

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
September 21st, 2021, 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center

In attendance: Chairman – Brad Strgar
 Supervisor – Jennifer Tarnowski
 Supervisor – Dirk VerSteeg
 Treasurer - Kent Fredeen
 Clerk – Misty Hendrickson
 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 September 7th 2021, a motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg to approve the September 7th, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Kent Fredeen

Receipts: \$19,856.82			
Revenues:		First National Bank – Interest	
St Louis County – 2021 Taconite Municipal Aid	\$18,962.00	FNB-C Checking Aug. 2021 Interest	\$9.10
Canister Site coupons	\$750.00		
Community Center Rent	\$100.00		
Life Insurance Reimbursed	\$32.72		
Copy machine use by resident	\$3.00		

First National Bank - Account Balances	
Checking Account	\$221,118.15
MET (Mining Effects Tax) Account	\$170,275.54
Community Center Account	\$45,120.75
Building Project Account	\$4,962.39
COVID -19 account	\$43,813.76
Total	\$485,290.59

Debit Card usage:

- Staples – hole punchers for the canister site \$48.25
- A&B Automotive Electric – loader starter motor \$290.00
- USPS - Return of the starter core \$47.65

Voided checks: none

Supervisor Tarnowski moved to approve the treasurer’s report as read. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. Motion carried unanimously.

Transfers completed:

- \$31,317.00 transferred from checking to the MET Fund for the 2nd stipend in 2021.
- \$370.55 from checking to the community center Fund for 8/28/21 pancake breakfast proceeds

Recommended transfers: none

A motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteege, to approve the bills for payment on September 21st, 2021, and ordered paid in the amount of \$9,803.33. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteege, to accept the payroll for September 21st, 2021 (payroll period September 5th – September 18th, 2021), in the amount of \$10,305.23. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

1. Clerks Report: Misty Hendrickson

- a. The Salo Road culvert project has been published and posted. The letters to residents were handed out by Supervisor Strgar on Monday, September 20th, 2021. The project will begin on Thursday, September 23rd, 2021.
- b. The newsletter is ready for approval, then publishing and mailing. It includes the snowplow application to residents. The newsletter will be sent to the printers after October 5th, 2021 and mailed when ready. The snowplow agreement is included.
- c. Update on the Balkan Kids' Fair scheduled for October 16th, 2021 Saturday from 1 pm to 4 pm. The planning committee will meet again on September 28th, 2021 at the garage office to assign duties.
- d. The clerk has been researching how to remit the ARPA report to the U.S. Treasury. The Treasury will send out more info in late September to early October. A webinar offered through the League of Minnesota Cities talked about the different categories to report. The first ARPA report will be due October 31st, 2021, then annually after that until March 31st, 2027.
- e. The Northeast Minnesota Broadband virtual meeting will be on September 22nd, 2021 from 9am – 11am. The clerk will attend this webinar.
- f. There are high transmission rates of COVID for our area. Should Balkan Supervisors reassess the allowed capacity at the community center? Not yet.
- g. A resident suggested Balkan hold a bingo night. Balkan needs more information about how to put on a bingo night. Treasurer Fredeen is also a Legion member. The Legion puts on a Turkey Bingo event before Thanksgiving each year. He will ask about details on how to put on an event with bingo.

2. Shop & Road Report:

- a. The culvert for replacement on Franti Road has been ordered but is not in yet.
- b. The clerk asked supervisors about the boot allowance for full time operators. Both operators are eligible to be reimbursed for new boots annually.
- c. Colombe and Franti Roads were graded on September 7th, 2021.
- d. Johnson Road was graded on September 8th, 2021 until the operator was rained out, then he cleaned up the shop for the remainder of the day.
- e. The loader was to be hauled from Laitala Road to Sunset Pit but had starter issues. The operator troubleshooted the “no start” issue.
- f. A treetop was removed from Franti Road on September 9th, 2021.

