

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
February 8th, 2022, 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center

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

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 6:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

- After review of the minutes from the regular board meeting on January 25th, 2022, a motion was made by Supervisor VerSteeg, supported by Supervisor Strgar to approve the January 25th, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
- After review of the minutes from the Board of Audit special board meeting dated February 1st, 2022, a motion was made by Supervisor VerSteeg and supported by Supervisor Strgar to approve the Board of Audit special meeting minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Kent Fredeen

Receipts: \$4,729.68			
Revenues:		First National Bank – Interest	
City of Chisholm – Canister site agreement – Jan. 2021 and Jan. 2022 payments	\$2,729.38	FNB-C MET Jan. 2022 interest	\$6.76
St Louis County 12/21 late tax apportionment	\$1,532.88	FNB-C Community Center Jan. 2022 interest	\$5.32
Community Center Rent	\$125.00	FNB-C Cap. Expenditures Jan. 2022 interest	\$0.47
Community Center Garbage Fee	\$25.00	FNB-C COVID-19/ARPA Jan. 2022 interest	\$5.21
Life Insurance Reimbursed	\$98.16	FNB-C Checking acct. Jan. 2022 interest	\$10.50
MN Revenue – sales tax overpayment returned	\$191.00		

First National Bank - Account Balances	
Checking Account	\$174,673.50
MET (Mining Effects Tax) Account	\$17,044.90
Community Center Account	\$46,611.66
Building Project Account	\$1,064.73
COVID -19 account	\$8,428.79
Total	\$247,823.58

A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar to approve the treasurer’s report as read. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteeg and passed unanimously.

Debit Card usage: none

Transfers completed:

1. The transfer of \$36,840.56 from the COVID-19/ARPA fund to the CTAS Road and Bridge fund, for the oil/water separator project was completed.
2. The transfer of \$365.00 from checking to the Community Center account for Dec. 2021 community center rent was completed.

Recommended transfers:

1. A motion to approve the transfer of \$1,500.00 from MET to checking for the 2022 Chisholm Recreation Program was made by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. This passed unanimously.

2. A motion to approve the transfer of \$600.00 from checking to the community center account for January 2022 Community Center rent was made by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. This passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to approve the bills for payment on February 8th, 2022, and ordered paid in the amount of \$8,328.94. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Strgar, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to accept the payroll for February 8th, 2022 (payroll period January 23rd – February 5th, 2022), in the amount of \$3,843.02. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

1. Clerks Report: Misty Hendrickson
 - a. The clerk sent out an email to election judges asking who wants to work the Annual election on January 28th, 2022.
 - b. The clerk researched ARPA uses. Nothing was found about paying employees who have COVID-19 out of this fund. More research may be needed.
 - c. The clerk updated CTAS to the 2022 version on January 31st, 2022.
 - d. While inputting receipts in CTAS, the clerk noticed a difference in the amount Chisholm agreed to pay for the canister site shared services agreement for 2022. Chisholm remitted a check for \$60 less than what it should be. The clerk contacted Eileen Zah, clerk of Chisholm, and Margaret Gornick to ask about this issue. Eileen Zah said they would send a difference check the week of Feb. 7th, 2022.
 - e. Balkan received a letter from the IRS regarding the second quarter of 2020's missing tax return. There was a credit on the account for the required payments but no tax form was remitted. The clerk resent a copy to the IRS along with the letter, as requested on February 4th, 2022.
 - f. The clerk reconciled the bank statement on CTAS February 8th, 2022.
2. Shop & Road Report:
 - a. Snowplowing was done on January 24th on all routes and some driveways.
 - b. Supervisor VerSteeg volunteered hours while an employee was out sick. He did random road jobs, such as putting sand on intersections, cleaning up the snow at the canister site, etc., to keep the township running smoothly and to keep motorists safe. Thanks Supervisor VerSteeg!
 - c. Three sets of cutting edges are needed for the plows. Supervisor VerSteeg suggested buying 4 foot cutting edges, since they are so heavy to put on. **A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar to have Supervisor VerSteeg or Steve Johnson order the cutting edges from H&L, not to exceed \$3,000.00. This was supported by Supervisor Tarnowski and passed unanimously.**
 - d. The 2018 International plow truck needs repairs. Supervisor VerSteeg suggested bringing the truck into Skubic for repairs.
 - e. On February 5th, all roads and driveways were plowed.
3. Community Center Report:
 - a. The garbage canister at the community center was moved to allow for better plowing.
4. Canister Site Report : none
5. Other Reports:
 - a. There will not be a February 12th, 2022 pancake breakfast. The hostess believes Feb. 12th will be too cold and doesn't want to risk anyone's safety for the event.
 - b. Shari Fisher reported on her research for funding for broadband. She said there isn't any grants available right now. She stated she talked with Steve Howard, from Paul Bunyan Communications, to ask what he suggests Balkan do right now. He said to have more residents fill out the broadband survey and get around 30-40 percent interest in our area. Also, to have residents and elected officials write their congress people to say why they need broadband in rural Minnesota. Steve Howard has a grant writer who works for Paul Bunyan. We hope we can piggy-back off them on using their grant writer in the future.
Another round of grants will be opening up after Feb. 22nd, 202 through the USDA. The Border-to-Border grant isn't open yet for this year. Shari contacted IRRRB's Whitney Ridlon to find out what Balkan can do in the meantime. She said we will need preliminaries in engineering and design of the network to continue our planning. Balkan will need to ask about applying for a grant for equipment only to get away from the prevailing wage requirement the state requires for some grant funding.

