

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Board of Supervisors

April 5, 2023

Avon Township Hall, 16881 Queens Road, Avon (MN)

Call to Order: LeRoy Gondringer, *Chair*, called the meeting of the Avon Township Supervisors to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Main Chamber of the Avon Township Hall. This meeting, like other Town meetings, was also available virtually via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945>, Passcode: AvonTown.

Pledge: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – LeRoy Gondringer (*Chair*), Chad Klocker, Kelly Martini (*Treasurer*), Rich Sanoski, and Stephen Saupe (*Clerk*). Also present – Paul Buttweiler (*Deputy Treasurer*), Marion Gondringer (*Deputy Clerk*), Joe Koopmeiners (*Maintenance*), Sheldon Tschida, and Lori Yurczyk (*PC Chair*).

Approval of Agenda: Sanoski moved to approve the agenda as presented. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Clerk slightly redesigned the agenda format. Informational items that don't require Board action have been moved to the end of the agenda. We will see how this new format works. The agenda will be labeled "Tentative" so that if it is uploaded to Facebook or the website prior to the meeting, residents will know that the agenda has not been formally-approved.

Minutes: Sanoski moved to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023 Supervisor meeting as presented. Gondringer second. Two in favor. One abstain (Klocker; since he wasn't present at the meeting). Motion carried.

Sanoski moved to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2023 special meeting of the Supervisors. Gondringer second. Two in favor. One abstain (Klocker; since he wasn't present at the meeting). Motion carried.

The minutes from the "Closed" portion of the February 1, 2023 were approved at the March 1st meeting.

Sanoski moved to approve the Board of Canvass meeting minutes correcting the math error in Jacob Hoheisel's vote percentage (0.01% was corrected to 1%). Gondringer second. Two in favor. One abstain (Klocker). Motion carried.

Sanoski moved to approve the minutes from the Qualification/Organization meeting held on March 22, 2023. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Hearings: none scheduled.

Planning Commission (PC) Report – Lori Yurczyk, PC Chair.

1. **Introductions/Policy** – Yurczyk reported that Supervisor Klocker attended the meeting as the Board representative to the PC. Klocker and PC members provided introductions. The PC examined the current PC policies and found it to be adequate; no changes are recommended.
2. **Bank Accounts** – the PC discussed the safety of Township accounts. Yurczyk and Treasurer Kelly Martini, who was also present at the PC meeting, reported that a representative from our bank reported that our accounts are adequately protected by insurance because they are governmental accounts that have additional safeguards to protect deposited funds, even if greater than \$250,000. No action was recommended.
3. **Solar Escrow** – the PC recommends that a formal escrow agreement be signed between the Township and Novel/Gertken. The Supervisors agreed that an escrow agreement is necessary. The Supervisors also want to

put the escrow funds in a separate escrow account so that they do not appear on the monthly Cash Control Statement because it gives the impression that the Township has more available funds than in reality. However, if placed in a separate account, the Supervisors also want to be sure that the funds are not ‘forgotten’ over time, especially considering that Township staff will change. The County holds escrows for solar projects internally. Gondringer moved to authorize Yurczyk, because of her past expertise in the banking sector, to obtain information about opening an escrow account in an area financial institution such as Falcon Bank, Magnifi Credit Union, and American Heritage Bank. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. Yurczyk will report back at the next meeting.

4. **Mapping** – Yurczyk spoke with Chad Martini at the County. The Property Viewer program will be updated and improved. The County will be seeking feedback. Beacon will remain, at least for now.
5. **Staff Manual** – the Clerk has created a manual with important information about the Township. It is derived from the Clerk Manual that originally served as a transition document for a future clerk. However, considering the importance of keeping all Town members informed of how things are handled in the Township, the Clerk made the manual generic so it would hopefully be especially useful to new members. It was suggested that a comparable Treasurer Manual/document be created. Martini stated she has started to gather documents. A draft of the Staff Manual was provided to Supervisors and PC members; edits and other suggestions should be forwarded to the Clerk. The Supervisors decided the Staff Manual would be made available online, after removing any passwords or sensitive Township information). A hardcopy will be available in the office. The Clerk will also maintain a copy.
6. **Rental Home/Rezoning Request** – The PC was alerted to inquiries to convert a home into two rental units and to rezone a property. There was no follow-up by the residents – no action taken/recommended at this time. Gondringer reported that some townships have moratoriums or bans on rental homes because of concerns by residents.
7. **Gertken/Novel Vegetation Plan** – Yurczyk reported that she has been in contact with SWCD. They have completed the seed plan review. It is estimated that it will take about two hours. The billable rate for this service is \$65/hour. The results and invoice will be sent to the Clerk. There will be no formal contract for the reviews; just a verbal contract for services. SWCD will follow up with inspections. The Town will need to send them a letter to request the site inspections in the future. A reminder will be included in the Clerk Things-to-do list in the *Staff Manual*. The seeding will be inspected late summer (2023) and annually for three years. Then final surveys at 5 and 7 years.

