

**Princeton Township Regular Board Meeting
Tuesday, December 15, 2020
Minutes**

The December meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m. Due to COVID restrictions the meeting was held by teleconference.

Supervisors attending: Thomas Duden, Dan Hiller, Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, John Wilhelm
Also attending: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Engineer Todd McLouth,
Township Attorney Jason Hill, Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Open Forum

Resident Mark Riverblood delivered a memo to be read during open forum. Mr. Whitcomb displayed the memo on the shared screen and read it for the participants.

Resident Mary Kramer delivered a memo from herself and resident Steven Long. She joined the meeting to read her memo to the participants.

From: Mary Kramer & Steven Long, 2615 Appletree Drive, Princeton, MN 55371
Subject: Save the Appletree Drive Cul-de-Sac

The memo asked the board to reject any proposal to turn the Appletree Drive cul-de-sac into a through street.

Full text of the memo is on file at the township hall and posted on the website:
www.princetontownshipmn.us.

Resident Cyndi MacDonald spoke against taking action on the Riverblood memo. She noted that the current board has taken steps to ensure that all residents have opportunities to participate in public hearings and open forums. She particularly commended the board's efforts to engage residents via teleconference meetings during the times of COVID restrictions.

Marcia Anderson spoke against the Riverblood proposal. She stated her belief that government should not stop functioning during COVID restrictions. She expressed her appreciation for the work the board has been doing to keep its actions open and transparent, and to involve all residents who want to participate in their government.

Open forum closed at 7:50 p.m.

Approve Minutes

November 17 regular meeting: Mr. Duden moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hiller.
Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash control statement:

Beginning balance for November: \$254,942.77
Receipts \$136,184.46
Disbursements \$91,552.80
Ending balance \$299,574.43

Mr. Duden moved to approve the cash control statement. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Payroll: Net pay distribution—November net payroll: \$4,570.88.

Mr. Duden moved to approve the November payroll. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Claims for approval: Total claims \$45,694.57 — Includes \$27,470.00 to City of Princeton for the fire contract.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to approve the claims. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Dahl noted that the November tax settlement had come from Mille Lacs County on December 11.

The Township has received notification from Midco, provider of cable television, Internet, and telephone service, that it will be expanding its services to approximately 215 households in Princeton Township in 2021. Midco requested a franchise agreement or a resolution declining regulation. Members agreed that the township chooses not to establish franchises.

Mr. Duden moved to adopt Resolution 2020-33: Resolution Declining to Regulate Cable Television System in Princeton Township. Seconded by Mr. Hiller.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried. Adopted as Resolution 2020-33. Full text of the resolution is on file and published on the Township Website.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Scott Richards

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Section on Trails to include reference to the Great Northern Trail:

Scott Richards presented Ordinance 2020-4 amending the Comprehensive Plan to include reference to the Great Northern Trail as an approved project for the Township's Park Dedication Fund. The amendment also includes a future land-use map reflecting the current zoning in the vicinity of the Trail. Members confirmed that adopting the ordinance permits use of park-dedication funds for the Trail, but does not require it.

Mr. Duden moved to adopt the ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried. Adopted as Ordinance 2020-4. Full text of the ordinance is on file and published on the Township Website.

Resolution approving publication of summary language for Ordinance 2020-4:

Mr. Richards proposed Resolution 2020-32 approving publication of summary language for Ordinance 2020-4.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Mr. Hiller.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried. Adopted as Resolution 2020-32. Full text on file and published on the Township Website.

Status Update on Woods Push Development (Todd McLouth---Loucks):

Mr. McLouth reported that the final plat and developer's agreement for Woods Push were completed in August. Since then, work is proceeding on the development. To date the developer has delivered cash in lieu of the letter of credit, and paid the required escrows. However, the park dedication fee is not yet paid. The road into the development has been graded. Mr. McLouth notified the developer that the road needed additional work to bring it up to standard. The developer agreed to have his contractor complete the work. The road still needs final inspection before the engineer can approve for acceptance and begin the warranty period.

Status Update on Silver Lake Oaks (Todd McLouth---Loucks):

Mr. McLouth reported that the final plat and developer's agreement were completed in June. Work on the roads and some homes began in October. However, the developer has not met the security requirements. He has paid \$32,700 for park dedication and sealcoating. He has not delivered a letter of credit (\$548,701.38) or paid the cash escrow (\$21,948.06). Mr. Richards recommended holding any pending building permits until those securities are resolved. Mr. McLouth added that in the future the township should not sign a final plat until all required securities are met.

Township Attorney Jason Hill noted that the township is required to retain no less than 25% of the letter of credit amount (\$137,175.35) from the developer's agreement until the project is completed. He recommended notifying the developer that the 25% LOC amount would be sufficient at this point, given the progress on the project. Mr. McLouth agreed with that recommendation, adding that 25% would be more than sufficient to complete the project from this point should the developer abandon it.

The board agreed that the clerk will hold any pending building permits in Silver Lake Oaks until the township receives the reduced letter of credit and cash escrow.

Old Business

Report/Update on Status of AWAIR Compliance: Mr. Stoeckel reviewed the AWAIR standards and seven questions that determine compliance. Mr. Whitcomb and Ken Hennen noted specific actions that had been taken with respect to some of the items. The board agreed that all items have been completed successfully.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to approve the AWAIR Annual Review. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Supervisors' Reports

Road report—Mr. Whitcomb reported that two stop signs appear to have been stolen. On November 27 Mr. Whitcomb discovered the first one at 40th Street and 50th Avenue (township owned). He replaced that one the same day. The second was reported on December 8 by John Roxbury at 40th Street and County Road 1 (county owned). Mr. Whitcomb reported that one to the county. The county placed a temporary sign at the location that evening, then returned the next morning to install the permanent sign. At that time, the temporary sign had been removed and thrown into the ditch. The county official informed Mr. Whitcomb that many signs were being stolen recently.

