

# Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Board of Supervisors

January 6, 2021

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

**Call to Order:** Chair Mike Linn called the meeting of the Avon Township Supervisors to order at about 7:00 P.M. in the Main Chamber of the Avon Township Hall.

**Pledge:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call:** Present – Mike Linn, Kelly Martini, Ken Mergen, Rich Sanoski, and Stephen Saupe. Also present – Leroy Gondringer (*PC Chair*), Marion Gondringer (*Deputy Clerk*), Paul Buttweiler (*Deputy Treasurer*) and Joe Koopmeiners (*Maintenance*).

**Approval of Agenda:** Several items were added to the agenda including a meeting with Deputy Lust, Humane Society agreement, resident discussion about salting roads, and plowing. Linn moved to approve the agenda as amended. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Mergen moved to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Sheriff's Update:** Two Deputy sheriffs, Mark Lust and Andrew Gravidahlin, attended the meeting to provide an update on activities in the Township. Deputy Lust reported that there were 146 calls in December (2020), or an average of 4.7 per day. The calls ranged from 911 abandoned calls to door checks to false alarms to suspicious vehicles to welfare checks. The most frequent calls were agency assists, behavioral health, and traffic stops. The Supervisors had no specific concerns and thanked the Deputies for their service.

## **Planning Commission (PC) Report**

- Yurczyk Certificate of Compliance** – Ms. Lori Yurczyk appeared at the PC meeting to request a certificate of compliance for a land split. The PC studied the proposal and recommend approval. The Supervisors agreed. Mergen moved to approve a certificate of compliance for Robert and Loreli Yurczyk for their property at 3118 Co Rd 155, Avon (MN). Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Blonigen Variance Request** – Mr. Craig Blonigen appeared at the PC meeting to request a variance to construct a storage building closer to the road than currently allowed. The PC recommends setting a public hearing to consider this variance. The Supervisors noted that these are low traveled roads and that the lots in this area are small. Linn moved to set a public hearing on January 27, 2021 at 7:15 PM to consider a variance request by Craig Blonigen & Colleen Blonigen for a variance to construct a 28 x 32' storage building on their property at 18733 368th St., Avon (MN) that would be no closer to 188th Avenue, Avon (MN) than 45 feet to the center-of-the-road (or 35 feet from the edge-of-the-road; variance of 18 feet); and no closer to 368th Street, Avon (MN) than 40.5 feet from the center-of-the-road (or 35 feet from the edge-of-the-road; variance of 22.5 feet). Mergen second. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Application for PC** – An application was received from Mr. Craig Blonigen to fill one of the open positions on the Planning Commission. Mr. Blonigen was interviewed. The PC recommends taking no action until after the variance decision for Mr. Blonigen to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest. The Supervisors agreed and the application was temporarily tabled.

4. **Annual Meeting** – The COVID-19 situation makes it more challenging to host the Annual Township meeting, especially voting during the meeting. The PC discussed various options including hosting the meeting remotely and then continuing the meeting to allow for voting. After careful consideration of all options, the Supervisors agreed. Mergen moved to formalize the plan to host the meeting online via Zoom and then continue the meeting until June 8<sup>th</sup> when residents could gather safely outdoors to allow for voting. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Clerk will prepare a resolution for this situation.
  
5. **DNR Recreation & Local Road Improvement Program Grant Opportunities** – The PC discussed potential grant opportunities for both parks and local roads but decided none were suitable for the Town at this point. The Supervisors agreed; no grants will be applied for during this funding cycle. Mergen will contact Stearns County Engineer Jodi Teich to see what the Town should do to prepare for a future LRIP grant opportunity.
  
6. **Parkland Dedication Funds** – the County requested input on its plan to distribute Parkland Dedication funds. No suggestions were made.
  
7. **Road Maintenance Plan** – the PC recommended the following schedule of roads in need of repair: 2021 – Two Rivers Road and 190<sup>th</sup>; 2022 – Kopyy & Lower Spunk Lane; 2023 – Red Oak Circle, 145<sup>th</sup> Ave, & 370<sup>th</sup> Street. Linn suggested that Narnia, Kopyy Lane and Lower Spunk Lane are in particularly bad shape and should be done sooner than scheduled. We have contacted Holding Township to see if they are interested in a joint project on Two Rivers Road. We will wait to hear from them to make final decisions. The Clerk will follow up with Holding Township. There is general agreement that the Town should not maintain the Schirmer’s driveway (Peach Drive N), which the Town has done for many years. However, since there have been no complaints about it and it would be costly to vacate, no action will be taken. If the Town decides to vacate the road, the Town Attorney will be contacted. It was agreed to change the name of this road in Town documents from Peach Drive N to Schirmer’s Driveway.
  