Sanoski moved to approve the PC report. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was read and the Cash Control Statement for the period 3/01/2023 to 3/31/2023 (*copied below*) was presented.

For the Period : 3/1/2023 To 3/31/2023

Name of Fund	Beginning Balance	Total Receipts	Total Disbursed	Ending Balance
General Fund	\$169,395.87	\$5,175.68	\$6,669.02	\$167,902.53
Road and Bridge	\$240,672.19	\$42,416.98	\$32,403.09	\$250,686.08
Demolition Escrow	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Demolition Escrow Solar	\$0.00	\$262,500.00	\$0.00	\$262,500.00
Road Damage Deposit	\$2,950.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,950.00
Fire Fund	(\$2,381.43)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$2,381.43)
General Capital Projects	\$41,513.46	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$41,513.46
ARPA Fund	\$181,613.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$181,613.30
Total	\$635,763.39	\$310,092.66	\$39,072.11	\$906,783.94

Martini placed the escrow funds received from Novel Inc. in a separate fund labeled “Demolition Escrow Solar.” A different name for this fund was suggested. The Township currently has another escrow fund, labeled “Demolition Escrow,” that was created to ensure removal of an old farm house and septic system when an interim use permit (8-27-18) was issued to Elmer & Genevieve Maciejewski. To help keep track of the escrow accounts, they will be included in the *Staff Manual*.

Since there were no changes in Township signatories, Resolution 04-05-23-4, was unnecessary; no action was taken. Sanoski moved to certify the 2024 levy (General Revenue – \$109,350; Road & Bridge – \$379,750; Fire – \$150,000; Capital Reserve – \$5,000; Total Levy – \$644,100), that was adopted by voters at the Annual Meeting. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried. A Federal Tax Deposit was submitted late; no late fee was charged.

Sanoski moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Cash Control Statement. Klocker. All in favor. Motion carried.

Claims, Receipts & Payroll: The March PERA claims (4438, 4439 & 4440) totaled \$898.90. The March payroll was \$4,835.73. The April payroll was \$6,4207.05. The April claims (4441-4454) were \$8,178.73.

Last month there was an error in the invoice from The Store. They corrected the error. Check #10786 was voided and a new check was written for the correct amount. The Town received its Gravel Tax receipt from the County. Sanoski moved to authorize a check for Bob Yurczyk for his service as the moderator of the Annual Meeting. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Sanoski moved to approve the claims, receipts and payroll. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Town Hall Maintenance Report – presented by Joe Koopmeiners

1. **Albany Mutual Telephone** – Koopmeiners and Gondringer authorized AlbanyTel to run internet fiber to the Town Hall. There is no cost to the Township, unless we enroll in their high-speed service after installation. A map of the installation locations was received. One concern that was raised is that the installation seemed to include only part of what was proposed in Phase 1. The Supervisors authorized the Clerk to contact AlbanyTel to request that they come to a meeting to explain in more detail what will occur.
2. **Salt Sand** – Koopmeiners reported that we should have enough remaining for the season. We need about 275 yards to fill up the salt shed. The Supervisors authorized Koopmeiners to request quotes from Klaphake, Huls, and Lange.
3. **Assorted** – (a) LP – at 29%; (b) Flag – A new one is needed. The flagpole may need a new pulley; (c) Window replacement – no update; (d) cleaned Town Hall; (e) parking lot repaired with Bobcat; (f) garbage was taken to Opatz; (g) there is about 4” of blue insulation in the shop. Additional insulation could be installed to save heating costs; (h) jobs that will need to be done – new float in floor drain, pump septic tank, obtain salt sand quotes, monitor salt level in water softener & purchase additional salt as necessary; change furnace filters in May; wash windows; reseal concrete; and change furnace filters.