Mr. Whitcomb noted that some residents have raised concerns about the township's sign management. Mr. Whitcomb displayed the maps and lists of signs showing which entity, township or county, owns which signs. He noted that the township does not have responsibility for signs owned by the county. The township passed Resolution 2020-14 in June establishing a traffic-sign policy and sign-replacement plan based on the actual inventory of township signs. The township is removing signs in accordance with that plan. All signs being removed are stored at the town hall with identifying notations.

Mr. Hiller asked Mr. McLouth to explain the requirements for townships to post speed-limit signs. Mr. McLouth replied that speed-limit signs are not required, especially in low-volume roads, unless limits are different from the statutory limit. The speed limit for roads in the state of Minnesota is 55 mph per statute. In rural residential areas the speed limit is 35 mph per statute.

Shared-Road Agreements—Mr. Whitcomb reported that he has begun researching the townships share-road agreements with contiguous jurisdictions. He has found agreements from 1993-94, but has not had time to study them in detail.

Mr. Whitcomb presented the details of the state's Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP). The state is offering aid to local governments for road improvement projects. Mr. Whitcomb is seeking approval from the board to work with Mr. McLouth to prepare an application under the program for improvements to 50th Avenue, a road shared with Wyanett Township (Isanti County). Members generally agreed that the aid program presents an excellent opportunity to upgrade 50th Avenue, especially given the potential benefit to multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to approve pursuing the application. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Fire Board Liaison Report—Mr. Whitcomb. Nothing to report. Meeting was cancelled.

Airport Commission Liaison Report—Mr. Stoeckel reported that the commission is continuing to seek aid from MNDOT and federal sources for projects it hopes to undertake.

City Planning Commission Liaison Report—Mr. Stoeckel. Nothing to report. Meeting will be Monday, January 21.

Township Planning Commission Liaison Report—Mr. Hiller. Planning Commission continued its discussion of home occupation interim-use permits and zoning amendments for cul-de-sacs to the January meeting. The commission established a subcommittee to research the history of developments in the township.

New Business

Confirm 2021 Township Meeting Calendar: Dan Hiller moved to approve the township meeting calendar with the July Planning Commission meeting date moved back one week (to July 12) as requested by the Commission. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried. The meeting calendar is posted at the town hall and on the website.

Schedule a Working Meeting for Early 2021: Mr. Whitcomb asked to schedule a special meeting to work on road priorities. Mr. Whitcomb moved to call a special meeting for January 5 at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

2021 Pay Schedule and Updated Resolution 2020-03: Mr. Whitcomb presented a revised pay schedule for discussion. The schedule proposes an increase from \$55 per meeting to \$65 per meeting for the Town Board Chair and Planning Commission Chair; an increase in the range for secretarial/deputy chair from \$12-16/hour to \$15-20/hour; and minor changes to the descriptions of the duties of road-maintenance worker and general-maintenance worker (*i.e.*, adding “includes but not limited to”).

Mr. Duden moved to adopt the pay schedule and ask Mr. Hill to prepare a resolution for adoption at the January monthly meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hiller.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

2021 Fee Schedule: Mr. Duden noted that the conditional-use permit fee (\$250) does not always cover all the costs associated with processing the permit. He suggested taking some action to make sure those costs are covered by the applicant, not the township. He also recommended dropping the licensing requirement for 3.2 beer. Mr. Hiller agreed with the observation about excess costs for CUP/IUP, but cautioned that raising the fee significantly would discourage residents from filing applications.

Mr. Hiller moved to continue the fee schedule discussion to the February meeting to allow the Planning Commission to consider the question. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Other Business

Ken Henchen Annual Review: Members commended Mr. Henchen for his diligence in carrying out all his duties. Mr. Stoeckel noted particularly his work on achieving AWAIR compliance; Mr. Whitcomb mentioned his thoroughness in preparing an inventory of tools and equipment. Mr. Henchen expressed his appreciation for the involvement and support he has received from the board. Mr. Whitcomb added that Ken does considerable work on the roads, such as assisting with brush cutting, but has not been paid for that work at the higher road-maintenance rate.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to increase Ken Henchen’s base pay by 3% (to \$20.60/hour), and to pay him the road-maintenance rate (\$25/hour) for any road work he performs. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Henchen has been using his own snowblower to clear the town hall sidewalks. He has located a quality snowblower that the township could acquire for \$1,299.
Mr. Stoeckel moved to allocate \$1,299.00 to purchase the snowblower. Seconded by Dan Hiller.
Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—[inaudible]; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Doug Dahl Annual Review: Mr. Stoeckel noted that Mr. Dahl is working hours he is not being paid for. Mr. Whitcomb commended Mr. Dahl for his work managing the town hall through the changing requirements under COVID.

Mr. Dahl commented that he does not need or desire an increase in his hourly wage. However, he has found that it is not possible to do the job properly in 20 hours per week.

Mr. Hiller moved to authorize up to 30 hours per week to the clerk-treasurer, and to open the town hall one additional day per week (Wednesday) starting in January. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.

Adjourn

Dan Hiller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll: Mr. Duden—Aye; Mr. Hiller—Aye; Mr. Stoeckel—Aye; Mr. Whitcomb—Aye; Mr. Wilhelm—Aye. Motion carried.
Adjourned 10:55 p.m.

Attendees

Marcia Anderson, Andrea Gerrard, Bart Kendall, Marcia Kendall, Mary Kramer, Gary Larson, Steve Long, Cyndi MacDonald, Nancy Moan, plus unidentified callers

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Dahl, Clerk-Treasurer