

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Minutes

The January 17 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

Supervisor absent: John Wilhelm

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

Via GoToMeeting:

Public attendees: Jason Betzler, Mike Bishman, Joss Jondahl, Joel Minks, Nancy Moan, Craig Wensmann,

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Agenda

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Open Forum

No business in Open Forum.

Approve Minutes—December 20 Monthly Meeting

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the minutes of the December 20 monthly meeting. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash Control Statement—December 31, 2022

General Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 69,131.69
Receipts	\$ 56,410.14
Disbursements	\$ 43,941.22
Ending Balance	\$ 81,600.30
Road & Bridge Fund Beginning Balance	\$227,295.52
Receipts	\$115,845.22
Disbursements	\$ 44,900.16
Ending Balance	\$298,240.58
COVID Fund	No change
Total Cash Beginning Balance	\$512,146.06
Receipts	\$172,255.36
Disbursements	\$ 90,256.39

Ending Balance \$594,145.03

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the December Cash Control Statement. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

November Payroll

Gross \$5,005.50
Net \$4,100.23

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

Claims for Approval

Total Claims through January 20 \$49,123.74

Noteworthy:

- Dahlheimer Trucking (snowplowing) \$ 4,452.50
- County Ditch 2 tax assessment pmt in full \$ 2,096.18
- County Ditch 2 improvements pmt in full \$19,790.11

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the Claims List. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried.

Auditor Search Update

Mr. Dahl reported that he has been unable to secure a replacement audit firm for Schlenner Wenner. He has contacted all prospective firms from the list provided by the Minnesota Association of Townships. In the absence of an audit firm, the Office of the State Auditor is supposed to conduct the audit. Mr. Dahl contacted the State Auditor to request an audit, but was informed that the Auditor could not provide the service due to its own staff shortage. The Auditor's representative informed Mr. Dahl that several townships in the state are in similar circumstances. Mr. Dahl is investigating any other options, including the implications of not having an outside audit for the year.

2022 Board of Audit

At the December 2022 meeting the Board voted to schedule the 2022 Board of Audit during the Town Board monthly meeting on February 21, 2023. To prepare for the audit, Clerk-Treasurer Dahl delivered four financial reports from fiscal year 2022 to each member:

- Statement of Receipts, Disbursement, and Balances (CTAS report Schedule 1)
- Remitter Ledger for tax receipts from the Mille Lacs County Auditor-Treasurer
- 2022 Receipts Register
- 2022 Disbursements Register

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

Zoning Report

Reger Acres Sketch Plan Review

Zoning Administrator Scott Richards presented a sketch-plan application from Michael Reger for property located south of 65th Street on 110th Avenue/County Road 149. The proposed subdivision consists of five lots on a total of 69.89 acres. The Planning Commission reviewed

the application at its January 9, 2023, meeting. Members did not vote on the plan, but asked the Zoning Administrator to present it to the Town Board for preliminary review and comment. The response was generally favorable, and Mr. Reger will continue preparing to present the plan to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and vote.

DPJB Sketch Plan Review

Mr. Richards presented a sketch-plan application from Jason Betzler, representing DPBJ Properties, for a multiple-family development at Highway 169 and 70th Street/County Road 135. The Planning Commission reviewed the plan at its January 9 meeting. Members raised a number of concerns, including the septic system and the number of units. Some members considered the concept worth pursuing, and looked forward to more detailed plans.

Mr. Betzler brought the plan to the Town Board for preliminary review and comments. Town Board concerns reflected those expressed by the Planning Commission, but members welcomed the opportunity to see the detailed plan once it has gone through the full Planning Commission review and vote.

Old Business

Wyanett Township Shared-Road Agreement Options

Mr. Whitcomb presented drafts of three options for a new shared-road agreement with Wyanett Township. Options 2 and 3 offer slightly varying ways of dividing maintenance costs equally between the two townships.

The Princeton Township-Wyanett Township shared road consists of five miles of the road known variously as 50th Avenue, Jarvis Street, and County Line Road on Princeton Township's eastern boundary. Currently, Princeton Township maintains three miles of paved road, while Wyanett maintains two miles of gravel. The result is that Princeton Township's maintenance costs are several times higher than those of Wyanett Township. Such a disparity is out of compliance with the Minnesota statute governing shared roads.

Princeton Township has approached Wyanett officials several times in the past year and one-half about establishing a new shared-road agreement to address the disparity (Options 2 and 3), but Wyanett has rejected them. Wyanett officials insist that the informal agreement, established in 1926, is still applicable.

Mr. Whitcomb developed a new option based on the standard from the governing statute that maintenance costs for shared roads be "equitable", but not necessarily equal, between adjacent authorities. That standard does not require costs to be split 50-50, but that responsibilities be divided in a way that both entities can agree is fair. In the absence of such agreement, the Township has the option of turning its proposal over to the next higher authority, in this case Mille Lacs and Isanti Counties, to resolve the dispute.

