

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Minutes

The March monthly meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m. Supervisors attended the meeting in person at Township Hall. The meeting was open to limited in-person attendance, with most attendees participating remotely via GoToMeeting.

Supervisors attending: Thomas Duden, Dan Hiller, Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, John Wilhelm

Also attending: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards (remote), Township Engineer Todd McLouth (remote), Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Reorganization and Official Designations

- Chair
 - Bill Whitcomb moved to appoint Gene Stoeckel as Town Board Chair. Seconded by Dan Hiller. Approved unanimously.
- Vice-Chair
 - Mr. Whitcomb moved to appoint Thomas Duden as Vice-Chair. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Approved unanimously.
- Secretary
 - Mr. Duden moved to appoint Dan Hiller as Secretary. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Approved unanimously.
- Planning Commission Liaison
 - Mr. Duden moved to appoint John Wilhelm as Planning Commission Liaison. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Approved 3-2, with Mr. Hiller and Mr. Whitcomb voting no.
- Princeton City Planning Commission Liaison
 - Mr. Wilhelm moved to appoint Gene Stoeckel as Princeton City Planning Commission Liaison. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Approved unanimously.
- Airport Advisory Board
 - Mr. Hiller moved to appoint John Wilhelm to the Airport Advisory Board. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Approved unanimously.
- Fire Advisory Board
 - Mr. Duden moved to appoint Dan Hiller to the Fire Advisory Board. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Approved unanimously.
- Road Supervisor
 - Mr. Hiller moved to appoint Bill Whitcomb as Road Supervisor. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Approved unanimously.
- Weed Inspector
 - Mr. Wilhelm moved to appoint Thomas Duden as Weed Inspector, to include ditch mowing and brushing, and tree trimming. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Approved unanimously.

- Official Newspaper
 - Mr. Whitcomb moved to maintain the Union-Times as the official newspaper for public noticed. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried unanimously.
- Official Depository
 - Mr. Whitcomb moved to maintain Bremer Bank as the official depository for all Township funds. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried unanimously.
- Supervisor roles and related responsibilities are recorded in the attached document entitled 2021 Supervisor Roles.

Approve Liquor License Renewals

Mr. Duden moved to approve liquor-license renewals for:

- Long Siding Bar & Grill
- Moonshine Bar & Grill
- Princeton Lanes
- Old Log Liquor
- Shooters

The motion included the stipulation that the township license fee would be waived for Long Siding Bar & Grill, Moonshine, Princeton Lanes, and Shooters. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Minutes

February 16 regular meeting:

Mr. Duden moved to approve the minutes of the February 16 monthly meeting. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Mr. Hiller recused (not present at the meeting). Motion carried 4-0.

Open Forum

Rayme Herold described his plan to establish a used-car dealership location on the east side of Hwy 169 adjacent to Old Log Liquor. His goal was to assess the Town Board's general reaction to his plan. Scott Richards advised that use-car sales is a conditional use in the commercial/industrial district; Mr. Herold will have to prepare a conditional-use permit application along with a site plan of his proposed project. The permit application and site plan will require a public hearing, as well as review before the Planning Commission before the Town Board can take up the question.

Dan Patnode, owner of Old Log Liquor, requested clarification on the township's plans to create a township road through the current driveway to his business. He noted that this possibility raises complications for his plan to add commercial storage units to his existing property; specifically, it would turn his side-yard setback (35 ft) into a front-yard setback (70 ft), which would interfere with his planned storage-unit location by taking 35 feet of buildable area from is property.

Mr. Stoeckel offered to arrange a meeting for Mr. Patnode with Mr. Richards and Township Engineer Todd McLouth to clarify the plan details and the township's future plan for the road in question. Meeting to take place at Township Hall at the earliest opportunity.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash control statement:

General Fund beginning balance for February:	\$165,004.45
Receipts	\$ 12,078.30
Disbursements	\$ 17,878.25
Ending balance	\$159,204.50

Road & Bridge Fund beginning balance for February:	\$140,286.81
Receipts:	\$ 31,577.34
Disbursements	\$ 9,799.38
Ending balance	\$162,064.77

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the February cash control statement. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried unanimously.

Payroll:

- Regular February net payroll: \$3,230.09. Mr. Hiller moved to approve the regular payroll. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Motion carried unanimously.
- March election net payroll: \$1,010.00. Mr. Hiller moved to approve the election payroll. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims for approval:

- Regular claims through March 23: \$29,154.13.
- Claims paid by EFT/debit card 2-16 to 2-28: \$415.14.
- Lundberg escrow refund (\$3,325.00) and TMK Properties cash letter-of-credit (\$9,703.00) refund.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the three separate claims: regular claims, EFT/debit claims, and refunds of the Lundberg escrow balance and the TMK Properties cash LOC balance. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion approved unanimously.

