

Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes (Reorganization)
Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, April 10, 2023

Call to Order: 5:30 PM by Chairman Hautala

Present: Supervisors Hautala, Paris, and Hall, Clerk Highland, Treasurer Bluhm and seven guests: Chuck Larson, Erik Wedge, Joe & Ellen Nygaard, Alan Nelson, Gordy Imberg, and Tony Nygaard.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Designation of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Township Attorney:

Supervisor Paris nominated Todd Hall as Chairperson. There were no other nominations after three calls. Hall accepted the nomination.

Supervisor Paris nominated Walter Hautala for Vice-Chairperson. There were no other nominations after three calls. Hautala accepted the nomination.

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

Special Agenda Requests:

Joe Nygaard – Per concern of Minnesota Health Department 327.20 Rules, there needs to be a tornado shelter available for the residents of a manufactured home park. Nygaard will need to either build an underground shelter or use the town hall as a shelter. In order to use the town hall the state would need to approve the 1.8 mile travel to the hall. Chairman Hall noted we do not give out building permits.

Supervisor Paris is unsure the hall would qualify as a shelter, especially with all the windows. Supervisor Hautala noted in the past he offered the old hall as shelters for the local camps if the need was warranted. Paris added we would need to treat the use as a rental i.e. payment, proof of liability insurance on hand. The building is locked, how would someone get contacted in an emergency to open it. Hautala figures we will need to look into see if the building qualifies first. We need to do the right thing. It would be awful if someone died.

Benchmark/DSGW – Alan Nelson introduced himself as the civil engineer for the fire hall expansion project. He submitted a site work proposal for \$38,015.80. Erik Wedge introduced himself to the Board and explained he doesn't have proposal yet since he just met with Chief Nygaard Friday (two days ago). He feels the project looks feasible as he has done other public safety facilities. He is expecting a month process after hiring DSGW. Contractors are busy now through the summer, but this would be a good fall project. Discussion about funds was had. Supervisor Paris does not want to start the project without guaranteed funds in the bank. This money was already taken away from us once. Supervisor Hautala will follow up with Gary Lamppa. Chief Nygaard suggested Clerk Highland call Tyler Ray with USDA to figure out what exactly we are getting for USDA funds and a timeline of when we need to start a project to keep the funds.

Wedge suggested the Board look into FEEMA for storm shelter specs. He has worked on shelter projects before. The state may have different requirements, but the current hall would not qualify for a FEEMA grade shelter. It would be a nice emergency services hub after a disaster.

Minutes: Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the March 13, 2023 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Opening Balance 03/01/2023	\$ 470,583.44
Receipts	\$ 1,841.95
Disbursements	\$ 42,112.68
Ending Balance 03/31/2023	\$ 430,312.71
Deposits in Transit	\$ 0.00
Outstanding Checks	\$ 10,037.21
Petty Cash	\$ - 100.00
Total Checking Acct.	\$ 440,249.92
Total Investments	\$ 197,052.75

The Clerk and Treasurer are in balance with the bank.

Motion by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the financial report for March 2023 file it for audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Clerk Highland went over claims with the board. She explained the claims list will be \$5.00 more than listed because the Moderator gets paid \$25.00 per meeting and she originally made the claim for \$20.00. The down payment paid to Approve Plumbing was destroyed before it was cashed. Clerk Highland explained we can void the first check and reissue the half down or approve full payment since the boiler is installed. If full payment was issued she would hold the payment until the system was up and running. The Board would like to make sure the new boiler works before approving full payment. Supervisor Hautala also submitted reimbursement for attending the MAT short course. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to pay claims list as presented including the extra \$5.00 moderator pay for \$12,099.74. Motion carried unanimously. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to approve the mileage and parking reimbursement to Walter Hautala for \$95.15. Motion carried unanimously. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to void original down payment (check 29305) to Approve Plumbing and reissue a payment for \$6,169.50. 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, October meetings will be held on the third Monday and the January meeting will be held on the second Tuesday all at 5:30 PM. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hall to adopt the meeting schedule from April 2023 to April 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Set Compensation and Mileage Reimbursement:

Clerk Highland reported to the Board the payroll budgets for 2023. Due to raising the levy the Board decided to not increase their wages at this time. They felt the office personnel deserved raises for being present for the public's needs. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to set the Clerk's salary at \$1,900.00 a month. Motion carried unanimously. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to set the Treasurer's salary to \$1,300.00 a month. Highland reported that there was an election judge that requested to have meals again. It was also discussed that most places are now paying \$15.00 an hour for part time employees. If rates increase, total hours available will decrease due to PERA exclusion parameters. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Superiors Paris to set office deputies and part time employees to \$15.00/hour; Head Election Judge to \$15.00/hour, Election judges to \$13.00/hour plus a meal provided for their shift. Motion carried unanimously. Surrounding fire departments pay their members per hour. We are the only department that still pays per call. Chief Nygaard is unsure where we are budget wise with wages and is ok with keeping rates at per call. **Motion**

by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to set Public Safety wages to \$20.00/call and keep the Fire Chief and EMR Director stipends the same. Motion carried unanimously. Supervisor Paris would like to see the call rate increase yearly.

