

**WOODROW TOWNSHIP**

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**

**September 12, 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 Wold/Peterson approve Agenda for Regular Monthly Meeting as amended.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson approve September 12, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended.

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

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

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

Clerk's Report –

- No Report

**OPEN FORUM (FKA PUBLIC INPUT) –**

- Citizen Thielmann brought up speed limit by Woman Lake Lodge. This is an agenda item so will be discussed at that time.
- Citizen Thielmann asked where gravel is coming from for graveling roads for the rest of the year. Chair Reher responded there is still some gravel left in the township gravel pit.
- Citizen David Howell from Kee Nee Moo Sha Resort asked if there is anything new on Timber Drive. Chair Reher responded there is no changes planned. We finished the work that we deferred. There are two things, and one is to be put into the Capital Improvement Plan, and we don't have a date for doing it. And the other we are presently working with FEMA to replace two culverts. Citizen Howell states he is just one of the people that's concerned about what it's going to cost. Chair Reher continues as we progress on all roads, we want to make sure that the recorded survey for right of way and that kind of stuff is in place. At that time, we would talk with individuals on those roads. Supervisor Wold asks Chair Reher, you're talking about surveying the right of way and Chair Reher responds, yes. Supervisor Wold asks Citizen Howell, you're talking about paving Timber Drive, and Citizen Howell responds, yes. Supervisor Wold responds, there's no plan to pave Timber Drive at this point. If there were to be, there would be

a whole new set of planning and meetings. We're not discussing it because there is no project at this point. If there were to be, there would be notice sent out. We'd be informing everybody on Timber that a topic has come back up to discuss, but there's no plans of that. So what Chair Reher is referring to, is work coming up that might reach out, this may be marking the right of way with survey stakes, but as far as paving a big project, there's no immediate plans for that.

## OLD BUSINESS

1. Signs – Supervisors will need to take an inventory of the signs in the township. The Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) attorney provided the Supervisors with an email citing statutes and explaining it is the Board's authority. The attorney also states this is a complex subject and MAT could do a presentation on Town Tuesday. Chair Reher will respond the board is interested.

It looks like there are some corners getting out of control and in the right of way. The Board does not want to see the Lake Association signs go away. Citizen John Mertz asked how big is right of way. Chair Reher responded 66 ft, 33 from center line of road, is most of the roads. County roads are more. The Township right of way terminates at County right of way. Supervisor Wold suggestion is to reach out to each of the associations this winter, and during road inspection in April 2025 review what signs are there and work to clean up.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson table agenda item 'Signs' to the January agenda.

2. Zoom meeting resolution. Chair Reher provides a proposed resolution and states we're talking about this nice equipment that's here can do Zoom meetings which we have done in the past. There are a lot of strings associated with that. And we have people that think that every meeting should be on Zoom, and there are a goodly number of reasons not to do that. So, what I put together is this.

'Whereas equipment was purchased and installed at the Woodrow Town Hall for the primary purpose of holding regular meetings during a pandemic illness or emergency which makes gathering unsafe and

Whereas having the equipment to allow meetings if such pandemic or emergency is again experienced does not require that such equipment be used for any meeting when not unsafe.

Whereas board discussion indicated that interactive technology, so that's Zoom is a member of that family, interactive technology. Such meetings have additional duties to the public, but there's nothing in the Woodrow budget for this year or next to cover the costs associated with such meetings, and necessary funds would have to be budgeted after that. The board did not investigate



storage requirements for regular recorded meetings, and because the cost of such storage for government meetings, such as monthly town board meetings, are often different, the storage costs. They're different, more complicated, and significant, and as no funding has been budgeted for these costs. And

Whereas Minnesota Statute 13 D02 and D04 address changes in meetings and require written notice of such changes to be posted on the principal bulletin board of the public body, and that's the box that's outside on the post, just outside the front door.

So therefore be it resolved by the Town Board at this time to make no policy regarding use of interactive technology for regular board meetings as this issue can be investigated again should the need present itself in the future and that if there will be a change to a meeting notice of such change shall be posted on the kiosk outside the town hall, including, if necessary, the information needed to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location.'

