

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**March 22nd, 2022, 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center**

In attendance: Chairman – Brad Strgar  
 Supervisor - Dirk VerSteeg  
 Supervisor - Jennifer Tarnowski  
 Supervisor – Garth Wilson  
 Treasurer – Kent Fredeen  
 Clerk – Misty Hendrickson  
 Deputy Clerk – Lisa Smith  
 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 regular board meeting on March 10th, 2022, a motion was made by Supervisor VerSteeg, supported by Supervisor Strgar to approve the March 10th, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Kent Fredeen

<b>Receipts: \$2,389.70</b>			
<b>Revenues:</b>		<b>First National Bank – Interest</b>	
St Louis County 2021 Forfeit Land Revenue	\$1,531.98		
Canister Site Coupons sold	\$500.00		
Community Center Rent	\$300.00		
Community Center Garbage Fee	\$25.00		
Life insurance reimbursed	\$32.72		

<b>First National Bank - Account Balances</b>	
Checking Account	<b>\$163,960.88</b>
MET (Mining Effects Tax) Account	\$39,585.22
Community Center Account	\$47,965.04
Building Project Account	\$1,065.61
COVID -19 account	\$8,436.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$261,013.36</b>

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

**Debit Card usage:**

1. \$76.62 for minutes paper

**Transfers completed:**

1. The transfer of \$28,247.00 from checking to the MET fund for the first stipend of Taconite Production tax payable in 2022 was completed.
2. The transfer of \$740.00 from checking to the Community Center fund for Feb. 2022 community center rent was completed.

**Recommended transfers:**

1. A motion to approve the transfer of \$5,016.78 from MET to the checking account for the road signs purchase in 2021 was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, and supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. Motion passed unanimously.
2. A motion to approve the transfer of \$1,943.28 from the Covid-19/ARPA account for COVID-19 lost wages was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, and supported by Supervisor VerSteeg. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to approve the bills for payment on March 22nd, 2022, and ordered paid in the amount of \$8,677.87. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Tarnowski, supported by Supervisor VerSteeg, to accept the payroll for March 22nd, 2022 (payroll period March 6<sup>th</sup> – March 19th, 2022), in the amount of \$8,296.12. Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Tarnowski made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 6:07 PM. This was supported by Supervisor VerSteeg and passed unanimously.

**The Reorganization meeting was called to order at 6:08 PM by the chairman.**

1. The oath of office was given to Misty Hendrickson, re-elected clerk, by Kent Fredeen.
2. The oath of office was given to Lisa Smith, deputy clerk, by the clerk, Misty Hendrickson.
3. The oath of office was given to Garth Wilson, newly elected supervisor, by the clerk, Misty Hendrickson.

A motion to appoint the chairman, Brad Strgar, was made by Supervisor VerSteeg and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to appoint the vice-chair, Dirk VerSteeg, was made by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to designate the official publication being Mesabi Tribune for Balkan Township was made by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to appoint the First National Bank of Chisholm as the town's official depository was made by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to appoint the Balkan Community Center, Canister Site, and Lucky Seven as the official posting places for 2022 by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Supervisor VerSteeg to designate the board liaison for the garage and shop to Supervisor Strgar. This was supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed. A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar to designate the board liaison for the roads to Supervisor VerSteeg. This was supported by Supervisor Wilson and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Supervisor VerSteeg to designate the board liaison for the community center to Supervisor Wilson. This was supported by Supervisor Strgar and passed unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson, to accept the Fire Resolution passed at the Annual meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson, to accept the 2023 Tax levy, increased to \$344,760.00, passed at the Annual meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The treasurer reminded the board the signature card at the First National Bank of Chisholm will have to be changed to include: Brad Strgar, Chairman, Dirk VerSteeg, Vice-chair, Kent Fredeen, treasurer, Misty Hendrickson, clerk, Lisa Smith, deputy clerk, and Gail Radotich, deputy treasurer. The treasurer will contact the above named when the card has been readied at the bank.

## **REPORTS:**

1. Clerks Report: Misty Hendrickson
  - a. The clerk called Gloria Erickson regarding the Community Wildfire Protection Planning on Monday March 14<sup>th</sup>. She explained the process. The program is geared toward educating area leaders first. She would like to coordinate fire chiefs, deputies, police chiefs, and key leaders in the community. First, they identify wildfire concerns, prioritize these concerns, identify solutions then move forward with the solutions. Next, they invite the public, DNR fire officials, Gloria, the Fire Wise coordinator. There is a series of 2 – 2hour meetings/workshops that can be offered. These are guided and community specific driven. The clerk would be the organizer for the workshops, gathering all of the chiefs, community leaders, and key officials. Gloria said these people are most likely volunteers and no one wants to waste any time, so,

she emphasized, they would like to jump right in working on the issues. A Town hall meeting in Gilbert April 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-830pm will be given with speakers: Fire Chief, Police Chief, SLC Emergency management planner, DNR Asst. Forest Supervisor, and Gloria from Fire Wise, if you would like to view their planning for a wildfire event.

