

**BEMIDJI TOWNSHIP TOWN BOARD
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, July 24th, 2012
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Jan Heuer, Pete Fredrickson, Lowell Vagle, Brian Merschman, and Erin Stieg
Absent: John Rowles

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the Bemidji Township Town Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Jan Heuer and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

AGENDA: The agenda was reviewed and "JPC Member participation" was added. Pete Fredrickson made a motion to approve the revised agenda. Lowell Vagle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MINUTES: Brian Merschman made a motion, seconded by Pete Fredrickson, to approve the minutes of July 10, 2012, (Regular Board Meeting) as printed. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSTITUENTS (see attached attendance sheet): Constituent Stella Wakonabo inquired about legal status pertaining to annexation and an update was given.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Roads:

Calcium Chloride Fox Drive; "Swap" w/county; Parking lot: No update on this issue at this time. The item will be placed on the August 7th, 2012 agenda.

Signs:

No report at this time.

Fire:

One board member stated that the fire danger is high, however since John was absent, this item will be updated at the August 7th, 2012 board meeting.

Weeds:

Board member turned over state guidelines to Dick Anderson, but has not heard anything back. Dick has been invited to either of the August board meetings to discuss this issue.

Animal Control:

This month's meeting has been postponed until August 1st, 2012 due to schedule conflict.

BATO:

Lowell will be leaving early tonight to attend the meeting scheduled at 7:00 p.m.

Paul Erickson, Bemidji Library Manager, Update:

Paul Erickson from Kitchigami Regional Library spoke to us this evening about the summer reading programs and other events going on at the Bemidji Public Library. He mentioned that these programs are important because children who read during the summer do better at school the next year than those that don't. These programs are successful because they include incentive prizes that are donated through "Friends of the Library". This volunteer group is also responsible for managing the used book store, which has raised a considerable amount of money for the library. What isn't sold at the book store is then put in the Annual book sale, which raises about \$4,000.00 per year for the library. Paul stated that these sales are an

important part of the funding for special programs because the Library does not have funding for these normally. Many of the children in the summer reading program have set record reading times this year, with K- 5th or 6th grade having steady participation over the years and 6th or 7th grade to 12th grade having increasing participation each year. The preschoolers have a program called "Story time", which takes place 3 times per week, where the children are read to. Paul stated that State funding has also come to the Library in the form of "Legacy Amendment Funding", a portion of which goes to "Cultural Legacy". Those monies are then distributed to the regional library system to use as needed. This is the 3rd year of receiving funding from the state, which has helped the library go from not having any events, to having 2-3 events per year. Some of the most successful events are "Author Events", where the writers come to the library to discuss a book they have written. They explain their motivation for writing as well as the "story behind the story", as Paul puts it. He remains hopeful that the state will continue the Legacy funding. One of the Board members asked if Bemidji State University had expressed any interest in allowing access to their electronic resources, such as S.A.G.E. or J- Store. Paul stated that this hasn't been addressed since the library uses different vendors for their databases and the college is provided resources by the State. A board member then explained that there was once an element of loitering at the library and asked if the issue had been resolved. Paul explained that it was a very difficult situation because the library did not want to be discriminatory in any way; however, they did want to make the library safe for everyone. They have engaged the local police for daily walk-throughs, as well as training and encouraging staff to get involved and "break-up" loitering groups. Paul stated that there have been no incidents for several months concerning this issue.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Culvert on Monroe Ave SW:

A board member spoke on the phone with Jeff Farr, who had placed a culvert on his property according to Township guidelines only to find out that his property is on a County road and his culvert now needs to be redone according to County specs. Andrew Mack of the Joint Planning Office had been out to the property to discuss building permits and setbacks and mistakenly told Jeff to contact Bemidji Township regarding his culvert instead of directing him to the County authority. When Mr. Farr contacted the Bemidji Township, he did not give the address of his property, leaving the township to assume his property was on a Township road. Mr. Farr feels that he got the wrong information from the Joint Planning Office and now doesn't feel comfortable trying to obtain a building permit from them, for fear that things will not be done correctly. Mr. Farr stated that it is going to cost a large amount of money for him to have his culvert taken out and a new one put in, approximately \$2,500.00. The Township Board does not believe Mr. Farr should be responsible for this cost and believes the Joint Planning Office should pay for the difference to make the constituent whole. After further discussion, Pete Fredrickson proposed a motion for the JPO to correct this problem under its own volition. Lowell Vagle seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Bemidji Township Ag Zone (Restoration of Agriculture Zone rezoned to R1 & R2):

Members of the board received the revised agriculture zoning document just hours before the board meeting tonight. Members stated to the Joint Planning Office that this was unacceptable. These documents need to be sent to the Board so that there is time to review them and find possible flaws before the meeting. It was noted that the item may not be ready for the Joint Planning Office to process as an August planning Case. A discussion on the revised document followed with many items still needing to be changed or omitted. It was brought up that Minnesota state statute has language about Ag areas already and that we need to be following that language to make sure we are not violating state law. Andrew Mack stated that he didn't know what a few of the items meant and that Mayana should come to the next meeting to

discuss this further. A board member also stated that there should be a definition included for farm animals and that "Animal Land" areas or zoos containing non-farm exotic animals were not to be allowed in Ag areas due to disease.

JPC Member Participation:

It was brought up that the Joint Planning Commission members representing Bemidji Township have not been attending Town Board meetings. It was also noted that the clerk had not been notified by any of the JPC representatives of their absences nor had they submitted any time for these meetings. Pete Fredrickson offered a motion that any Joint Planning Commission Member who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meeting (Town Board meetings immediately preceding JPC meetings/hearings and JPC meetings) and/or four (4) non-consecutive meetings (in any combination of Town Board and JPC Meetings) in a six-month period will result in the Bemidji Town Board rescinding the appointment of the Commission member as a Bemidji Township Representative on the Joint Planning Commission. Brian Merschman seconded this motion and the action passed unanimously. The clerk is to draft a letter to these members, which will be signed by the entire board, to notify them of these directives.

2012 Newsletter: This item will placed on the 7/24/12 agenda and will be discussed then.

Storm Clean-up:

JD Hansen will be sending an itemized invoice for the costs specific to storm damage. That will be submitted to Beltrami Emergency Response for review. Storm damage cleanup is estimated to cost an additional \$25,000.00.

Rental Enforcement (follow-up for William Patnaude's visit on 6/12/12): A board member has emailed Mr. Patnaude and he is working on the proposal.

New Clerk Hours:

The clerk proposed operating hours of 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Pete Fredrickson made a motion to approve of these hours pending further review. Brian Merschman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER:

Another constituent, Miles Rowland, from Bemidji was addressed prior to adjourning the meeting. He was also given an update on the legal status pertaining to annexation.

ADJOURN:

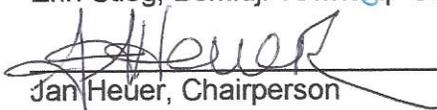
Pete Fredrickson made a motion, seconded by Brian Merschman, to adjourn. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Prepared by Erin Stieg, Bemidji Township Clerk



Erin Stieg, Bemidji Township Clerk

Approved 8/7/12



Jan Heuer, Chairperson