

**Princeton Township Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Tuesday, December 17, 2019
Minutes**

December meeting of the Princeton Township Board called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m. Supervisors present: Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, Dave Persing, Thomas Duden, and Greg Anderson

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Approve Minutes

Bill Whitcomb moved to approve the minutes of the November 19 regular board meeting. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion Carried.

Dave Persing moved to approve the minutes of the November 26 continuation meeting. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Old Business

Recycling collection point: Members discussed the Mille Lacs County plan to change days for the weekly recycling container at Township Hall from Wednesday to the weekend; container to be delivered on Friday and picked up on Monday. Members noted concerns raised at the previous meeting about weekend traffic on U.S. 169. They asked MLC Solid Waste Coordinator Stephanie Reynolds to investigate the possibility of extending container availability by one day before or after the weekend. She agreed to inquire.

Greg Anderson moved to accept the plan as presented by Mille Lacs County. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

Road sign responsibility: Bill Whitcomb has been investigating the question of responsibility for road signs, county vs. township. The Mille Lacs County head of maintenance indicated the county follows state guidelines. Based on that discussion, the township may be taking responsibility for signs that actually fall under the county's purview. The township's sign inventory may be lowered from 295 to approximately 165. The project is continuing.

33rd Street & 82nd Avenue: Discussion of options for reconstruction of intersection of 33rd Street and 82nd Avenue. Township Engineer Todd McLouth presented options and cost estimates for a typical shoulder reconstruction. Options were based on soil borings taken from the sight. Recommended re-surfacing the roads without disturbing the road beds, widening the roads, or re-building ditches. Mr. McLouth noted that each item on the project would be bid individually, giving the township the option of removing any item from the final project. Bill Whitcomb moved to put the project out for bids. Seconded by Gene Stoeckel. Motion carried. [Handout documents attached to original minutes.]

Employee performance reviews: Dave Persing noted that employee reviews must be conducted in a closed meeting; to avoid having to call a special meeting, the regular meeting could be closed at the end for the purpose of conducting reviews. Gene Stoeckel moved to do reviews in January. Seconded by Dave Persing. Motion carried.

Employee manual: Members discussed the need for, and potential value of, an employee manual. Clerk Doug Dahl volunteered to begin researching practices of other townships as a starting point.

Township pay schedule: Members discussed revising the township pay scale, comparing the present pay scale with surrounding townships. All supervisors agreed generally that hourly rates for equipment operators need to increase. Greg Anderson suggested increasing rates for equipment operators, but keeping rates for elected positions the same. After discussing, a new pay scale was proposed.

Thomas Duden moved to adopt the new pay scale. Seconded by Dave Persing. Dave Persing moved to amend the motion to pay the road supervisor the road-maintenance worker rate for his work on the roads. Amendment carried 4-1, Greg Anderson voting no. Main motion carried 4-1, Greg Anderson voting no. [New pay schedule attached to minutes.]

Approve website postings: Doug Dahl reported that posting to the Township page on the County website isn't complicated. He also reported that he has started researching options for the Township's own website.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Gave variance: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards offered the proposed Gave variance, noting that the Planning Commission had approved the variance at its December 2 meeting. Dave Persing moved to approve the variance. Greg Anderson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Event venues: Mr. Richards reported on the proposed amendments to the Event Venues/Agritourism ordinance. The amendments are still in the hands of the Planning Commission.

Solar energy ordinance: Mr. Richards also reported that the Solar Energy Ordinance is still being considered by the Planning Commission.

New Business

AWAIR report: Gene Stoeckel pointed out some of the safety deficiencies in the shop; specifically a fireproof cabinet and an eye-wash station. Dave Persing brought up a hazardous condition that occurs in front of the building when ice builds up on the walkway. Gene Stoeckel moved to appoint himself, Ken Hennen, and Doug Dahl to inspect the facility for AWAIR deficiencies and report on findings and corrective action at the next town board meeting. Dave Persing seconded. Motion carried.

Status of fire contract with the City of Princeton: Bill Whitcomb reported that the city has delivered a draft of a new contract that will apply to Princeton Township as well as the other townships covered by the city's fire department. The contract will be filed at the town hall. It doesn't require any action by the town board.

Mr. Whitcomb also reported that the city has a policy of trying to recoup some compensation from the insurance companies of vehicle owners involved in accidents in the fire district that require action by the fire department. The city reported an outstanding balance of \$31,100 in their attempted collections. Mr. Whitcomb asked for a general sense from the board if they approve of the city taking such actions. Mr. Stoeckel commented that he could approve with the provision that the moneys go back into the fire department fund.

Review and approve election judges for 2020 elections: Candidates are:

- Doug Dahl (Clerk of Elections)
- Jeanette Oakes (Head Election Judge)
- Linda Boettcher
- Carole Carling
- Nancy Moan
- Pat Osterkamp
- Cheryl Schimming
- Larry Ziebart

Thomas Duden moved to approve the slate of election judges and the required election-judge training. Bill Whitcomb seconded. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Joel Minks commended the snow-plowing operation. Marcia Anderson asked how the AWAIR resolution has been passed in prior years without having a fireproof cabinet and eyewash station. Greg Anderson responded that we no longer have gasoline onsite, having eliminated the fuel tanks some years ago. Joel Minks noted that the township can call OSHA for a courtesy inspection. The OSHA inspector will prepare a list of deficiencies which require remedial action. There is not a specific requirement to report back to OSHA on actions taken against the deficiencies.

