

**Princeton Township Regular Monthly Board Meeting  
Tuesday, February 18, 2020  
Minutes**

February meeting of the Princeton Township Board called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m.

Supervisors present: Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, Dave Persing, Thomas Duden.

Supervisor absent: Greg Anderson

Also present: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Engineer Todd McLouth, Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

**Approve Minutes**

Bill Whitcomb noted one correction. Under Road Report, first paragraph, second sentence should read "The map has been corrected..." instead of "The list has been corrected..."

Thomas Duden moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

**Old Business**

**Review and approve fire-protection contract:** Dave Persing moved to approve the contract. Seconded by Gene Stoeckel. Motion carried.

Review bids for improvement project – 33<sup>rd</sup> Street & 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue: Todd McLouth reported he had received four bids for the project:

Knife River Contracting: \$345,735.00

Minnesota Paving & Materials: 359,779.80

North Valley, Inc.: 361,899.45

Omann Contracting Company: 365,753.55

Bid specifics attached as Exhibit A.

The City of Princeton and School District 477 share responsibility for the road sections covered by this project. Completing the project will require action from those two entities. The city is not willing at this point to agree to the plan.

The township's responsibility includes the portion of 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue north of 82<sup>nd</sup> Street, and 82<sup>nd</sup> Street west of 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Mr. McLouth stated that the township is free to complete its parts of the project without the city taking action on its part.

Mr. Stoeckel suggested delaying action on the project to a continuation meeting in one week.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to set a continuation meeting for Tuesday, February 25, to take action on the road contract, the budget, and the audit. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

**Richard Reiman escrow account status:** Cannot take action. The septic system needs to be approved by a township inspector before the escrow can be released.

Compensation plan for meeting videographer: Members agreed that the complications of paying a salary or stipend require legal advice before proceeding. Andrea Gerrard, the videographer,

explained that she is open to an internship arrangement that would earn college credit. No action was taken on the issue.

**AWAIR compliance update:** Ken Henchen reported on his research into the availability and cost of items required for AWAIR compliance. Major cost of the fire-proof cabinet large enough to accommodate two 55-gallon drums of oil. Members agreed that the township doesn't need to keep 55-gallon drums in the shop. Selling the drums would provide enough money to purchase a smaller cabinet to store the five-gallon drums.

Thomas Duden moved to sell the two 55-gallon drums and put the money toward purchasing the smaller cabinet. Seconded by Gene Stoeckel. Motion carried.

**Zoning Administrator's Report:** Scott Richards reported that because the Planning Commission did not act on the preliminary plot for Silver Lake Oaks, the board cannot act, either. The Planning Commission did recommend approval of the lot split separating the part of the Silver Lake Oaks property on the east side of Aspen Road from the parcel to the west, removing the separated parcel from the Silver Lake Oaks development.

Thomas Duden moved to approve the boundary line adjustment as proposed. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Amendments adding event-venue requirements to zoning regulations: Scott Richards reported that the Planning Commission recommended placing all event-venue regulations under conditional use, rather than interim use.

Bill Whitcomb moved to approve the event-venue ordinance amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission. Seconded by Thomas Duden. Motion carried.

Thomas Duden moved to approve the solar-energy ordinance amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission. Seconded by Gene Stoeckel. Motion carried.

Review and adopt 2020 fee schedule: Scott Richards suggested clarifying the per-lot fee section by adding the label "Final Platt Application" above the fee for Each Lot in Plat.

Gene Stoeckel moved to adopt the 2019 fee schedule as the new schedule for 2020. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

Post job opening for part-time maintenance employee: Bill Whitcomb recommended establishing a part-time job for minor road maintenance including mowing brush, replacing signs, and similar duties. He envisions the job requiring no more than eight hours per week.

Thomas Duden moved to post a job opening for a part-time maintenance employee to mow ditches and brush between April 1 and August 15, approximately 10 hours per week. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

**Clerk's Report:** Doug Dahl suggested acting on the recommendation of the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) to add a deputy clerk-treasurer to the office staff. Having two people who know the job protects the township from disruption if/when the clerk-treasurer leaves abruptly or is otherwise unable to continue in the position. The board wants to confirm that the position is at the clerk's discretion, and deferred action to the continuation meeting.

Discussion of the 2021 budget: Members agree that the budget needs to be made clearer and more transparent. Work on the 2020 budget is ongoing, and depends to a large extent on the 2019 audit, which is not yet finished. Action deferred to the continuation meeting.

**Annual meeting:** Bill Whitcomb moved to allocate \$150.00 to place the township's election/annual meeting notice in Princeton Today as an advertisement. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

**Annual meeting agenda:** Will be finalized at the continuation meeting.

**Road Report:** Bill Whitcomb distributed a handout showing the accounting categories for various road expenses. He explained that the chart of accounts in CTAS differentiates between paved roads and gravel roads. Past account practices haven't maintained those distinctions, posting expenditures to paved roads that were actually spent on material and maintenance of gravel roads.

Goals of the township road action plan:

- 1) Enhance communication with residents to help everyone understand the responsibilities and plans to be addressed.
- 2) Develop a priority scale for both gravel and paved roads.
- 3) Prioritize and act based on facts and data.
- 4) Reduce and eliminate over-maintenance and under-maintenance of any type of road surface.
- 5) Eliminate neglect of paved roads.
- 6) Assure a long-range budget is developed to address the township's responsibilities to all roads in a regular program for maintenance, as required by statute.
- 7) Establish clear shared responsibilities with all bordering city and township governments.

