

Regular Monthly Meeting of the Windemere Township Board - August 13, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chairman, John Wesely. Others present were Supervisors Heidi Kroening and Mark Dunaski, Clerk Scott Danelski, Deputy Treasurer Paul Horgen, Zoning Administrator Dennis Genereau, and Road Maintenance Department Lead Employee Mike Buetow. Absent Treasurer Ron Mossberg. Also in attendance, four participants via Zoom.

CLERK'S REPORT :

The Clerk's July 2020 report was discussed. Motion made by Wesely, second by Kroening to approve the Clerk's July 2020 report as submitted. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

TREASURER'S REPORT :

Treasurer's July 2020 financial report was read. Motion made by Wesely, second by Dunaski to approve the Treasurer's July 2020 report as submitted. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

PUBLIC INPUT :

None. However, two Zoom participants did comment that it was hard to hear the audio. The issue was addressed and participants stated they could now hear the meeting better.

OLD BUSINESS :

STURGEON ISLAND BRIDGE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE :

The Sturgeon Island Bridge was discussed. Chairman Wesely read aloud a letter dated August 11th, 2020 from Krysten S. Foster MnDOT District 1 State Aid Engineer. Details of the letter are listed below:

1) Minnesota Rules Part 8820.9922, sets a 20-foot minimum width requirement where a road's average daily traffic count is less than 50 vehicles per day and the local government agency finds that the bridge can operate effectively at that width for the bridge's expected life. No state-supported project has ever received approval for a variance to vary below this minimum width for a new bridge. Further, an initial review of this site indicates a minimum bridge width of 28-feet may be required if the traffic exceeds 50 vehicles per day.

2) If Windemere Township chooses to construct a traditional span bridge, the I-RFD Bridge Design Manual requires a guardrail for drivers' safety. Widening the crossing and replacing this bridge with a long box culvert is the only option to avoid a guardrail assuming the township prefers to utilize funding available through the Town Bridge Program to support this project.

3) Finally, MnDOT considers the cover of a covered bridge a decorative/aesthetic item. A variance is not required to add a cover (unless the cover restricts the travel width of a bridge below the above minimum standards). However, state funding cannot pay for construction of the cover or materials for the same.

Ms. Foster stated an agency should also consider your potential future needs for emergency response or construction vehicle access as you're considering the height, width, and load carrying capacity of structure repair — if repair is feasible —or replacement options. She recommend working closely with Pine County Engineer, Mark LeBrun when considering the township's options. In addition, no Sturgeon Island Bridge Preservation Committee members have participated in the past three regular monthly Board meetings to discuss this topic or to give an update on their fund raising status for replacing the bridge using the current specifications.

WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP POLICY :

Windemere township policies were discussed. Supervisor Kroening has completed updated drafts for three new township policies and is currently working on two additional policy drafts. The five policies currently being worked on are listed here: 1) Accident Reporting Policy 2) Hiring Policy 3) Employee Termination Policy 4) Credit Card Policy and 5) Nepotism Policy.

HARMONY LANE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (TP 19-01) :

The Harmony Lane Improvement Project (TP 19-01) was discussed. All contracts have been awarded and letters of engagement have been sent to the vendors. Construction for the project is scheduled to begin mid to late August 2020 or early September 2020. A pre-construction meeting will be held approximately one week prior to the start of construction with the two vendors (Kiminski Paving and Straightline Surveying, Inc), Road Maintenance Supervisor John Wesely, Clerk Scott Danelski, and Road Maintenance Department Lead Employee Mike Buetow.

PALON ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (TP 17-01) :

The Palon Road Improvement Project (TP 19-01) was discussed. At a special town Board meeting held on June 6th, 2019, the Windemere Township Board previously approved a motion to place an additional 6" of class-5 gravel (approximately 4450 cubic yards) onto the Palon Road which will increase the road load weight limit to approximately a 10-ton road. The Board would like to move forward with that project now that soil corrections on Palon Road have been made by the vendor Casper Construction.

Motion made by Wesely, second by Kroening to approve Rydberg & Sons, Inc quote/proposal of \$5.69/Cubic Yard for the hauling of class-5 gravel from the Windemere township pit to Palon Road and other various township roads. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

Motion made by Wesely, second by Dunaski to approve Rydberg & Sons, Inc quote/proposal of \$2.00/Cubic Yard for the spreading and compacting to rough blue-top grade for an additional 6” class-5 gravel to be place on the Palon Road. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

Motion made by Wesely, second by Dunaski to approve Straightline Surveying, Inc quote/proposal not to exceed \$2500.00 for the staking of the new blue-top grade for adding an additional 6” class-5 gravel on the Palon Road. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