Marcia Anderson asked if the video cameras installed in the township hall had been re-connected. Doug Dahl responded that the cameras are all shut down, and that re-activating them has not been a priority. Ms. Anderson observed that the township has spent money on the cameras, and is not using them. She suggested that there are other examples of similar expenditures.

Supervisors' Reports

Gene Stoeckel: Mr. Stoeckel reported he had met with the City Planning Commission. The commission negotiated a setback agreement with a solar farm adjacent to the airport to ensure protection of the airport's landing space.

Thomas Duden: Would like to grant Brian Dahlheimer permission to use the township's road grader to blade snow and ice buildup from the paved roads. Mr. Duden moved to pay Brian Dahlheimer the hourly wage to use our equipment to blade the paved roads. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Dave Persing questioned if treating Mr. Dahlheimer as an employee for this purpose would entail worker's compensation liability for the township. Mr. Anderson suggested the liability could be covered by an insurance bond posted by Mr. Dahlheimer as a contract employee. Given that coverage, Mr. Persing said he had no objection. Mr. Duden's motion carried.

Clerk's Report

Election notices: Township Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl reported that he missed the deadline for the notice of township board candidate filing period. The notice had to be at the newspaper by noon, December 9, to make the December 12 edition. The notice went to the paper at 2 p.m. As a result, the first publication date would be December 19. Mr. Dahl contacted township attorney Adam Ripple. Mr. Ripple is preparing the necessary paperwork to bring the matter before the Mille Lacs County Court. Mr. Ripple has written a brief for the court explaining the circumstances, and noting the corrective actions we've taken, including multiple publications in the newspaper, posting the notice on the township bulletin board, and adding it to the township page on the county website. Mr. Ripple expects a routine, expedited ruling in favor of retaining our election date.

Mr. Dahl, pursuant to the request from the November 26 continuation meeting, provided examples of fire-resistant filing cabinets that might be used for employee records in the township office.

Mr. Dahl noted that the Planning Commission meeting schedule calls for a meeting on Labor Day. He suggested that the meeting date might have to be changed.

Mr. Dahl reported he had received an invoice and an audit report form from the Minnesota Association of Townships. The invoice covering the township's workers' compensation premium for 2020 is included in the claims list for approval at this meeting. The audit report, which will determine our rate for 2021, is due by January 31. Mr. Dahl requested help from a member of the board to complete the audit.

Mr. Dahl reported that all delayed tax reporting and withholding had been brought up to date, as well as PERA contributions. Also, Minnesota Unemployment had granted his appeal to remove the \$250 late fee for a missed filing date. He noted a questionable tax allocation in CTAS for FICA withholding, specifically that the entire withholding amount is recorded as employer contribution, whereas only half is employer, and half is employee. He will ask for clarification from the MAT trainer.

Approve Payment of the Bills: Doug Dahl delivered the claims list and payroll register for November. Claims for invoices and individual expenses totaled \$47,089.12. Payroll totaled \$3,455.75. All supervisors present signed the claims approval list.

Motion to adjourn: Moved by Thomas Duden. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk/Treasurer

Attendees: Kathy Stoeckel, Marcia Anderson, Stephanie Reynolds, Kevin Walz, Nicholas Taylor, Andrea Gerrard, Nancy Moan, Del Gave, Diane Gave, Cheryl Schimming, Brian Dahlheimer, Mike Trunk, Josh Mathews, Joel Minks

2020 Princeton Township Pay Schedule

Town Board Supervisors	\$55.00/Meeting \$10.00/Hour
TB Road Supervisor work on road maintenance	\$20-25/Hour
Town Board Chairman	\$55.00/Meeting \$10.00/Hourly
Planning Commission Chairman	\$55.00/Meeting
Planning Commission Members	\$55.00/Meeting
Liaisons to various commissions	\$25.00/Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission • Airport Commission • Weed-control Commission • Princeton City Council 	
Maintenance	\$19.00-22.00/Hour
Road Maintenance	\$25.00-30.00/Hour
Road Grader Operator	\$25.00-30.00/Hour
Snow Plow Operator – Primary	\$25.00-30.00/Hour
Snow Plow Operator – Secondary	\$25.00-30.00/Hour
Election Judges	\$15.00/Hour
Head Election Judge	\$20.00/Hour
Clerk/Treasurer	\$20.00-26.00/Hour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Board Meetings & • Planning Commission Meetings • Paid vacation 60 hours per year • Paid Holidays 9 per year @ 7 hours each • Medical Coverage 	\$55.00/Meeting \$55.00/Meeting Current hourly rate* \$150.00/Monthly
Deputy Clerk (fill-in basis only)	\$12.00-16.00/Hour

*Clerk's paid Holidays include: (regardless of the day of week the holiday falls on)

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day