

Meeting of the Windemere Township Board - February 13, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by Chairman, John Wesely. Others present were Supervisor Heidi Kroening, Treasurer Ron Mossberg, and Clerk Scott Danelski. Absent, Supervisor Pete Steen.

RESIGNATION :

The resignation of Windemere Board Supervisor, Pete Steen, was discussed. Motion made by Wesely, second by Kroening to accept Windemere Board Supervisor Pete Steen's resignation effective February 1st, 2020. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

CLERK'S REPORT :

The Clerk's January 2020 report was read. Motion made by Wesely, second by Kroening to approve the Clerk's January 2020 report as submitted. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

TREASURER'S REPORT :

Treasurer's January 2020 financial report was read. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to approve the Treasurer's January 2020 financial report as submitted. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

2019 DELINQUENT TAXES :

The delinquent 2019 Windemere Township property taxes were discussed. Treasurer Ron Mossberg stated a check was received early February 2020 from Pine County for the remaining 2019 property taxes due to Windemere Township. Treasurer Mossberg requested the Board designate which fund(s) the Board would like the check to be allocated to; the Revenue Fund, the Road & Bridges Fund, or both funds. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to allocate the entire amount of the 2019 delinquent taxes check, \$6775.41, into the Road & Bridges Fund. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

PUBLIC INPUT :

John Menke was present a stated he wanted to thank the elected officials and township employees for all of the wonderful work that everyone does for Windemere Township. John stated that he hopes that future meetings can remain civil, and also that individuals be more appreciative for all and the hard work that everyone does for Windemere Township.

Larry Martin was present and asked when is the Sturgeon Island Road scheduled to be repaired. Due to the impending work that is going to be needed to either repair or replace the Sturgeon Island Bridge, it was decided to wait until the bridge construction is completed before starting the work on Sturgeon Island Road. The Board believes that the heavy truck and equipment traffic that road will endure during the bridge construction could possibly end up destroying the newly refurbished road if the road construction was completed prior to the bridge construction being completed.

OLD BUSINESS :

STURGEON ISLAND BRIDGE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE :

Vern Anderson II was present and gave an update for the Sturgeon Island Bridge Preservation Committee. The grant for repairing the Sturgeon Island Bridge has been applied for, but the committee has not heard back regarding the outcome of their application. No other updates available.

ZONING DEPARTMENT :

The township's zoning department was discussed. Zoning Administrator, Phill White, has submitted his letter of resignation effective May 1st, 2020. Moving forward the Windemere Board will need to have further discussions and determine which option Windemere Township should use going forward with the township's zoning department. Options being explored by the Board are; 1) maintaining our current model of having our own zoning department administer Windemere's zoning ordinances, 2) opting-in and having Pine County administer all of Windemere Township's zoning ordinances through a county-wide zoning ordinance, or 3) hiring an outside private contractor to administer the township's zoning department and zoning ordinances. The Town Board held a second meeting on January 21st, 2020 with Pine County Zoning Department Land & Resource Manager, Caleb Anderson, to discuss Windemere Township possibly opting-in to the option of adopting the Pine County county-wide zoning ordinance model, and also to have public input in regards to the possibility of choosing this option. The meeting had a very low turn-out with only one individual attending the meeting. A third meeting to discuss the same topic will be held on Thursday March 5th, 2020 6:30 PM and hopefully will have more constituents attend and participate with public comments regarding Windemere township using this type of model.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) :

Windemere Township's enrollment into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administrated through Pine County, Minnesota was discussed. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to approve Windemere Township Agreement 2020-2-13 which is an agreement between Windemere Township and Pine County and allows Pine County to implement, administer, and manage the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for the residents of Windemere Township and the Township Government. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP 2019 – 2022 ROAD MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE CONTRACT :

The Windemere Township 2019 – 2022 Road Maintenance Department Employee contract was discussed. The final draft language of the new contract was approved on January 29th, 2020 and the Board signed the contract tonight on February 13th, 2020 to place the contract into effect.

ISLAND LAKE BOX CULVERT :

Tabled until a later meeting.

