

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center**

In attendance: Chairman – Brad Strgar  
 Supervisor – Jennifer Tarnowski  
 Supervisor – Dirk VerSteege  
 Clerk – Misty Hendrickson  
 Treasurer – Kent Fredeen  
 Visitors – 4 guests

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 6:02 pm.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** After review of the minutes from the board meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting, a motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteege to approve the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Kent Fredeen

<b>Receipts: \$2,569.96</b>		
<b>Revenues:</b>		<b>First National Bank – Interest</b>
St Louis Co. Remainder of Dec. 2020 Apportionment	\$1,525.53	
Community Center Rent	\$350.00	
Community Center Alcohol and Damage deposit	\$450.00	
Community Center Garbage fee	\$25.00	
Refund by Airgas (4/2020)	\$186.71	
MetLife Insurance Reimbursement	\$32.72	

<b>First National Bank - Account Balances</b>	
Checking Account	<b>\$203,647.34</b>
MET (Mining Effects Tax) Account	\$135,792.17
Community Center Account	\$40,589.99
Building Project Account	\$4,956.84
COVID -19 account	\$5,101.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$390,088.02</b>

**Debit Card usage:** Staples \$193.40 for office supplies

A motion by Supervisor Strgar and seconded by Supervisor Tarnowski to approve the treasurer’s report as read. Motion carried unanimously.

**Transfers completed:** none

**Recommended transfers:** The treasurer recommended a transfer from the checking account to the Capital Expenditures account for \$198.32. This is for 13% (per levy) of the St Louis County remainder of the December 2020 Tax apportionment in the amount of \$1,525.53. No one motioned to support this transfer, it failed.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to approve the bills for payment on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and ordered paid in the amount of \$9,287.77. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to accept the payroll for January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (payroll period January 10<sup>th</sup> - January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021), in the amount of \$9,833.42. Motion carried unanimously.

The treasurer reported the ending balance for the checking account for 2020 of \$238,429.38 less outstanding checks of \$4,251.08 totaling \$234,178.30. If broken out according to the levy, 39% would go to the general fund, 35% would go to the Road and Bridge fund, 13% would go to Capital expenditures, 11% would go for fire protection, and 2% would go to PERA. The remaining COVID-19 money is not part of the levy. The treasurer suggested a transfer of \$30,443.18 to the money market account for the Building Projects/Capital Expenditures account. Supervisor Tarnowski suggested she meet with the treasurer and the clerk to discuss more about what should be done.

## **REPORTS:**

### 1. Clerks Report:

- a. The clerk and treasurer are working on the paperwork for the Board of Audit, scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the garage/office.
- b. Community Center rentals are picking up.
- c. The treasurer completed auditing the receipts and disbursement registers for December 2020, according to the bank statement. After the Board of Audit, the financial reports to the State Auditor will need to be sent in. These are due March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. After the financials are remitted, the clerk will change the beginning balances in CTAS to reflect the amounts the treasurer has, per board order.
- d. The Boundary and Annexation Survey from the Census Bureau was completed on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. There weren't any changes to boundaries to report.
- e. The clerk will be working on writing up the COVID procedures.

### 2. Shop & Road Report:

- a. Roads were brush cut on Baich and Cooper roads.
- b. The canister site was cleaned up and plowed out on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, and sanded on Jan 19<sup>th</sup>.
- c. The community center was plowed out on Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>. A path to the flag pole was plowed.
- d. The foreman purchased more high visibility vests for the canister site attendants, spray paint and letters for making signs for the cardboard containers.
- e. Took down a leaning dead tree on the end of Long Lake Road in danger of falling on the road.
- f. Snow was removed by the fire hall exit, by the air conditioning unit outside the garage, by the salt shed and by the office door. Also, the edges of Vlasich road were cleaned up.