8. **Vacation Home Rental IUP Update** – The Stearns County Commissioners decided to hold a public hearing to consider an Interim Use Permit (IUP) for a proposed vacation rental home.

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

**Treasurer’s Report:** Martini read the Treasurer’s Report and presented the Cash Control Statement for the period 12/01/2020 to 12/31/2020 (*below*). It would have been helpful to pay the Fire Fund invoice in 2020; in the future we will try to ensure that we get it early enough to pay at the end of the year. Fund totals for Road & Bridge and General Revenue don’t match those from last month because Martini had to switch funds for three items. Sanoski moved to approve the Cash Control Statement and Treasurer’s report. Linn second. All in favor. Motion carried.

For the Period : 12/1/2020 To 12/31/2020

<u>Name of Fund</u>	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Total Receipts</u>	<u>Total Disbursed</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
General Fund	\$132,011.72	\$38,805.86	\$10,630.51	\$160,187.07
Road and Bridge	\$284,871.23	\$122,712.44	\$67,944.41	\$339,639.26
Demolition Escrow	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Road Damage Deposit	\$4,850.00	\$500.00	\$1,200.00	\$4,150.00
Fire Fund	\$8,673.93	\$27,212.22	\$0.00	\$35,886.15
General Capital Projects	\$46,306.76	\$781.10	\$0.00	\$47,087.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$478,713.64</b>	<b>\$190,011.62</b>	<b>\$79,774.92</b>	<b>\$588,950.34</b>

**Claims & Payroll:** Martini presented the December PERA claims (3935 & 3936), which totaled \$525.54. The December payroll was \$2,818.70. The January claims (3937 – 3955) totaled \$45,671.27. The January payroll was \$1,911.33. Darren & Tara Roiger requested a refund of their driveway damage deposit (\$500); they will receive no refund until the 12-inch culvert they installed is replaced with a 15-inch culvert as was specified in their permit. Because of a small piece of land dedicated to the Town as a result of a plat, we needed to pay the County a small amount for the Ditch 28 project. Martini updated our credit information with Menards – Koopmeiners and Sanoski will be the designed purchasing authorities.

Sanoski moved to approve the claims and payroll. Mergen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Town Hall Maintenance Report** – presented by Joe Koopmeiners

1. **Garbage** – was hauled to Opatz.
2. **Bolts** – were organized and new ones ordered.
3. **Cleaning** – the Town Hall was cleaned.
4. **LP** – the tank is currently at 70%; it was filled by Belgrade. We will request “will call” for filling in the future.
5. **Salt Shed** – we have enough.

**Road Report** – presented by Joe Koopmeiners

1. **Road/Maintenance Report** – Among the work completed this month: maintenance of the Red Plow, shouldering work, and salt/sanding roads.
2. **Snow** – a few complaints were received after the last storm regarding damaged mailboxes. There were also a few complaints regarding ice at intersections. The Town policy is to replace mailboxes that are on break-away posts and are directly hit by the plow. There are several non-compliant mailbox posts in the Town; the residents will be contacted to replace them. Both plow drivers were present to alert them to the importance of being especially careful when plowing to avoid mailboxes, etc.
3. **Tree Removal 186<sup>th</sup>** – a quote is being sought for tree removal on 186<sup>th</sup> Ave.
4. **Driveway Standards** – Linn moved to approve Resolution 01-06-21-1 regarding driveway standards in the Township. Mergen second. All in favor. Motion carried.
5. **Manufactured Homes** – several were noted to be in poor shape. Linn will contact the County.
6. **Road Salt** – Mr. Walter Beckers appeared at tonight’s meeting to recommend to the Supervisor’s to reduce the amount of salt that is spread on Township roads, especially around lakes. Not only is the salt messy and expensive to the Township, but it is a pollutant in our lakes and other ecosystems. The Supervisors recognized the problem and indicated that they will seek to balance road safety while limiting salt usage.

