

## **Empire Township Meeting Minutes December 10, 2019**

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

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

**Agenda:** Terry Holmes made a motion to approve the agenda. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

**Meeting Minutes:** Terry Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes of the Town Board Meeting of November 26, 2019; the Planning Commission Meeting/Town Board Meeting of December 3, 2019; and the Park & Rec. Commission Meeting of December 7, 2019. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

**Treasurer Report:** The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$33,887.67 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$13,059.65 plus investments. Empire Township received the 2nd Half Property Tax Levy in the amount of \$465,326.74 on 12/3/2019, transferred \$465,000 from Checking to Savings on 12/3/2019 and transferred \$20,000 from Savings to Checking on 12/10/2019.

Terry Holmes made a motion to approve the financial report. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

**Visitors:** No visitor comments.

**Bills to be Paid:** Terry Holmes made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$54,220.16. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Maintenance / Sewer and Water / Road and Bridges**

Jeff Hince reported that the Township maintenance staff is spending a lot of time on snow removal.

## **Park & Rec**

Denise Williamson reported that the Holiday Celebration went great and was very well attended and that the Park and Rec Committee will be meeting once per month for the remainder of the winter season.

Denise Williamson is stepping down from the Park and Rec Committee. The Town Board recommended that the open position on the Committee be advertised until the end of February.

## **Engineering**

Brian Hilgardner reported that the meeting with Fischer Sand & Aggregate regarding the easement for the Highway 3 and 170th Street Roundabout project went well. Although it is likely that everything should be settled soon, the Township's attorney is recommending that the Township begin eminent domain proceedings in case that option would need to be used to obtain the easement. If agreement is made before these proceedings take place, the proceedings will be terminated. Otherwise, the proceedings would work to grant permission for an easement before the project goes under contract next spring. The Town Board reviewed a memo from Mike Couri regarding the recommended action.

Terry Holmes made a motion to authorize attorney Mike Couri to commence an eminent domain action against Fischer Sand & Aggregate for an easement needed for the proposed 170th Street roundabout. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Brian Hilgardner reported that there is an issue with a culvert on 190th street and it will likely need to be replaced. Al Full was present to express his concerns about the rising water table in that area. Since the road is now frozen, replacement of the culvert likely won't take place until spring.

Brian Hilgardner reported that at the last EFPAC meeting, the possibility of working with the City of Farmington to conduct a water study on the new water tower to be constructed near Highway 3 was discussed. This study would include areas of Empire Township that could be served by the new tower, including several areas that can possibly host future development. This would help the Township determine exactly what areas this tower can serve until the Township constructs its own new tower. The cost for participation in the study would not exceed \$10,000.

Terry Holmes made a motion to work with the City of Farmington to conduct a water study for the new Farmington water tower. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

## **Planning**

Jane Kansier reported that the Township has received a request from the developer of the proposed Verizon Monopole to table decision on the IUP request to January of 2020. The Town Board recommended that the decision on the proposed Verizon Monopole be postponed to the Town Board Meeting on January 28th, 2020.

It was reported that the Met Council is increasing their sewer charge by 6% in 2020. Jane Kansier presented a memo recommending changes to Ordinance 510, Empire Township Public

Utility Ordinance. It was reported that the Township has not increased their sewer usage rates since 2006 and an increase will be needed to help offset the increase in the Met Council fees. The proposed sewer rate would be set from a base charge of \$36.00 to \$38.15 and the usage rate increased to from \$1.05 to \$1.12 per 1,000 gallons after the first 6,000 gallons.

Terry Holmes made a motion to adopt Ordinance 510-H, an amendment to the Empire Township Public Utility Ordinance and increase the sewer user rates as stated in the amended ordinance. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

**Old Business:**

The draft Personnel Policy was discussed. It was determined that language be changed in the vacation leave portion of the policy to include the following; employees can carry over one years' worth of earned vacation time into the following year. Employees leaving employment in good standing will be able to be paid out for a maximum of one years' worth of accumulated vacation time.

**New Business:**

The Town Board discussed pay rates for employees for the year 2020.

A motion by Terry Holmes to include the following proposed wages in the 2020 employee contracts; a 3% increase for all Township Employees. The wages for the Deputy Clerk will be increased by an additional \$2.01 per hour.

It was recommended that letters be sent to property owners that have not picked up their building permits.

The property owner at 19239 Carmel Trail was present to discuss concerns regarding snowmobiles going through his property. The property owner placed snow fences in the boulevard along Catail Lane. Because this is public right of way, the Township is concerned about the liability of having the snow fences placed at this location. The property owner will replace the snow fences with reflective driveway stakes. The Township will work with the Sheriff's Department to try to find the snowmobilers that are driving down the boulevard.

**FYI:**

The Town Board reviewed information from the Farmington Fire Relief banquet; the next Town Board Meeting will take place on December 23rd at 7:00 PM; information from Dakota County regarding tax impacts from a decision relating to property owned by Northern Natural Gas; and cable lineup changes from Charter Communications.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

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Terry Holmes Chairman, Town Board

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Charles Seipel, Clerk – Treasurer