- g. Sand was applied to a deep bump on Salonen road on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, due to a culvert dip. With moderate success on the Salonen road culvert dip, sand was added to even out the roads temporarily on Latick, Barrett, and Vlasich Roads.
  - h. The power steering hose broke on the T-24 on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>. The hose was replaced. The coil pack on the F350 went out that day, also. This was also replaced and repaired on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - i. Roads were plowed Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> and on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, along with some driveways.
  - j. The roads were inspected again on Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> for any downed trees or hazards.
  - k. The only plow truck with sanding capabilities is used on the east Balkan routes. Supervisor Strgar suggested the two operators switch routes sometimes to get familiar with both routes. Also, switch plow trucks to sand on the west side.
  - l. The shop door needs to be kept locked. We have had unauthorized individuals coming through the garage to the office. A new sign is ordered to put on the back door. Canister site attendants have keys to the shop door, for use of the restrooms.
  - m. The foreman has been working with Frank Sever, Sign Supervisor for St Louis County Public Works department, to order and replace existing road signs in Balkan. Mr. White presented an estimate for the signs to be purchased. The supervisors suggested getting an estimate for the sign costs plus the labor to install the signs. The signs cost about \$30/sq. ft to make (double sided) and \$20/sq. ft. to install signs. It was suggested to order soon due to the time delays in making the signs. Currently, the sign company, Newman Signs, is taking about 3 months to fill orders. If we would like the signs installed in 2021, they should be ordered soon.
3. Community Center Report
- a. Due to the governor’s executive order, most rentals at the community center have been put on hold indefinitely. Two small groups are allowed to meet.
  - b. The capacity at the community center was discussed. Venues are currently allowed to operate at 25% capacity. We will monitor the amount of people per event rented to be in compliance.
  - c. Mesabi Tribune is advertising venues for their Winter Bridal edition on Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this year, we will keep this in mind for 2022 and not advertise this year.
4. Canister Site Report
- a. A designated glass container is needed at the canister site in order to keep glass separate from plastic. Supervisor Strgar will check with his contacts about getting a glass container.
5. Canister site pamphlets were made by Supervisor Tarnowski. The clerk was asked to make copies to give out at the site to residents who are unsure of how to properly recycle.
6. Other Reports

**CONCERNS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: none**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Two residents brought in an article, from the Hometown Focus dated Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, they asked the officials to read aloud at the meeting. The article was titled “No Fraud in Balkan Cases”. It referred to a decision that was passed down from the district court in reference to the **March 10, 1914 Balkan township election**. The Oliver Iron Mining Company allegedly tried to “colonize” Balkan by having their men move to Balkan 31 days before the election, “qualifying them as voters” and basically “writing their own ticket”. With the mining company owning more than 75% of the township and the largest tax payer in the area, there was complaints that the public funds were not being spent properly.

The court found that if the election was “conducted fairly”, there was nothing wrong with those officials being installed in Balkan 31 days before the election, by the mining company. However, the law is very clear that only residents and citizens of the town have the right to vote or hold office. After the election, some people claimed the “colony moved out” of Balkan. It was pointed out by the court that violations of the law that states only residents can vote and hold office will be punished severely if found they voted and weren’t residents.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Waste Management claims Balkan has another year on the contract. The contract auto renews on the anniversary date of December or January (effective date). The contract can be cancelled with written intentions to WM in July through October 2021. The clerk was asked to form a cancellation letter.
2. The noxious weed inspectors report was brought up for discussion. Supervisor Strgar volunteered to be the weed inspector for the report. The clerk was asked to call Kristen Fogard to get a better understanding of what is required for the report. The clerk will finalize the report and send it in.
3. A policy to provide guidance on purchases over \$100 was prepared for approval of the board. The clerk was asked to make a few changes to the form. The chairman will sign it and the clerk will post it on the board in the shop.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. The work priority sheet has been updated.
2. Pancake feed dates have been discussed with Ann Palmquist and established. An updated food list and where the items are purchased was needed. Mrs. Palmquist gave the clerk the needed information to finalize the Food License paperwork. The clerk will submit the form for payment at the next meeting on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
3. Supervisor Tarnowski made post cards to send to the residents regarding the broadband survey and the annual meeting. She suggested we ask W.A. Fisher to put the broadband survey on a pop-up on the homepage of our website. This would enable residents to access the survey in one click.
4. The annual meeting was discussed. The equipment list needs to be updated. Any proposed projects for 2021 should be laid out ahead of the meeting.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:**

1. Employee Review - February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 at 6 PM at the community center.
2. Board of Audit – February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6PM at the garage/office.

**NEWSLETTERS & MEETING MINUTES:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion by Supervisor Strgar, supported by Supervisor Tarnowski, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM. The next board meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center on February 9th, 2021.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Hendrickson, Clerk

---

(Clerk) Misty Hendrickson

---

(Board Chair) Brad Strgar

