

**WOODROW TOWNSHIP**  
**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**

**July 11, 2024**

**7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gordy Reher at 7:00 p.m. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Present are Supervisor Colter Peterson, Supervisor Scott Wold, Treasurer Tim Mueller and Clerk Cathy Dietrich. To see sign in sheet for citizens present, request from Clerk.

M/S/P Reher/Peterson approve Agenda for Regular Monthly Meeting as submitted.

M/S/P Reher/Peterson approve June 13, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended to update the word 'plated' to 'graded' in first bullet point on page 4.

M/S/P Reher/Peterson approve June 2024 Treasurer Report, subject to audit as presented by Treasurer Tim Mueller.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson roll over the \$100K CD set to expire on July 20, 2024, into a 7-month CD at 5%.

M/S/P Reher/Peterson approve claims as submitted by Clerk Cathy Dietrich.

M/S/P Reher/Peterson approve payroll as submitted by Clerk Cathy Dietrich.

Clerk's Report – No Report

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Continuation from June meeting is that Nordheim Association has put the Dry Hydrant placement on hold until spring of 2025. Primarily due to not getting the DNR permit back in time to submit to Sourcewell a company that will help pay for this through a grant.
2. Road Washout on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue Lott Excavating was contacted. With all the rain there were a lot of washouts on roads which Lott Excavating has been working on grading and fixing those. On Buxton the rain caused a sinkhole, and Lott Excavating has been contacted to fix that. Finally, the turnaround on Big Deep Drive was washing out into a property and Supervisor Reher has spoken to Lott Excavating to correct the issue.
3. The signage on roads and turnarounds discussion was concerning blind driveways and primarily speed limits. Citizens brought up many issues with increasing speeds on roads and the change in speed limit that occurred on Hwy 5. Citizen Ron S mentioned he called Cass County Sheriff, and

they said we do not have the manpower to do speed enforcement in this area, and that you would have to contact the state patrol. He also called the state patrol, and they said they don't have enough people to cover all that area either. Moving on, supervisors agree this is a tough subject, they all know that people drive fast and is a safety issue with people walking along the township roads or highway. Supervisor Wold stated we can make the request to have the Sheriff come for an hour on a weekend and monitor traffic speed but to be honest that with all the township roads out there, even one hour on a Saturday, if they go to every township road where there's busy traffic, they don't have the capacity for that. I'm not saying we can't make that request, but I just don't see it going very far. We've had that same request for Timber Drive and other roads so the request will be made to the Sheriff.

The other part of this subject concerns all the signs on corners and in right of ways. Specifically, regarding Randy Turnacliiff's email about the Baby, Kerr, Kid, Lost, Man & McKeown Lakes Association signs they are replacing, his question was concerning too much clutter and if there is an ordinance they should follow when rebuilding their signs. Supervisor Reher commented it goes farther than that because all the lake associations were doing something similar. And what we'll need to do is to get in touch with all the lake associations and see what they want to do, and then go from there and make a standard so that is much bigger than what we're going to do here at the meeting to start with. There is an ordinance that placing signs in the right of way is not allowed. Supervisor Reher will get in touch with Randy and the topic will be continued in August.

4. The Open Forum guidelines were presented in June, the guidelines are just a statement of facts we could lay out here at the meeting. During an open forum (aka Public Input) the following rules will apply.
  1. *The open forum will be held at the beginning of the meeting.*
  2. *A maximum time of 20 minutes will be allowed for the open forum.*
  3. *A maximum time of three minutes per person will be allowed for the open forum.*
  4. *Groups of people who wish to address the Board on a similar issue are encouraged to select a representative to speak on behalf of the group.*
  5. *Those speaking will state their name and address prior to speaking.*
  6. *Open forum is for the presentation of new topics/information. Please refrain from restating what has already been said at a previous meeting.*
  7. *Statements should be limited to the issues only.*
  8. *Personal attacks will not be permitted and will cause the speakers' time to expire.*
  9. *The Board retains the right to respond or not but may discuss the item.*
  10. *These guidelines are not intended to restrict the right of citizens to address the Board, and the Chair may relax where necessary to maintain productive open public discourse.*



The reason for proposing those is in the past six months we've had some open forum conversations that were kind of repetitive in nature. We have had some people leveling personal attacks against other people and this is not the forum or the discourse for that. Having something in writing, or someone who's on notice, would make it an easier place for everyone to be and get through some of those hurdles. Also, gives us a means to say we're not discussing that, or we are done with that, and we're moving on now.

