

**Princeton Township  
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

**Town Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2024**

**Minutes**

The February 20 monthly meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:00 p.m. Supervisors attended the meeting in person at Township Hall.

**Supervisors present:** Thomas Duden, Dan Hiller, Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb

**Supervisor absent:** Mike Bishman

**Staff present:** Interim Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl, Ken Henchen, Zoning Administrator Scott Richards

**Public attendees:** Jason Betzler, Joel Minks, Nancy Moan, Dave Persing, Shawn Williams

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance

**Board of Audit**

Minutes prepared separately. Board of Audit closed at 7:14 p.m.

**Regular Meeting**

Chairman Stoeckel opened the regular meeting at 7:15 p.m.

**Open Forum**

Resident Joel Minks spoke to several points:

- In view of upcoming elections, election Poll Pad training is available on YouTube.
- Animal control: Township should no longer appoint each resident his/her own pound master at the Annual Meeting. Animal control enforcement resides with Mille Lacs County.
- Ordinance amendments to be considered in this meeting's agenda: He cited several examples of activities permitted by Mille Lacs County that will be restricted in Princeton Township if the current draft amendments are adopted. He advocated keeping Township ordinances in line with County regulations.

Supervisors engaged in an extensive discussion with Mr. Minks, Jason Betzler, and Shawn Williams about several issues, particularly multi-family housing and senior housing.

Open forum closed at 7:44 p.m.

**Approve Minutes**

**January 16 Town Board Meeting:** Interim Clerk Dahl reported that he has been unable to find a draft, notes, or recording of the January 16 meeting.

**January 30 Special Meeting:** Mr. Dahl provided a draft of the January 30 Special Meeting created by the former clerk.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the minutes of the January 30 Special Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

**January 31 Closed Meeting—Clerk-Treasurer Employee Review:** Meeting closed at the request of Clerk-Treasurer Samantha Toth. Mr. Stoeckel read a summary statement approved by the Township Attorney:

“The Board discussed the Clerk-Treasurer’s strengths and weaknesses. As a result of that review, strengths were noted, and areas of improvement were defined. The Board developed goals regarding communication and leadership. Areas of growth were identified, and the evaluation is an ongoing process.”

Mr. Stoeckel reported that Clerk Samantha Toth had not been reporting for work since early February. She had delivered an e-mail on February 7 reporting that her father was gravely ill, and in intensive care. She did not indicate when she or Deputy Clerk Lynell Toth would be able to return to a regular work schedule. Her actions constituted an abandonment of her position.

In view of these facts, Mr. Stoeckel moved to discontinue employment of Samantha Toth. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried unanimously.

**Clerk-Treasurer’s Report**

Interim Clerk-Treasurer Dahl delivered the Clerk-Treasurer’s Report:

Cash Control Statement—January 31, 2024

General Fund Beginning Balance	\$184,361.06
Receipts	\$ 48.20
Disbursements	\$ 1,318.30
Ending Balance	\$183,090.96
Road & Bridge Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 141,936.98
Receipts	\$ 0.00
Disbursements	\$ 0.00
Ending Balance	\$ 141,936.98
Total Cash Beginning Balance	\$395,995.29
Receipts	\$ 48.20
Disbursements	\$ 1,318.30
Ending Balance	\$394,725.19

January Payroll

Gross	\$ 4,172.50
Net	\$ 4,114.42

February Total Claims \$ 99,119.26

- Notable :
  - City of Princeton \$ 26,996.00 Fire Coverage
  - MATIT \$ 1,317.00 Workers Compensation
  - MLC Auditor-Treasurer \$ 11,527.00 Assessments

Mr. Duden moved to approve the Clerk-Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

### **Old Business**

At an earlier meeting the Board had approved researching and taking estimates for a security-camera system for Township Hall. The Township received one estimate from North Country Systems, a company that provides security systems for other municipalities around the state. Total estimate including equipment and installation is \$4,280.04.

Mr. Hiller noted that the North Country Systems estimate is the same one he has in his auction business. He believes it will serve the Town Hall very well.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve up to \$4,300.00 for North Country Systems to install the proposed security-camera system at Township Hall. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

### **Zoning Administrator's Report**

Mr. Richards recommended extending the current moratorium on commercial development to April 15, 2024. Mr. Whitcomb moved to extend the moratorium as recommended. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Hiller voting no.

Mr. Richards summarized the proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance, presented as Ordinance 2024-1, developed by the Planning Commission subcommittee. The supervisors engaged in an extended discussion, generally recommending that the ordinances subject to revision follow the regulations in the Mille Lacs County zoning ordinances. Mr. Richards will make revisions and present the amended draft at the March 26 meeting.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to waive first reading of the ordinance amendments and schedule second reading for the March 26, 2024, meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

### **New Business**

Mr. Duden moved to approve Resolution 2024-2 establishing Township Hall as the designated polling place for all state and federal elections in 2024. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Mr. Hiller moved to appoint Doug Dahl as Interim Clerk-Treasurer, Election Judge, and Clerk of Elections. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve publishing the Township Election Notice in the Union-Times and Princeton Today newspapers two times each. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Motion carried.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to place the notice for Planning Commission Letters of Interest in the Union-Times designating Monday, March 25, 12:00 noon as the deadline for submission. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to set the date for the Township Clean-Up Day and Road Tour for Saturday, April 27, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Supervisors conducted an open employee review for Ken Henchen. Mr. Henchen was given a positive review.

### **Road Report**

Mr. Whitcomb presented the quote tabulation from Township Engineer Todd McLouth for three projects scheduled for 2024: 40<sup>th</sup> Street, 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Three companies submitted quotes: Knife River Corporation, Minnesota Paving & Materials, and Rum River Contracting. Minnesota Paving & Materials provided the low quote for two of the three projects, and low total for all three.

Mr. Duden moved to contract with Minnesota Paving & Materials for all three projects. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb reported that he is receiving quotes for sinkhole repair in four locations: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of Hwy 95, 25<sup>th</sup> Street near Shooter's Bar & Grill, 33<sup>rd</sup> Street near Bethel Reformed Church, and 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Denhi (the longest of the four). He is also taking quotes for crack & fill surface treatment at Silver Lake Oaks, fog seal on Brickton Road, and other crack-fill and chip-seal projects.

Mr. Whitcomb will deliver all quotes to the Board for consideration at its March 26 meeting.

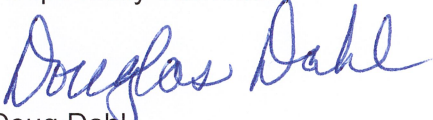
### **Fire Board Liaison**

Mr. Hiller reported that the Princeton Fire Department is requesting permission to locate its Grass-3 truck at the Township garage for which the department would pay \$300 per month rent. Mr. Hiller will ask Deputy Chief Josh Vaccari for a proposal. Mr. Stoeckel will contact the insurance provider to determine if there are any risks for the Township.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Hiller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Doug Dahl  
Interim Township Clerk

Approved by the Town Board March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024



Eugene Stockel, Chairman