- g. On September 13th, 2021, the starter was pulled from the loader for replacement. The tops of some canisters were cut off to facilitate better emptying. The backhoe was recovered from Sunset Pit.
 - h. Ditching was done on Laitala Road on September 14th, 2021.
 - i. New picks were installed on the grader on September 15th, 2021. The canisters were moved away from the fence for Dave Pajunen to weed whack before winter. Brushing and ditching was done on Laitala Road and Long Lake Road.
 - j. The excavator was hauled into the Balkan garage yard.
 - k. More ditching was done on Long Lake Road on September 17th, 2021.
3. Community Center Report
- a. Ann Palmquist suggested some new food items for a special Valentine's Day breakfast feed. The breakfast would be on February 12th, 2022. Balkan will have to apply for the food license early in 2022.
 - b. The supervisors asked about winterizing the pavilion soon. They will try to keep it open as long as possible until it starts to freeze. Then they will have to shut off the water.
4. Canister Site Report
- a. Dave Pajunen gave an update on the new employees at the canister site. He is making the schedule for the canister site attendants.
 - b. Jim Daugherty was hired at the canister site. His first day was September 15th, 2021. There are now 5 canister site attendants.
 - c. An umbrella and screen door are needed for the canister site. The clerk will provide the umbrella, from the office. The supervisors will look into installing a screen door to keep out flies and wasps.
5. Other Reports:
- a. Balkan's loader needs work on the brakes, the starter, and the radiator. Supervisor VerSteege contacted RMS and Ziegler to ask if they have any loaders in stock that have low hours and are under \$100,000.00. RMS said they have 3 available with low hours and will consider a trade-in of Balkan's loader.
The treasurer was asked if Balkan has any money for a loader. He said "no" but Balkan's options include bringing this issue to the people to ask for a levy increase in a special meeting, as the elected officials are only caretakers of Balkan's people's money. Treasurer Fredeen said there is \$45,000 in the community center fund, if the supervisors wish to use it for a loader purchase. According to the levy, the Road and Bridge fund gets 35% of the levy of \$331,500 totaling \$116,025, making this a viable option. Also, past years' snowplowing fees have been put in the Road and Bridge fund to use to finance any equipment repairs or equipment purchases Balkan needs.

CONCERNS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

- a. It was suggested by a resident to put a blinking battery or solar light on the Hwy. 73 and Pozar Road intersection's stop sign. It is hard to see to stop at that sign due to the hill on Pozar Road intersection. The supervisors will consider this.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1. The clerk gave an update on the Aramark situation. There's currently a contract in place for 3 years from 12/19/2019. Balkan is already at the minimum delivery status for coveralls. Balkan could buy out the contract or wait until 12/19/2022 to cancel the contract. The supervisors tabled this issue.
- 2. The office's Century Link bill has been high lately. It should've gone down when long distance was taken off of the line on August 27th, 2021. The supervisors asked the clerk to

call and find out what is different on the office bill compared to the community center bill. The clerk will call Century Link and report back what she finds to the supervisors.

3. Lakes Gas provided a bid for propane. Their bid was \$1.54/gallon of propane. The clerk was asked to find the propane gallons used in 2020 and ask for additional bids.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. There will now be a protocol for ordering parts and equipment for the garage. The employees will order the part or equipment, then have the vendor call the office for payment and to get details about the purchase. The Balkan debit card will not be leaving the office. The operators could also ask Supervisor VerSteeg to purchase the item on his debit card.
2. Supervisor Tarnowski gave an update on the broadband project. She has applied for the St Louis County Planning grant that will provide up to \$25,000 for planning, pre-engineering, grant writing, etc. It is a 1:1 matching grant. This grant can help Balkan find funding and do preliminary work for the broadband project.
CTC is installing fiber in Cherry Township, currently. CTC said they could put fiber in South Balkan covering 8 Balkan households and 22 Hibbing households for \$100,000.00 and complete the project this fall. This would not be a good use of Balkan money. The supervisors did not support this plan.
Balkan will begin to look at further grants for broadband. There is one available as a 1:1 match granting up to \$400,000.00.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. The work priority sheets were provided for the supervisors and reviewed.
2. Supervisor Tarnowski applied for the St Louis County planning grant for broadband. **A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar to approve resolution 21-08 authorizing Balkan to make an application and accept funds from St Louis County and IRRRB for broadband grant programs. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteeg and passed unanimously. The resolution was signed by the chairman and clerk.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:

1. September 25th, 2021 Pancake Breakfast
2. October 31st, 2021 – ARPA first report of spending due to the US Treasury

NEWSLETTERS & MEETING MINUTES:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM. The next board meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center on October 5th, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Hendrickson, Clerk

(Clerk) Misty Hendrickson

(Board Chair) Brad Strgar