Sanoski moved to approve the Town Hall report. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Road Report. Presented by Joe Koopmeiners

1. **Monthly Update/Report** – Most of the work this month was snow-related. A discarded TV was removed from 370th Ave. If plow drivers encounter hazards on the road, they should report them to the sheriff if they are

blocking the road.

2. **Meadowview Road** – was plowed twice this month.
3. **Plow Truck** – A support beam on the wing of the Red truck was twisted when plowing the heavy snow during the last storm. The wing was removed and the truck is still functional, but the beam will need to be replaced to use the wing. Koopmeiners reported that a replacement will cost about \$1760. The Supervisors authorized Koopmeiners to obtain the parts to complete the repair.
4. **Road Inspection** – The Supervisors agreed to hold Road Inspection on April 15th at 9:00 AM. The Clerk will publish and post.
5. **Xcel Roadwork** – Xcel is planning to replace a power pole at 36882 188th Avenue and inquired about whether there are Township concerns regarding right-of-way work. The Supervisors confirmed that there are no specific Township requirements for road right-of-way work other than existing state and country rules.
6. **2023 Summer Roadwork** – Dave Gerads will get a quote for milling. Gondringer will seek a second quote from Craig Bardson.
7. **Road Vacations** – no action taken; it will be reviewed next month. The advantage of vacating High Street is that it would ‘clean up’ property boundaries while the disadvantage is the cost to the Township for legal fees, etc. The advantage of vacating ‘Peach Drive North’ is that since it only serves a single resident and is essentially just a private driveway, it would save the Town money to maintain (gravel will be needed) and plow the road. It was suggested that a street sign could be installed on Peach Drive N.

Sanoski moved to approve the Road Report. Klocker second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Business:

1. **Koopmeiners Absence** – Koopmeiners will take a leave of absence. The Supervisors discussed how to handle his Workman’s Compensation. Workman’s Comp is paid out weekly; we will temporarily suspend Koopmeiner’s autopay check. Koopmeiner’s has requested a payout of his PTO. His contract needs to be revised to reflect the correct fiscal year. LG moved to change the dates of Koopmeiner’s contract from January 1 to December 31. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Koopmeiners provided a list of jobs that need to be completed in his absence. The list included: wash plow trucks, pickup and Bobcat from winter; prep lawnmower for summer; check 80/90 in ditch mower and change annually; clean shop floor after winter; cut road ditches; and grade gravel roads. Plow driver Sheldon Tschida is willing to pick up some of Koopmeiner’s responsibilities, including any plowing that might be required. Sheldon may also be able to do some of the other tasks, and he said that he will likely have extra time available this summer on Fridays. Gondringer moved to authorize Sheldon Tschida to work for the Township in Koopmeiner’s absence. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. Town staff will pick up other duties as necessary. Klocker moved to pay Tschida \$26.00 per hour for any substitute work (excluding plowing which will be paid at his standard rate). Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. Gondringer will serve as Tschida’s boss. Gondringer moved to authorize Tschida to purchase supplies as needed when substituting for Koopmeiners. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Lion’s Club will be contacted to request that they do an especially good job cleaning up after meetings since Koopmeiner’s won’t be available.

2. **Resolutions** – Klocker moved to approve Resolution 04-05-23-1 (*authorizing contract with Sanoski*), Resolution 04-05-23-2 (*authorizing contract with Gondringer*), and Resolution 04-05-23-3 (*authorizing contract with Klocker*). Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.
3. **Computers** – some of the Township computers seem to be having problems. Martini has been in contact with the Community Technology Center where they were purchased. They will examine the computers but it could take a few days. The computers are no longer under warranty. Township computers should not be password protected because it will make it difficult for a future staff member who will be issued the same machine. The Treasurer's computer should probably be password-protected and the password recorded in the Treasurer Manual and shared with the Clerk. The Clerk is having trouble editing Adobe files and suggested purchasing AdobePro. The Clerk was authorized to look into options.
4. **Contact Listing** – a list of Township officers was edited/updated for the County and MAT. The Clerk shared a copy of County contact numbers.
5. **Water Exhibition** – Klocker moved to approve a Water Exhibition Permit for a St. Anna Sportsmen's Club event on Two Rivers Lake on May 20, 2023. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.
6. **Signing Authority** – The Clerk was authorized to continue to sign gambling (*i.e.*, church raffles), water exhibition (*i.e.*, fishing contests), and construction site permits, without bringing them first to the Supervisors. The Supervisors will continue to approve at a meeting the following: Town Hall Use, road use permits, and liquor licenses.
7. **Hiring** – Sanoski moved to hire Joshua Raab and Michael Gondringer as plow drivers to work as necessary. Gondringer second. Two in favor. One abstain (CK, because he wasn't involved and doesn't know them). The Supervisors support developing a hiring policy for the Township. The Clerk and Treasurer will create a draft for review/discussion. The Treasurer will put together a packet of documents that need to be completed by a new hire. The Qualification / Organizational Meeting will be a time to ensure that all Township staff have complete and updated financial forms on file, and the Treasurer will include this in the Treasurer's Checklist of Things to do.
8. **Facebook** – Gondringer moved to authorize Klocker to maintain a Facebook site for the Township. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. It will include items such as news and announcements, agendas (*labeled tentative*), minutes only after they are approved, and feedback from residents alerting the Township of potholes, downed trees, and other things about which the Township needs to be aware. Klocker will remove any political or other inappropriate comments posted by residents and others.

