

**BIRCHDALE TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, December 28, 2021 – 8:00 P.M.**

**1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

Chair Jim Carstens called to order the regular meeting of the Birchdale Township Board at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 29, 2021 at the Birchdale Town Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present were Supervisors Jim Carstens, Dale Ahrens, Arnie Berscheid, Joe Ostendorf, Larry Bebus, Treasurer Marlene VanHavermaet and Clerk Jackie Bauer.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Supervisor Berscheid, seconded by Supervisor Ahrens, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Supervisor Bebus, seconded by Supervisor Ostendorf, and unanimously carried to approve the November 30, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes.

**4. Approval of Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer VanHavermaet presented the November Treasurer's Report. At last month's meeting the reconciliation was not accurate for the Treasurer's Report. After reviewing, Treasurer VanHavermaet realized that she had cleared all of the November claims in CTAS and this caused the discrepancy. The November report now reconciles and Clerk Bauer agrees. A motion was made by Supervisor Ostendorf, seconded by Supervisor Berscheid and unanimously carried to accept the November Treasurer's Report

Treasurer VanHavermaet presented the December Treasurer's Report. A motion was made by Supervisor Bebus, seconded by Supervisor Ahrens, and unanimously carried to accept the Treasurer's Report.

**5. Approval of Bills**

Next presented was the list of bills for the month of December to be considered for payment. A motion was made by Supervisor Berscheid, seconded by Supervisor Ostendorf and unanimously carried to approve payment of the bills in the amount of \$10,583.76. (See attached list of bills).

**6. Resident's Comments**

- a. None

**7. Reports/Requests/Presentations**

- a. None

**8. Township Road Report**

- a. Grant funding update for minimum maintenance roads repair – Clerk Bauer updated the Board regarding possible grant funding for the minimum maintenance roads in the Township. 2 of 3 minimum maintenance roads will be eligible under the Minnesota State Park Road Account Grant. The deadline for this year has passed but Clerk Bauer will plan to apply for the funds in partnership with Todd County for 2022. Clerk Bauer has researched other grants but so far, has found the MN State Park Road Account Grant is the only program that would qualify.
- b. Road Brushing – Supervisor Ostendorf stated that brushing has not begun yet but should start after the holidays. Once the snowfall slows down, MBC Drainage should have time to begin brushing work.
- c. MDA Noxious Weed/Invasive Plant Grant – Clerk Bauer informed the Board that Birchdale Township will be informed whether they are receiving a \$5,000.00 noxious weed/invasive plant grant by Spring of 2022.

**9. Unfinished Business**

- a. Shed in Township Road Right-of-Way – Clerk Bauer gave an update regarding her contact with Attorney Troy Gilchrist regarding the shed that is in the township road right-of-way at Residents Bradley and Cindy Wren-Gray’s residence. Attorney Gilchrist is working on drafting a letter that he will send to the Wren-Gray’s. He will present a copy of the letter to the Board before sending.
- b. Todd County Broadband Consortium – The Board to discuss whether they would like to join a group of residents and other township board members working to bring broadband internet to Minnesota. The group would ultimately like to raise funds in order to purchase its own cable and then contract with Arvig to have the cable laid to any resident who would like internet. At this time, Arvig Communications determines where cable will be laid and not all residents are included in having internet service. If the Board wishes to pursue joining this group, a resolution needs to be passed by the Board and then submitted to the Mr. Kent Hovet, Hartford Township Supervisor, who is a member of the

group. Clerk Bauer has requested a copy of a draft resolution that can be used in the event that the Board would like to join the group which is called the **Todd County Broadband Consortium**. Supervisor Bebus stated that he did attend part of a meeting for the group this evening. He stated there is a facebook page for the organization and right now, the group is looking for others to join including more townships. The Board stated they support the group in their pursuit of bringing broadband to all residents in Birchdale Township but not financially. At this time, the Board will wait and see what support the organization is seeking and will consider at that time.