NEW BUSINESS :

2019 MATs ANNUAL MEETING REPORT :

Deputy Treasurer Paul Horgen was present to give a report from the MATs 2019 Annual Meeting & Educational Conference held last November 22nd – 23rd, 2019 in Mankato, MN.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATES :

The mileage reimbursement rate for the calendar year 2020 was discussed. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to approve the change to the new Federal standard 2020 mileage rate of \$.575/mile to take effect on the February 2020 claims. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

PRAXAIR LEASE AGREEMENT :

The upcoming renewal of lease agreements with Praxair Distribution, Inc was discussed. Both leases will automatically renew on April 30th, 2020 unless a written notice of termination of the existing contract lease agreements are given prior to April 29th, 2020 termination deadline. The two current leases are for use of a quantity of three Praxair tanks (Oxygen, Acetylene, and Argon/CO2 Mixed-Gas) at one tank each.

The Board would like to terminate the lease agreement with Praxair but would like to know what the township's cost would be for purchasing our own tanks as well as the perimeters of the two current contract leases. Road Maintenance Employee Buetow to acquire quotes for the purchasing of Qty-1 each of the three tanks needs to replace the leased Praxair tanks, and Clerk Scott Danelski to provide the Board with copies of the Praxair lease agreements currently in place with Windemere Township.

EMPLOYEE PAYROLL :

Windemere Township employee payroll was discussed. Due to the new wage laws that went into effect last August 2019, Windemere Township needs to update their payroll policy to be in compliance with the new wage laws. Per Minnesota State Statute 181.101 the new wage laws require that all employees be paid at least once every 31 days. Minnesota State Statute 471.38; Subdivision 1 (Itemized, Declaration) requires that all claims to be paid by a local government, must be accompanied by an itemized list of services in order for the claim to be approved for payment, with the exception for claims provided under Subdivision 2. Minnesota State Statute 471.38; Subdivision 2 (Application) provides an exemption to Subdivision 1 for any claims made for fixed hourly rate and allows the Governing Board of the municipality to authorize by law payment of employee claims on a payroll basis.

Due to our meeting schedule, Windemere Township will need to process special mid-month payrolls for months when 5 weeks will pass between our regular monthly township Board meetings. For the calendar year 2020 that situation will occur on four occasion; April, July, October, and December. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to authorize the processing of Windemere Township employee payroll claims on a payroll basis, producing payroll payments twice a month for the months when the township's regular monthly meetings fall more than 31 days apart, thus keeping the township in compliance with Minnesota's new wage law, Minnesota State Statute 181.101. All employee payroll claims will be paid electronically via direct deposit and approved at each month's regular monthly Board meeting. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

ELECTION JUDGES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2020 :

The Election Judges for Windemere Township were discussed. The Clerk recommended the Board approve the township's election judges for the 2020 calendar year. Motion by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to approved Scott Danelski, Rhonda Young, Terry Schumann, Debbie White, Susan Quest, Gayle Moonen, Mary Wiegand, Donna Burns, Linda Eckert, Marie Danelski, Dee Koivisto, Clarissa Ellis-Prudhomme, and Kelly Goeb as election judges for the 2020 calendar year. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OTHER :

WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISOR VACANCY :

The vacant seat on the Windemere Township Board of Supervisors was discussed. The Board will post and publish that they are accepting letters of interest with resumes for the vacant seat on the Windemere Board of Supervisors. Letters of interest and resumes can be sent either by mail or via email until the closing date of Friday March 6th, 2020, 5PM. The Board will review all applicants and the vacancy will be filled at the next Windemere Township regular monthly Board meeting which will be held on Thursday March 12th, 2020.

HIGH-WATER ISSUES :

Supervisor Kroening stated that she requested a meeting with Minnesota DNR Hydrologist Heidi Lindgren, the Clerk and herself to further discuss the high-water issues around Windemere Township. Kroening would like to get further clarification in regards to the process of applying for a Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) grant as they are very hard to get and she does not know if this is the proper route for the township to go in regards to funding the feasibility study. Kroening stated she attended the February 13th, 2020 Pine County Land Development & Water Quality Workshop earlier in the day where Heidi Lindgren presented. Lindgren stated during her presentation that applications are very difficult to give out in regards for granting permits to move water via drainage ditches, storm sewers, etc.

Ben Anderson from Straightline Surveying has provided the township with some historical data regarding high-water issues that occurred in the past, and the data shows that Windemere Township has previously faced the same situation that the township is currently facing in regards to flooding and high water. The data shows that twice previously, a plan and process to remove the high water had been identified, but both times the plan was denied by the state. The goal of the meeting is to go over the historical data with Ms. Lindgren and to find out why the previously conducted feasibility study plans were denied, and also to ask her what is really the township's best option to move forward with the current feasibility study and plan to mitigate the high water in the township.

