MINUTES
TOWN BOARD MEETING
APRIL 16, 23, 2020

The regular April 16, 2020 meeting of the Town Board was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was rescheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 6:30 via Webex teleconference.

Present at Town Hall: Terry Hill, Rhonda Peleski, Leah Pykkonen

Attending via Webex teleconference: Bill Gerard, Ruth Janke, Tony Compo, Jason Paulson, David Pritchett

Other staff members attending via Webex teleconference: Zoning Officer Daniel Stangle, Road and Utility Supervisor Logan Saline, Fire Chief Kyle Gustafson, Town Engineer Joe Jurewicz, and Carlton County Deputy Rob Lucas

Chairperson Hill called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. in the Town Board Room at the Town Hall.

Resolution No. 2020-03 Establishing the Ability to Conduct Open Meetings by Telephone was presented by Paulson with support from Gerard. Resolution adopted with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Gerard made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2020 regular meeting. Second by Paulson. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

Paulson made a motion to approve the current vouchers in the amount of $ 140,215.71 (Check #'s 45122 – 45210, Void 45171, 45202) to pay payroll and due bills and electronic payments in the amount of $ 18,395.09. Second by Compo. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

February receipts in the amount of $ 45,756.42, March receipts in the amount of $ 102,362.59 and fund balances were reviewed.

The 2019 financial statement from North Country RIDE was reviewed. A motion was made by Compo with a second by Paulson to approve the payment of $750 to North Country RIDE from the Recreation Fund. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

The 2019 financial statements were received from Esko Baseball/Softball Association were reviewed. A motion was made by Compo with a second by Janke to approve the payment of $ 2,600 the Esko Baseball/Softball Association from the Recreation Fund. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

Deputy Lucas reported on issues with parking on W. Highway 61 frontage road by the Midway River. Vehicles have been blocking driving lanes so the plow and garbage trucks haven't been able to get through. There has also been damage done to the road. Discussion was held on additional cars on the property. A motion was made by Gerard with a second by Paulson to authorize "No Parking" signs be installed in that area. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

Discussion was also held on the businesses further west on W. Highway 61 and the things that are visible from the road. Staff will look into ordinances and what is enforceable in that commercial zoned area.

Saline reported on a sewer lateral break that happened on March 27. Lift station # 1 by the Midway River wasn't able to keep up with the flows. Saline tracked the problem down to a private sewer lateral cleanout that was broken. Peleski will determine the total costs associated with the break and will have that available for the next meeting.

Discussion was held on hiring a seasonal worker again this year. Saline suggested that two workers be hired this year. One could work 20 hours per week doing grounds work such as mowing and trimming. A full-time person could be hired to assist with road and utility maintenance. The decision was made to hire for the two positions.

A resident of Dogwood Drive has inquired if the Town would be willing to take over that road as a Town maintained road, make needed improvements and then assess the project to the property owners. After discussion, it was decided that the Town is not inclined to do this. The improvements would need to made first before the Town will take it over.

Saline presented quotes from McCoy John Deere and Zeigler Caterpillar for a new grader. Both are off of the State of Minnesota Cooperative Purchase Venture. The low quote is for the John Deere in the amount of $ 318,473 with a trade-in value for two of the older Town graders in the amount of $ 73,500. It is Saline's recommendation that the John Deere be purchased. After discussion, A motion was made by Compo with a second by Gerard to purchase the John Deere 672GP for the net amount of $ 244,973. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays. Saline is also working on a program with the MPCA for financing the new grader.

Discussion was held on whether the Town should continue providing plowing and grading services to residents. This will continue to be discussed.

Saline presented quotes for repairing or replacing the pumps at lift station # 1. To repair them will be $ 7,125. To replace them both will be $ 21,068. Since the pumps are 25 years old, Saline is recommending replacing the pumps. After discussion, it was determined that an additional quote for replacement should be obtained before a decision is made.

Gustafson reported on the results of the recent Insurance Services Organization (ISO) review of the fire department. It was hoped that the fire department could improve its rating and thus reduce insurance rates for some of the residents. A letter received recently assigned a rating of 5 to the department which is an improvement on the previous 6 rating.

Gerard obtained quotes for crack-filling on the W. Highway 61 walking trail. A motion was made by Compo with a second by Paulson to award the work to A-1 Asphalt with the low quote of $ 490. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

Esko Historical Society is again inquiring about obtaining the 1949 Chev that is currently part of the Road and Bridge fleet. The truck was the first fire truck purchased by the township and has been used by the road department for the last several years. Legal counsel has determined that if they are a 501c3 organization, the truck can be donated for display. A motion was made by Paulson with a second by Gerard to donate the 1949 Chevrolet truck to the Esko Historical Society after it's been determined that they are a 501c3 organization. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 0 nays. Peleski will work with the members to determine a value and write a bill of sale.

Gerard reported that the Wood City Riders are in the process of applying for a grant to extend their trail through the township. The snowmobile trail will cross the Midway River but the trail groomer isn't allowed to cross the waterway. They are requesting permission for their trail groomer to use the Town's right-of-way along W. Harney, E. Harney Church and Juntunen Roads. A resolution in support of the snowmobile trail and allowing the trail groomer to use the Town's right-of-way was presented by Gerard with support from Paulson. Resolution adopted with 5 yeas and 0 nays.

Stangle gave his monthly report. He has been working remotely approving plat sketches, answering email and phones requests for zoning information and parcel split requirements. He has also been working with a local developer on possible land usages.

Gustafson reported on fire department activities. They'll be part of the State-wide mask collection on April 25. They've been doing all of their training on-line or via video conferencing.

Peleski reported that she is still working with the auditors remotely to complete the 2019 financial audit.

Gerard is going to begin pruning trees in Northridge Park.

Hill gave a thank you to Peleski and Pykkonen for working to get the Webex meeting up and running.

Paulson reported on the Cloquet Area Fire Districts search for a new fire chief. Chief Kevin Schroeder will be retiring soon. They will be advertising the position a second time.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:31 pm by Gerard with a second by Janke. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Peleski

Rhonda Peleski, Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Thomson

Terry Hill, Chairperson