Brad Gustafson, St Louis County Planning, will need to be contacted to ask how long do we have to use our planning grant issued to Balkan in December of 2021. The clerk will email Brad Gustafson.

Shari suggested asking Ida Rukavina, RAMS director, to write a recommendation for Balkan's efforts in finding a solution to our lack of broadband.

CONCERNS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: none

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. John Maynes, from On-Time-Sports, a third-party fund-raising company, asked if Balkan would like to contribute to Hibbing High School's fund raiser by buying a spot on their T-shirts the kids will wear. Balkan declined to support this. The board doesn't use tax payer money to advertise.
2. On January 27th, 2022, Balkan received a letter St Louis County requesting local community Wildfire protection planning. They would like Balkan to set up a workshop to talk about what can be done in our area. This would set up actionable wildfire resiliency efforts in our area. St Louis County would be eligible for infrastructure funding in the future if they use the community to mitigate emergency strategic planning. Balkan is willing to set up a wildfire planning meeting/workshop to see who in our community is interested. The board of Supervisors hope to bring this to the people at the annual meeting on March 8th, 2022.
3. The MN Benefit Association group term life insurance for officers is up for payment on April 1st, 2022. **A motion was made to pay the annual amount of \$405.00 to MN Benefit Association for 2022 by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. This passed.** The purpose of this group life insurance is to level the playing field for elected officials. Only township elected officials aren't automatically enrolled in life insurance, all other elected officials automatically get enrolled in group life insurance when elected.
4. An email came from a resident suggesting Balkan consider making an ice rink at the community center for residents to enjoy. The board supports this idea and would help out financially if there was a volunteer or group of volunteers from the community to head up the effort. Since Balkan only has one full-time employee, the board doesn't want to overtax him by making another requirement of his time. The clerk will reply to the resident's email with this explanation.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. none

NEW BUSINESS:

1. The work priority sheets were provided for the supervisors and reviewed.
2. A resolution to appoint election judges for the Township election on March 8th, 2022 was presented to the board. **A motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski to approve the 9 election judges listed by the clerk on the resolution. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteeg and passed unanimously.**
3. Supervisor Tarnowski suggested Balkan send out post cards to announce the annual meeting on March 8th, 2022. Supervisor Tarnowski will call Express Print One to produce the post cards.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:

1. Absentee voting began February 4th, 2022 for the township election.

NEWSLETTERS & MEETING MINUTES:

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM. The next board meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center on February 22nd, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Hendrickson, Clerk

(Clerk) Misty Hendrickson

(Board Chair) Brad Strgar

