

BIWABIK TOWNSHIP ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 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, Erik Erie, Walter Hautala, Gordy Imberg, Julie Bluhm, Chuck & Nita Larson.

Pledge of Allegiance - Recited

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

Luke Soderling nominated Gordy Imberg, supported by Walt Hautala.

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.

Moderator Imberg opened the meeting in prayer over Ukraine.

2021 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

Motion by Todd Hall, seconded by Luke Soderling to waive the reading of the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. No Discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kirstie Hall, seconded by Walt Hautala to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

2021 Financial & Audit Report

Motion by Todd Hall, seconded by Kirstie Hall to waive the reading of all receipts and disbursements and read only the synopsis. Motion carried unanimously.

Julie Bluhm read the synopsis attached to the minutes. No questions.

Motion by Todd Hall, seconded by Kirstie Hall to approve the 2021 Financial and Audit Report. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Proposed 2023 Levy

Julie Bluhm reported there are no proposed changes to the levy from the previous year (\$342,000.00). **Motion** by Luke Soderling, seconded by Kirstie Hall to approve the 2023 levy for a total levy of \$342,000.00 set by the Board of Supervisors. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

2021 Department Reports

Chairman Hautala: Walter Hautala reported on the Recreation departments. Hockey is the most popular recreation service we offer. Over the summer the rink was leveled and we did not use a liner this year. We have two volunteers helping to maintain the rink. John Kuitunen floods it and Tom Carlson snow blows it. The weed issue within the playground area has been addressed and now we have a tiller to use every summer on it. The town hall open house was finally held in 2021. Mark Phillips from IRRRB appreciated being able to see the project from start to finish. He likes to see the IRRRB money stay local. The building committee, Board, residents, politicians, grant providers and architect were invited. The township has another grant application in with the IRRRB to update the parking lot. The project would move the parking lot over to atop of the old hall site. This will help with safety in the winter to keep vehicles away from the garage when equipment is moving in and out on the slippery slope by garage doors. Hautala reported the paved walking trail made from the Hall to the cemetery may still happen. The project is in a federal grant with other projects that include an addition to the Fire Hall and a new fire hydrant on the north side of Hwy 135. These projects will not move forward until there are grant monies available. Two major projects he hopes to see accomplished this coming summer is resurfacing of the tennis courts and placing two picnic shade shelters in the green space around the playground. The resurfacing project is quoted at about \$11,000.00 - \$16,000.00. Hautala is concerned this price may increase with the rise of oil/tar due to the unrest between Russia and Ukraine. The estimate for the shelters is \$45,000.00. Luke Soderling is learning how to build buildings made out of timbers. If we

went this route it would tie into our entry way arch. Hautala would like to look into possible grant opportunities. Unfortunately, CDBG will not give us grants because our mean house hold income is too high. They do offer grants for handicap purposes. There was discussion about if we should ask residents for donations for the shelters. These would be big donations and as a thank you we could name the shelters after the highest donor. Fourth of July and Halloween events were held in 2021. They were on a smaller scale. Emily Highland explained part of the reason Fourth of July was smaller is because she needs more guaranteed volunteers available to help with games. We have gotten compliments on the scaled down version of Halloween. It is less overwhelming without the bounce house.

Supervisor Hall: Reported the township is working on getting a map of the cemetery placed in the cemetery to help families and employees find grave sites. The Fire Department has kept up on trainings throughout the second year of covid. Hall has learned a lot more sitting on the Board than being in the audience. He applauds all employees and elected officials working through the pandemic.

EMR Director Nita Larson: Reported the 2021 call volume was up, a total 70 calls. She feels the raise in calls could be from covid, however our responders never contracted covid on a call. There are currently four active first responders. She is working on recruiting more members. Larson submitted a written report that is attached to these minutes.

Vice-Chairman Supervisor Paris: Submitted a written report for Road & Bridge (attached to the minutes). His main concern is the current unexpected rise in fuel costs. He is hoping the budget will be able to accommodate this change. We set our budgets two years out, so the unexpected war/conflict will affect how we spend our money.

