

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Minutes

The July 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 in-person attendance, plus remote participation via GoToMeeting.

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

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

Public in-person attendees: Joyce Johnson, Ron Lindberg, Joel Minks, Nancy Moan, Kathy Stoeckel, Abbi Wright

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Meeting Agenda

Thomas Duden moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Mr. Duden moved to approve the June 15 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Township resident Ron Lindberg raised questions about the actions of neighbors at 10082 55th Street. He reported that the occupants had placed a shed on the right-of-way of a public-access road passing the house on the east side. He noted several actions that appear to violate Township zoning regulations. He suspects that much of the work being done on the property is proceeding without proper permitting. He asked the Board to investigate the situation. Chair Stoeckel agreed and will request an investigation by the Zoning Administrator and other Township staff.

Supervisor Thomas Duden addressed the question of Township legal fees that had been raised in a shopper ad the past week. He noted that the individual who placed the ad has been engaging in actions that result in the Township incurring some of those fees. Mr. Duden also noted that fees for legal services have been high due to the high level of development activity in the Township in 2020 and 2021. He suggested that the Township needs to consider how it might delegate some of the planning to Mille Lacs County.

Mr. Hiller responded that he had inquired about delegating planning to the County. He learned that it is all or nothing. He noted that only Princeton Township and Greenbush Township do their own zoning; Mille Lacs County handles all the other townships. He agreed that Princeton Township should consider handing planning and zoning off to the County.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash control statement:

General Fund beginning balance for June:	\$54,513.98
Receipts	\$13,242.81
Disbursements	<u>\$42,532.23</u>
Ending balance	\$25,224.56
Road & Bridge Fund beginning balance for June:	\$228,351.87
Receipts:	\$ 966.81
Disbursements	<u>\$ 9,304.36</u>
Ending balance	\$220,014.32

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve the June cash control statement. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Payroll:

June net payroll: \$4,296.60

Mr. Duden moved to approve the June payroll. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Motion carried.

Claims for Approval:

Total claims through July 20, 2021: \$84,230.79

Mr. Dahl noted that the claims included \$57,974.50 from Allied Blacktop Company for its work on the 2021 crack- and chip-sealing project. He presented Resolution 2021-18 authorizing payment to Allied Blacktop for the work.

Mr. Duden moved to adopt Resolution 2021-18. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve the claims. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Dahl reported that, per last month's instruction, he had closed the Township's money market account and transferred the balance of \$170,507.61 to the Township's checking account. Also, the Township had received the first-half tax settlement from Mille Lacs County: \$179,036.39.

Distribution:

- General Fund \$52,929.70
- Road & Bridge \$95,649.37
- Fire \$30,457.32

Zoning Administrator's Report

Section 27 & 34 land use and planning study

Mr. Richards gave an update on the Planning Commission's discussions on the Township Section 27 re-zoning request from Scott Moller. He also reported on the Commission's discussion of potential amendments to ordinances governing setbacks, accessory buildings, and electronic signs and billboards.

The Board took no action on those issues.

Old Business

The Township received a revised Special Event Permit for Outlaw Grassdrags correcting the applicable times for its liquor license. Mr. Duden moved to approve the permit. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Long Siding Bar & Grill closed after the death of its owner. The establishment is re-opening under new ownership as Long Siding Station. Mr. Duden moved to approve the liquor license for Long Siding Station, waiving the Township fee. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

The Board considered Resolution 2021-19 renewing a contract with Hiller Auction Service for the sale of vehicles and equipment as approved by the Board at its June meeting. Mr. Whitcomb moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Yes; Mr. Hiller—abstain; Mr. Stoeckel—yes; Mr. Whitcomb—yes; Mr. Wilhelm—yes. Motion carried unanimously.

The vehicles and equipment will be offered via an exclusive Princeton Township online auction in August. Mr. Hiller asked for an advertising allowance to run print ads in addition to online promotion via the Hiller website, email, and social media.

Mr. Duden moved to allocate up to \$500 for advertising to promote the Township auction via print and Facebook ads. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried with Mr. Hiller abstaining.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to offer the merchandise to auction without minimums or reserves. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried with Mr. Hiller abstaining.

New Business

Mr. Stoeckel reported that Mille Lacs County has accepted the bid for County Ditch 2 repair from Land Pride Construction. Bid price is \$440,988. The County has proposed assessing Princeton Township \$14,000 for two culverts. The Township has the option of putting the job out for contractor bids rather than accept the assessment.

Mr. Hiller moved to pursue contractor bids for the Township's work in County Ditch 2. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Road Report

- Tree removal, trimming, and chipping: Mr. Duden reported that brush-cutting and trimming/chipping are continuing. Should consider grinding stumps in some areas as some stumps are creating hazards. Also, current brush-cutting equipment is not adequate for the task. Will need to consider options.

Ken Henchen owns equipment that is equal to the task. He gave the Board a proposal to rent his chipper and dump truck to the Township for \$30/hour. Members agreed that the proposed rental rate is better than they can get elsewhere.

Mr. Duden moved to accept Mr. Henchen's proposal to rent his chipper and truck for \$30/hour each. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

- Mowing shoulders: The first round of mowing is complete. Members discussed options for completing the second round before winter. They will inquire with neighboring

townships for potential contractors.

Mr. Hiller moved to seek bids for the second round of mowing. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Mr. Duden moved to allocate up to \$1,500.00 to purchase a brush-clearing saw. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

- Gravel roads: Graveling is continuing. Should be completed within the week.
- Crack fill and chip seal: The Township can now bill the City of Princeton and Baldwin Township for their portions of the project: \$1,631.00 to the city; \$911 to Baldwin.
- Soil borings: There are approximately 10 sunken road areas in the Township that need repair. Reason for sinking is unknown. Need to take soil borings to determine cause and steps to fix. Borings will provide useful information for the bidding process on those road sections, which will help keep costs in line.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to authorize Mr. Whitcomb to discuss the process with the Township Engineer and begin contacting potential contractors. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

- Brickton Road: Paving is done. Shoulder still needs gravel. Culvert still needs to be filled, plugged, and abandoned.
- Pavement patching: Patched 40th Ave. at County Road 102; also, southernmost ¼ mile of 50th Ave.
- Shared Road Agreements: Mr. Whitcomb worked with Township Attorney Jason Hill on July 2 & 16. He forwarded draft agreements to the supervisors for their review.

Supervisor Reports

Mr. Stoeckel reported from the Airport Commission that the airport taxi lane bid had been approved at \$991,000, which was about 40% less than projected. Construction window is 70 days beginning August or September. The city will pay approximately \$27,000. The balance is federal and state expense.

Mr. Stoeckel noted that the motion passed at the Annual Meeting, to increase compensation to boards and commissions, is not binding. Compensation must be set annually by the Town Board.

Mr. Stoeckel brought up the issue of the Township's expenses for legal services, particularly for planning and zoning. He commented that the unexpected sharp increase in development and other construction activity in the Township has resulted in planning and zoning expenses that far exceed the level anticipated in the 2021 budget. He suggested that the Planning Commission would need to cut back on some of its consideration of zoning-ordinance amendments, and take other steps to rein in spending. Mr. Whitcomb commented that much of the consideration of zoning-ordinance revision has been necessary because current ordinances are often vague or out of date.

Mr. Hiller again urged the Board to consider transferring planning and zoning to Mille Lacs County. He recognizes that doing so would entail giving up control, but believes it is worth considering for financial reasons.

Mr. Hiller gave a brief fire board report.

Adjourn

Mr. Whitcomb moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk/Treasurer