The township follows the federal mileage rate, which gets set in January (\$0.655 per mile).

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 Hautala 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.

Clerk Highland requested to move this segment and setting mileage reimbursement to January meetings. These topics don't involve a change in supervisors or roles and should be addressed earlier in the year. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to designate the official newspaper, official depositories, posting places, and set mileage in January of each year. Motion carried unanimously.

Designation of Deputy Officers (Clerk and Treasurer):

Clerk Highland appointed Kirstie Hall as Deputy Clerk.

Treasurer Bluhm appointed Angel Imberg as Deputy Treasurer.

Designation of Department Liaison:

The Supervisors picked the areas they would like to be liaison for. The Department Liaison List for 2023 that is attached to these minutes. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to accept the designation of department liaisons. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Special Claims Payments:

Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to pay recurring bills and special claims list (attached to these minutes). Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Road & Equipment- Supervisor Paris reported three culverts are iced; 2 on Elm, 1 on Maple. Water is flowing over the roads in multiple places. Culverts will be steamed this week. It was requested that Clerk Highland check the budget for grader blades.

Fire- 1 call for March. Engine 39 is at Mid-State because there was coolant in the oil.

Supervisor Hautala feels the addition work is going well. He asked if he should have Chairman Hall contact Lamppa or continue doing so. The Board felt the working relationship between Hautala and Lamppa is good and should continue. Chief Nygaard suggested Clerk Highland contact Tyler Ray and see exactly where we are with the funds and how much we are getting. He is the head of USDA.

Chairman Hall is reviewing the draft from the Attorneys regarding collaborating with McKinley. There is a new council member in McKinley that would like to see the department thrive on its own. Nygaard noted the township has some more time to work on the legal end of things because of this.

First Responders- Six calls

Recreation- Supervisor Hautala likes the idea of a mobile volleyball net with extra sand in the rink area. He would like to move forward on that project. The volleyball equipment will need to be looked over.

Memorial Day meal will include sloppy joes, chips, cookies, pickles, and beverages. Clerk Highland and Treasurer Bluhm will work on the meal beforehand. Gordy Imberg was asked to work on cemetery flags. Clerk Highland will work on a cemetery map that shows where the vets are buried.

Cemetery- Clerk Highland submitted a deed for LaWayne Frost. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the deed for LaWayne Frost. Motion carried unanimously. All elected officials signed the deed.

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

Old Business:

Parking lot – Supervisor Hautala would like tarred paths going to each. The Board felt that is a good idea and should add it to the project. There was little discussion about the township's portion of the 50/50 grant.

New Boiler Installed – discussed earlier

Cemetery Tree Removal – No update.

Dumpster – Treasurer Bluhm submitted a generalized quote from Hiti Sanitation for a dumpster from Hartell. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to purchase a dumpster from Hartell. Motion carried unanimously. Supervisor Paris will follow up on this.

Senator Money – Discussed earlier.

Broadband Info – MediaCom sent a right-of-way agreement asking for permission to run lines for broadband internet. The agreement is for 15 years and will have two additional renewals. **Motion** by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to accept the right of way agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

AWAIR- Supervisor Paris reviewed the policy with everyone. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to adopt the AWAIR policy for 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Open Willow Lane – **Motion** by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Chairman Hall to open Willow Lane on May 1, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Eshquaquma Country Club Liquor License- **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the ECC liquor license for 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Open Brush Dump- May first, weather pending. The hours will be Mondays & Fridays 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM and Sundays 1:00 – 5:00 PM.

MATIT – A preliminary estimate was sent regarding an increase to the insurance premium for property insurance. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to acknowledge there will be a renewal increase in July. Motion carried unanimously.

Resident request for contract – Re: Levy Increase Explanation – Clerk Highland relayed to the board a request to contact Erik Erie regarding the Levy increase for 2024. Chairman Hall will contact him.

Other Concerns – Supervisor Hautala reported to the Board that MAT does not support if township's go in on resident's properties. They will not be responsible to cover any damages and it would be the townships responsibility. Some discussion was had about whether or not to continue with plowing driveways or not. **Tabled.**

Correspondence: Clerk Highland went over correspondence with the Board. No action taken.

- RAMS – Misc Emails
- St. Louis County – Misc Emails
- MAT – Misc Emails
- RAMS – Misc Emails
- Lake County Power – Annual mtg notice
- Park State Bank – Public Entity Pledging
- Couri & Ruppe – Legal Seminar
- Erik Erie (email)– Contact request

Hall Rentals:

- Iva Lopp – Friday & Saturday, May 12-13, 2023
- Shirley Leoni – Saturday, May 20, 2023
- Jean Korpi – Saturday, May 27, 2023

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

Comments from the Audience:

Gordy Imberg feels the township should offer special services to the residents. He requested to please try to keep snowplowing as an option. Supervisor Paris explained it is worth it. Too many complaints are received and now there is a worry about this new insurance issue.

Adjourn: Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 PM. Meeting adjourned.



Chairperson:

5/31/23

Date:

