

Biwabik Township Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Biwabik Township Hall - 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Monday, June 17, 2023

Call to Order: 5:32 PM by Chairman Hall

Present: Supervisors Hall, Hautala, and Paris, Clerk Highland, and Treasurer Bluhm

8 Guests; Kirstie Hall, Gina Costello, Wayne Edwards, Russell George, Erik Wedge (DSGW), Jaymes Cuff, Sheri & Steve Harms, Dick Grabko.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Special Agenda Request:

Public Hearing – Postponed 15 minutes for full attendance.

ECC Snowplowing Concerns – Steve Harms, representing ECC asked what the plan is for plowing White Pine Lane, Ponderosa Drive, Eshquaguma Road extension, and Cypress Lane. These are roads that are maintained by the township. Even though the Club owns the properties on the roads, it does not necessarily make them private roads. The township will snowplow all roads in the township. We are no longer plowing private driveways/parking lots. The price the club paid was for snow removal at the club, not the roads. There was discussion about how far down Cypress Lane the township will plow. There was a rumor that we would stop at the mailboxes. This is untrue. The township has an obligation to keep all roadways cleared. Even if the property at the end of the road no longer pays for plowing, the township needs to plow to the last fire number. This property happens to not be owned by the club, proving that the club doesn't actually own the road.

Public Hearing – Opened 5:45 – Dick Grabko presented the Public Hearing required by Rural Development USDA. The reason is to make known to the people of Biwabik Township that we are moving forward on projects via congressional direct spending we applied for two years ago. At the time of original application we requested funds for; a new water hydrant off the Gilbert water main that goes to McKinley, fire hall addition, parking lot expansion, and a walking trail from the town hall to the cemetery. Only two projects were approved for spending through USDA the fire hall addition and town hall parking lot expansion. The fire hall plan is to add space for training, an office, and extra equipment storage. Handouts were given for the proposed new structure. The parking lot at the town hall will be expanded over the spot of the previous town hall. This will allow for better spaced parking and safety by keeping vehicles away from the township garage. DSGW has been hired for the architectural preparation. Benchmark Engineering is submitting the environmental review. These two tasks need to be completed before funds are released. Once submitted, there is a 30 day comment period and another 30 day period for SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) to do their part. Erik Wedge from DSGW explained the 1942 Feasibility Report that is next for submission. Since our project is under \$3,000,000.00 it gets reviewed at the local level first. It is quite a long process. There is hope for a 2024 start date for the fire hall. If possible we want to avoid paying winter set up fees. The bidding process should still happen this year. Grabko explained that projects are 100% fully funded by the congressional spending. He opened the floor for a question and answer segment.

Jim Paris asked if there will still be 100% coverage in 2024 with a 5% contingency coverage. Building supplies are high and tend to continue to increase. Wedge explained if the building plans need to be changed they will be.

Walter Hautala asked if we will get better bids next spring. Wedge replied proposals will be ready this fall to bid on a project to start in the spring.

Russell George asked what the foundation plan is. The current foundation is sinking. Wedge explained Benchmark Engineering is working on a grading scale to flow water away from the building. Core samples of the area will also be taken to plan for best slab preparation. Some modification of the current slab may be needed.

Jim Paris is concerned about the size of door on the equipment addition. He feels it should be taller in case we purchase different equipment in the future. He wants to make sure it will fit. It was discussed that the equipment addition is more for the 6x6 and equipment that isn't on a truck. Grabko said we are still in the conception phase. Wedge added small and minor changes can still be made. Walter Hautala feels Chief Nygaard is working closely with DSGW about the wants and needs for the addition.

Wayne Edwards asked if the Board is planning on purchasing new equipment. Todd Hall replied the current hall doesn't have enough room for the current equipment or space for training. There is no plan on updating equipment at this time. Wayne Edwards had a concern about the levy increasing. Todd Hall explained there is no levy increase for this. Grabko reiterated that this project is fully funded by the congressional spending.

Jim Paris asked if there is a possibility the township will lose the money since we haven't used it yet, like a Covid pull back. Erik Wedge replied technically the project has already started and fees have been incurred.

Grabko finalized the hearing by stating we are continuing to submit paperwork. The project contacts are Erik Wedge from DSGW for architectural and Alan Johnson from Benchmark Engineering for engineering. The minutes of this hearing and the affidavit of publishing will be submitted to USDA. The public hearing closed at 6:15 PM.

Minutes: Motion by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the June 12, 2023 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Opening Balance 06/01/2023	\$ 357,235.57
Receipts	\$ 447.57
Disbursements	\$ 52,933.99
Ending Balance 06/30/2023	\$ 304,749.15
Deposits in Transit	\$ - 275.00
Outstanding Checks	\$ 4,310.38
Petty Cash	\$ - 100.00
Total Checking Acct.	\$ 308,784.53
Total Investments	\$ 197,352.39

