

Franconia Township, Minnesota
Town Board of Supervisors Meeting – April 11, 2023
Franconia Town Hall, 25156 St. Croix Trail N, Shafer, MN 55074

Town Board Members Present

Owen Kuhnly – Chair
Sony Sparby – Vice Chair
Doug Wallis – Supervisor
Jake Guzik – Engineer
Lee Cartier – Maintenance
Karen Anderson – Treasurer and Clerk
Chuck Fitzer – Deputy Clerk

Residents Present

V.J. Polkus
George DiGidio
Daniel Omdahl
Mark Dellwo
Scott Anderson
Sarah Beuzis
Patrick Anderson
Lesli Anderson
Travis Greene
Wes Herberg
Erik Edson

Call to Order

Chairman Owen Kuhnly called the monthly Franconia Township board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approve Agenda

The agenda was reviewed. Sony Sparby made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Doug Wallis. Motion carried.

Approval of Previous Minutes

March minutes were reviewed. Lee Cartier stated that the hours on the grader were 1,600, not 1,300. The minutes were updated to reflect this change. Sony Sparby made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Doug Wallis seconded. Motion carried.

New Business

Franconia Sculpture Garden – Sarah Beuzis requested three one day liquor licenses – July 1, 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.; August 12, 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.; and September 23, 3 p.m. – 9 p.m. Owen asked if the permit requests

were the same as last year, and Sara said yes. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve resolutions approving the three one-day liquor licenses: Resolution Number 2023-04-11-1, Resolution Number 2023-04-11-2, and Resolution Number 2023-04-11-3. Sonny Sparby seconded the motion. Motion carried. Owen signed two copies of each resolution. One copy of each resolution was given to Sarah to deliver to the county.

Center City Fire Contract – Travis Greene, Center City Fire Chief, presented statistics about the number of calls and the number of fire department members. In response to a question, Travis said that Hazelden is under a contract separate from the Franconia Township contract and Hazelden had 52 runs last year. Owen complimented Travis on the report. Travis said they could use more department members and gave out his phone number. He mentioned that the current contract with Franconia Township runs through the end of 2023.

Ziegler Rep – VJ Polus, the Ziegler representative, reported that he and Lee discussed the grader. VJ Polkus said the grader was well-maintained. The 7 year buyback option expires at the end of this month, so the township would need to decide by then whether to purchase a new grader or not. The warranty expires at the end of May. The township has three options: buy a new grader, extend the warranty, or let it ride with no warranty. Sonny Sparby asked for details about the extended warranty option. VJ Polkus said that, if the township decides to extend the warranty, an inspection for \$999, all in, will be required. We currently have power train and hydraulic coverage. If the grader gets a clean bill of health, we will have three coverage options. Sonny Sparby asked what the useful hours are on a grader, and VJ Polkus said, because we don't use it for snow plowing, it could run 10,000-12,000 hours if we do maintenance and testing. Doug Wallis asked if the extended warranty covered rental, and VJ Polkus said the dealer would give us 50% off on rentals. The advantage of the purchase option is that the township can buy it under the state contract, which is cheaper. The current machine costs \$18,500 per month to operate, and a new machine would cost about \$22,000 per month to operate. Owen Kuhnly suggested the township should go with a three-year warranty extension. Sonny Sparby made a motion to approve a three-year extension, seconded by Owen Kuhnly. Motion carried. Ziegler will work through Lee Cartier to get the extension done for the warranty.

HomeTown Internet – Sam Ashkar, representing HomeTown Internet (headquartered in Chisago City), gave a presentation about wireless internet for residents of Franconia Township who currently don't have high-speed internet. He pointed out that 26 existing towers in Chisago County could host the transmitters. Trees and water are inhibitors, but coverage can go out 6-7 miles and improve download speeds to 40-80 MB, or 100-200 to those living close to the towers. The county has \$2 million set aside for broadband that needs to be spent by the end of 2024.

Daniel Omdahl pointed out that this would have been a good solution at the beginning of the pandemic. Other potential high speed options from ECE, TrueSpeed and Frontier were discussed. Currently, 274 homes in Franconia have high speed fiber internet through Midco. BY 2026, we will all have fiber internet.

Cost for 25 MB is \$54.99 a month; 50 MB, \$74.99; 100 MB, \$99.00. The cost to set this up for the township would be \$200,000. Owen Kuhnly asked if there was a charge for checking things out if the

situation can't be improved, and Sam Ashkar said no. Karen Anderson asked if the township cost would be \$100,000, assuming the County would use designated funds to pay the other half, and Sam Ashkar said yes.

Citizen's Forum

Erik Edson, who lives at 26775 Quinlan, wants road access for his field, since he won't have it once he fences his land. Owen Kuhnly said that the township doesn't have any permits right now. Once we get permits, we will ask Erik Edson to fill one out. If this is a second driveway for the property, the township board will have to vote on it. Lee Cartier and Sonny Sparby will go out to take a look at it.