- c. Township Technology Update – Clerk Bauer has set up a Business Account on Amazon for purchasing by the Township. Amazon allows a business account to be connected to a business checking account for payment. Prior to setting this up, Clerk Bauer contacted Minnesota Association of Townships to inquire whether townships could purchase items through EFT in this manner. MAT stated that this is an allowable process of purchasing but a Delegation of Authorization must be in place stating who is able to use the Amazon Account and the process of getting prior approval for purchasing. Clerk Bauer has drafted a Delegation of Authorization and will present this to the Board for approval. Once this document is approved, purchases for township technology can be made through Amazon. The Board asked that Clerk Bauer edit the authorization form in two ways. First instead of listing each individual member of the board that it states, “All Birchdale Township Board Members, Clerk and Treasurer”. Also, the Board would like the authorization to state that needed Birchdale Townships purchases up to \$1,000.00 can be made without prior approval of the Board. All other purchases above \$1,000.00 will require prior board approval. A motion was made by Supervisor Bebus, seconded by Supervisor Ostendorf and unanimously approved to accept the Birchdale Township Delegation of Authority for purchases through Amazon with the above changes.
- d. Postcard Mailer for Annual Meeting – Clerk Bauer update the Board regarding a postcard mailing for the Township Annual Meeting and Election to be held on Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. She asked the Board for agenda items to be placed on the postcard and any other information that they would like to see. One suggestion was if the township technology is in place so that the meeting can be live-zoomed for residents, that instructions for this be included on the postcard. Clerk Bauer will again work with Schmidt Printing to create a mock-up of the postcard for the next meeting.
- e. Updated Gopher Bounty Form – Clerk Bauer presented a new Gopher Bounty form to the Board. The prior form has been somewhat confusing for residents due to gopher feet needing to be counted and then

calculating how many total gophers are paid for. Clerk Bauer has simplified the form to make it easier to understand. The Board agreed with the changes made to the form and the new version will be loaded onto the website and will be began to be used immediately.

- f. Arvig Communications Internet Bill Payment Update – Clerk Bauer updated the Board regarding setting up the monthly internet bill through automatic EFT. By setting up the account in this manner, it will allow the township to pay for the internet services for the entire next year at minimum and possibly for more than 1 year. Setting up the payment process this way, required a township email. Clerk Bauer was able to set up a free email account through the township website service. The township email is: [clerk@birchdaletownship.com](mailto:clerk@birchdaletownship.com). Clerk Bauer will monitor this email account. The next step in the process requires working with Arvig to determine what the total yearly cost is and then stopping into the company location to present a check for the amount so that it can be applied correctly. This is a new process for Arvig so they would like to have the payment presented in person. Clerk Bauer will work on determining what the total amount the township is able to pay for, for internet services. These funds are through COVID assistance money so the township would like to spend down these allocated funds.
- g. As per the Board’s direction, Clerk Bauer also applied for a bill credit donation for one year of service from Arvig in the amount of \$995.40, which is 12 months of payments at the current monthly rate of \$80.95. Arvig encouraged the township to apply for this donation and to continue to apply for the donation on a yearly basis. However, there is no guarantee that the township will receive this donation.

## **10. New Business**

- a. 2022 Calendar of Events - The Board reviewed the Calendar of Events for the 2022 year.
- b. Planning for March Annual Meeting - The Board discussed planning for the March 8, 2022 Annual Meeting. Agenda items will include: Township Road Report, Township Yearly Budget, Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, Tree Trimming and Dust Control.
- c. Fire Service Contract with the City of Grey Eagle (Contract will automatically renew each year, unless there is a notification by either party, thirty days before the end of each contract year. The contract is expected to be dated in February) – This item is placed on the agenda simply as a reminder of this information.

## **11. Informational Items**

The Board then reviewed the following informational items:

- a. 2022 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Tax Rate - Clerk Bauer presented correspondence from State of Minnesota Unemployment Insurance. The 2022 Unemployment Insurance Tax Rate Determination is 0.5%.
- b. Minnesota Election Notification Form/Certification & Ballot Layout Request Form - Clerk Bauer presented correspondence received from Todd County regarding the Election Notification Form and Certification of Ballot Layout Request for the March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Township Election. There will be two Supervisor opening on this year's ballot: Position A and B (currently held by Supervisors Jim Carstens and Dale Ahrens).
- c. MATIT Consolidated Coverage Document from the Minnesota Association of Township Insurance & Bond Trust – Clerk Bauer presented the MATIT Consolidated Coverage Document. The yearly premium invoice is also included in this month's claims in the amount of \$1,846.00. Coverage now includes \$6,900.00 for computer, TV and additional media.
- d. Special Assessment Request From:
  1. Home Town Title LLC – 27291 State 28, Grey Eagle, MN 56336
  2. Main Street Title & Closings LLC – Eric Engle, Simon Uphus, Santana Uphus, 23494 County 2, Sauk Centre, MN 56378

Clerk Bauer responded to both requests that there are no assessments from Birchdale Township.

## **12. Officers Comments**

- a. None

## **13. Adjournment**

With no further business, a motion was made by Supervisor Ostendorf, seconded by Supervisor Berscheid, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jackie Bauer  
Birchdale Township Clerk