

**Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Biwabik Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN**  
**Monday, June 12, 2023**

**Call to Order:** 5:35 PM by Chairman Hall

Present: Supervisors Hall, Hautala, and Paris, Clerk Highland, and Treasurer Bluhm  
2 Guests; Tony Nygaard and Chuck Larson

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited

**Special Agenda Request:** None

**Minutes:** **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the May 8, 2023 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the May 9, 2023 Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**Financial Report:** Treasurer Bluhm went over the May Financial Report with the Board.

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Opening Balance 05/01/2023  | \$ 399,016.30        |
| Receipts                    | \$ 1,208.56          |
| Disbursements               | \$ 43,826.63         |
| Ending Balance 05/30/2023   | \$ 356,398.23        |
| Deposits in Transit         | \$ - 100.00          |
| Outstanding Checks          | \$ 3,079.65          |
| Petty Cash                  | \$ - 100.00          |
| <b>Total Checking Acct.</b> | <b>\$ 359,377.88</b> |
| <b>Total Investments</b>    | <b>\$ 197,258.55</b> |

**Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the financial report for May 2023 and file it for audit. Motion carried unanimously. Paris wanted to make sure the CDs will auto renew at the end of September. They will.

**Claims:** Clerk Highland reviewed the claims with the Board. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve claims as presented for \$15,662.50. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports:**

**Road & Equipment-**

Road Plan: Has been reported to the crew. Jackpine and Elm are slated for overhauls this summer.

Culvert Policy Update and Review: On hold for updated policy to sign.

Juneteenth: Will discuss during contract negotiations.

Signs: Clerk Highland reported on prices from Mesabi Sign Company for slow sight impaired, road closed, and barricades. **Tabled** for budgetary purposes. May wait for the levy increase to purchase.

Supervisor Paris reported grading, dust control, wash outs, and down trees are being tended to.

**Fire-** One call for May. New helmets are in. SCBA bottles have been sent back. Waiting for bottles to return with the proper valves. The brush dump may need to be shut down or a new pile started as it is too dry to burn and the pile is getting quite large.

McKinley Collaboration: The City has reviewed the preliminary contract and sent it to their lawyer. There is clarification needed about the contract cost difference of \$7,500.00 vs \$5,500.00. Chairman Hall feels the lease agreements should come from City of McKinley. Nygaard will relay that to the City.

**First Responders-** Six calls for April. Five calls for May. Director Larson is requesting to get paid quarterly vs semi-annually. Some EMRs are having a hard time tracking their hours for a half a year. Discussion was had about changing to quarterly payroll. **Tabled** for next payroll.

There is a personnel issue with Lakeland. Their first responders are responding to calls in the township without being paged. One individual lives with a responder from the township and they are arriving on scene together. The Lakeland responder is not covered by our insurance and needs to leave the scene. The chief from Biwabik is also causing control issues on our scenes. We need to be able to have full control of the scene. This may mean kicking responders from other areas off scene. City of Biwabik and/or Lakeland does not have incident command in our Township if we have responders on scene. Supervisor Paris asked if we are able to do something legally to avoid this problem. We don't have a policy to back us up and protect our responders. Chairman Hall suggested offering the one individual that shows up with our responder a position on our department. Chuck Larson explained it needs to be in writing that you cannot be on scene if you are not called to the scene. He further explained that training will be held in regards to taking command of the scene when we arrive first and calling for mutual aid if needed. Nygaard and Larson will address the two personnel showing up on scene together. Paris would like these issues being brought to the Board's attention sooner rather than later.

### **Recreation-**

Tennis/pickle ball courts: Clerk Highland has received an email suggesting using drop nets instead of purchasing portable nets for pickle ball. It was discussed resurfacing the courts and designate one for pickle ball. Supervisor Hautala would like to contact Mesabi Bituminous to resurface the courts. He would like to look for recreation grants for this and the walking trail. Supervisor Paris would like to look for volunteers to help with the resurfacing project. He will contact Commissioner McDonald about crack filling the court.

Memorial Day Financial Report: Treasurer Bluhm submitted the financial report (attached to these minutes) for Memorial Day. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the financial report for Memorial Day 2023, overall spending just under \$150.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Fourth of July: The following was discussed and designated; Larson's in the kitchen (serving: hotdogs, ice cream cups, watermelon, chips, kool-aid, water, coffee), Emily and Julie games and parade, Walt and Jim money window, Todd horseshoes, firefighters cook and run fire hose. No bounce house, sawdust pile, or drop tank. If complaints are received the will be answered with requests to help volunteer at future events. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to allocate \$1,400.00 for Fourth of July expenses made out to Walter Hautala – Recreation. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Cemetery-**

Ludwig Stone Issue: Clerk Highland reported it has been discovered that a previous employee marked an incorrect area for the Ludwig stone. It needs to be moved and should be our responsibility. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to contact Laurentian Monument to move the Ludwig stone to it's proper place. Motion carried unanimously.

Highland also noted that Eunice Krogstad's memorial was placed in a granite boarder, not a cement boarder.

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

### **Old Business:**

Broadband Info – Chairman Hall has been meeting with the Northband group. They would like to do a survey in our area to see what people currently have for internet service. No update from MediaCom.

Parking Lot – Supervisor Hautala will make contact with Mesabi Bituminous.

Boiler Issues – Waiting on Hometown Electric to connect the boiler. Supervisor Paris asked if we should get a different electrician to finish the wiring. It isn't fair to Approve Plumbing that we are holding their payment waiting for electrical work. There was discussion about the length of warranty. We don't want it to run out before we even get it up and running. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to pay Approve Plumbing \$5,000.00.