Citizen Lisa M requests clarification, "so it's an open forum, but it says here it's for a presentation of new topics. So, is that different from, like, for example, when we're having these conversations about the items on your agenda?" Supervisor Wold responded, when the board's having a meeting and walking through agenda items, that's not technically an open meeting for the public to comment, but it's a public meeting to witness the board making decisions. But there's also the public input section on the agenda and that is what the open forum is. The board is not hardline on statute in that you cannot talk during the meeting, the board does want to hear people's thoughts. The same rules would generally apply throughout the rest of the meeting and discussion back and forth. This doesn't change anything the way that this meeting has just happened right now. It's not trying to overly complicate or formalize things, but for situations where we are having potential issues, it gives us a mean just everyone's on the same page and then we can keep this a productive space. All supervisors agree to change public input at the end of the meeting to the beginning and change the name of agenda item to open forum.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson to adopt open forum guidelines.

The guidelines will be posted by the meeting sign in sheet and also posted on the website under Administrative Guidelines.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. No new business.

## **SUPERVISOR REPORT**

### **Supervisor Reher –**

- I Inspected the changes on Norman point and Lott Excavating brought in probably 130 trucks of pit run and gravel and changed 2 areas of the road to elevation by about a foot. And the objective there was to get rid of where the water was collecting.
- I spoke with Steve from Envirotech, since after putting chloride on Buxton, Interlachen plus Evergreen the township received 5-7 inches of rain. Steve said the application was in place long enough before that it should not have washed. And the washouts themselves were from water running off the center of the road going onto the shoulders, washing the shoulders and carrying gravel into the ditch, but the center part of the road held up very well. So the shoulders themselves are never chlorinated, only the center part where the traffic is.

- Finally, medically, as I mentioned last month that we'll need to find a person to replace me as Supervisor, but now I'm probably going to need another back surgery as well, so that's just going to hasten things.

#### **Supervisor Peterson –**

- Tom Larson has notified me that the defibrillator on the wall in the town hall needs the pads and battery replaced as they are going to expire in September. He'll order a new battery from the manufacturer and then we will reimburse him at the next meeting.  
M/S/P Wold/Peterson Mr. Larson will purchase pads and batteries for the defibrillator and the township will reimburse him for the purchase.

#### **Supervisor Wold –**

- I reached out regarding weed spraying and haven't heard back yet. The board will be updated once I hear back.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT**

Citizen Sandra from Timber Drive Association speaking on behalf of the Association, "We want to thank the Township Board for putting off the paving project for a timber drive. We do, however, want to call your attention to the second point that was in our March 8th letter, and that was, we request that the Township offer live video conferences for all meetings. This will provide increased transparency to the full meeting and discussion, and in a more timely proper manner to all property owners. So, I know that you had the first step, which was in the minutes, the member, your internal board Zoom meeting policy. But I really wanted to understand what is the next step for consideration for public Zoom meetings.

Supervisor Wold replied, I don't have much to add to it at this point. We adopted a policy so that it's an available tool. That document also relays how the public could be expected to interact.

Further discussion ensued on exactly if public was mentioned in the document, which Wold replied that he could show it to her after the meeting. Wold goes on to say, at this time, that's all that I was looking for. We have the tools available, but I don't see a huge need to go online with the meetings at this point. I can tell you that the majority of townships that are less than a certain number of residents or citizens that aren't here full-time, they don't have Zoom meetings every month either. I can see utilizing it if we had a specific topic that we knew there were a lot of people that wanted to hear about it or you know something special but in a routine meeting I just I don't see the need for it at this point.