Mr. Whitcomb recommended the new option, known as Option 1, to the Board for its action. Option 1 establishes State Highway 95 as the dividing line between the two authorities. Princeton Township will keep the two miles of paved road south of Highway 95; the one mile of paved road north of 95 will be added to the two miles of gravel road now maintained by Wyanett, giving them the three miles from Highway 95 to County Road 13.

Given Wyanett's persistent refusal to negotiate a new agreement, Mr. Hiller called for delivering Option 1 directly to the counties. Supervisors generally agreed that approaching Wyanett again with a new proposal would be futile.

Mr. Hiller moved to select Option 1 as the preferred option, and to direct Attorney Hill to deliver it to Mille Lacs County and Isanti County with a letter requesting their intervention. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

City of Princeton Fire Contract Payment

At the December 20, 2022, meeting the Board voted to withhold its payment to the City of Princeton for second-half fire coverage due to the large increase from 2021. The 2021 charge was \$55,090.00. The 2022 bill totaled \$68,524, an increase of \$13,434, or 24.4%. The City had suggested the increase would be 3-5%, similar to that of previous years. Using the top estimate of 5%, the 2022 charge would be \$57,844.50. Subtracting the first half payment of \$34,264, the remaining balance would be \$23,580.50.

Mr. Duden moved to pay the City \$23,580.50, and send a letter with the payment explaining the Township's objections, and showing how the Board had calculated the amount due. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried with Mr. Hiller abstaining due to his status as an active fire fighter with the department.

New Business

Employee Reviews

Mr. Whitcomb commended the five road employees—Dale Henchen, Ken Henchen, Kimberly Paxton, Steve Pflighaar, and Tony Trunk—for their work on the roads, and their readiness to work when needed. He noted that having five workers available helps ensure there will always be at least two to go out at any time, which is valuable for safety.

Mr. Stoeckel commended Clerk-Treasurer Dahl for his work on behalf of the Township.

Mr. Dahl cited the progress of Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Terry Pflighaar. She attends training, takes copious notes, and studies diligently. She is now covering effectively for Mr. Dahl when he must be absent, as during his recent health emergency. Mr. Dahl noted particularly her experience as a librarian, and how valuable that has been as they have been called upon to research history, such as the relationship with Wyanett Township going back more than a century.

Election

The election notice will include the election, Board of Canvass, and Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Duden moved to publish the election notice in the Union-Times on February 2 and 9. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Set Deadline for Planning Commission Candidate Letters of Interest

Mr. Whitcomb moved to publish the Planning Commission candidate notice on March 9 and 23 with a submission deadline of 3:30 p.m. March 27. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried.

Set Date for Township Clean-Up Day/Road Tour

Mr. Duden moved to hold the Township Clean-Up Day and road tour on April 29. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Supervisor Reports

Road Supervisor

Mr. Whitcomb reviewed 2023 road plans. He distributed a map showing areas needing various repairs, where chloride will be applied, a section of ditch needing re-grading, and a segment of road needing to be reclaimed and paved. (Map is attached to these minutes.)

Mr. Stoeckel noted that the pavement at the south end of 50th Avenue is unsafe, and should be repaired in 2023. Mr. Whitcomb added the south end of 50th Avenue, Section 36, to the 2023 road plan to be reclaimed to gravel.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to approve the 2023 Road Plan with the addition of repairing the south 1200 feet of 50th Avenue. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Snowplowing

Mr. Duden reported that the Township has already spent \$10,495.50 on plowing, or 47.7% of the annual budget. He's trying to manage resources as tightly as possible in order to make sure funds are available for the rest of the plowing season.

Liaisons

Airport Commission: Continuing dispute between Fire Board and the City over location of the new AWOS (Automated Airport Weather Station). No agreement reached.

City Planning Commission: No report

Township Planning Commission: Covered in Zoning report

Fire Board: Fire Department received 472 calls in 2022, most ever.


Adjourn

Mr. Hiller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved by the Town Board February 21, 2023


Eugene Stoeckel
Chairman

2023 Proposed Road Work

RED = West ditch regrade along 100th Ave. (Approx. 600', Est. \$8-12K)

ORANGE = Reclaim and Pave – Widen from 21' to 24'. (Approx. 2800')

All grading and reshaping \$80-90K, Pave 3" \$110-120K. Total \$190-\$210K)

GREEN = Areas where Chloride is applied (Approx. 5.30 miles)

PURPLE = Sink hole repair. (Patch and pave to level, no excavation? 4@ \$5-10K= \$20-\$40K)

BROWN = Crumbling pavement. Repair, Reclaim and 3' Pave, riprap pond slope. (Approx. 425', estimate \$30-\$40K)

PINK = Chip Seal (Approx. 2.45 miles, \$44-\$48K)

