

The Cormorant Township Board meeting was held on **Tuesday, March 26th, 2024**, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cormorant Community Center. Board members present were Chairperson Steve Sorenson, Supervisors John Buhaug and Tony Hubbard, Clerk Claudia Hanson, Treasurer Susie Braseth, and Deputy Clerk Penny Wickenheiser.

A. **Call to Order** by Chairperson Sorenson followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. **Minutes** from the February 27th, 2024, regular meeting and Audit/Planning meeting were read. Motion to approve minutes made by Tony, seconded by John. Carried 3-0. The claims/bills were signed as presented.

C. **New Business**

- 1) **ECFE** – Claudia received a very complimentary email from ECFE for using the community center for many years. Beginning fall 2024, ECFE will begin utilizing the newly renovated Audubon Elementary School and will no longer need our space at the community center. Story Time will still be provided monthly, by Edith Huseby, at the community center and will continue to be supported by ECFE.
- 2) **Light in Electronic Messaging Sign** – Claudia received solicitation from Indigo Signs to upgrade the light bulb in the outdoor messaging sign to LED. A recent after-dark photo of the sign confirmed the light bulb is not operational. Indigo Sign’s cost for LED lighting would be \$1,195 and regular lighting would be \$600-900, depending on ballasts and wiring. Board agreed these are expensive options and Steve advised that a township employee should look at the lighting situation, which John mentioned Kerry Evenson. Ila Mae Lindstrom added that she cleans out the messaging sign for cobwebs and bugs as recommended by Indigo.

D) **Old Business**

- 1) **Revamp Newsletter Circulation**– Jessie Chenze was present at the meeting and has made numerous unreturned calls to the printer on the status of the newsletter. She also spoke to Andrea, the Postmaster at the Lake Park Post Office, informing Jessie that newsletters are deemed “a mailer” by the post office; therefore, it is not prioritized for delivery. Jessie proposed to continue having the newsletter be uploaded on the website

and a few copies made available at the community center, but no longer continue a mass mailing of it. It is a costly mailing for the township and several newsletters are returned with insufficient addresses, which the township has to pay the return mailing fee. Board agreed the newsletter will no longer be mailed to residents, just have some copies available at the hall and on the website. Claudia will attempt to reach the printer to cancel the current newsletter, as most of the scheduled events in that newsletter have already passed.

- 2) **Lake Park Fire Contract Payment** – Susie has mailed payment for the Lake Park Fire contract and the contract has already been submitted.
- 3) **LPA Community Education Classes** - No follow up contact from LPA Community Education has been received into having art courses at the community center.
- 4) **Window Replacements for the Watershed Office and Township Office** - John will contact Detroit Lakes Glass & Paint to replace cracked windows.
- 5) **Front Door** - Ila is still searching for door weatherstripping and the electronic door manufacturer for the front double door is no longer in business. She is collaborating with another company to see if they can provide weather stripping.

E. **Recycling**

- 1) **Move Braseth Bay Road Recycling Site to new Brush/Compost Site** – John explained if the Braseth Bay Road site is relocated to the brush/compost site, the township could save a lease payment for land use of that old site, and the new site will still be a convenient location for township residents. The gate to the brush/compost site could be moved to the bottom of the hill. Board members agreed the same people who maintain the Braseth Bay Road recycling site would be asked to continue to maintain the site in its new location.
- 2) **Brush/Compost Site Tree Planting and Opening Date** – John advised the trees will be available on/about May 1st to plant, so he will contact Ryan Olson to prep the grounds. Ed Chenze noted no date is scheduled yet for the opening of the brush/compost site as the ground is still soft to drive on.
- 3) **Cameras** – John indicated all cameras are installed and operational except for one camera might have a bad antenna.

F. Roads

- 1) **Schedule Road Inspection Earlier** – Steve advised that with the warm, cooperative weather the road inspection should be scheduled in April, so the township can request bids sooner for road work.
- 2) **Lawyer Inquiry on 115th Street** –An email was received from a lawyer regarding an accident and alleged missing stop ahead signage on 115th Street. Claudia read email and will follow up with the township insurance company and township attorney, Sam Rufer, for assistance.

G. Other Business

- 1) **Safety Meeting** –The annual safety meeting for township employees is on Wednesday, March 27th, 2024.
- 2) **Planning Commission Hearing for Jarko Properties LLC (Storage Units), 15912 Co Hwy 6** – This is scheduled for March 27th at 6:00 pm. Steve asked Board for input and the township board has no comment on this building project.
- 3) **Short Course Training in Mahnomen** – This is scheduled for Monday, April 1st.
- 4) **Board of Review & Equalization Meeting** – Tony Vigen, the new county assessor, will be present at that meeting, set for Wednesday, May 1st, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.
- 5) **Easter Party Results** – Ila mentioned 50-60 children were present at the event even though there was inclement weather. Free will donations were received that will be given to Cormorant Daze. The little lambs and bunnies from local farms were a huge hit, and Ila added the Lions may help pay farmers for them bringing their animals over to the hall.
- 6) **Regular Township Meetings Two Times Per Month Throughout Year** – Board discussed issues with the currently holding regular township meetings one time per month November through March, which sometimes delays addressing township needs and paying bills. The Board decided that beginning this fall, regular township meetings will be held two times per month November through February (second Tuesday and last Tuesday of each month) The only exception would be the month of March as the Annual Meeting is already set by MN Statutes for the second Tuesday of the month, but a regular township meeting would be held last Tuesday of month.

