

Empire Township Meeting Minutes August 11, 2020

The Town Board meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Holmes at 8:00 PM.

Present were: Terry Holmes, Jamie Elvestad, Ed Gerten, Charles Seipel, Jeff Hince, Denise Williamson, Brian Hilgardner, and Jane Kansier.

Agenda: Jamie Elvestad recommended the addition of the Clerk's contract to the agenda under New Business. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Terry Holmes seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Meeting Minutes: Ed Gerten made a motion to approve the minutes of the Town Board Meeting of July 28th, 2020; the Planning Commission Meeting of August 4th, 2020; and the Park & Rec. Commission Meeting of August 10th, 2020. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Treasurer Report: The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$23,929.03 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$2,559.48 plus investments. An escrow payment in the amount of \$6,750 was paid on 7/29/2020. The report included a revenue and expenditure guideline as of 8/6/2020 and a cash balance report as of 8/11/2020.

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the financial report. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Visitors: None

Bills to be Paid: Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$233,833.72. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Committee Reports

Maintenance / Sewer and Water / Road and Bridges

Jeff Hince reported that trees along some areas of the trail system have been trimmed. Maintenance staff had to grade all of Biscayne Avenue as the contractor would not do it. The Town Board discussed the need to clear the trees and shrubs from the property at the northeast corner of 197th Street and Highway 3 in order to construct a turn lane onto Highway 3 in the near future. The Town Board requested the placement of hash marks on the parking stall directly in front of the ramp at the Town Hall Park pavilion in order to allow handicapped access to the ramp.

Park & Rec

The Town Board interviewed Jordan Johnson for the vacant Park & Rec Commission position. Mr. Johnson provided information on his background and why he is interested in serving on the Park & Rec Commission. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to appoint Jordan Johnson to the Park & Rec Commission. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Denise Williamson reported that the Park & Rec Commission is proposing the following park improvements for this year; the resurfacing of the playground surface areas at Town Hall Park and the Empire Preserve playground, the placement of a concrete walkway from the Town Hall parking lot to the playground area, and the installation of a handicapped accessible swing at the Town Hall Park playground. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to implement the recommendations by the Park & Rec Commission for park improvements to be made this year. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Park & Rec Commission reviewed playground equipment choices for the new Sachs Park playground equipment and recommended going with option #2. The cost of the new equipment is \$70,000. This price includes deconstruction of the existing equipment and construction of the new equipment. Town Board discussed the possibility of the Township deconstructing the existing equipment and disposing of it in house in order to save on costs.

Denise Williamson reported that Bolton & Menk has provided a quote in the amount of \$2,000 to create a GIS database that would house information on Empire Township Parks, including information on structures and individual pieces of equipment. Ed Gerten made a motion to work with Bolton & Menk on an Empire Parks GIS database. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Engineering

Brian Hilgardner reported that paving will begin on the Highway 3 project later this week. He is upset that the contractor did not grade Biscayne as they were supposed to do according to the project contract.

Brian, Terry and Charlie met with the Met Council earlier this week to discuss a proposed drainage ditch on the west side of the wastewater treatment plant property. The meeting went well. The Met Council will agree to provide an easement onto their property for the construction of a drainage ditch. It will need to be determined if trees can be removed at the south end of the proposed ditch, along an existing ditch. The Met Council will be putting together a communication piece about the proposed project to go out in the next newsletter. Brian will work on getting some survey information for the easement then the Met Council will draw up the easement agreements and include a section on maintenance of the easement.

The Town Board reviewed a draft resolution and a final pay request from McNamara for the close out of the 2019 Street Reconstruction Project. The total price for the contractor's share of the project came in at \$106,000 less than quoted. Ed Gerten made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-8A, a Resolution Accepting Work with McNamara Contracting. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Planning

Jane Kansier presented a memo regarding the expansion of an IUP to permit automobile sales at 20485 Chippendale Avenue. The Planning Commission recommended approval of this IUP with the following conditions: that automobiles be located at least 10 feet from the front lot line; that the IUP permit the storage of up to 10 automobiles in front of the fenced in area and 50 automobiles behind the fenced in area until the time that the front parking lot is paved. After the front lot is paved, up to 20 automobiles would be permitted in front of the fenced in area. A fire lane must be maintained. Discussion was held regarding the signage on the property. The applicant indicated that they did not change dimensions on any of the signage; they only replaced existing signage with their new business information per the Planning Commissions recommendation.

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the expansion of the IUP for automobile sales at 20185 Chippendale Avenue. Ed Gerten second. Motion carried.

COVID-19:

It was reported that all Empire Township Sunday entertainment for 2020 has been cancelled. The Public Works facility was discussed and it was determined that the yoga and exercise classes are ok to be hosted in the facility, but there should be no rentals through the month of September.

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to close the Public Works facility to rentals for the month of September. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Town Board directed Seipel to look for examples of CARES Act expenditures from other cities and townships.

Old Business:

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to adopt Ordinances No. 281 and 281-A, Empire Township Nuisance Ordinances. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

New Business:

The Town Board reviewed the draft 2021 Budget. It will be formally presented at the next Town Board Meeting at the Continuation of the Annual Meeting.

It was reported that Dakota County is providing the Township with \$1,195.51 in CARES Act funds for eligible COVID related expenses for the Empire polling place. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the State of Minnesota 2020 CARES Act Grant County-Municipality Agreement. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Town Board discussed the Clerk's employee contract. Jamie Elvestad recommended that based on previous experience, Seipel accrue vacation based on the rate of 10 years of service. In 2021, Seipel would accrue vacation time based on 11 years of service. A motion by Jamie Elvestad to place the Clerk at 10 years of service for vacation accrual for the year 2020 and 11 years of service beginning in 2021. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

FYI:

The Town Board reviewed information regarding the Cooperative Weed Management Area Draft Plan, the 2021 Municipal Wastewater charge rates for the Metro Area, information from the City of Hastings regarding their Wellhead Protection Plan amendment, and information from Charter Communications on cable lineup changes.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:50 P.M.

Terry Holmes Chairman, Town Board

Charles Seipel, Clerk – Treasurer