Progress report: 2020 audit by Schlenner Wenner & Co.:

Mr. Dahl reported that Schlenner Wenner has completed the audit. He received the auditor's draft Report to the Members of Governance on March 18. He will complete the procedural matters with the auditor's primary contact this week.

Mr. Dahl reported that it appears the Town Board has been operating on a misunderstanding of the Board of Audit for several years, going back to at least the 2002 audit. The Board practice has been to meet as the Board of Audit each year in February to certify the external audit. However, the attorney for the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) informed Mr. Dahl that the Board of Audit is a separate function from the external audit. In a proper Board of Audit, as mandated by state statute, the town treasurer prepares a report for the Board of Audit following a checklist developed from the governing statute. The Board of Audit reviews that report, verifies receipts and disbursements by examining selected records, makes any necessary corrections, then approves the internal audit.

Mr. Dahl added that the goal for this year should be to conduct a proper Board of Audit process—to get it right; then, next year, to get it right and on time for the Annual Meeting.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Scott Richards

100-Acre Homestead Event Venue—James & Sara Rutten

Mr. Richards noted that the Planning Commission had approved the application for a Conditional Use Permit for an event venue at 6360 60th Avenue with conditions stipulated in Resolution 2021-7.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to approve Resolution 2021-7 granting the Conditional Use Permit for an event venue at 6360 60th Avenue to be called 100-Acre Homestead. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Hiller—yes; Mr. Stoeckel—yes; Mr. Whitcomb—yes; Mr. Wilhelm—yes. Mr. Duden had left the meeting due to illness. Motion carried 4-0.

Northern Natural Gas—Exemption to the Conditional Use Permit

Mr. Richards presented Resolution 2021-8 granting an exemption to the Conditional Use Permit requirement for Northern Natural Gas to complete its facility upgrade project on 82nd Avenue within Section 21 (PID 16-021-4603).

Mr. Hiller raised the question of restoring the road area affected by the project. Mr. Wilhelm suggested adding a condition to the resolution to require Northern Natural Gas to restore the roadbed to the condition it was in before the work began. Township Engineer Todd McLouth agreed that such a condition would be good.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve Resolution 2021-8 with the added condition that Northern shall restore the Town's right-of-way, including the road surface, shoulder, and ditch, to the same condition that existed prior to the construction of the proposed upgrades. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Hiller—yes; Mr. Stoeckel—yes; Mr. Whitcomb—yes; Mr. Wilhelm—yes. Motion carried 4-0.

Kepple Addition—Zoning and Preliminary Plat

Mr. Richards reported that David Kepple has made application for a preliminary plat located north of Highway 95 in Section 26 at 2601 65th Avenue. PID 16-026-0600. In researching a question raised by a resident the clerk found that the property had been re-zoned back to AC—Agricultural Conservation in 2015. The 2019 Zoning Map showed it as RR—Rural Residential. Mr. Richards provided a new 2021 Zoning Map correcting the error.

Mr. Richards offered Resolution 2021-9 to adopt the 2021 Zoning Map, thus correcting the zoning error.

Mr. Richards expressed his support for considering re-zoning the subject area again to RR. He suggested having the Planning Commission take up the question at a public hearing before the regular Town Board meeting on April 20 to proceed with the preliminary plat application.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve Resolution 2021-9 adopting the 2021 Zoning Map, and request the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing on April 20 to consider re-zoning the property in Section 26. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Hiller—yes; Mr. Stoeckel—yes; Mr. Whitcomb—yes; Mr. Wilhelm—yes. Motion carried 4-0.

Residential Development Subcommittee—Update

Mr. Richards provided an update on the Planning Commission Subcommittee on Residential Development. The subcommittee's research discovered that resolutions approving the Preserve

at Princeton and Balsam Ridge were based on density bonuses allowed under a planned unit development (PUD) provision. Princeton Township had allowed PUDs between 2001 and 2005. The PUD allowance was removed in 2005.

Special Meeting on Roads

Mr. Stoeckel has called a special meeting for April 6 to discuss road plans and budget. The meeting has been published and posted.

Old Business

The decision on what action to take on the Brickton Road repair will be taken up at the April 6 special meeting on roads.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve Mr. Whitcomb to work with Jason Hill to pursue a joint-powers agreement with City of Princeton for crack-filling and chip-sealing this year. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve MLC's request to move the LBAE date from April 22 to April 21, 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Supervisors' Reports

Road report—Bill Whitcomb

The windshield on the tractor shattered on March 20. The tractor is covered under the MATIT vehicle insurance policy.

