Regular Town Board Meeting Town of Gnesen

July 10, 2023

The bi-monthly meeting of the Town of Gnesen was held on Monday, July 10, 2023. The following officers were present:

Jon Nelson Chair

Gary Juten Supervisor

Nancy Poppenberg Supervisor

Sarah Blix Clerk

Hannah Jurek Deputy Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Nelson. Board Members and residents stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. A motion to approve the agenda was moved by Supervisor Juten, second by Chair Nelson. All voted in favor.

Minutes of the June 26, 2023 Town Board Meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Poppenberg.

Treasurer’s report:

Balance for May 2023 $435,051.91

Receipts for June 2023 +$3,822.21

$438,874.12

Disbursements for June 2023 -122,941.30

Balance for June 2023 $315,932.82

There were three outstanding checks for the month totaling $32,186.10. Motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg, all vote in favor to accept the Treasurer’s report.

**DISCUSSION**:

**OLD BUSINESS**:

Ulland Gravel Quote Update – This topic was discussed and accepted at the June 26, 2023 Town Board meeting so tonight’s action was just to review and sign the updated quote.

Road Project Bids – There was only one company who turned in bids for the road projects that need to be completed this season and that was Cedar Drive Excavating, Inc. The bid amounts were as follows - Bergstrom Road project was for $3,000.00, West Pioneer near Old Town Hall project was for $3,800.00, and West Pioneer near Tower Road was for $5,300.00. The total for completing all three projects was $12,100.00. Supervisor Poppenberg made a motion to accept all three bids, second by Chair Nelson. Two Supervisors voted in favor with Supervisor Juten abstaining.

Heated Maintenance Facility at the GCC – Darin and Beau investigated the plugged drains and said they are clear until they leave the building after that they get plugged somewhere. Beau stated they can’t find where the drains daylight out but think it is near the Howard Gnesen Road. Chair Nelson questioned if the next step is bringing in an excavator. Beau said it would be beneficial to get a camera that they could put it down the drain first to pinpoint the exact location the drain daylights out at. Supervisor Juten said Cedar Drive Excavating would donate time and their utility locator to help try to locate the location where the drain ends.

Building Violation Updates – There are currently no updates concerning the old fire hall location. Sarah reported the owner of 4054 Normanna Road did stop in the office to pay their fine. Sarah discussed the conversation she had with the owner and the issues he is experiencing with trying to evict the current tenants. After some discussion as to how to move forward and work with the landowner it was decided that Supervisor Juten would reach out to Ross Litman for guidance and bring back information for the July 24, 2023 Town Board Meeting.

STR non-conforming septic certificates – Sarah had a discussion regarding non-conforming septics with Emily Anderson from St. Louis County and how to deal with them when residents are applying to operate a short-term rental. Sarah was informed that the reason for why a septic was deemed non-conforming needs to be identified. If it is due to soil issues, then we need to only allow 2 guests per each bedroom the septic was originally designed

Page 2 of 3, July 10, 2023 Town Board Meeting Minutes

for. If the reason is due to the septic being undersized then the issue becomes trickier and should be delt with on a case-by-case basis. Sarah said Emily indicated she would work with the township on specific properties when a STR permit is applied for. Nathan said currently the verbiage in our ordinance states the septic needs to be compliant so that is the term he looks for when approving applications and if the township wants to allow non-conforming septic’s, then the ordinance verbiage would need to be changed. After some discussion the supervisors said rather than investigating each septic they would rather lean towards just saying if the septic is non-conforming then the location is not allowed to operate as a STR. Chair Nelson asked P&Z to discuss this at their July 19, 2023 meeting and provide feedback to the town board at their July 24, 2023 meeting.

Update on MIG building violation – Nathan stated he did not have time to deal with this issue yet.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Road Report – Darin said overall the roads are in good condition. There is some wash boarding on a few roads and he will get out to grade those before Wednesday. The remainder of the calcium chloride should be put down this Friday. There was a delay in getting the product which is why finishing this project has taken longer than expected. Dennis Campbell stated he has driven a bunch of the township roads and noticed they have a lot of wash boarding specifically Park Drive and Tracey Road from the end of Thompson Lake Road to the first y. Darin stated he was going to do Tracey Road today but didn’t have time to get it done before the meeting. Darin said the two trees on Boulder Lake Road have been removed by Rick’s Tree Service and the sign on Church Road has been installed. Mowing should be started later this week.

Gnesen Community Center Report – Sarah reported not much has been going on with rentals. Preparations for National Night Out are underway and employee job duties will be handed out at the next town board meeting. Chair Nelson said he spoke with representatives from CTC (the company installing broadband) and they will be having a table at National Night Out to answer resident’s questions and provide maps and some swag.

Zoning Officer Job Opening – Nathan announced he is resigning. His last day will be Wednesday, July 12, 2023. The Supervisors thanked Nathan for all his hard work.

DNR Grant Update – The township was awarded the DNR grant they had applied for. Contracts will be signed Oct-Nov of 2023 and projects can get started anytime after that with a completion deadline of June 30, 2025. Sarah said some of the projects that will be completed are installing a new playground, replacing the parking lot, resurfacing the tennis courts and installing new fencing, installing energy efficient lighting around the skating rink, updating a few items in the playscape, new signage and a better entrance to access all the amenities. Sarah said the grant is a matching grant that totaled $288,000.00 so Gnesen is responsible for $144,000.00. Our portion can be made either monetarily or in hard labor – skilled or unskilled. Sarah said volunteers will be needed so that most of the township’s portion can be completed in labor. Sarah said she created a board to put up at National Night Out to notify residents of the upcoming updates to the facility and start getting volunteers interested.

**ZONING OFFICERS REPORT**: There are two variance public hearings coming up before the next P&Z meeting and another one that a resident will be applying for soon. Two STR applications have been approved, one was denied because they wanted to rent out an accessory dwelling which is not allowed in Gnesen. Carol questioned the STR application for Seeds of Hope as they are not true owners of the property since they are a nonprofit. Nathan said it is up for interpretation and the way he interpreted it was that since they were homesteaded residents of Gnesen and if they were able to rent out a property that is located on the same site as Seeds of Hope which is a nonprofit then they must be owners. Nathan said there have been several small subdivision applications turned in recently as well.

**CORRESPONDENCE**: None

Disbursement #15881 through #15908 and 5 EFTs were read, approved, and signed for payment for a total of $58,595.88 with a motion by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Juten all in favor to pay the disbursements.

No further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. with a motion by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Juten. No objections, meeting adjourned. (This meeting is taped for transcribing purposes only.)

Page 3 of 3, July 10, 2023 Town Board Meeting Minutes

Visitors attending the meeting: Darrin Franckowiak, Beau Halverson, Bruce Smith, Dennis Campbell, John Armstrong, Jay and Marcia Haller, Carol Jacobson, Pete Bergman

Employees present: Mary Bjorklund, Bruce Smith, Beau Halverson, Darin Franckowiak, Dennis Campbell, Kathy Buran, Nathan Horyza

Employees absent: none

**Upcoming meetings:**

Town Board Public Hearing for Proposed Ordinance Updates – July 17, 2023 – 7:00pm

P&Z Meeting – July 19, 2023 - 7:30pm

Town Board Meeting – July 24, 2023 - 7:00pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sarah Blix, Clerk Mary Bjorklund, Treasurer

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Jon Nelson, Chair