HIGH-WATER ISSUES ON STURGEON LAKE :

The high-water issue on Sturgeon Lake was discussed. Supervisor Kroening stated she spoke to MN DNR Hydrologist Heidi Lindgren and to Minnesota State Senator Jason Rarick again regarding the high-water on Sturgeon Lake. Both stated they are still committed to help the community residents, but again stated that the first step that needs to be completed is a feasibility study. The cost of completing a feasibility study would be approximately \$60,000.00. Senator Rarick stated he believes Windemere Township should apply for a Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) grant to fund a feasibility study. Kroening stated that completing the grant is very complicated and the township would need help from someone outside the township to help fill out the grant. Previously in 2020 Supervisor Kroening contacted the Pine County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to see if they would be willing to help with the LCCMR application. The scope of a LCCMR grant is very narrow, yet the grant’s accomplishments must be very broad reaching. Based on the fact that the Pine County (SWCD) has previously applied for LCCMR grants, and have been denied, the (SWCD) was not willing to be a partner with Windemere Township in a LCCMR grant application and the Board has also not heard back from the Pine County Board of Supervisors on whether they would be willing to help fund a feasibility study. At this time the Windemere Township Board believes Pine County’s position has not changed in regards to the feasibility study. No Action Taken.

COVID-19 CARES ACT RELIEF FUND :

The COVID-19 Cares Act Relief Fund was discussed. COVID-19 Cares Act is funding which the federal government provides states/counties/townships monies to help provide assistance with changes that need to be made due to COVID-19 virus restrictions. Dennis Genereau was present and stated that requests for Cares Act funds by local governments must be made to their county by November 1st, 2020 and that any additional funds must be returned back by November 15th, 2020. Genereau also stated that local governments must certify the acceptance of the monies accepted from the COVID-19 Cares Act Relief Fund in order for any excess funds to be able to be returned to the county and not back to the State of Minnesota.

Information is available on the MN Association of Townships (MATs) website to review on exactly what types of COVID-19 damages are eligible for townships to spend COVID-19 fund monies on. Genereau stated that it is recommended that the township should not issues any grants with monies from the COVID-19 Cares Act Relief Fund.

WINDEMERE TOWN HALL MAINTANANCE :

Electrical maintenance of the Windemere town hall was discussed. Supervisor Dunaski stated he solicited for quotes and he is waiting for the vendor to return pricing. No Action Taken.

GRUBBING OF TREES AT WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP PIT :

The grubbing of trees to prepare for the 2020 class-5 gravel crushing was discussed. Topic is tabled until the special Board meeting to be held on Thursday August 27th, 2020 so additional quotes may be received.

ISLAND LAKE BOX CULVERT :

This topic is tabled until after the 2020 budget meetings.

NEW BUSINESS :

QUOTE FOR ROLL-OFF DUMPSTER :

The rental of a roll-off dumpster to clean out trash and rubbish in Windemere township buildings was discussed. Motion made by Wesely, second by Kroening to approve Mike's Sanitation & Roll-Offs quote/proposal for a one week rental of a 20-yard dumpster at \$240.00 rent, plus \$60.85/ton for rubbish, plus tax. Disposal of appliances will charged an extra \$10.00 each, TVs an extra \$20.00 each, and mattresses an extra \$15.00/each. There is no extra charge for computers or printers. Non-disposal items include; wet paint, chemicals, and propane tanks and are not allowed to be placed in the dumpster. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

TRAINING FOR LOCAL BOARD OF APPEALS & EQUALIZATION :

Training for the Local Board of Appeals & Equalization was discussed. Online classes are available for the Town Board Supervisors to register and attend. At least one Board Supervisor is required to take the online class in order for the Board of Appeals & Equalization to remain at the local level. Chairman Wesely has attended the on-line training and has one year remaining on his certification, however the county advises that all town Board Supervisors take the training class.

The online training class administered by the Minnesota Department of Revenue opened for registration on July 1st, 2020 and closes promptly on February 1st, 2021.

ISLAND LAKE ROAD SHORELINE EROSION :

The erosion of shoreline on Island Lake along Island Lake Road between the two lakes was discussed. A preliminary estimate for correcting the erosion problem was sent to the township. Mike Buetow to meet on-site with the engineer to discuss the project in more detail. No Action Taken.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS - PINE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY :

Windemere Township received a letter from Larry Helwig President of the Pine County Historical Society requesting a donation from the township. Discussion followed and it was noted that the electorate made a motion at the 2020 Windemere Township Annual Meeting allowing the Board to make up to \$5000.00 in charitable donations for the calendar year 2020. Motion made by Dunaski, second by Kroening to approve a \$500.00 donation to the Pine County Historical Society. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS UTILITY PERMIT :