Citizen Pete commented how he'd rather be face to face with people rather than on Zoom. I just think if it's important enough that you want to participate in the meeting, I think it's your responsibility to come to the meeting and observe what's going on, put your public input in, what not. I don't think there's any need for it to be remote. We're not in the COVID era anymore. That's just my opinion.

Wold responded, most of the input that we have received is similar to that.



Citizen commented, the issue is not that we need to be this is for hybrid meetings, so if you want to come here and meet with people and give your perspective on things, that's great. I would love to be able to be here every single meeting, but I can't. I live in Florida, my family is scattered throughout Minneapolis, we're not here all the time. You need to give us the chance to evaluate the agenda, which you need to get the agenda. I couldn't get the agenda until I walked in here.

Repeated discussion on Zoom meetings continued. Ultimately, this is a meeting of the Board to get business done, it is open to the public to listen to the items discussed. If the Timber Drive Association people are only interested in the Timber Drive topic the Board can send an email to the Association. Supervisor Wold makes it clear that it is not a one-to-one comparison, when we use it for government, it is different than using it for non-profit or corporate settings. There are different rules, and different expectations. Once we create data there are storage requirements after a certain amount of time this information is turned over to the historical society. Most counties in the state of Minnesota don't have Zoom meetings. Very few townships have Zoom meetings. And it's just the size of our organization, and I realize that there's a seasonal aspect and you're not here all the time. There's an avenue that citizens can take to communicate their concerns but for the most part we're doing routine business at meetings. Also, the added workload on our town clerk to manage that system, take care of the recordings, respond to any requests, people requesting those videos. Now we've got to get them on thumb drives or on DVDs, then in the mail or meet at the hall to get them. I'm not trying to blow it up, but I'm just saying it is more complicated than just throwing a camera in the corner and record. There are many more things to consider, and if we're just a small township, if there's something of interest, 99% of people will take the time to come here. It's at seven o'clock, and the doors open to everyone.

Citizen responded, there's two problems with that. First off, It makes it sound like you really don't know what it would take to do it, what the costs are, what the capacities are that are needed to do that, and how much it really would cost. So, you really haven't done the research to figure that out. The second thing is you talked about Timber Drive. Well, for the longest time, nobody knew what was going on with Timber Drive and the awful stuff that was getting done with that because it was all being decided on at every meeting without anybody really being around. And a lot of decisions were being made when the cabins were shut down. So, people weren't coming up here, they didn't get a chance to be involved in meetings and see what's going on. We could have stopped the travesty that was being done on Timber Drive a lot earlier without all that expense. And so that would have stopped the project a lot earlier and cost our township a lot less money because of all the mistakes made. Also, So to give people the opportunity to get here, when can the agenda come out so they know what's on the agenda and then if they have interest in what's on the agenda, they can at least have an opportunity to get here. Clerk Dietrich responded that I cannot always get the agenda out before the meeting, and it isn't a statute to have an agenda. Citizen Lisa continues that she would like Zoom meetings and agendas posted prior to the meeting. She went on to say that the Hackensack Mayor offered his help and was in support of Zoom meetings for his organization in December. Did anyone follow up?

Wold responded, I don't think we need assistance on that. I go back to our rules we adopted, we have discussed this topic more than we should have. The comments you made about how things were done and incorrectly is a fundamental misunderstanding of the township board process that was followed with everything that happened. And there were statutes in place which dictated the exact course of this. I wasn't on the board at this time, but I support them. They dictated the exact course this board took. And the project ended six months before everybody finally realized that it was over. The township had an obligation to act by statute. They can't say, wait, you need to bring this in June because that's when people are up here. The petition was brought when it was brought. The board acted on it by statute, as required to. And then the project ended. And so, I don't understand what we're still talking about. So, I'm going to say thank you for your comments. They're on the minutes. Let's move forward.

