

Franconia Township, Minnesota
Town Board of Supervisors Meeting – May 9, 2023
Franconia Town Hall, 25156 St. Croix Trail N, Shafer, MN 55074

Town Board Members Present

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

Others Present

Adam Josephson
Dmitry Tomasevich
Randy Anderson
Ben McCarty

Call to Order

Chairman Owen Kuhnly called the monthly Franconia Township board meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approve Agenda

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

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes from the April 11, 2023 Franconia Township Board of Supervisors monthly meeting were reviewed. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Owen Kuhnly seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Board of Equalization Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the April 27, 2023 Board of Equalization meeting were reviewed. Doug Wallis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Sonny Sparby seconded. Motion carried.

New Business

260th and Highway 95 – two projects are upcoming.

Highway 243 Osceola Bridge Project) - Dmitry Tomasevich from the State of Minnesota gave a presentation, in advance of the public meeting on the bridge project scheduled for May 10, 2023. He stated the bridge needs to be replaced and the bike and pedestrian trails need to be improved. There are three alternatives – Alternative B – Existing Alignment; Alternative C – North Alignment; Alternative D – South Alignment. There are challenges each way. The state recommends Alternative B – it will have less impact on the bluff and minimizes the impact to the river, park, and protected species. Also, there is no additional property that needs

to be acquired, it only requires one access point during construction, and it is most likely to get approval from regulatory agencies.

Alternative C would have the greatest impact to the glen, the greatest amount of bluff impact (50-foot retaining wall in Wisconsin), higher river disturbance and require two access points to remove the old Bridge and construct the new one.

Alternative D – would impact the Osceola landing, need a retaining wall, would have a greater overall effect on natural resources, including wetlands.

Alternatives C and D would have a greater length of construction but require a shorter length of bridge closing than Alternative B. The state will look for ways to minimize the length of closure. There still needs to be a bridges study, visualization analysis and environmental review. Construction would begin in 2026. The state is trying to find a balanced approach.

Sonny Sparby asked if they could re-use the current piers, and Dmitry Tomasevich said no. But they may be able to reduce the number of piers needed, depending on bridge type.

Dmitry Tomasevich noted that the daily traffic on the bridge is now 5,500 cars per day and is projected to jump to 8,500 cars per day in 20 years.

Roundabout project – Dmitry Tomasevich said that the state has kicked off the detailed design geometric that needs to be signed off by the geometrics unit and design squad. A study recommends the roundabout and Franconia Township needs to sign off because it has one leg of the roundabout site.

Accommodating access for businesses (Ag Industries and the leasing business) cut off during construction of the roundabout was discussed. The state met with Ag Industries. There are two alternatives. Option 1 – use 260th Street for the bypass. Option 2 – construct a temporary road.

There would be 200 trucks a day for two months. The road quality on 260th would change and there is concern about whether the road shoulders will hold up. Sonny Sparby asked where the borings on 260th are being done and Dmitry Tomasevich said he would confirm that. Dmitry Tomasevich asked if the township had plans to improve 260th or reconstruct it in the next five years. They must document this as part of the overall environmental review of the project.

Sonny Sparby asked how far it is from Ag Industries to Red Wing Avenue and Engineer Jake Guzik replied that is one mile.

Dmitry Tomasevich reports that the plan is to construct the roundabout in 2026.

Jake Guzik said that the township is willing to use 260th as the bypass if it can save the state from putting a road through the swamp. The township's benefit would be the dollar amount needed to fix 260th once the project is complete. Sonny Sparby specifically asked if there were problems with the road, who would fix them. Dmitry Tomasevich replied that the State would pay a percentage of the repairs. Sonny also asked if the state would take over the road during the project. Dmitry Tomasevich replied that since 260th will just be a detour, he doesn't think so.

Issues with Redwing Avenue were discussed.

Owen Kuhnly asked about the size of the roundabout. Dmitry Tomasevich replied that it would be about the size of the roundabout at the intersection of Highway 8 and Highway 95.

The state pulled permits to see the size of vehicles that will be using the roundabout. Dmitry Tomasevich said that the roundabout will be made to an 80-foot, so a mobile home can get through it. Lee Cartier asked if there would be a pedestrian path. Dmitry Tomasevich replied yes, even though there is currently no pedestrian trail next to the area. He also said there were a couple of issues to work out, including future maintenance of the trail.

Dmitry said that the roundabout would cost about \$3.6 million. The cost of the Franconia Township leg will be about \$500,000. Jake Guzik pointed out that in the township's five-year plan, we are slated to spend about \$350,000 a year on road projects, so \$500,000 is more than we would typically spend in a year. He asked if there was an exception process for the cost. Dmitry Tomasevich replied that if the volume for our leg is less than 5% of the total volume of traffic on the roundabout, that can be an exception for cost participation. Right now, the volume is 6 ½ %. If that would be a hardship for the township, he wants to know.

Sonny Sparby stated that the roundabout would result in a better intersection with fewer accidents. He also stated that they will need to expand the right of ways for pedestrians. Dmitry Tomasevich stated that the state will need to buy property for a pond for runoff and that, for the bypass, the state will have temporary property needs.

Parking Ordinance – Owen Kuhnly stated that the ordinance allows anyone to park on paved roads, subject to the snow rule. Lee Cartier said that it's a state law that you cannot park in the driving lane. Owen Kuhnly said that if, somebody does have an event with parking along a road and it's snowing, tickets can be issued. Karen Anderson will update the ordinance related to residents requesting a waiver and move approval of the ordinance to the June meeting.