*Discussion* – This is not a final payment. We are still holding \$1,169.50 until the system is running. Motion carried unanimously.

*Cemetery Tree Removal Quote* – Still have not received a quote from North Country Tree Removal Services. We do have a resident willing to take the wood if we can get a company to take down the tree. Tony Nygaard of Freedom Yard Service offered to remove the tree for \$200.00. Clerk Highland explained she will need proof of liability insurance. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to hire Freedom Yard Services to cut down dying tree along the cemetery road. Motion carried unanimously.

*Dumpster* – Ordered

*Senator Money Update* – Clerk Highland has sent the paperwork approved at the last meeting to USDA. A public hearing needs to be set with them. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to set a public hearing regarding the Fire Hall expansion project on Monday, July 17, 2023 at 5:30 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to accept architect and engineering proposals from DSGW and Benchmark, understanding that we are waiting for full project costs once hired. Motion carried unanimously.

*Residential Snowplowing* – Clerk Highland reported a resident requested offering snowplowing just one last time and as people come in to sign up the office gives them notice that this is the last year we are offering services. It would give residents more time to find another option. The Board reviewed an email received from the Township Attorney advising the township to discontinue the practice of residential snowplowing as Minnesota Association of Township Insurance Trust no longer provides insurance coverage for the snowplowing of private residents. Paris is worried that even if we re-word our indemnification statement we could still have a death suit on our hands. Treasurer Bluhm explained that Town of White is offering a list of people who plow residential driveways now that they too are unable to offer snowplowing. Chairman Hall's ultimate concern is how this will affect the levy now that we will no longer have snowplowing income. He doesn't like the idea of cutting services when we just increased the levy based on not cutting services. Supervisor Hautala explained the township has taken away other services in the past too. Residents will get over it. Lifetime medical responsibilities would be horrible. In fairness to the people we should end snowplow services this week. **Motion** by Supervisor Hautala to cease residential snowplowing services based on recommendation from the Township Attorney that there has been a change in insurance coverage (no longer covered).

*Discussion* – There was hesitation of a second. Supervisor Paris explained he plans on abstaining from the vote as he does residential snowplowing himself and doesn't want any conflict of interest.

Motion seconded by Chairman Hall. Motion carried upon the following vote:

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chairman Hall      | Aye                            |
| Supervisor Hautala | Aye                            |
| Supervisor Paris   | Abstain – conflict of interest |

Residents will be informed of the change via letter. An ad will be placed in Home Town Focus and East Range Shopper closer to fall. Chairman Hall offered the office to put his number on the notice for any complaints.

#### **New Business:**

*OHV Email* – The office received an email concerned about reckless driving and other behavior from ATVs on Chestnut Drive. Chairman Hall explained he has seen Gilbert PD on ATVs since the email was received. The designated ATV trail should open soon and hopefully that will alleviate the trouble. Clerk Highland explained there is a policy on file that states if there is criminal activity within the township, residents are to call the Sheriff. Hall will contact Gilbert PD and see if they can expand their coverage.

*Resolution 2023-02* – **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to adopt Resolution 2023-02 stating the Township's incorporation date was 1892. Motion carried unanimously.

*Resolution 2023-03* – **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to adopt Resolution 2023-03 accepting donations for Memorial Day and the Cemetery Beautification Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Seibert Celebration of Life Rental Request – Resident Jim Seibert passed away. His children have moved out of the area, but were wondering if they could get the resident rate for a celebration of life for him. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the resident rate for Jim Seibert’s celebration of life.

Discussion – These situations will be decided on a case by case basis and this is not to set precedence. Motion carried unanimously.

Sandpit Tree Request – A resident is interested in a tree at the top of the sand pit for carving purposes. Foreman Merritt has told the office it looks as if the tree may fall anyways. **Tabled** the Board is unaware of what tree is in discussion.

Other Concerns –

Clerk Highland forgot to ask for the reissuance of the check for our MAT and SLCAT dues during claims discussion. The first check was mailed to an invalid address. We have not received it back yet. The original check will be voided. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to reissue the dues check to St. Louis County Association of Townships for \$837.34. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Hall announced to the Board that the County is recognizing Juneteenth Day this year.

Supervisor Paris asked if we should consider getting the septic pumped. It has been five years since we have been in the new building. We do have a three tank system.

Supervisor Hautala thinks we need more sand in the playground area and around the new picnic shelters. He would still like to see the township move forward on the volley ball project.

**Correspondence:** The correspondence was reviewed by the Board. No action.

- RAMS – Misc Emails
- Dick Grabko – Emails regarding grant
- MAT – Misc Emails
- International – Emissions Recall Notice
- MN State Demographic Center – Annual Population Estimate
- St. Louis County – Misc Emails
- CPF – Annual funding notice
- Catherine Niemi – Thank you for Memorial Service
- Bob Ruppe – Snowplow email
- Sheila Cave – OHV Email

**Hall Rentals:**

- Siebert Family – Sunday, July 2, 2023
- Holmes Family – Saturday, July 22, 2023
- Meagan Trast – Saturday, July 29, 2023
- Joni Banks – Friday & Saturday, 4 & 5, 2023

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

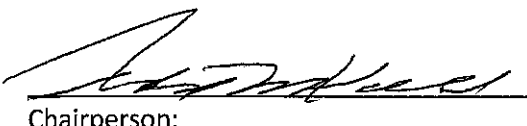
**Comments from the Audience:** None

**Adjourn:** **Motion** by Supervisor Paris to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Hall adjourned the meeting at 9:23 PM.

Chairperson:

Date:

Attest by Clerk:

 7/17/2023 