Bluhm explained there is currently a negative balance in the Community Celebration Fund because we have not returned funds from the Fourth of July and we purchased paper products for all events from the fund. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve the June 2023 Financial report and file it for audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Clerk Highland reviewed the claims with the Board. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to approve claims as presented for \$26,171.85. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Road & Equipment- Supervisor Paris reported mowing, grading, hauling gravel and the Elm Drive project have been worked on. A couple questions regarding the change in snowplowing have been received. Supervisor Hautala likes the pile of class 5 we have. Paris would like to have class 5 hauled and laid straight on the road. Hautala added that he feels Elm Drive is improving. Supervisor Paris submitted the updated Culvert policy changing driveway culvert length from 20' to 32'. **Motion** by Supervisor Hautala, seconded by Supervisor Paris to adopt the township culvert policy update. Motion carried unanimously. Resident George asked the process for new land owners to receive culverts from the township. Paris explained that the resident would receive a 32' culvert free. The resident will have to pay the difference if they want a bigger size. Also, if a resident wants a current culvert changed and its not needed, they can purchase their own and the township will place it at no charge (this is outlined in the policy). Clerk Highland reminded the Board the driveway culvert on Walnut needs to be finalized. Raw property has been purchased on Steptz Road and there is no road access yet. The land owner has marked where he would like a culvert place. Highland explained they do not plan on using this property as a residence, but will need the longer culvert for equipment purposes. Paris figured the price difference from a 32' to a 40' culvert was \$206.00 in 2022. Clerk Highland will report to the land owner the price difference. Once they decided the size she will inform Foreman Merritt and invoice the individual if needed.

Fire- Assistant Chief Cuff reported one call for June. The DNR submitted the updated cost agreement. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to approve the DNR wild fire agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

McKinley Collaboration: No update

First Responders- No report.

Recreation-

Tennis/pickle ball courts: Supervisor Hautala would like to ask Mesabi Bituminous for a quote to redo the tennis courts. Currently there are grants available from IRRRB for culture and tourism that may help cover the cost of this project. Hautala has spoken with Gary Lamppa about applying. They are receiving applications until July 31, 2023 and then again between January 2-31, 2024. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to apply for the Cultural and Tourism grant from IRRRB. Motion carried unanimously.

Fourth of July: Treasure Bluhm reported on the Financials for Fourth of July. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to accept the Fourth of July financial report. Motion carried unanimously. Report attached to these minutes.

Cemetery- Clerk Highland submitted a deed for Kim Schaeftbauer. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris to accept the cemetery deed for Kim Schaeftbauer. Motion carried unanimously. Deed was signed by all elected officials and will be mailed out.

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

Old Business:

Broadband Info – No update

Parking Lot – Tar tomorrow. Supervisor Hautala feels Nemanich went above and beyond with the grading around the picnic shelters and appreciates it very much. Discussion on curb stops vs retaining wall was had. Striping the lot is included in the original project. The old parking lot should be seal coated and striped as well. A quote will be needed for this.

Boiler Issues – Clerk Highland explained that Hometown Electric has tabled our project since it is a cold weather project and they are focusing on warm weather projects like AC units. The Board feels our boiler needs to be hooked up to ensure it is working before we run out of our warranty period. Supervisor Paris would like Chairman Hall to contact Scott Tyo with Brimson Electric to see if he is able to hook up our boiler. Supervisor Hautala explained Tyo has increased his prices. He would like to receive a quote before moving forward with him. Chairman Hall feels something needs to be done. It has been installed over three months ago. Soderling from Approve Plumbing originally suggested Tyo for other work on the boiler so we should go with him. **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Chairman Hall to hire Scott Tyo, if quoted up to \$1,000.00, to hook up the new boiler. Motion carried unanimously.

Cemetery Tree Removal Quote – Clerk Highland suggested calling Stahl's Stump Grinding from Chisolm to remove the stumps from the trees that were removed. Supervisor Paris suggested turning the stumps into flower pot holders. This idea created further discussion regarding the front entry sign area at the town hall and cemetery along with the old flower box on Highway 4 that is no longer used and was originally supposed to be removed in 2017. **Tabled**

Senator Money Update – Discussed earlier. Clerk Highland reviewed the 1942A form with the Board. She will work with Erik from DSGW on this. Chief Nygaard and Clerk Highland are still working on updating the SAMS registration.

Sandpit Tree Removal – There is a tree atop the sand pit that will become a hazard if not tended to. A resident is interested in having it for carving. Our Road and Bridge crew should remove the tree for liability purposes. Once the tree is removed the resident can have it. **Motion** by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Hautala the Board acknowledges that the Road and Bridge crew will be removing a tree from the sandpit area and give it to a resident. Motion carries unanimously.

New Business:

Road and Bridge Meeting – Supervisor Paris explained there has not been a working meeting between the Board and Road and Bridge Crew since before Covid. He feels it is a good time to hold one. A special meeting will be held on Thursday, July 27, 2023 from 8:00 to 10:00 to meet with Road and Bridge to discuss wants and needs for the township and crew.

Menards Charge List – Keep as previously set.

Election training for Clerk and Deputy – **Motion** by Supervisor Paris, seconded by Supervisor Hautala to have the Clerk and Deputy attend training in Duluth for Election purposes. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Concerns –

Supervisor Hautala would like to contact Joe Radtke to submit a quote on repairing the dust control building. Other contractors/companies have been contacted, but we haven't received any quotes.

Correspondence: The correspondence was reviewed by the Board. Holidays will be discussed during negotiations. No action.

- RAMS – Misc Emails
- Dick Grabko – Emails regarding grant
- MAT – Misc Emails
- St. Louis County – Misc Emails
- Bob Ruppe – Legal Seminar 10/07/2023
- IUOE
 - MOU – Juneteenth
 - Seniority List request

Hall Rentals:

- Glen Berts – Saturday, September 9, 2023
- Karen Bruun – Saturday, October 21, 2023

Motion by Chairman Hall, seconded by Supervisor Paris 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 8:10 PM.



Chairperson:

8/14/23

Date:



Attest by Clerk:

