

## **Empire Township Meeting Minutes July 14, 2020**

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

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

**Agenda:** Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the agenda. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Meeting Minutes:** Ed Gerten made a motion to approve the minutes of the Town Board Meeting of June 23rd, 2020; the Planning Commission Meeting of July 7th, 2020; and the Park & Rec. Committee Meeting of July 13th, 2020. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Treasurer Report:** The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$26,303.81 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$10,059.65 plus investments. A transfer of \$30,000 from the General Savings to General Checking was made on 7/14/2020. The Cash Balance Report and the Statement of Cash Flows was also provided.

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

**Visitors:** A resident attending the meeting thanked the Town Board and employees for all they do.

Dakota County Commissioner, Mike Slavik, provided an update on COVID-19 in Dakota County, the opening of County facilities, and funding coming to area Townships through the CARES Act. The money from the CARES Act would need to be spent for COVID related expenses by the end of November. Funds not spent by that date would need to be returned to the State.

**Bills to be Paid:** Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$149,833.58. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

### **Committee Reports**

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

Jeff Hince reported that Biscayne Avenue has been graded and treated with chloride, which is keeping the dust down, but with Highway 3 being closed, the road is experiencing heavy traffic volume, including many trucks moving at a high rate of speed. Discussion was held on if weight limits should be imposed south of 170th Street. After discussion, it was recommended that Jeff and Brian be provided with the authority to place a 5-ton weight limit on this stretch of road if needed and to work with the Sheriff's Department on enforcement of the limit.

Staff will be patching the trails and cut and mill over roots in bad spots along the trails.

The handicapped accessible door has been installed at the Public Works Building.

### **Park & Rec**

Mike Carey reported that the Park & Rec Committee has worked with a consultant to evaluate the status of playground equipment in the Township. It was determined that current surfacing material at three of the playgrounds does not meet safety requirements. It is recommended that these surfaces be replaced with a wood fiber surface. Additionally, the equipment at Sachs Park needs to be replaced. There may be a grant program available from a playground equipment company that can provide matching funds for the playground equipment at Sachs Park. The Committee would like to recommend that the Township consider budgeting for the replacement of equipment at the other parks in the coming years, but the Sachs Park equipment would need to be replaced as soon as this year.

Other recommended improvements include purchasing handicapped accessible swings for Town Hall Park and the Stelzel Playground and installing a handicapped accessible walkway to the playground at Town Hall Park.

The Town Board recommended that the Park & Rec Committee seek quotes for the recommended park improvements. Bolton & Menk will search for other grants that may help with playground improvements.

The Park & Rec Committee approved hiring Stacy Popp as the new yoga instructor.

The Committee has received one application so far for the upcoming Park & Rec vacancy. The Town Board recommended that the time period to submit applications be open until August 1st. The candidates would then attend the August Town Board Meeting for an interview.

### **Engineering**

Brian Hilgardner reported that there have been a few change order requests for the 170th Street Roundabout. The Township will be required to help finance the pay requests. The contractor will be repairing the trails that have been disturbed by the turning lane portion of the project. The Town Board reviewed a map of the proposed trail design along Highway 3.

The Town Board reviewed a draft Water Storage Tank Siting Study on future water pressure supplies for future growth areas in Empire Township and Farmington. The Town Board had concerns regarding the option in the plan that called for the decommissioning of the current water tower. The Board would like to see the existing water storage facilities remain in place. Brian will take a look at the plan and work to address the concerns.

Brian will set up a meeting with the Met Council to discuss collaboration on the proposed ditch to the west of the wastewater treatment plant property.

## **Planning**

Jane Kansier presented information on the recommended amendment to Section 6.20 of the Empire Township Zoning Ordinance. The amendment would remove language that requires roof top structures to occupy no more than 75 percent of the roof it is affixed to and modifies language regarding ground mounted systems by allowing them to be up to 15 feet in height. The ground mounted systems would not be permitted in the MXR District unless a variance for this type of system is granted. The amendments were recommended by the Planning Commission after a public hearing and come in the form of Ordinance No. 400-H. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to amend Section 6.20 of the Empire Township Zoning Ordinance. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

It was reported that the Planning Commission has recommended the renewal of the existing IUP to allow for the operation of an automobile dealership at 20485 Chippendale Avenue. The IUP allows for the storage for up to 30 vehicles at the site and expires on March 31, 2022. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the renewal of the IUP for the sale of automobiles at 20485 Chippendale Ave. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

## **COVID-19:**

The opening of the Public Works Building was discussed. It is proposed that the building will be open for yoga and exercises classes, beginning in September. The facility will need to follow State capacity guidelines for any private events that may want to use the facility.

After discussion, it was recommended that visitors to the Town Hall during business hours be required to wear a mask upon entering. The Township will provide masks to those that do not have them. Township staff should wear a mask or some other form of facial protection when interacting with visitors to Town Hall.

## **Old Business:**

None

## **New Business:**

The Town Board reviewed draft Ordinances 281 and 281-A. The proposed ordinances would replace the existing nuisance ordinance 280 and list nuisances that are payable offenses in a separate ordinance (281-A). It was recommended that the ordinances be brought to the Planning Commission, then to the July 28th Town Board Meeting, for consideration.

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the list of election judges for the August 11, 2020 Primary Election. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

## **FYI:**

The Town Board reviewed information from the Charter Communications on cable lineup changes.

Terry Holmes will be absent for the July 28th Town Board Meeting.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

---

Terry Holmes Chairman, Town Board

---

Charles Seipel, Clerk – Treasurer