- b. Kyle, from Hometown Fiber, called 3/17/2022, Thursday to see what the board thought of their proposal. He mentioned they would directly provide connected fiber that will offer an ownership piece back to Balkan. He said a good analogy of the idea would be: If you built a road, you wouldn't build that road only for Cadillacs, but for Fords, Chevys or any other vehicle. Paul Bunyan Communications builds a road for only one vehicle – theirs. This approach to being a community provider enables multiple internet providers to use their fiber line. These ISPs would pay a lease fee for use of the fiber line. This gives the township an ownership piece. The clerk asked him to put that in writing for a layman to understand and send it to the board.
- c. The clerk hasn't had time to order a computer for Kent, the treasurer, yet, but will soon.
- d. Early distribution of 2022 tax collections were requested on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. This will be 70% of property taxes collected in May 2022.

2. Shop & Road Report:

- a. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the snow banks were pushed back with the grader. The plexiglass dividers were reinstalled at the community center for the election in compliance with COVID-19 rules. Bolts and wires were purchased at Radko.
- b. Snow banks were pushed back with the grader on the east side of Balkan on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Intersections were scraped on Highways 73 and 84 to ensure better traction.
- c. Hills and approaches were sanded on west routes on March 9<sup>th</sup>.
- d. The oil and filter were changed on the 1996 Cat grader on March 9<sup>th</sup>.
- e. New cutting edges were picked up from H&L on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Petro Choice was asked for estimated prices. The oil was changed in the 1989 Cat Grader. A brace was straightened on the wing of the grader and a light was fitted on the wing.
- f. A supply run was done on March 11<sup>th</sup> with Supervisor VerSteege. The shop was cleaned.
- g. Inventory was done on all filters in preparation for an annual filter sale at Auto Value on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. A price quote was given for all anticipated filters requested.
- h. The inventory room was cleaned and existing filters were organized.
- i. The east and west routes along with the canister site were spot sanded, due to icy road conditions on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- j. New purchased filters were put away and inventoried. The 1992 Yellow pickup was fitted with the culvert steamer on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The oil was changed in the Landa steamer.
- k. A new battery was purchased and installed in the 1992 Yellow pickup. The overhead door was fixed at the shop on March 18<sup>th</sup>. A culvert was steamed on Colombe Road due to flooding on the road mitigation.

3. Community Center Report:

- a. Dave Pajunen would like to wax the floors at the community center in April. He needs five days to complete the waxing process. He started waxing the floor in the table and chair room at the community center this week.

4. Canister Site Report :

- a. The canister site was sanded last week. We will see what it needs after the snow stops on Wednesday.
- b. Mr. Pajunen, canister site manager, will be reducing hours for two employees who are not working out. The supervisors will have a meeting to discuss the issue with these employees in the future.

5. Other Reports:

- a. Krogerus Road is flooded. The water isn't draining into the ditch. There are bad pot holes off of Highway 84's entrance to Krogerus Road. Supervisor VerSteege will attempt to fix this issue when possible.
- b. Supervisor Strgar asked Jennifer Tarnowski if she still plans on planting flowers at the community center in the spring. She said she would, if Balkan paid for the flowers. Balkan will pay for the flowers.

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

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, St Louis County Planning Commission sent a letter of a hearing on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, held at Virginia Government Services Center, regarding cleanup of ordinances' wording and are open to comment on proposed amendments to ordinances.

2. A new claim for Unemployment came in to the office on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The clerk raised an issue on the MN UI website stating the claimant is still working for Balkan Township and isn't eligible for unemployment benefits from the township. The claimant works part time and on-call for the township.
3. The township received an email from a resident regarding a November 2019 snowplow hit hand-dug well that ground water is leaking in to. The claimant said the well never leaked groundwater into it until it was hit by the snow plow in 2019. The issue was discussed and suggestions given to the resident. The supervisors offered to stop by the claimant's house to look at the well. They suggested the claimant have a professional look at the well to get some advice on how to handle the issue. No liability was discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Supervisor VerSteege supplied 2022 culvert cost estimates. Costs have gone up. Other options, such as plastic culverts, were discussed. Supervisor VerSteege will ask for other estimates from outlying areas such as Grand Rapids and Cloquet.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. The work priority sheets were provided for the supervisors and reviewed.
2. **A motion was made to pass a resolution to Reestablish Precincts and Polling Places for 2022 by Supervisor Strgar and supported by Supervisor Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.** This is done after redistricting is completed by counties, state and federal entities. Political lines are redrawn to show proper representation after the census is taken and required by Minn. State statute section 204B.14, subdivision 3(d).
3. **A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar to pass a resolution to authorize Supervisor VerSteege to provide road and equipment operation as an interested officer under Minn. State Statute 471.88, subdivision 5. This motion was supported by Supervisor Wilson, Supervisor VerSteege abstained from voting. Motion passed unanimously. A proper affidavit will accompany any payment made for services to Supervisor VerSteege, as required by law.** This resolution will cover any conflict-of-interest Supervisor VerSteege will have accepting payment for services as a part time operator.
4. **A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar, supported by Supervisor Wilson, to allow the treasurer to provide "seed money" from petty cash for all pancake breakfasts in 2022. Motion was passed unanimously.**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:**

1. Pancake Breakfast – April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, 830 AM – 11 AM
2. Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meets on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6-7PM.

**NEWSLETTERS & MEETING MINUTES:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**A motion was made by Supervisor Strgar, supported by Supervisor Wilson, to adjourn the reorganization meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM. The next board meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Balkan Community Center on April 5th, 2022.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Hendrickson, Clerk

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(Clerk) Misty Hendrickson

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(Board Chair) Brad Strgar