

Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Biwabik Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, July 18, 2022

Call to Order: 5:30 PM by Chairman Hautala

Present: Supervisors Hall, Hautala and Paris, Clerk Highland and Treasurer Bluhm
3 Guests; Tony Nygaard, Joe Vaida, and Kirstie Hall

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Special Agenda Request:

City of McKinley – Councilman Vaida asked the Township Board if they would be interested in offering fire services in McKinley and use the fire hall as a satellite office. Supervisor Hall questioned how many of the McKinley fighters would be able to help cover the township. Supervisor Paris’ concern is making sure this process would be tackled legally and suggested contact the township attorney. Vaida understands this will probably be a long process and agrees to do it through legal terms. There are few active members on the department and the chances of them helping in the township are slim. The township already does mutual aid for McKinley and show up to their calls, but total absorption would be best. Fire Chief Nygaard explained the amount of calls the City has would not affect the township. The budget for McKinley fire is \$8,300.00. The majority of that is used for wages. Vaida explained the City would submit an annual fee to the Township. The fire hall and building maintenance would still be covered by the City. Vaida’s overall question was if there is any interest at the township level. Paris’ main concern is making sure the process is done legally. Both parties were in agreement that there is interest as long as it can be done on legal terms. Discussion is open and will continue in the future.

Minutes: Motion by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the June 13, 2022 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report: Treasurer Bluhm went over the April Financial Report with the Board.

Opening Balance 06/01/2022	\$ 344,947.79
Receipts	\$ 1,145.32
Disbursements	\$ 50,173.45
Ending Balance 06/30/2022	\$ 295,919.66
Deposits in Transit	\$ - 40.00
Outstanding Checks	\$ 2,593.23
Petty Cash	\$ - <u>100.00</u>
Total Checking Acct.	\$ 298,372.89
Total Investments	\$ 211,532.59

The Clerk and Treasurer are in balance with the bank.

Clerk Highland explained a direct deposit bank account had been closed out. The office re-administered a paper check in July for the June public safety payroll.

Motion by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the financial report for June 2022 and file it for audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Clerk Highland reviewed the claims with the Board. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve claims as presented for \$34,757.40. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Road & Equipment- Supervisor Paris reported grading, hauling gravel, filling graves, and clearing branches have been happening weekly. The crew has fixed a culvert on Elm Drive. A temporary employee is working on the shelter slab areas. The new loader tire is now on.

Fire- No calls for June. The department helped cook for the Fourth of July. Pump testing has been completed. Still looking for a computer. Clerk Highland has made contact with Steve Peterson in regards to getting quotes on a new computer system. Chief Nygaard requested weed whacking at the fire hall.

First Responders- No report.

Recreation- Treasurer Bluhm submitted the financial report for the Fourth of July. Approximately \$811.00 was spent. **Motion** by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the Fourth of July Financial Report. Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Paris explained there was an article in the Ely Echo about how volunteers re-surfaced an old tennis court and turned it into a pickle ball court. The city only had to pay for materials. He is wondering if the township could find volunteers for something like that. Supervisor Hall suggested getting a quote from a different company. Chairman Hautala will see if he can find another quote.

Cemetery- The map is still a work in progress. Treasurer Bluhm submitted the financial report for Memorial Day. Event Coordinator Carlson donated just shy of \$100.00 above the \$200.00 the township allotted. Clerk Highland feels there needs to be a set menu for Memorial Day to help curb over spending. **Motion** by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the Memorial Day Financial Report. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Old Business:

Broadband Info – Supervisor Hall reported the provider CTC created a coverage map for full fiber optic. Basically a triangular coverage to encompass the lakes with in the township. The project would cost about \$2.4 million. They are the provider in the Cherry area. Media Com has created a coverage area that goes through the township, but doesn't cover as much as CTC would. They would use fiber optic for the main line and then only two wire to the house. There is no cost estimate for this project. Supervisor Hall explained Media Com would like a recommendation letter from the Township. Supervisor Paris wondered why the township should support less coverage. Hall would like to support both companies. He feels if both companies were in the area it would offer competitive pricing.

Gazebo/Shade Area– Still waiting on a start date. The contract and half down payment will be taken care of this week. Supervisor Paris would like the contractors to look at the dust control building too.

Boiler Issues – Approve Plumbing submitted an estimate to drain a portion of the boiler system/refill with glycol mixture, test all individual lines under the slab, and cap leaking lines. The estimate may increase because the amount of capping that may need to be done is unknown at this time. **Motion** by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Chairman Hautala to accept the quote from Approve Plumbing for over \$3,500.00 to fix the boiler leak. Motion carried unanimously. Clerk Highland will schedule this for a Thursday when she works full mornings.

AWAIR – Tabled

Updated Resolution 2022-05 – Resolution 2022-05 was updated to reflect the donation of food received from Joan Carlson for Memorial Day. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve Resolution 2022-05. Motion carried unanimously.

