

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
October 6th, 2020, 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center

In attendance: Chairman – Brad Strgar
 Supervisor – Jennifer Tarnowski
 Supervisor – Dirk VerSteeg
 Clerk – Misty Hendrickson
 Treasurer – Kent Fredeen
 Visitors – 3 guests

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 6:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: After review of the minutes from the September 22nd, 2020 meeting, a motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg to approve the September 22nd, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Kent Fredeen

Receipts: \$6,058.27			
Revenues:		First National Bank – Interest	
Website reimbursement	\$4,232.00	FNB – C MET Sept. 2020 interest	\$19.40
Chisholm Oct 2020 Canister site agreement	\$1104.17	FNB – C Community Center Sept. 2020 interest	\$5.73
Garbage tickets sold	\$375.00	FNB – C Building Projects Sept. 2020 interest	\$0.71
Community Center rent	\$310.00	FNB – C COVID-19 Sept 2020 interest	\$2.98
		FNB – C checking account Sept. 2020 interest	\$8.28

First National Bank - Account Balances	
Checking Account	\$172,842.37
MET (Mining Effects Tax) Account	\$136,740.11
Community Center Account	\$39,850.73
Building Project Account	\$4,955.70
COVID -19 account (restricted)	\$20,730.36
Total	\$375,119.27
Balkan Funds available	\$354,388.91

Debit Card usage: none

A motion by Supervisor VerSteeg and seconded by Supervisor Tarnowski to approve the treasurer’s report as read. Motion carried unanimously. The treasurer, Kent Fredeen, mentioned that interest rates are 0.00015% for the money market accounts and 0.00005% interest rate for the checking account.

Supervisor Tarnowski brought up the idea of investing some of the money market funds in another higher producing investment instrument. It was suggested that Supervisor Tarnowski talk with Mike Furlong, from Ameriprise, about investing options, and report to the board of supervisors what was advised.

Transfer completed: none

Recommended transfers: A motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg to approve the recommended transfer of \$440.00 from checking to the Community Center fund for August and September’s community center rent. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to approve the bills for payment on October 6th, 2020, and ordered paid in the amount of \$18,434.92. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to accept the payroll for October 6th, 2020 (payroll period 9/20 – 10/3/20), in the amount of \$4,673.00. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

1. Clerks Report:

- a. The newsletters went out to residents Saturday, October 2nd, 2020. A second batch of newsletters went out Wednesday, October 7th, 2020.
- b. There have been multiple calls regarding how many acres of land are required to build in Balkan. The clerk called St Louis County zoning and planning to ask. They said it varies, so call to make sure, every time. The general rule is nine acres plus three hundred feet of width of property. However, some land off of Highway 73 isn't a minimum acre amount, only needed is a property that has three hundred feet of width and the proposed house has to be set back 250 feet from the highway, but a garage can be set back 100 feet off of the highway. Lake shore property is treated differently also.
- c. Four Balkan decals were found in the safe. Two were given to the Foreman to install on the new excavator.
- d. Planning is being done for the presidential election, November 3rd, 2020.
- e. There is a light out at the community center by the driveway entrance, leased by MP&L. The clerk called to put in a work order to get that light operational.
- f. The new printer arrived on 9/24/20. It is wireless.
- g. Supervisor Tarnowski brought in some file folders to reuse at the office. Thanks!

2. Shop & Road Report:

- a. The canister site expansion is complete. The Balkan employees rearranged the layout of the site to better serve our customers.
- b. A call to locate was made for proposed ditching on the 6300 block of Long Lake Road by Carl Robbins house. This area has a record of flooding and washing away most of the road in that area.
- c. The man-door for the building behind the garage was repaired.
- d. More culvert work is being planned for a property on Laitala road and Baich road. Screens need to be installed on the culvert on Laitala road due to beavers.
- e. The ditch off of the new driveway to the Balkan garage needs to be filled in.
- f. Another flood light is to be installed for the new driveway.
- g. Briski road needs work to fill in washouts and pot holes. This has been added to the priority sheet.

3. Community Center Report

- a. More keys need to be made for the pavilion's bathrooms. Supervisor VerSteeg does not have operational pavilion bathroom keys.
- b. While doing preparation for winterizing the pavilion, Supervisor VerSteeg and Chisholm employees discovered that there is a broken pipe in the septic system there. In the spring of 2021, the pipe will have to be dug up and repaired.

4. Canister Site Report

- a. Another green cardboard container is needed at the canister site.
- b. The foreman will be asked to pull off the broken lids from an orange canister to make an open lid for old furniture to be put in.