Windemere Township received a letter from Robert Gann of SQUAN – Engineering Division on behalf of Frontier Communications requesting permission to upgrade Frontier Communication’s Sturgeon Lake Telephone Exchange by installing a new fiber-optic cable. Frontier Communications is requesting permission to place the new fiber-optic cable along some of Windemere Township’s road R.O.W.s. Proposed construction is to take place along Rush Blvd, Military Road (South), Ring Road, and Pioneer Road. Discussions followed. Windemere Township does not currently have any type utility permit application for utility companies to fill out when they are requesting permission to install physical plant inside the township’s road R.O.Ws. Zoning Administrator Dennis Genereau and Clerk Danelski to work on creating a permit application for Windemere Township and get it sent off to Mr. Gann. Danelski stated that the proposed construction plans list that Frontier Communications would like to place the new fiber-optic cable at a depth of 36” located approximately 2’ from the backside of the township road ditch R.O.W. Danelski recommended that the township should suggest to Frontier Communications that the new fiber-optic cable needs to be placed along the edge of the roadbed right next to the grass line instead of along the backside of the road ditch, and also request that all township road culverts need to be directional-bored and the fiber-optic cable be encased inside inner-duct pipe under the culverts at a minimum depth of 5’ below grade of the ditch bottom. Danelski stated this is a much safer location for the placement of the cable and will lessen the liability for the township when the township’s Road Maintenance Department performs culvert maintenance or cleans out township ditches.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OTHER :

Chairman Wesely stated that the Blomskog Cemetery will hold their annual meeting at the town hall on Monday August 17th, 2020 at 5 PM.

Supervisor Kroening discussed the communications she has had with township attorney Kevin Hofstad regarding the final payment for the Palon Road Improvement Project (TP 17-01) and a warranty for the work performed. Discussions followed. Clerk Danelski has provided Mr. Hofstad with all pertinent documentation for the project and stated to the Board that the township should use the township attorney for communicating with the vendors on the project (Casper Construction and Erickson Engineering) regarding the final payment and warranty for the project. Motion made by Wesely, second by Dunaski to approve expenditures for attorney Kevin Hofstad of Ledin, Hofstad, & Troth, LTD to resolve contract issues with township vendors Casper Construction, Inc and Erickson Engineering. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

Supervisor Dunaski inquired about purchasing a couple of new clocks for the town hall.

ROAD UPDATE :

Road Maintenance Department Lead Employee Mike Buetow gave the monthly road update. The Maintenance Department has been busy cleaning up downed trees and repairing washouts on the township roads after the recent significant rain event. The Maintenance Department will next begin cleaning out township road ditches once an excavator becomes available for rental.

ZONING UPDATE :

Zoning Administrator Dennis Genereau gave the monthly zoning update. The Zoning Department has handled 104 permits thus far for the calendar year 2020 and has received 15 new inquiries since the last regular monthly Board meeting. Genereau stated he met with Windemere Zoning Supervisor Kroening and previous Windemere Zoning Administrator Phill White to have discussions regarding the current township Zoning Ordinance how they can clean up some off the current ordinance's language; ordinances that need revisions are the placing of only 10 yards of material for shoreland restoration and grade & fill projects per year, the house-raising ordinance, and the blight ordinance. Another area in the ordinance that needs some refinement is to look into how to enforce septic systems that are failing in the township. Genereau stated he is beginning to work on cleaning up the blighted properties in the township and said the township may have to offer some assistance via grants to help clean up the worst properties. Lastly, Genereau recommended to the Windemere Board that permit costs should increase. After conducting some research, Windemere Township's fees for issuing permits are low compared to other townships.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE :

The next meeting of the Windemere Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday August 18th, 2020 6:30 PM.

FIRE DISTRICT UPDATE :

No update this month. The Fire District changed their meeting to tonight due to a conflict with the 2020 Primary Election. Starting September 2020, Supervisor Dunaski will begin attending the monthly Fire District meetings as his role as the Windemere Township Safety Supervisor.

CLAIMS :

July 2020 claims were reviewed. Motion made by Wesely, seconded Kroening to approve the July 2020 claims as submitted. Payroll #s PAY-200722 & PAY-2008, EFT #s 20-25 through 20-29, Check #s 12643 through 12662 & Direct Deposit #s DD1266 through DD1279 for a total of \$25,217.73. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

Township mail was opened and reviewed.

ADJOURN :

Motion made by Wesely, seconded by Dunaski to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM. Roll Call Vote Taken: Wesely – Aye, Kroening – Aye, Dunaski – Aye. Motion Passed 3 Aye – 0 Nay.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED :

APPROVED :

Clerk, Scott Danelski

Chairman, John Wesely