

Biwabik Township Special Meeting Minutes
Biwabik Township – 6555 Oak Drive, Gilbert, MN
Thursday, July 27, 2023

Call to Order: 8:00 AM by Chairman Hall

Present: Supervisors Hautala, Hall and Paris, Clerk Highland, Kevin Merritt, and Jonathan Bernard.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Special Agenda Request:

Wants and Needs For and From the Department– Supervisor Paris explained he came up with an outline for talking points. He offered the Crew to start with their wants and needs from the Board. Merritt would like to have the meeting held in an open dialog form.

Wants and Needs For and From the Town Board – The outline discussed is attached to these minutes.

Equipment: All pieces of equipment were discussed. The crew has switched from the stinger blades to regular cutting edges because they were picking up too many rocks and digging into the road bed. The walk and roll attachment gets used on the last pass during grading. There is an issue with it locking in place. This may be due to air in the oil lines. Merritt would also like to try carbide blades for the rest of summer. Since we have a new parking lot section, Merritt plans on ordering straight cutting edges for the loader so the new tar doesn't get grooves in it from the carbide blades. There is currently a recall on the DIF tank for the tandem truck. This will be taken care of through Mid-State. The single axle dump truck needs a new box. There was discussion on whether or not it should be replaced or repaired. **Tabled.** The box and frame on the one-ton is also deteriorating. Merritt feels it would be best to run the truck out and then replace that whole vehicle instead of wasting money by patching and repairing it. Paris asked if the Board should start saving money for replacement, kind of like we started for the new hall. When the time comes, Hautala suggested getting the replacement truck undercoated so it will last longer. The water truck (1993) is still in good shape. Paris wondered if we should switch to a pressurized system when applying dust control. Currently it is gravity fed and the crew can control the flow via switch. Merritt explained it would cost too much to transfer a new system for the current truck. Paris feels it would be a good system to have for the future. Clerk Highland suggested coming up with an equipment replacement schedule. Equipment purchases should be budgeted for.

Roadside Mowing/Brushing: On going. Hautala would like to see two passes done on each road. Merritt replied they will if time allows.

Merritt brought up he would like to see 15" culverts installed at driveways versus 12". The 12" seem to be too skinny where there is a heavy flow of water. If the policy can't be changed, he would like to have at least a couple on hand for variables if needed. There currently is no culvert stockpile. The budget only allows for the total of three culverts to be purchase. This budget item should be reviewed in the future.

Dust Control: Last order of dust control made. This will make us go over budget slightly.

Grading: On going

Class 5 Budget: 300 yards have been hauled. Nemanich is charging us \$8.50/yd. Merritt likes to make sure we have a surplus for Spring. He follows the budget close. Any unused gravel budget will be put towards the fuel budget. It was discovered that we are already over budget with fuel.

2023 Road Project: Elm Drive and Jackpine Lane are slated for a full overhaul. In the past there was spotty ditching done on Elm. Paris would like to make sure the whole road is up to date on ditching. Merritt explained the first part is getting done. It's hard to tag team on the road when they are trying to keep up with grading and hauling class 5. Paris would also like to see the roadsides reclaimed during the overhauls. Merritt will not spread the reclaimed material on the roads, but will use it for better ditch flow. Elm Drive is sluffing on the sides in the spring because the current ditches are too deep. Paris explained he doesn't want to see any grass between the roads and ditches.

2024 Road Project: Cypress Lane needs a lift only. Ditching and brushing have been done within the last couple years. Hopefully Merritt can get to this by the end of 2023. It was decided that Chestnut will be the only road redone in 2024 as it is one of the longest in the township.

Cemetery: Tree limbing is needed in some areas.

Brush Dump: It was discovered during the last burn that stumps have been dumped. The brush dump will now only be open on Sundays to deter improper dumping.

Employer/Employee Concerns: Paris asked if the summer road care schedule follows the winter snowplow route? I.e. Jonathan plows the Lakeland side and Kevin plows the Hutter side, does grading follow the same outline. Merritt explained he wants Jonathan to get seasoned on the grader so he does most of the grading. He followed up with we both do a little of everything. Paris explained he feels that would be stressful on Jonathan to do all the grading and a little of this and a little of that on top of it all.

Hours: There was discussion on changing the duration of 4/10s. Merritt and the Board agree that six months of 10s is too much. It is hard to get work done on the roads when it is dark in the mornings. This will need to be discussed during contract negotiations. Paris reminded the crew they are able to stager their hours within reason to best fit their prime working skills.

Temporary Help: Paris asked if there was any need ask the Temporary workers for help on summer projects. He reminded the crew they can use temporary help as needed year round.

Merritt asked the Board if there are any grants available to get gravel on these roads. We are down to the road bed on most of them. Chairman Hall explained there is a new plan through IRRRB we can look into to see exactly what they would help with. Hautala would like to see if he can get the County and Town of White on board to apply for a federal grant to get Stepetz Road and Evergreen Road tarred. Merritt explained Evergreen uses up a lot of our maintenance time by needing grading at least once a week. Hautala would like to be aggressive in looking for money. Clerk Highland suggested speaking to all residents along the route about this idea.

Paris asked how often these working meetings should take place. Overall there was good discussion back and forth. There should be two a year; one to set expectations and a second one to follow up on progress. There was not a consensus on when. It was agreed that the outline Paris created was good and should be used annually.

Adjourn: Motion by Supervisor Paris to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Hall adjourned the meeting 9:56 AM.



Board Chair

8/14/2023

Date



Attest by Clerk