Supervisor Reports:

Thomas Duden reported on actions taken toward removing snow and ice from township roads.

Dave Persing:

- 1) Noted shortcomings with the current Web page arrangement with Mille Lacs County: difficult to find; space limitations. Recommended action to establish a separate Web site for the township.
- 2) Recommended undertaking a search for a new township attorney based on rate increases from Rinke Noonan. Mentioned Kennedy & Graven and Couri & Ruppe as potential replacements. Gene pointed out that the township has gotten help from Couri & Ruppe in the past; they were excellent to work with. Bill Whitcomb added that he had attended a legal seminar with Couri & Ruppe the previous weekend. He learned that the township is severely lacking in legal documentation and needs to bring it up to date.
- 3) Noted that the forensics report on the township computer, undertaken at the change of clerks, still requires study and interpretation. He explained that Mr. Carney of Carney Forensics is accustomed to working with attorneys to explain the implications of information gleaned from computer forensics. Possibly another matter to hand over to a new township attorney.

Members directed Doug Dahl to contact Couri & Ruppe and Kennedy & Graven for rate quotes.

Clerk-Treasurer's Report:

1) Financial summary:

Beginning balance	\$766,692.05
Receipts	\$ 7,795.21
Disbursements	\$ 36,688.48
Ending balance	\$737,798.78

- 2) Financial reports: Net pay account distribution, claims list, cash-control statement.
- 3) Date for Board of Appeal & Equalization set by MLC: Thursday, April 23, 6:00 p.m.

- 4) Minnesota Benefits Association Township Benefits Program: Life insurance (\$2,000 death benefit) for board members and staff. Does the board want to keep it? If so, need to update the list of covered employees.
- 5) So far have gotten two proposals for Web site design: Surreal Marketing, ProudCity, and Gary Larson. Continuing to search for additional bids.
- 6) Suggest creating a residents' email list.
- 7) MAT Spring Short Courses are coming up. Details in the magazine and on the MAT Web site.

Gene Stoeckel moved to drop the MBA life insurance program as long as it is not mandatory. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Doug Dahl reported that he is still working with the BerganKDV auditor to meet their requirements for information they need to complete the 2019 audit. The auditor had scheduled a field visit for February 3, but had to re-schedule because he needed more information.

Dave Persing moved to pay all claims. Seconded by Thomas Duden. Motion carried.

Dave Persing moved to recess the meeting to the continuation meeting. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl  
Clerk/Treasurer

Attendees: Craig Wensmann, Daniel Whitcomb, Terri Persing, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Maria Anderson, Jerry Sands, Ralph Wilson, Jeanne Wilson, Nicholas Taylor, Andrea Gerrard, Cyndi MacDonald, Jesse Jondahl, Joss Jondahl

## **Princeton Township Board Continuation Meeting Thursday, February 27, 2020 Minutes**

The continuation of the February 18 Township Board Meeting was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2020.

Members present: Gene Stoeckel, Dave Persing, Bill Whitcomb, Thomas Duden.

Member absent: Greg Anderson

Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Township Road Supervisor Bill Whitcomb previewed the budget proposal to be presented to township citizens at the annual meeting on March 10. Copy of draft proposal attached to minutes.

Meeting opened for public comment. Joel Minks suggested starting to raise the levy a little each year to keep up with increasing expenses. Suggested 2% to keep up with normal inflation. Dan Whitcomb cautioned that any increase has to be within the maximum tax capacity established by state statute.

Joel Minks suggested publishing the budget in the local newspaper. Could also be published on the Website (when the township establishes its own), and in the township newsletter.

**Motion to approve Township Resolution 2020-2:** Mr. Stoeckel read the resolution to accept the bids of \$115,145.75 for 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and \$79,067.50 for 33<sup>rd</sup> Street from County Road 4 (85<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and contract with Knife River Corporation for these projects.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve. Dave Persing seconded. Discussion: Mr. Stoeckel noted that the Board is working with the City of Princeton and the Princeton School Board on the project. Todd McLouth reported that he had just come from the City Council meeting. The Council has approved a feasibility study for its portion of the project. Mr. McLouth was assigned to prepare the feasibility study for the Council meeting the following week. Motion to approve the resolution carried.

Mr. Stoeckel previewed the agenda for the Annual Township Meeting and Continuation.

Proposals for new township attorney. Doug Dahl reported that he had acquired two bids for township attorney. The board directed him to solicit one more.

2019 Audit: The audit is still in process. It's proving very detailed and time-consuming. The auditor requested several more documents that day. Doug was able to fulfill most, others are still in process.

Doug Dahl reported that the two requests from MPCA related to SSTS had been completed.

Ken Henchen reported on progress toward AWAIR compliance.

Open Forum: Discussion of the meaning of each person being his/her own pound master.

Dave Persing moved to adjourn. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Attendees: Carol Whitcomb, Dan Whitcomb, Kathy Stoeckel, Cheryl Schimming, Joel Minks, Nancy Moan, Todd McLouth, Marcia Anderson, Cyndi MacDonald, Kevin Gerrard, Andrea Gerrard, Ken Henchen