- 7) **Weed Meeting** – John attended the Weed Meeting and was cautioned about fentanyl. He learned that only a very small amount is needed to harm or kill someone. He advised when picking up garbage or emptying garbage bags left at the recycling centers, a person needs to be extra cautious. He provided a photo of a harmful size of fentanyl next to a penny. Ila recommended the Cormorant Lions to take the ditch garbage they collect (using gloves) directly to the dump versus placing them by the township dumpster.
- 8) **Miscellaneous** –
- a) Arvig Update – Claudia advised Arvig is offering a less expensive rate for internet \$93.75, and the community center will now have 63.75 internet speed versus 50.
 - b) PGOLID Meetings –The Pelican Lakes Improvement group has paid rent to hold five meetings throughout the year.
 - c) Shredding Material – Claudia advised she will be shredding very old papers that are no longer needed, based on the approved retention schedule. See attached.

H. **Reorganization Items** -

- 1) **Chairperson** – The Board unanimously voted Steve Sorenson should continue to serve as Chairperson, with a motion by John, seconded by Tony. Carried 3-0.
- 2) **Conflict of Interest** – Conflict of Interest forms were signed by the Board as required. These documents outline if a supervisor does any work for the township, that their work price is as low or lower than prices at which services could be obtained elsewhere.

A resolution for any conflict of interest was reviewed if John does any such road work as snow removal or other community center projects. Tony motioned, seconded by Steve, to accept resolution #2024-2 as written. Carried 3-0. Each supervisor voted in favor of resolution and was signed by Steve.

As Tony may do some emergency debris removal or snow removal on township roads, or community center work, a resolution regarding any conflict of interest was reviewed, and Steve motioned, seconded by John, to accept Resolution #2024-3 as written. Carried 3-0. Each supervisor voted in favor of resolution, and it was signed by John.

As Steve may do some snow removal at the community center parking lot and on township roads, another resolution regarding any conflict of interest was reviewed and John motioned, seconded by Tony, to accept Resolution #2024-4 as written. Carried 3-0. Each supervisor voted in favor of resolution and signed by Tony.

3) **Donations** –The Board agreed to donate to the following causes/entities this year:

A) Alert =\$6,000; Becker County Historical Society =\$150; Humane Society of the Lakes =\$100; Lake Park Historical Society = \$250; LPA Dollars for Scholars = \$2,000; LPA Post Prom = \$200.

B) YMCA = Susie will arrange for two children to be sent to YMCA Camp Cormorant this summer (approximately \$1,075).

C) Cormorant Daze related items = Games Galore, Kiddyland tickets, gift cards, etc. There may be additional related Cormorant Daze donations once planning for the event evolves.

Other donations that were suggested at the annual meeting were also considered. John made motion for all donations to be made as outlined above. Seconded by Tony. Carried 3-0. It was mentioned that John Mattson expressed gratitude for the continued donation to the Becker County Historical Society.

4) **Wages and mileage reimbursement =**

a) **Waste Management Crew** - \$375 monthly for recycling sites, \$250 for brush/compost site. \$80 for each time to do additional mowing, snowplowing over monthly base pay. Board discussed and agreed to make no changes. Steve motioned, seconded by Tony, to maintain same wages as mentioned above and motion carried 3-0.

b) **Snowplow operators** – Board discussed hourly wage of \$50 and agreed to no change in this wage, as an increase was made couple years ago. The \$80 per time rate for equipment usage will stay the same. Tony moved to no changes, seconded by Steve. Carried 3-0.

c) **Other township employees (tar crew, maintenance crew. etc.)** – Board reviewed, and John motioned to maintain hourly wage at \$30. Seconded by Tony. Carried 3-0.

d) **Board members** – Board discussed that no increase is warranted as hourly rate was increased two years ago to \$35 per hour. Steve motioned to keep \$35 hourly rate and per meeting rate of \$80 the same. Tony seconded motion and carried 3-0. Susie indicated mileage has increased to \$.68 per mile.

5) **Rental rates for space in the community center** - Board discussed to keep rates as is.

6) **Tar Clothing Allowance** - The Board agreed the tar clothing allowance should increase from \$50 to \$100 this year. Discussion ensued regarding the fact that it is difficult to purchase necessary clothing items for only \$50. Motion made by John, seconded by Steve, and carried 3-0.

I. **Treasurer’s Report** - Susie presented her treasurer’s report for *February 2024*. Board reviewed claims (payments) and receipts. Susie added that the Minnesota Department of Revenue inadvertently automatically deducted fourth quarter taxes twice from the township bank account. She spoke to the Minnesota Department of Revenue today and it will be rectified. Susie also mentioned she has set up monthly automatic payment to Greater Minnesota Gas and is working to do the same with Lakes Area Connection. Data is available on request.

Beginning Balance	\$255,692.58
Receipts	+ \$ 8,839.71
Disbursements	- \$ 14,671.37
Ending	<u>\$ 249,860.92</u>
checking acct. balance	
Investment beginning balance	-0-
Investment purchased	-0-
Investment transferred/sold	-0-
Investment interest	<u>-0-</u>
Ending Investment value	<u>-0-</u>

The Treasurer’s Report was approved by Steve, seconded by John. Carried 3-0.

I. **Adjournment** - The township meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. with a motion from Steve, seconded by John, and carried 3-0. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on April 9th, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia M. Hanson, Clerk and

Penny Wickenheiser, Deputy Clerk