Chairman Wesely stated that he had a conversation with Pine County Commissioner John Mikrot and stated that the Commissioner said he was going to try to get the Pine County Board of Commissioners together to hold a meeting in Windemere Township so that the township can present to them showing the township's current situation in regards to the high-water issues, and again to ask the County Board if they would be willing to pay for a portion of the feasibility study. Chairman Wesley stated he had not heard back from Commissioner Mikrot and that he will follow up with him.

ADDITIONAL BOARD SUPERVISOR DUTIES :

Additional Windemere Board Supervisor duties were discussed. Due to the resignation of Supervisor Pete Steen, the township currently does not have a Road Supervisor. Motion by Kroening, seconded by Wesley for Chairman Wesley to assume the additional duties and purchasing authority of the Windemere Township Road Supervisor. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

ROAD UPDATE :

Clerk Scott Danelski gave the monthly road update. Road Maintenance Employee Mike Buetow is going to meet with Pine County employee Todd Lindstrom and review all of Windemere Township's road signage. The flooding of township roads due to the high water continues to be a problem for the Road Maintenance Department, and the flooding is expected to worsen as the ground thaws and the frost comes out of the ground.

Mike Buetow provided quotes for cones and warning signs from the three vendors and is requesting funds to purchase signage for the closing roads and to warn residents of potential road hazards.

The lowest quote was submitted by the vendor Newman Signs for a total of \$2210.18. The vendors quote is less than the township's purchasing policy \$2500.00 thresh-hold and Road Supervisor Wesely to contact Buetow to approve the purchasing of the warning signs and cones.

A separate quote for a locator was provided by the vendor Locators & Supplies Inc for at \$895.00 which would be used to help the Road Maintenance Department locate culverts this spring. Road Supervisor Wesely to also have a discussion with Buetow regarding the purchase of the locator.

Buetow also made a request to all constituents who have road maintenance concerns to contact him directly through the township's website via email. Buetow explained that he gets the email notifications immediately and it will help the Road Maintenance Department identify problems quicker and address those issues more rapidly.

ZONING UPDATE :

Zoning Administrator, Phill White gave the monthly zoning update. The Zoning Department handled 17 new contacts with questions and issued no new permits since last month. Zero zoning permits have been issued thus far in calendar year 2020. The Pine County Assessors Office has been out in Windemere Township finding violations by property owners who have completed some construction and built structures without properly applying for permits. The Windemere Township Zoning Department has sent out violation letters this week notifying the property owners of the violation and to try to get the violators into compliance. White read his letter of resignation aloud for the meeting minutes and wanted to explain the reasoning behind his resignation. The letter dated February 13th, 2020 reads as follows: I Phillip White am submitting my resignation from the position of Zoning Administrator for Windemere Township, as of May 1st, 2020 or before if requested by the Board. I would consider a part-time position to help with the transfer of duties to a new Administrator or Pine County Zoning. I would also like to thank all of you for the support provided over the years. It made the job easier knowing your support was always there. Signed Phillip William White. White went onto explain that he did not resign because of the residents of Windemere township, but rather because of the number of hours that this position requires to in order to complete the job effectively. White stated that the number of hours required were too many, especially for someone who is retired, and that the position is overwhelming. He also wished he could provide the Board with names of good candidates for his replacement, but he had none to offer at this time.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE :

Clair Strandlie gave the Planning Commission update. The next meeting of the Windemere Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday April 14th, 2020 6:30 PM at the Windemere town hall located at 91546 Military Road Sturgeon Lake, MN.

FIRE DISTRICT UPDATE :

No update this month.

CLAIMS :

January 2020 claims were reviewed. Motion made by Wesely, seconded Kroening to approve the January 2020 claims as submitted. EFTs – 20-05 through 20-07, Checks - 12517 through 12542 & Direct Deposits - 1213 through 1218 for a total of \$32,477.19. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

Township mail was opened and reviewed.

Motion made by Wesely, seconded by Kroening to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM. Motion passed, 2 Aye – 0 Nay.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED :

Clerk, Scott Danelski

APPROVED :

Chairman, John Wesely