5. Other Reports

CONCERNS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

1. Laurel Fredeen reminded the board that someone needs to pick up the concrete planks from Tower-Soudan DNR for the boat landing on Centa Road.
2. Laurel also reminded the board to get the sign for the community center. However, there is some who still think the sign should go up at the garage where there is more visibility.
3. Laurel mentioned some areas of concern for motorists are at the intersections of Highway 73 and Latick Road, Highway 73 and Cooper Road, Highway 73 and Briski Road, and Highway 73 and Salonen Road. She mentioned that motorists who are turning onto these roads are sometimes passed, at full speed, on the right of the road, or even the shoulder. This could be dangerous. She asked if someone else could take up her fight to make these areas safer for everyone.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Balkan received the reimbursement check for the website project from Whitney Ridlon, IRRRB, on 9/30/20.
2. A resident called the Balkan office to ask about snow removal (shoveling) services for walkways for people that are unable to shovel. Does anyone in the area do this? Supervisor Tarnowski suggested Balkan post the question on our Facebook page to residents who follow to see if there is anyone we can “match up” with residents who need additional help shoveling. The clerk asked Nancee Strgar, who maintains Balkan’s Facebook page, to post this question to Balkan’s followers.
3. St Louis County sent an email informing Balkan of *election CARES act money* available in the amount of \$651. This was discussed by the board. The money would have to be returned to SLC by December 15th, 2020. Balkan already has CARES Act money to report on and return November 15th. The board decided not to file for the election CARES act money because we have enough Federal CARES act money.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. The city of Chisholm requested Balkan itemize the costs associated with the canister site expansion due to the overage of the invoice in regards to the estimated and approved amount of \$16,000.00. Supervisor Tarnowski made a motion to let the clerk and Supervisor Strgar itemize the invoice for Chisholm and resend to Larry Folstad, Chisholm employee.
2. The propane heat is on at the community center, but no floor heat. The supervisors will turn on the floor heat soon.
3. Supervisor Strgar updated Balkan’s employee handbook. There are some more updates to list in the handbook. It will be reviewed and revisited soon.
4. A new holding tank for township garage holding tank will have to be ordered. Supervisor Tarnowski suggested we get a tank on order, if there’s any lead time.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. The work priority sheet has been updated.
2. **Supervisor Tarnowski motioned to approve the list of election judges the clerk provided. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteege and the motion carried unanimously.**
3. The option for Columbus Day, October 12th, to be considered a holiday or not was discussed. It was not considered a holiday to Balkan.
4. It is very dark on Balkan’s new driveway. Supervisor VerSteege requested the clerk to call MP&L. The clerk called to request an LED floodlight be installed to light that area. It was discussed if more than one area light was needed. The supervisors thought that we can start with one light and see if we need to add another after the first is installed. The clerk will call to let MP&L know to go ahead with ordering the area light. This project is 4-5 weeks out.
5. According to the Presidential notice 2020-65 dated 8/8/20, effective September 1st, 2020, employers must make available to their employees an option to defer the employees’ portion of social security employment taxes through December 31st, 2020. However, since this is a deferment, the social security taxes must be paid still. The presidential notice states that employees that take the deferment must double their social security employment tax January 1st, 2021 through April 2021 in order to pay this back. There may be an option to forgive this deferred amount but this forgiveness hasn’t been established yet. Balkan township will make this available to all employees soon. A letter to employees will be drawn up describing the presidential notice.
6. A Workplace accident and injury reduction (AWAIR) program was discussed by the board. The document, E3000 off of the MN Association of Townships website, consists of 5 pages of accident and injury awareness procedures. There is an annual review of the program available on page 5 of the E3000 document. In a beginning effort to comply with this program, the supervisors will need a list of chemicals that are used in the township for varying duties. Once, we have the chemical names, we can look up and put together a Safety Data Sheets (SDS) book listing safety procedures recommended for a specific chemical.
7. Minnesota’s wage theft law was discussed. “The wage theft law protects employees from an employer’s failure to pay wages, withholding wages, demanding rebate of wages owed, or attempts to show wages were paid in an amount greater than what the employee received.” (MN Association of Townships Staff, 2020). There is additional record keeping requirements for employers and additional notices that the employee must sign. Balkan supervisors will enact this for all employees. The employee notice will be given to existing employees and new employees going forward. These notices will be put in the employee’s employment file.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:

NEWSLETTERS & MEETING MINUTES:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM. The next board meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center on October 20th, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Hendrickson, Clerk

(Clerk) Misty Hendrickson

(Board Chair) Brad Strgar