Citizen Lloyd provides input, in an open forum, we all have to remember, that all five of you guys sitting up there are the board, and all of us citizens, are just company at this meeting. You (board) don't have to listen to a word we (citizens) say. It's a meeting for you five to decide and correct things and do things needed for the township. This open forum is a very courteous thing, but it's not part of the program. You guys, we elected you guys to do this. And if somebody disagrees, and I don't, then get somebody else on the board. There's an opening right now. If somebody on Timber disagrees, then get somebody elected to the board and then Timber will let us in. But until then, you guys are extending a courtesy to us to speak, but you don't have to.

Citizen comment on subject already discussed earlier. I know the speed limits were increased on Hwy 5 with a lot of opposition, yes, we were talking about signage also for the blind driveway. Know that I have absolutely nothing to do with the Woman Lake Lodge. But want you to know I went there last Saturday to pick up some ice or what not. There were about 60 kids coming from across the street. Is there any way to put some signage there or reduce the speed limit just in that little area? Supervisor Reher explains, there is a yellow sign up with 30 MPH, but the difference between a white sign and a yellow sign is the white sign is regulatory that can be enforced, and the yellow sign is one that's a suggestion. Citizen asked if there is anything that can be done, such as have a pedestrian crossing, actually painted on the road, with a stop where pedestrians are present. Supervisor Reher responded, MnDOT did a study on Hwy 5 and they are the ones responsible for the speed increase. Seems when they do speed studies, they end up raising the speed limit. What we're dealing with is undue influence from trucks. The problem with the statute on all of these says that the determination is by the road authority which is MnDOT. We can make the request, but we can't enforce MnDOT to do anything, we can hope they listen.

Supervisor Peterson responds to this issue, It's a very unique situation because you've got the store here, and then you've got the property across the street where everybody's staying and renting cabins. And people are crossing, they go into the store, cross the street, and there's passing traffic going back and forth. Drivers are blinded by the sunshine. Every morning the cars are parked out front, people




walk right out. You can't see no one. Also, you can't walk four or five abreast on the road. And I might be a little biased on this, but when you've got five pedestrians walking shoulder to shoulder, they're taking up half of my lane of traffic, I have a vehicle coming towards me and now I have to come to a complete stop so that person comes and looks at me like I'm wrong. I can see where the concern is on this, and I do think the speed of Hwy 5 is set too high. But pedestrians have to be smart about it too. I think there are more pedestrians that are going to cause accidents than any high rate of speed is going to cause on that stretch of highway. Because there's bicyclists, there's pedestrians, and they think that they own that road. And when you walk in five abreast, and I'm hauling a boat through there, doing 30 miles an hour, because I know the people that live around there, and I've heard this whole conversation many months in a row. And I'm doing 30 miles an hour, and I got to come to a complete stop, because somebody else is driving down the road, and you're too stupid to get off the side of the road or walk where you're supposed to walk, and now, you know, it's causing an impediment upon the normal traffic, which it's a highway, it's meant for vehicles, not pedestrians. At least in that part of the road. And they don't care. Pedestrians have to be smart, just like the drivers have to be smart. I'm smart when I drive through there. I'm doing lower than the speed limit. But every single time I drive, and I've driven through there this week, ten times, probably twice a day this week already. And every single time, I've had to either get into the other lane or come to a complete stop because of pedestrians along that road.

Supervisor Reher responded, It's not just that, you know where I live. And that's another place where I've got people in my ditch, because somebody's coming out of boat landing, and as they're coming up the hill and making a turn onto Hwy 5 they're blinded to it. Right there is 55 miles an hour and so I'm making a left turn into my driveway, and somebody decides to head in and pass on my left. And I almost got creamed in my own driveway. So there are more questions than we're ever going to solve. I hear all the concerned citizens in the area making phone calls and complaining. All we can do is express these issues up the chain.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**MEETING ADJOURNED M/S/P Reher/Wold @ 8:25 p.m.**



Chair, Gordy Reher



Clerk, Cathy Dietrich