Fire Board Liaison Report—Bill Whitcomb

Mr. Whitcomb displayed a breakdown of the 429 calls that Princeton Fire & Rescue responded to in 2020. Princeton Township accounted for 18% of call volume. The volume of calls is absorbing most of the city's fire & rescue budget, leaving little to accrue to the truck and equipment fund. That will result in pressure to raise taxes for the equipment fund.

Mr. Whitcomb noted that the part of the annual levy devoted to fire coverage has lost approximately \$85,000 in buying power over the past 14 years with the township levy remaining the same. That situation will also have to be addressed in the 2022 budget discussions.

City Annexation—Gene Stoeckel

Mr. Stoeckel reported that the City of Princeton's annexation of 41 acres adjacent to the fire station cannot be contested by the Township because the previous owners of the property had sold it to the city before the annexation. At that point, the City removed the parcel from the Township's tax rolls, thereby nullifying the City's requirement of reimbursing the Township for lost tax revenue. The loss was negligible—approximately \$700 over five years. Mr. Stoeckel questioned the legality of the action, but was told the Township had no recourse.

Mr. Hiller suggested it might be time to begin meeting with City officials to work out an annexation plan that will protect the Township from similar actions in the future.

New Business

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) policy: Mr. Dahl presented a draft policy from the Minnesota Association of Townships covering EFT, ACH, and debit cards. Mr. Hiller moved to adopt the policy. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to delegate to the Clerk-Treasurer the authority to make electronic funds transfers (EFTs). Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Mr. Hiller moved to set 2022 civic donations budget to \$0. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb reported that he will be requesting gravel quotes from three vendors: Dahlheimer Trucking & Excavating, Hass Construction, and West Branch Construction.

Mr. Whitcomb reported that Steve Pflieger has not been able to continue working on the roads. He and Mr. Hiller interviewed new applicants last year. For safety reasons, he wants to have two people on a mowing, brushing, and tree trimming crew. He and Mr. Hiller will interview an applicant who submitted his application last fall.

Other Business

No action under other business.

Adjourn

Mr. Hiller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.
Adjourned 9:50 p.m.

Attendees

In person: Andrea Gerrard, Kenneth Hennen, Rayme Herold, Dan Patnode Nathan Taylor, Josh Vicari. Online: Jeremy Jacobsson, David Kepple, Tanya Lundberg, Cyndi MacDonald, Todd McLouth, Nancy Moan, Bonnie Nelson, David Persing, Scott Richards, Sara Rutten, Craig Wensmann, plus unidentified callers.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Dahl, Clerk-Treasurer

Video link to March meeting:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQx8yJBV8ZWw1EV1cmDLJdoOTkW3F_coK

2021 - Supervisor Roles

Seat 1 Dan Hiller

Seat 2 Bill Whitcomb

Seat 3 Gene Stoeckel

Seat 4 John Wilhelm

Seat 5 Thomas Duden

Chairman - Gene Stoeckel

Vice-Chairman - Thomas Duden

Secretary - Dan Hiller

Liason to		1st		2nd (backup)	
City Planning Commission	-	Gene Stoeckel		Gene Stoeckel	
Airport	-	John Wilhelm		Gene Stoeckel	
Fire	-	Dan Hiller		Gene Stoeckel	
TS Planning Commission	-	John Wilhelm		Gene Stoeckel	
Chamber of Commerce	-			Bill Whitcomb	
?? WHY ???	-			Thomas Duden	
Roads	-			Thomas Duden	
Pavement	-	Bill Whitcomb		Bill Whitcomb	
Crack filling & Chip Sealing	-	Bill Whitcomb		Bill Whitcomb	
Gravel	-	Bill Whitcomb		Bill Whitcomb	
Signs	-	Thomas Duden		Bill Whitcomb	
Mowing	-	Thomas Duden		Bill Whitcomb	
Brushing	-	Thomas Duden		Bill Whitcomb	
Tree trimming	-	Thomas Duden		Bill Whitcomb	
Ice & Snow	-	Thomas Duden		Bill Whitcomb	
Noxious Weeds	-	Thomas Duden		John Wilhelm	
County Ditches	-	Thomas Duden		John Wilhelm	
Culverts	-	Bill Whitcomb		Gene Stoeckel	
Zoning	-	Dan Hiller		Scott Richards	
Road Maintenance personnel	-	Bill Whitcomb		Thomas Duden	
Building Maintenance personnel	-	Gene Stoeckel		Thomas Duden	
Office personnel	-	Gene Stoeckel		Thomas Duden	