Supervisor Wold responds, reviewing it here, fourth paragraph, where it says, whereas the board did not investigate storage requirements for regularly recorded meetings, and because, well, we didn't price a spec sheet out. I think we have looked at that. I would suggest that that be changed to whereas, whereas, comma, because the cost of such storage is often different and more complicated. So, take out the sentence that says the board did not investigate. And then I would suggest that the first bullet point under therefore, I'm not stuck on it, but probably just be removed in its entirety because I don't think we need a policy that we're going to use interactive technology for every meeting. We did adopt a policy outlining how we would use interactive technology, so Zoom or whatever. Not that we would use it every time, but if we are to, here's the rules that apply and how that works. So, we have that policy, so I would suggest removing that first bullet, and then my change to the second bullet would read that if there will be a use of interactive technology, notice of such shall be posted on the kiosk outside the town hall and in the agenda as well. We do have to post that Zoom meeting and the link on the agenda itself. Also, including takeout if necessary because we're not doing it.

Clerk Dietrich mentioned maybe we shouldn't bring up there is nothing in the budget this year since we do not have the cost for it. Supervisor Peterson states we will not budget. Supervisor Wold stated just remove that paragraph in its entirety.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson approve resolution with changes discussed.

3. Speed limit on County Rd 5. Chair Reher stated the single biggest thing that showed up is that the township doesn't have any authority. I mentioned to Alex if we wanted to put a flashing sign or push button that begins flashing at the crosswalk at Woman Lake Lodge, and if he would let us plug into the resort, and he was totally open to that. So, if it doesn't have to be solar powered, then it's

a lot less grief and a lot less expensive. Supervisor Peterson asked about the cost, during the last meeting it was stated the cost is \$10K-\$15K. Is that a digital readout of the speed that the person is going or is that just a flashing sign? Supervisor Wold responded, I think it's a little pedestrian crossing with the flashing lights around it. Supervisor Peterson stated I don't think we need it to be up and running all the time, maybe just when the hours of the store and from May through October, however long they are open for the season. Just have it flash all the time for their hours. Chris Sonmor stated the issue is there is no enforcement. Supervisor Peterson states, I'm just assuming that if I were driving on the highway and I see caution, resort ahead, 30 mile an hour, you know, pedestrian crossing with two flashing signs, I'm going to take notice of it versus somebody having to push a button to get the lights to flash. Don't even look at the push button system. Supervisor Wold mentions maybe there are other options such as if there is room for a parking lot off the highway. Even if your going 15 mph I feel it is still too fast.

Treasurer Mueller mentioned the resort on Hwy 33 in a different county is controlled well. Supervisor Wold responded, after speaking with the county engineer, it is more densely populated right there with cabins on the opposite side of the road instead of all the cabins on the lakeside that just the lodges on the other side right so there's a lot more back and forth that way. There's also a public boat launch right in the middle there. And there's also the possibility that that speed limit and the other signs there are not in accordance with state statute. There are also different factors there that might lead to some of those additional measures. That's the hard part because it is out of our control.

Clerk Dietrich asked if this subject warrants a separate meeting to invite those involved, maybe inviting DOT and others. Chair Reher mentions that the state legislators should be contacted also. Because that is how it would have to be addressed, it has to go one step above the DOT to tell them what to do. Citizen asked, have we talked to the state or anybody about just lowering back the speed limit? Supervisor Wold responded, yes, it's a statute. So, they can't just lower it because they say. The county requested a speed study, and the state completed it. Speed studies are a bit complicated, so I'll request Chris Sonmor to speak on this.

Chris Sonmor explains, my understanding of speed studies is you've got to be very careful when you ask for those, because a lot of times they will end up going up and not down when you do them, whether you ask for it to be lowered or not. That's kind of an independent thing done by, I believe, MnDOT. You always have to be very careful because, like I said, more times than not they end up getting raised and people are more upset because they want to go down and they end up raising it. So, it's not a perfect system for getting those lower when you want. It does not always work out in your favor.