Senator Monies – Discussion was had about the money that was awarded to the township. Chairman Hautala is under the understanding that we will have to apply for each individual project. Community Resource Development (CRD) is willing to advocate on behalf of the township for \$5,000.00. They will only charge \$1,000.00 each meeting since we are in limbo as to where we stand with the funds. The senate continues to talk only about infrastructure projects. The only one in our list that qualifies is the fire hydrant. Clerk Highland spoke with Dick Grabko from CRD and he feels the senate accidentally combined the City of Biwabik and Biwabik Township's money in the award letter. Grabko feels that the money is ours even if the Senate miss labeled it because the award letter states Biwabik Township. Lamppa and Grabko

will continue to advocate for us and talk with the senators. Supervisor Hall feels paying CRD is warranted especially if they are able to get our full award. That is too much work to expect the office to track it down. **Motion** by Chairman Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to enter into an agreement with CRD for \$5,000.00 to keep track of our funding from the Senate.

Discussion – Hall wondered if we are only able to get one project will the \$5,000.00 be prorated. Paris is unsure if the payment will be prorated, since they are doing a lot of leg work. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Donation Resolutions 2022 – 07 – **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve Resolution 2022 – 07 accepting a \$50.00 donation for the Fourth of July. Motion carried unanimously.

MATIT Changes to Policy – **Motion** by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to acknowledge changes to the Property Insurance policy. Motion carried unanimously.

IRS/SS Issue – Clerk Highland explained to the Board there is an issue with a past clerk's social security. No social security was paid on her wages for three years. She has been in contact with social security and they are requesting new W-2s for those years. It was suggested to hire Diane from Fort and Company to handle this since she is our current CPA.

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to hire Diane from Fort and Company to fix the Social Security issue on Tracie Birchem's past wages and submit new W-2s to Social Security.

Discussion – There is a company portion and an individual portion (50/50). The Board feels they are only responsible for the township portion since Birchem received her portion on each check. They called Birchem during the meeting and everyone was in agreement with this. Motion carried unanimously.

Mileage Increase – Clerk Highland reported the federal mileage rate increased for the remainder of the year. Mileage will now be \$0.625 per mile. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to set the mileage rate to \$0.625 for the rest of 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

Propane Locked in for 2022 Heating Season – Clerk Highland has contacted Lakes Gas and we are locked in at \$1.959 for the season. **Motion** by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to keep Lakes Gas as the township's propane provider for 2022-23 with a rate of \$1.959 per gallon. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Election Judges for Training, Primary and General Election 2022 – **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to appoint the following people to be trained as Election Judges and used for the Primary and General Elections in 2022; Jean Korpi (head), Kathleen Wagner (head), Angel Imberg, Richard Wilson, Margaret Wilson, Tiffany Olson, Laurie Greben, Robyn Carlson, Myra Adams, Mary Suhodolc, Susan Lewicki, and Sharon Mount. Motion carried unanimously.

2022 Half Year Budget Review – Clerk Highland reviewed a few budget line items with the Board. It was discussed that the \$10,000.00 budget for buildings will be used for the new picnic shelters. Supervisor Paris would like to see a more accurate budget for fuel since we have almost completely depleted it. Paris would like to compensate our Road and Bridge Employees if they are denied the front line worker pay from the State. It was suggested that this could wait till the end of the year to see if there is a budget surplus anywhere.

Motion by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to move the capital outlay for buildings and structure \$10,000.00 from the town hall to township grounds (all with in general fund). Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Supervisor Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to move the \$10,000.00 for heavy machinery to motor fuels within Fund 201. Motion carried unanimously.

Other discussion included thinking about what to set the snowplow contracts at this year due to the high gas prices. The price for contracts will need to be set at the August meeting.

Other Concerns – Supervisor Hall explained he has other obligations the night of the RAMS meeting. He was wondering if the Board felt he needed to give up the RAMS position. The Board feels that as long as he is receiving correspondence and reporting to the Town Board on things of importance he can continue to stay as the RAMS contact point. He also

informed the Board that there will be a tour of Twin Metals on August 25th with a meet and greet. This is sponsored by the Better in our Backyard group.

Correspondence: The correspondence was reviewed by the Board. Discussion about frontline worker pay was had. No action taken.

- St. Louis County
 - Asuma campground approval
 - Ordinance 62 Draft - Public Hearing
- RAMS – multiple emails
- Enbridge – Pipeline safety
- MATIT - Changes to system
- Couri & Ruppe – Legal Seminar October 1 from 9 – 4
- Catherine Sheppard – Emails regarding Senator money

Hall Rentals:

- Sarah Walls – Saturday, July 30, 2022
- Marie Elg – Saturday, September 24, 2022

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hautala to approve hall rentals. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from the Audience: None

Adjourn: Chairman Hautala adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Walter W. Hautala
Chairperson:

8-8-2022
Date:

E. Highland
Attest by Clerk:

