

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Special Meeting

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Minutes

The February 3 special meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:50 p.m., following the Board of Audit. 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

Public attendees: None

2023 Road and Bridge Fund budget proposals

Mr. Whitcomb presented a plan for catching up on road maintenance which had been badly neglected for several years. He noted that the Township Engineer's report in 2014 had stated that the paved roads would need an average of \$382,545 per year for proper maintenance. The Board ignored that recommendation, and refused to adjust funding allocations or to increase the levy through 2020. As a result, the Township fell severely behind in road maintenance.

The Board began to address the situation in two ways: 1) proposing a moderate levy increase for 2022 (adopted by electors at the 2021 Annual Meeting); 2) re-allocating the levy split between the General and Road & Bridge Funds from approximately 50-50 to approximately 65% for roads. This allocation more closely aligns with recommendations from the State Auditor.

Mr. Whitcomb stressed that the Township needs two conditions to help meet the proposed road budget for 2023: 1) an additional increase in the levy; 2) a new road-maintenance agreement with Wyanett Township that implements the standard, established by Minnesota statute, of splitting maintenance costs for shared roads equally between the responsible jurisdictions.

[The text of Mr. Whitcomb's presentation is attached to these minutes.]

Mr. Wilhelm moved to increase the budget proposal for the 2023 Road & Bridge Fund from \$265,000 to \$365,000. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried 5-0.

2023 General Fund budget proposals

Mr. Stoeckel stated that the levy for the General Fund would not need to be increased for 2023, emphasizing that any levy increase must go to road maintenance.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to keep the budget proposal for the 2023 General Fund at the 2022 level of \$60,000. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried 5-0.

Approve 2022 R&B funding splits as proposed at the January 18 TB meeting

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve the 2022 Road & Bridge funding splits as proposed in the Road Supervisor report. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried 5-0.

Funding splits:

• Paved roads	\$318,000
• Gravel roads	\$ 82,000
• Miscellaneous	\$ 12,000 (Both paved and gravel)
• Snow & Ice	\$ 19,000 (Both paved and gravel)
Total	\$431,000

Consider options for renting brushing and tree-trimming equipment

Mr. Hiller moved to table action on brushing and tree-trimming equipment to the February 18 monthly meeting to pursue additional options suggested by members. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried 5-0.

Resolution to spend ARPA funds on lost-revenue replacement

Mr. Hiller moved to approve Resolution 2022-2 allowing the Township to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay for government services in 2022 as part of lost-revenue replacement. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:
Mr. Duden—Yes; Mr. Hiller—Yes; Mr. Stoeckel—Yes; Mr. Whitcomb—Yes; Mr. Wilhelm—Yes.

Adjourn

Mr. Hiller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Princeton Township



Road Plan and Road Budget for 2023

Presented by – Bill Whitcomb, Supervisor

February 3, 2022

Townships are responsible for roads and this is a primary function

§ 15-1. Town Road Authority
Town boards are "road
authorities" for township
roads. Minn. Stat. § 160.02,
subd. 25. ,
This is one of the major tasks of town boards.

§ 15-14. Towns are expected to
maintain and improve their
roads.

*Taken from 2019 Manual on Town Government
Minnesota Association of Townships*

Goals:

- Develop and approve a comprehensive road plan for all roads in the township and implement the plan.
- Determine priorities based on data and facts
- Address needs and assure due diligence and fiscal responsibility for the township residents

Princeton Township Comprehensive Road Maintenance Plan

Primary Focus Areas:

- Gravel Road Maintenance
- Paved Road Maintenance
- Snow Removal
- Mowing & Brush Removal
- Safety and Signage
- Comprehensive Budget Plan

It is important to revisit and remind everyone that the Road and Bridge budget was stagnant at \$110,000 since at least 2011, at least a decade.

During the past 3 years I have worked countless hours to develop a comprehensive road plan based on accurate data to address the years of neglect for our township roads and budgeting needs.

This presentation will focus on:

- Proposed road work and budgeting for 2023.

Princeton Township Comprehensive Road Maintenance Plan

Key Accomplishments: The approaches for each primary focus area provides improved outcomes & budget management

- Gravel Road Maintenance - ongoing 3 year rotating graveling plan with improved grading and dust control for high traffic roads that meet established criteria
- Paved Road Maintenance - when I was elected, more than 90% of the townships paved roads were under maintained for the previous 10 years. Now over 90% of the paved roads will have received routine maintenance by the fall of 2022.
- Snow Removal has moved to cost effective contracted service
- Mowing also moved to cost effective contracted service
- Safety and Signage - Accurate inventory established, policy and process developed and implemented
- Comprehensive Budget Plan to address current and future needs for the township to meet obligations for maintaining and improving township roads and associated services as required by State Statutes.

By significantly adjusting the levy allocations to better align with the Minnesota State Auditor's recommendations for Townships, we are now getting closer to where we need to be with the budget dollar amount. It was known since 2014, when the Township Engineer's report from Todd McLouth indicated we would need an average of \$382,545 per year to maintain township roads.

Road and Bridge funds available in 2023

Levy plus additional revenues:

Levy for 2023	~ \$318,000
ARPA (TBD)*	~ \$115,000
Cash reserve from 2022**	~ \$330,000
Total	~ \$763,000
Planned Cash reserve to carry over to 2024	~ - \$261,000
Funds available in 2023	~ \$502,000

*We may have an additional ~ \$115,00 coming in 2022 from ARPA (TBD).

**Proposed Cash reserve is contingent on the outcome of the 2022 bid proposals.

Proposed 2023

Road and bridge funding splits:

Paved roads***	~ \$387,000
Gravel roads	~ \$82,000
Misc. (Both paved and gravel)	~ \$13,000
Snow and Ice (Both paved and gravel)	~ \$20,000
Total	~ \$502,000

***All proposed work is contingent on the outcome of the bid proposals.

Thank you for your attention.