

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Minutes

The April 20 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, plus remote participation via GoToMeeting.

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

Staff present: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Andrea Gerrard, Ken Henchen

Public in-person attendees: Jon Archer (Schlenner Wenner & Company), Dave Kepple, Nancy Moan, Steve Pflieger, Kathy Stoeckel, Carol Whitcomb

Public online attendees: Maria Enninga-Wahlquist, Ronald Lindberg, Mark Riverblood

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the minutes of the March 9 Board of Canvass. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Duden moved to approve the minutes of the March 23 Monthly Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb requested a clarification to his notes from the April 6 Special Meeting: page 6, second to last paragraph, first sentence, add McLouth after Todd to read Todd McLouth.

Mr. Duden moved to approve the minutes of the April 6 Special Meeting with the single edit. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Dave Kepple spoke to his preliminary plat application. He objected to the road easement condition recommended by the Planning Commission. He also cited the funds he had lost due to the error on the 2019 zoning map he had relied on when he purchased the property. He requested a waiver of the plat fee as compensation for his losses.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash control statement:

General Fund beginning balance for March:	\$85,098.80
Receipts	\$22,346.16
Disbursements	<u>\$30,583.86</u>
Ending balance	\$76,861.10

Road & Bridge Fund beginning balance for March:	\$232,634.77
Receipts:	\$ 51.50
Disbursements	\$ <u>1,375.00</u>
Ending balance	\$231,311.27

Mr. Duden moved to approve the March cash control statement. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Payroll:

March net payroll: \$4,382.08.

Mr. Duden moved to approve the March payroll. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims for Approval:

Total claims through April 20: \$26,306.06. Note: Kennedy & Graven claim of \$6,765.02 covers two months.

Mr. Hiller noted that the Dahlheimer Trucking claim covered repair of a road that was on the road report agenda for later in the meeting. He objected to paying the claim if the damage to the road resulted from farming operations.

Mr. Hiller moved to table the Claims for Approval until after the discussion of the road damage. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Motion carried.

2020 Audit Report

Jon Archer of Schlenner Wenner & Company delivered the 2020 outside audit report. Major observations:

- Audit went smoothly.
- Did not need to recommend any material audit adjustments.
- One material weakness: No segregation of clerk and treasurer duties due to the combined office. However, the Board’s close scrutiny of monthly financials mitigates that weakness significantly.
- One legal compliance shortcoming: Making electronic funds transfers (EFT) without a policy in place. Noted that the Board established an EFT policy upon notification by the auditor.

Zoning Administrator’s Report

Actions related to Kepple Addition Preliminary Plat

- Request to rezone properties at 2601 65th Avenue, PID 16-026-0600 and 2735 65th Avenue, PID 16-026-0800 from AC—Agricultural Conservation to RR—Rural Residential
- Request by David Kepple for a preliminary plat, referred to as Kepple Addition, at 2601 65th Avenue

Mr. Richards reviewed the history of the preliminary plat application by David Kepple. He noted that the Planning Commission, at its special meeting preceding the Town Board meeting, had recommended approval of the zoning change and the preliminary plat.

Mr. Richards presented two actions for the Board to consider:

- Re-zoning the subject property from AC to RR.
- Approving the Kepple Addition preliminary plat.

Mr. Duden moved to approve first reading of Ordinance 2021-3 changing the zoning for PIDs 16-026-0600 and 16-026-0800 from AC to RR. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Duden moved to approve Resolution 2021-10, Kepple Addition Preliminary Plat, striking condition #3 providing an easement for a potential future road, and adding condition #10, that any culvert construction be subject to review and approval by the Township Engineer and Mille Lacs County, as recommended by the Planning Commission. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—No; Mr. Whitcomb—No; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried 3-2.

Mr. Richards mentioned Mr. Kepple's request for a waiver of fees due to the error on the Township zoning map. Mr. Whitcomb asked if the fees were above and beyond the Township's normal fees. Mr. Richards confirmed that the fees are/were what the Township normally charges.

Mr. Hiller moved to retain the fees. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Home Occupation—Interim-Use Permit Ordinance Amendment

Mr. Richards reviewed amendments he is recommending to the Home Occupation section (300-143) of the Township ordinance covering interim-use permits. The amendments will provide a two-tier process for granting interim-use permits for home occupations:

- Permitted Home Occupation—No interim-use permit required; for residents maintaining an office at home with no employees or general public coming to the premises.
- Special Home Occupation—Interim-use permit required; more complex businesses with employees or general-public access, site alterations, and other conditions.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to waive first reading of the ordinance and schedule second reading for the May 18 Town Board meeting. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried.