Supervisor Wold responds, One of the things they look at, if I remember correctly, is they do a speed study, right? So, they just actually want to track how fast people are actually traveling in said



stretch. And they try to set the speed limit, I think it's like the 85th percentile, of traffic, of just the speed people are actually going regardless of speed limit. And I believe the thought, part of the thought at least behind that, not being a traffic expert, if most people are going 65, but then there's a bunch of people that want to go 35, well those 35 mile an hour people are going to be a pretty big hazard with the 85% of people that are having to slam on the brakes all the time to slow down for someone around a curve. I'm not saying I agree with it, I just think that's the thought pattern. So that's one of several factors that they look at when they do the speed study, but as said, it's not just that it goes to a panel of five people and says, what do you think the speed limit should be? Let's hear some testimony and then we'll change it. Statute says, here's the parameters, you do X, and that's your speed limit. And as a township, in different circumstances, we have the ability to lower speed limits on township roads by statute, but we have that ability. The county has zero ability to change speed limits on a county road. The state sets it, and if they request a speed study, as mentioned, it's likely to go up, as it did in this case, because that's the speed that most people were cruising through. And honestly, for six, seven months of the year, it isn't as big of a deal as it is during the summer. We can get the highway engineer here and he'll say, I'd love to lower it, I can't do it. It's against state law. So that's the hang up.

Chair Reher responds, so that's why we have to go through the legislators.

Citizen asked, who puts up the yellow signs, you know, around curves in the county? Chair Reher responds, the county installs them. That's part of the state guidelines for this. This is termed a county state aid highway. And if the state puts money in it, then those signs are part of what they have to do. Citizen responds, I'm just suggesting that the combination of a warning sign and have some speed limit and that gizmo that tells you how fast you're going for me as a driver is a very effective means for me to look see what I'm doing and slow down so I'm just going to put that out there that that's like an effective combination.

More discussion issues regarding issues already spoken about above.

Supervisor Wold responds, I would suggest, just in the interest of making progress on this, that we would look to set up a special meeting, invite our local partners as well as our representatives to the same meeting and see if we can't have a discussion with outcomes. Supervisor Peterson asked, should we wait to hear back from our state representative or whoever it may be before we set up and get a date from them? Chair Reher responded, he is in contact with Ben Davis office and will update Clerk when he hears back.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson set up a meeting for October and Supervisors will work with local partners and legislators for them to attend. Clerk Dietrich will post meeting as soon as meeting date is known from Chair Reher.

## NEW BUSINESS

1. Cass County Land Sale Parcel #51-405-0190.

M/S/P Wold/Peterson Woodrow Township does not want to purchase this property.

## SUPERVISOR REPORT

### Supervisor Reher –

- At the Minnesota Association of Townships meeting, they are concerned about weed spraying and making sure Wild Parsnip is controlled as it is on the list of noxious weeds. The Township has recently sprayed.
- There's a lot of cyber security fraud going on, and I brought some examples of their brochures back so that we can all have them.
- Working with FEMA for reimbursement when we had all the rain back in June to claim all the work completed for the washouts and flooding. Also, working on a different program to include reimbursement for 4 culverts needed throughout the Township so flooding doesn't happen.
- The township needs to identify all stop signs needed coming from township road to county road. Then inform Cass County of these so they can install them.
- A citizen has asked about Buxton and when it would be paved. Chair Reher suggested to her to feel out whether the people who are going to sign the petition would, if we looked at a 10-year assessment, to go from years 2 through 10. And that goes through the county process and gets added onto their tax. Clerk Dietrich stated, we cannot start any process until a petition to begin looking into the process is received. Supervisor Wold stated that we should develop a policy as we've discussed on how we will do that assessment and then that can remain in place for with if and when we receive a petition, then we can act on that per statute and follow that process.

Chris Sonmor responded, I was just going to add on to that. I get what you're saying on the petition, but the first question people are going to ask, well, what's it going to cost us? So that's, I think we need to look at the assessment policy, we need to look at the project cost, we need to look at how we're splitting it down, because at the end of the day, the first question is always, what's it going to cost me? If we don't have that, it's a chicken or the egg sort of thing. So we've already done the study, I mean, the township can initiate it by the study. I mean, technically, it does not have to be a petition. But I think if you can get one, you're better off going that route. But I think we need to look at it. Clerk Dietrich states, the petition isn't to pave. The petition is to investigate and figure out the cost of what it would take to pave Buxton. Chris Sonmor responded, the feasibility study has already been completed. You can do it two ways. You don't have to do it by petition. The board has already authorized a feasibility study, which we've done. So we have the cost, but we don't have the assessment portion yet, and that's where we're stuck. Supervisor Wold responded, I'd like to have the policy in place that'll just be locked in place for any time we get a petition. Personally, I don't have a desire to, at this point, have I seen a need that we should pave any road by our order, but if the citizens on any road get enough petition signatures and bring it in, and then we hold a hearing, mail-out notice to everyone who would be affected, and have that public meeting and get feedback, then we can pursue. But if we figure out our policy on what an assessment will look like and we adopt