Reports:

1. Spring Short Courses – Martini, Klocker and Sause attended. There was lots of valuable information. Klocker attended the session for new Supervisors. Among the items they reported included: there will be a MAT dues increase; family medical leave legislation could affect the Township; there is a social media resolution available (*the clerk will follow up*); employee notification forms are required as part of the wage theft act; it is critical to avoid any violations of the Open Meeting Law; and that the Township should not use a debit card.
2. Weed Meeting – Klocker attended the meeting. There was good information. Bob Duning is our County contact person.
3. Bromenshenkel Pit Update – We received an update about the pit from Knife River. It is still being used for gravel removal. There are no plans for a hot mix plant or crusher. Areas are reclaimed as they are closed. If

interested, Town official are welcome to conduct a site inspection.

Announcements:

1. There were no requests for **991 signs**.
2. A **Construction Site Permits** was issued to Chisholm (15172 331st St; 24 x 20 remodel).
3. **Special Assessment Searches** were performed for Jonas (XXX Co Rd 9) and Rabideau (33728 Highland Terrace).
4. **No feedlot permits** were received.
5. There were no relevant **County Hearings**. There will be a County Hearing on April 13 regarding request by Eric & Brianna Kurtz for a septic system variance.
6. The Township Officers meeting will be April 28 at 7:45 PM. Town Board members are approved to attend. Reservations are required by April 14.
7. A letter was sent to the Lake Wobegon Marathon committee to remind them to avoid blocking farm fields, etc.
8. A letter was sent to the City requesting the availability of the Compost Site for Township residents.
9. Advertisements from Bertram Asphalt, A&C Farm Service, and Town Web Design were received.
10. The March 10th Township Association meeting with state legislators was cancelled.
11. MNDOT is seeking feedback regarding their Highway Investment Plan.
12. Dean Schramel, Stearns County, should be contacted regarding any roadwork in case monuments must be moved.
13. The Walker Area Food Shelf sent a request for donations.
14. MBA Group Life and Disability Insurance is available.
15. T-Mobile inquired about road restrictions regarding work proposed on a cell tower.
16. The County will host Land Use Training on April 20th.
17. The old ditch mower has been repaired and will be sold via Steffes auction.

Old Business: Culvert mapping project; 135th Avenue project with St. Wendel; 911 signs (35011- Blinking Lights & 34948 Tower Road); Thistle removal – Avon Hills SNA; Case to display old documents; Window treatments for Town Hall; Paint stripes in parking lot; Exterior sign for the Hall; Norway Road berm; 154th shoulderering work; 33786 Shorewood ditch brushing; missing sign on 185th; solar panels for Town Hall; Ordinance #5.

Signatures / Documents / Treasurer: Documents were signed as necessary.

Announcement of Next Regular Supervisor Meeting: The next regular meeting will be held on May 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM and will be available via Zoom (*see above*).

Other Upcoming Meetings/Events: (*meetings are available on Zoom at the URL above*):

- a. LBAE meeting – April 17, 2023; 7 PM
- b. Road Inspection – April 15, 2023; 9 AM

Adjournment: Klocker moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 PM. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

date: April 17, 2023

Supervisor Signatures:

date: _____

LeRoy Gondringer, Chair

Chad Klocker

Rich Sanoski