Karen Anderson asked if we should send out a newsletter to notify people of the parking ordinance, snow plowing, and other township activities. Owen Kuhnly responded that the township was doing its due diligence by posting the information in the Chisago County Press. When the township sends out the snow postcards in the fall, we can mention the parking ordinance, bridge project, etc.

Recycle Day – June 3, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Owen Kuhnly will get the pricing.

Set Date for Website Review – Karen Anderson and Owen Kuhnly will figure out a time to meet.

Citizen's Forum

Randy Anderson brought up the issue of traffic, with lots of dust, from cars on Quinlan going to the wedding venue on Fridays and Saturdays. Guests are apparently using GPS to find the venue. Owen Kuhnly said that we need to point out to the venue owner he needs to give directions to guests, as specified in his CUP. The board talked about various dead ending options.

Engineering Report – Jake Guzik

Quiet Valley Reclamation – Jake Guzik reported that we only got two quotes for this project. Jake Guzik recommended that the township accept the low quote of \$20,200.00 from Astech Corp. He also said that Geotech Co. will verify the compaction. Owen Kuhnly made a motion to accept the bid of \$20,200.00 from Astech Corp., Sonny Sparby seconded. Motion carried.

2023 Gravel Maintenance Project – Through a public bidding process, the township received four bids. The base bids were for Franconia Trail. Alternate No. 1 added Quinlan Avenue and Alternate No. 2 added Olympic Trail. The low bid was from Winberg Companies for \$340,257.60 for the base bid and both alternates. Jake Guzik said that we have to award the base bid and can award one or both of the others if we so choose. Owen Kuhnly said if we can afford to spend it, we should. Sonny Sparby agreed. Owen Kuhnly made a motion to accept the bid of \$340,257.60 from Winberg Companies to complete the Base Bid, Alternate No. 1, and Alternate No. 2., Doug Wallis seconded. Motion carried.

2023 Bituminous Patching Project – Locations are 260th Street and 280th Street. Valley Paving, Inc., came in with a low bid of \$47,400.00. It was asked why Bluhm Construction, Inc.'s bid was 2 ½ time higher. Jake Guzik responded that Bluhm thinks milling will take a few weeks, whereas the other bidders thought it would take a few days. Jake Guzik also said that Valley Paving would get here to do the work within the next month. Doug Wallis made a motion to accept the bid of \$47,400.00 from Valley Paving, Inc., Owen Kuhnly seconded. Motion carried.

Lee Cartier said he would like to have an inspector on site for the bituminous patching project. Jake Guzik said that two years of inspection was in the contract.

Quarry Road – Lee Cartier got a call from a resident who noticed an issue on Quarry Road. Lee Cartier and Sonny Sparby went to look at it. Jake Guzik went to look at it, too. Jake Guzik reported that aprons need to be replaced, along with some other work. Lee Cartier said that he doesn't have the quotes for the work yet, and that he will email the quotes to the board when he gets them. Jake Guzik estimated the cost of the work at \$7,000.00 to \$9,000.00. Doug Wallis made a motion to accept the low bid for the Quarry Road work, as long as it is \$8,500.00 or less, Sonny Sparby seconded. Motion carried.

Maintenance Report – Lee Cartier

Lee Cartier reported that he re-lamped the shop and upgraded to LEDs, which will save money. He also did some temporary repairs on 260th.

Grader Inspection – Sonny Sparby reported that the grader inspection was okay, with the exception being that the hydraulic fluid was out of spec.

Treasurer's Report

Karen Anderson presented for approval to the board claims #1940 through #1962 for a total of \$20,703.66 and payroll checks #13807 through #13810 for a total of \$5,269.09. She also presented claim #1963, which she added after she checked the mail on Monday. Owen Kuhnly stated that she could have cut it off on Thursday or Friday last week and the claim could have waited. Sonny Sparby made a motion to approve all claims and payroll checks as presented, seconded by Doug Wallis. Motion carried.

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

New Town Hall Funds – Karen Anderson reported that current money we have available for construction of the new town hall includes \$153,522.94 in the New Town Hall Fund; \$207,199.12 in ARPA funds; and \$96,564.46 in the General Fund. There is not a lot of other money we can move into that fund, although we can use equipment money coming out of the Road and Bridge Fund.

Maintenance Report (continued)

Lee Cartier discusses the need for some chloride. Owen Kuhnly made a motion to approve up to \$6,000.00 for chloride, seconded by Doug Wallis. Motion carried.

Clerk Update

Nothing to report.

Old Business

Driveway permit for field – Owen Kuhnly will talk to Erich Edson.

Hometown Internet – Midco is willing to do a joint venture. Owen Kuhnly will ask them to come to the next meeting and said we will hold off on approving Hometown Internet for now.

Driveway permit form – Karen Anderson sent out the final form to the supervisors. Owen Kuhnly noted that just the first page of the form needed to be in triplicate, and that the rest of the form was just information. A motion to approve the form was made by Doug Wallis, seconded by Sonny Sparby. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings

CCATO – May 31, 2023 – 7:00 p.m., Shafer Township

Township Legal Seminar – June 1, 2023 – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Albertville

Recycle Day – June 3, 2023 – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Franconia Town Hall

Joint Powers – June 12, 2023 – 7:00 p.m., Shafer Fire Hall

Appeals to County – June 13, 2023 – 6:30 p.m. (By appointment only)

Regular Board Meeting – June 13, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck Fitzer, Deputy Clerk

Owen Kuhnly, Chairman