open Willow Lane on April 13, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

Eshquaquma Country Club Liquor License- Discussed earlier

Clerk Training New Treasurer / Treasurer Training by Diane- Clerk Highland has been training Treasurer Bluhm. The previous treasurer was trained by outgoing Treasurer Williams. The Board at that time did set hours for training. Highland was wondering how many hours she should utilized for training. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to pay Clerk Highland necessary hours for training new treasurer. Motion carried unanimously. Regarding quarterly taxes, Clerk Highland requested the CPA Diane train Julie on these reports. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to pay Treasurer Bluhm for profession training with Diane on quarterly taxes.

Discussion: Supervisor Paris noted that the bill from Fort and Company will be higher due to the training. Motion carried unanimously.

Janitor Resignation – Janitor Hines resigned by March 18, 2021. There are two residents interested in cleaning the hall. Kirstie Hall and Sherrie Lamppa. Kirstie could be in charge of the office area since she has access and can clean outside of office hours. Sherrie Lamppa would primarily be in charge of the main hall area and cleaning after functions. Kirstie would be available for cleaning the main hall should Sherrie be unavailable. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to hire Kirstie Hall and Sherrie Lamppa for janitor positions. Motion carried upon the following vote:

Supervisor Hall	Abstain (Spouse of Kirstie)
Chairman Hautala	Aye
Supervisor Paris	Aye

Open Brush Dump- There have been a lot of calls for the brush dump to open. It has been requested to utilize the dump during the week. Gordy Imberg would still be the brush attendant to deter illegal dumping. He would like the hours set at 10:00 to 2:00 Wednesdays and Saturdays. Clerk Highland feels these hours throughout the whole summer may become tiresome not having a weekend off. She suggested only holding these hours until Mother's day weekend and then if there are other requests for hours try to schedule around them. Hours will be revisited at Monthly Board Meetings. Supervisor Paris feels it is only right if the township offer shelter at the dump if it is expected to keep an employee there. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to purchase an outdoor shelter for the brush dump. Motion carried unanimously.

American Rescue Funds (RAMS) – Chairman Hautala will ask Steve Giorgi for more clarification on this matter.

Building Permit Variance (Juniper Ln.) – Supervisor Hall attempted to attend this meeting on April 8th. However, he was unable to successfully connect.

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization – This meeting will be held on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM.

Covid -19 Vaccine – Supervisor Paris would like to somehow compensate the Road and Bridge crew for getting their Covid-19 vaccines on company time. The crew will be re-compensated for the time it took to get the vaccine as extra time off (comp time).

Other Concerns – Supervisor Paris would just like it noted, for re-organizational purposes, that the Township is ok with current vendors i.e. ICO, Lakes Gas, Portable John, Approve Plumbing.

Correspondence: Clerk Highland went over correspondence with the Board.

- IUOE – Open Labor Contract
- St. Louis County
 - Public Health Emergency Communications (weekly email to clerk)
 - Building permit variance
- MN Dept Health – Sanitary Survey Report (filed in office)
- RAMS Emails
 - American Rescue Plan Funds (2)
 - Broadband Lobby Day
- Lake County Power – Election ballot

Hall Rentals: Joe Leoni – Saturday, April 24, 2021
Nicole Depew – Saturday, May 1, 2021

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to approve the hall rentals with an increase occupancy to 75. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from the Audience: None

Adjourn: Chairman Hautala adjourned the meeting at 8:41 P.M.

*Attachments are located in the minute book

Walter W. Hautala 05/10/2021 E. Highland

Chairperson:

Date:

Attest by Clerk