Motion by Kirstie Hall, seconded by Luke Soderling to accept the 2021 reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Appropriation of funds for 4th of July and Halloween Celebrations and any other donations

Clerk Highland explained to the audience the amount that is currently in the Celebration Community Fund (\$720.90) and about how much it costs for each party. The township usually likes to donate to Youth in Action. We give a donation for two students (one from each school district within our township) to attend their annual conference. The price has increased in the past, so she suggested just supporting two students. Highland read a solicitation letter from Mesabi East asking for a \$10,000.00 donation to help pay for a Youth Activities Director. There was much discussion about this topic. The residents felt there wasn't enough information provided. They would have liked to see a prorated rate for our area since we do not have that many children participating. The township also does not have facilities to help facilitate activities. Now that budgets have been cleaned up, Clerk Highland would really like to see the Board work within the budget in 2022. If there happens to be a surplus this request could be revisited next year.

Motion by Luke Soderling, seconded by Kirstie Hall to transfer \$1,500.00 from the General Fund to the Community Celebration Fund.

Discussion- Memorial Day is usually covered by a specific donation. Doris Freeburg noted the amount spent on Fourth of July and Halloween in 2021 did not come close to \$1,5000.00. Highland explained that is because there was not prize money for games during the Fourth of July. If there is a remainder in the Celebration Fund next year a transfer will not have to be made. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kirstie Hall, seconded by Jim Paris to support two students from Youth in Action. Motion carried unanimously.

Tabled Mesabi East Youth Activities Coordinator donation request.

Old Business

Broadband – Luke Soderling feels this is at a standstill. Providers have “purchased” many areas, however they do not have the capability to serve the rural areas. Todd Hall explained the County is waiting for funds from the State for broadband. Then the county will disperse to municipalities.

Recreation use of Township Property – Discussed earlier.

New Business - None

Report of 2021 Township Election

Moderator Imberg read the Election results of the 33 total votes casted (attached to these minutes).

Supervisor for a Term of 3 years:	Walt Hautala	29
	Write-In	4
Clerk for a Term of 2 years:	Emily Highland	32
	Write-In	1

The results will be canvassed after the annual meeting.

Comments

Erik Erie was wondering why the brush dump has to be manned. There was much discussion about this topic. It will stay manned to discourage illegal dumping. Moderator Imberg explained the brush dump is more of a Board Meeting issue than an Annual Meeting topic.

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 14, 2023 Polls open from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM

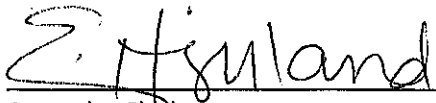
Annual Meeting Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 8:30 P.M.

Motion by Luke Soderling, seconded by Jim Paris to hold the Township Election on March 14, 2023 with polls open from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM and the Annual Meeting following the election at 8:30 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

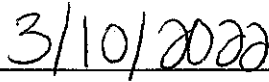
Adjourn

Motion by Richard Freeburg, seconded by Doris Freeburg to adjourn the annual meeting at 9:51 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

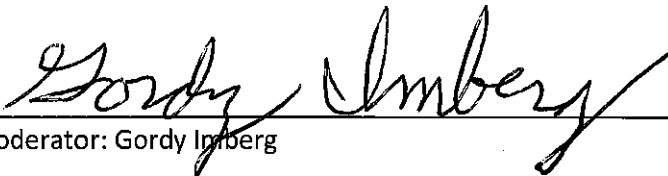
*All attachments are located in the minute book.



Attest by Clerk:



Date:



Moderator: Gordy Imberg

At 9:53 PM the Board of Canvass was called to order.

Clerk Highland issued the Oath of Canvass to the Supervisors.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to accept the election results, declaring Walt Hautala as Supervisor for three years and Emily Highland as Clerk for two years. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board of Canvass adjourned at 9:54 PM.