Mergen moved to approve the Road report. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Public Hearings:** none scheduled

**Business:**

1. **Website Host** – our current website providers, Yerbua, are retiring. The Clerk recommends switching to BigGroovy (Grand Rapids, MN), which was recommended by Yerbua. The Supervisors support and authorize this change.
2. **Meeting Schedule** – The Supervisors determined the dates for upcoming meetings in the Town (*see meeting schedule below*).
3. **Audit Meeting** – The Supervisors scheduled the Board of Audit meeting for February 4 at 7:00 PM. Martini prepared a budget model that can be used to develop the levy recommendations.
4. **Town Election** – Mergen moved to approve Resolution 01-06-21-2 appointing election judges. Linn second. All in favor. Motion carried. Linn moved to approve Resolution 01-06-21-3 appointing absentee ballot board. Mergen second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Town Hall office needs to be open on March 12 to accept any affidavits of candidacy. Koopmeiners will be on call. If it snows and he is required elsewhere, he will contact Marion Gondringer who will fill in.
5. **Annual Computer Backups** – the Treasurer, Deputy Clerk, and any other staff who use a home computer for Town business were requested to back it up and bring the flash drive to the next meeting.
6. **Lion's Club** – the Lion's Club requested hanging their Charter in the Town Hall. The Supervisors approved and authorized Koopmeiners to hang it in the Conference Room. The Lions also donated plates to the Town Hall; the Clerk will send a thank you.
7. **Inventory** – Gondringer will update the inventory to include new acquisitions during the year including the AV presentation system, laptop, automated doors, and gifts from the Lion's Club.
8. **Internet Speed** – Martini will contact our internet provider, CenturyLink, to see if our service can be improved. We are having bandwidth problems running Zoom calls.
9. **Shoreland Ordinance** – The Supervisors have no recommendations at this time regarding the County's proposed Shoreland Ordinance amendments.
10. **Water Quality Standards** – The Supervisors have no recommendations at this time regarding the MN PCA rules governing water quality standards.
11. **Humane Society Agreement** – Sanoski moved to approve the agreement with the Tri-County Humane Society. Linn second. All in favor. Motion carried.
12. **Voit Rezoning Inquiry** – Roger & Ross Voit inquired about the possibility of rezoning a parcel (A40) to commercial for a storage business. They were told that the Township is generally not supportive of spot zoning and that a similar proposal was denied (*see May 2017 minutes*).
13. **Westwood** – The Supervisors expressed their disappointment with the billing procedure used by Westwood Engineering for the Norway Road project.

**Other/Old Business:** *Permitting to County; Maintenance Shed insulation*

**Signatures / Documents / Treasurer:** *none*

**Recurring Reports:**

1. There were no requests for a **911 sign**.
2. **Construction Site Permits** were issued to Klocker (35389 Co Rd 155; pole shed addition); Pitzer (03.01036.0030; manufactured home & shed); and
3. Lukaswicz (34514 Peach Dr; modular residential dwelling, accessory structure, deck)
4. No **Feedlot Permits** were received.
5. **Special Assessment Searches** were completed for Kleman (14324 355<sup>th</sup> St.) and Tighe (17029 Norman Road).
6. There was a **County Hearing** to consider and IUP for a vacation home rental (the Commissioners will require a Public Hearing); and a hearing about Solar Farms (no update available).

**Announcements & Brief Reports:**

1. A thank you was sent to the Lion’s Club for donations to the Town Hall.
2. Martini completed the 2021 MATIT Workers’ Compensation Audit Report
3. Stearns County Business and Nonprofit Relief Grant Program is accepting applications from January 11 until March 15.

**Announcement of Next Regular Supervisor Meeting:** The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

**Announcement of Other Town Meetings:**

- Town Hall open to accept affidavits of candidacy – January 12, 2021; 1-5 PM
- Planning Commission – January 27, 2021; 7 PM
- Board of Audit Meeting – February 4; 7:00 PM
- Planning Commission – February 24; 2021
- Supervisor’s Meeting – March 3, 2021; 7:00 PM
- Public Accuracy Test – March 6, 2021; 9:00 AM
- Town Hall open to accept absentee ballots – March 6, 2021; 10 AM – 12 PM
- Annual Township Election – March 9, 2021; 2 – 8 PM
- Board of Canvass – March 9, 2021; 8:15 PM (virtual meeting)
- Annual Township Meeting – March 9, 2021; 8:30 PM (virtual meeting)
- Organizational/Qualification Meeting – March 17, 2021; 7:00 PM
- Planning Commission Meeting – March 31, 2021; 7:00 PM
- Supervisor’s Meeting – April 7, 2021; 7:00 PM
- LBAE Meeting – April 19, 2021; 7:00 PM
- Annual Meeting (possible continuation date) – June 8, 2021

**Adjournment:** Sanoski moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM. Linn second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

Clerk signature: \_\_\_\_\_

date: January 16, 2021

**Supervisor Signatures:**

date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Mike Linn, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Mergen

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rich Sanoski