Old Business

Protective equipment for road workers

Mr. Duden moved to approve the purchase of 12 safety cones, two roll-up signs, and two non-spring stands from Earl F. Anderson Company for \$492.00, per quote obtained by Mr. Whitcomb. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to approve the purchase of helmets and chaps for the road crew. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Levy discussion

Mr. Stoeckel and Mr. Whitcomb spoke to the need to address accumulating budget shortfalls. Mr. Whitcomb reviewed the challenges facing the Township due to the unwillingness of previous Town Boards to increase the annual levy in the face of rising costs for road maintenance and growth in the Township. After 14 years of zero levy increase the Township has lost over 22% of the purchasing power of its levy due to inflation. To provide adequate funds for the road budget in the upcoming years the Township must plan for gradual annual levy increases. The increases the Board is considering proposing to Township residents at the annual meeting continuation in June should result in no dollar increase for individual taxpayers due to the increase in the number of households in the Township.

The challenge for the Board is to prepare a clear, detailed budget to present to the electors at the annual meeting so they can understand the current situation as well as future needs, and set the levy accordingly.

Appoint Two Planning Commission Members

Four candidates submitted letters of interest for the Planning Commission: Steven Pflieger, Meri Reidl, Kathleen Stoeckel, and Tari Zortman.

Mr. Duden moved to appoint Steven Pflieger and Kathleen Stoeckel to the Township Planning Commission. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Mr. Stoeckel abstained. Motion carried 3-1.

Resolve conflict: Airport and Planning Commission Liaison

At the March 23 meeting John Wilhelm was appointed as liaison to both the Airport Board and the Planning Commission. Those two boards meet on the same night.

Mr. Duden moved to appoint Dan Hiller as Planning Commission Liaison. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried .

Road Report

Complaint from residents regarding road damage by farmers to 105th Ave.

Mr. Whitcomb reported that two residents on 105th Avenue north of 55th Street have complained that a local farmer is damaging roads and ditches by driving through ditches and driving heavy equipment on gravel roads, as well as parking equipment along the road, thus blocking the road.

NOTE: The subject of the complaint is Wilhelm Farms operated by the Wilhelm family, including Township Supervisor John Wilhelm.

Members discussed damage to the road. Mr. Hiller questioned why the Township should have to pay for road damage caused by farmers. Mr. Duden stated that damage to the road should be the responsibility of the party causing the damage. Mr. Wilhelm objected that Wilhelm Farms is not the only farming operation using the road. The road is also used by Shelly Farm. He also stated that his family's operation has not used the road extensively this spring.

Mr. Whitcomb observed that the complaints are coming in the spring when the roads are coming out of the winter freeze, we have had several days of rain, and the road serves a farm community.

The Township received an invoice for the repair work totaling \$1,310.00. Mr. Hiller argued that the bill should be split between the two farm operations on the road. Mr. Whitcomb noted that the road was scheduled for graveling this year.

Mr. Duden moved to split the charges between the two farm operations using the road: \$655.00 to Wilhelm Farms and \$655 to Shelly Farm. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried by a show of hands: Mr. Duden—Yes; Mr. Hiller—Yes; Mr. Stoeckel—Yes. Mr. Whitcomb and Mr. Wilhelm voted no.

Dust Control Quote

Mr. Whitcomb presented a quote from Central Minnesota Dust Control for a first dust-control application (magnesium chloride) in May and a second application in August on ten road sections specified in the quote. Total for two applications: \$20,898.75.

Mr. Whitcomb explained that the first application could be sufficient for the season if the summer is relatively wet. The second application would be applied if a dry summer wears the first application away, and will only apply chloride to the areas where needed.

Mr. Whitcomb made the point that applying dust control to roads can significantly reduce the need to grade the roads, helping to minimize road-maintenance costs. Best case would be reducing the need to grade roads from 12-15 times per year to 2-4 times per year. Dust control also reduces the need for applying additional gravel to the roads.

Mr. Duden moved to accept the quote from Minnesota Dust Control. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Hire three part-time road-maintenance workers

Mr. Whitcomb proposed hiring three road-maintenance workers for the 2021 season:

- Dale Hennen—continuing
- Ken Hennen—adding to present duties
- Tony Trunk—new hire

Mr. Hiller moved to approve hiring the three part-time maintenance workers. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Audit for Township Financial Year 2020

Procedure:

Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl delivered four financial reports from fiscal year 2020 to the Board:

- Statement of Receipts, Disbursement, and Balances (CTAS report Schedule 1)
- Remitter Ledger for tax receipts from the Mille Lacs County Auditor-Treasurer
- 2020 Receipts Register
- 2020 Disbursements Register

Each supervisor was asked to choose three items each from the Receipts Register and the Disbursements Register. Mr. Dahl was then required to produce documentation for each item. For receipts: the receipt entry from CTAS showing its source and account allocation, and the receipt-book entry verifying its deposit in the Bremer Bank account. For disbursements: the original claim, the claim form from the CTAS entry showing its account allocation, and verification of the method of payment, whether check, debit, or EFT.

Members reviewed the documentation and found it all in order.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the Board of Audit. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb Motion carried.

Upon completion of the Board of Audit Mr. Stoeckel re-convened the regular meeting.
Mr. Hiller moved to approve the claims list. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried
unanimously.

Adjourn

Mr. Whitcomb moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting
adjourned at 10:06 p.m.