that, that even before they sign the petition and they bring it around they can say look here's how the township is going to work this. Is it by parcel, is it by footage, you know any of those details. Then when people are signing that petition or when they're discussing it, they know kind of what they might be on the hook for. Chair Reher replied, we're talking cross purposes because there are two ways in state statute that the road funding occurs. And we started timber going one direction, what we're talking now is going a different direction. The statutes are different, the way it is done is different, and it falls back on us to do this to get the policy in place to go this way. And doing this does not necessarily require the petition, which is what Chris just said. But at the same time, the petition indicates that there's a drive, that there's support, and they're the ones that are technically starting it off. So, the fallback is not right on the board. The fallback is on the people that are saying, let's see what this, how much interest there is, and if they really are serious. Supervisor Wold replies, if there's a petition, I think we have an interest in responding to that that shows interest from people in a certain area to do a specific thing. Like I said, we're not going to start it on our behalf just because we think it's a good idea. Clerk Dietrich replies, all we have is verbal interest from a few citizens and no petition. Supervisor Wold replies, We're not there though. So, I think we say thank you for the acknowledgement that a petition may be coming. Chris Sonmor will send a sample policy to share with the board to draft a policy. There are so many different variables on this. So, I think we need to maybe sit down and look at this at a higher level to get a baseline, where we're setting these prices at. Because they're not all going to be the same cookie cutter. Supervisor Wold responded, there is no project at this point in my mind. I'm saying that a policy needs to be adopted which can be free if not very cheap for us to figure that out and once we have that in place then a petition does come in then we need to have these conversations. I think we're I agree 100% I just think we're a little early on it Because there is no project. Chris Sonmor responds, and just to back up on that, you know, there's a lot of different pieces of this, but that comes back to that capital improvement plan too. We have an idea when we're scheduling these projects. It's not this year, it's not next year. Those can be built in, so those costs will start coming, whether it's next fall we start on, I don't know, but when that time comes, we have those budget numbers in the capital improvement plan. We can plug in for you. All those costs should be built in, but we still need that policy because if they come to us we have nothing to base it off and to get any information at this point to even get it going. So, you know, we at least have to have a cost and some idea to break down what their share would be because again, it's always their first question.

Supervisor Wold responds, what I want to reiterate, my proposition is that we do the background research that could feed into what you mentioned if a project was to come up, or if we choose to include it in the capital improvement plan and move that forward. So, if it got brought up and we said, we can maybe do that in 2027, then we know what we can budget for, et cetera. But what I'd like to do is everything precursor to that, very little money, if anything.

Treasurer Mueller states, I want to make sure that any CIPs or feasibility studies are a budgeted item in the future too.

Clerk Dietrich to add the draft assessment policy discussion for October monthly meeting.

**Supervisor Peterson –**


- As part of the WTEMO electrical outages have been more frequent, and cyber-attacks have been happening more frequently than in the past. More than two dozen have been caught in the past two weeks. There could be outages up to 72 hours, up to seven days. Everybody should try to get a backup electrical plan.
- Should we schedule Larry Sanders for gravel crushing for next year? Treasurer Mueller responded, next year for crushing it's ok to get scheduled.

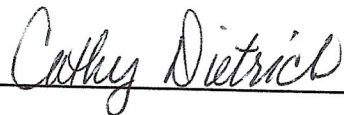
**Supervisor Wold –**

- Weed spraying is now done.

**OTHER BUSINESS – no other business**

**MEETING ADJOURNED M/S/P Wold/Peterson @ 9:05 p.m.**

  
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Chair,  
Colter J. Peterson

  
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Clerk, Cathy Dietrich