New Business (continued)

Patrick and Leslie Anderson asked about getting a sodium chloride treatment on the gravel road in front of their house. Owen Kuhnly said to get it set up with whoever they want to go with, and the township will help out with the charge. Owen Kuhnly said they could take a look during the road tour on April 15.

Citizen's Forum (continued)

Wes Herberg said there was a friendly dog hanging around his property, and no agencies wanted to deal with it. He asked what the animal control policy for the township is, what the budget is for salt and sand and mentioned the need for gravel on 297th. Owen Kuhnly said they will go through there on the April 15th road tour. Wes Herberg also complained about Waste Management and got agreement from many attendees. He asked if one trash pickup contract could be set up for the whole township, and the board did not see that as a viable solution.

Mark Dellwo asked the board to swing by Quiet Valley Road on the road tour. Owen Kuhnly said they were on the list. Jake Guzik went out there with Lee Cartier and Sonny Sparby and they had a contractor look at it. It looks like there is too much sand. There is no issue in dry years, but the issue is coming to a head because of all the water this year. Owen Kuhnly said he would deal with looking into it.

Engineering Report

Engineer Jake Guzik talked about the gravel maintenance project for Franconia Trail, Olympic, and Quinlan. He wants to finalize the project parameters during the road tour. With the current budget, we can't do the whole project. Jake Guzik proposed finishing the section on Franconia Trail and hitting the worst spots on Quinlan and Olympic. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the project specifications, seconded by Sonny Sparby. Motion carried.

Jake Guzik talked about the roundabout that will go in at the intersection of State Highway 95 and State Highway 243 (which is the road to Osceola). The state needs the approval of Franconia Township in order to proceed. 260th will not hold up as a detour. The board discussed that the township is open to using 260th as a detour but would want some compensation from the state for road repairs to 260th.

Jake Guzik reported that spring road restrictions are on, but may be off by the end of the week.

Maintenance Report

Lee Cartier reported that he thinks he has plowed for the last time this year. He reported that he has been spending time fixing a few street signs, working on culvert repairs on Franconia Trail, and started grading on roads as they dry out. Most everything looks good on a driveway permit. Due to poor road condition, 285th needs to be looked at before adding Class 5.

Lee Cartier's review meeting was held prior to tonight's board meeting. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve a raise of 3.5% for Lee Cartier and Owen Kuhnly seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Karen Anderson reported that she finally got everything balanced.

Karen went through the Treasurer's Report. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve this month's Treasurer's Report, seconded by Sonny Sparby. Motion carried.

Karen Anderson presented for approval to the board claims #1920 through #1939 for a total of \$16,127.04 and payroll checks #13785 through #13789 and #13805 through 13806 for a total of \$6,871.51. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the claims and the payroll checks. Seconded by Sonny Sparby. Motion carried. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the previously unbalanced statements that are now balanced, seconded by Sonny Sparby. Motion carried.

Resolution Number 2023-04-11-4 was presented for the Township to accept a donation of \$34,500.00 from the Shafer Firemen's Volunteer Benefit Association (license number 02326). Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Owen Kuhnly. Motion carried.

Karen Anderson reported that the board would need to sign the new Midwest One signature documents at the end of the meeting.

Clerk Update

Nothing to report.

New Business (continued)

MAT Liability Coverage Renewal Estimate – Karen Anderson reported that she will worked with Lee Cartier to update the equipment listed on the policy. Owen Kuhnly said we should keep the deductibles where they are at now. The coverage period is July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Doug Wallis made a motion to accept the policy with the necessary equipment changes made by Lee and Karen, seconded by Owen Kuhnly. Motion carried.

Township Legal Seminar – Karen Anderson is considering going to the seminar in Albertville on Thursday, June 1st.

Parking Ordinance on Township Roads – After a short discussion, Karen Anderson said she would get a copy of Sunrise Township's parking ordinance to Sonny Sparby.

Recycling Day – Recycling Day is Saturday, June 3 starting at 9 a.m. Owen Kuhnly will get a hold of Mark from AAA. Lee Cartier will check into new signs. Karen Anderson will get \$100 in change for Recycling Day through the Midwest One account. The board discussed changing the time of Recycling Day to 8 a.m. through noon.

Old Business

Owen Kuhnly is working on getting blank driveway permits. Franconia Township will base its driveway permit on the one used by Shafer Township. This topic will again be on next month’s agenda under Old Business.

Historical Book Close Out – is happening tonight.

Board Attended Meeting Reports

Owen Kuhnly went to the assessment meeting. He pointed out that the township board’s role is to hear our citizens protesting their valuation and decide whether to increase, decrease or make no change to that citizen’s valuation.

Upcoming Meetings

CCATO – April 26, 2023 – 7:00 p.m., Nessel Township
Board of Equalization – Thursday, April 27, 2023 – 1:30 p.m., Franconia Town Hall
Regular Board Meeting – May 9, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the April regular Board Meeting was made by Sonny Sparby, seconded by Doug Wallis. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck Fitzer, Deputy Clerk

Owen Kuhnly, Chairman