Regular Town Board Meeting Town of Gnesen

October 9, 2023

The bi-monthly meeting of the Town of Gnesen was held on Monday, October 9, 2023. The following officers were present:

Jon Nelson Chair – via Teams

Gary Juten Supervisor

Nancy Poppenberg Supervisor

Sarah Blix Clerk

Mary Bjorklund Treasurer

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 Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Juten. All voted in favor.

Minutes of the September 25, 2023 Town Board Meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Supervisor Poppenberg, second by Supervisor Juten.

Treasurer’s report:

Balance for August 2023 $458,493.22

Receipts for September 2023 +$11,769.25

$470,262.47

Disbursements for September 2023 -$16,410.00

Balance for September 2023 $453,852.47

There were three outstanding checks for the month totaling $658.16. Motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg to accept the Treasurer’s report. All vote in favor.

**DISCUSSION**:

**OLD BUSINESS**:

Zoning Officer Training – Duluth and Midway Townships have said they are not interested in training at this time. The City of Rice Lake said they may be. Supervisor Poppenberg said she thinks the training is beneficial and that the township should proceed so that everyone is on the same page. Carol Jacobson agreed that training would be beneficial. Chair Nelson made a motion to proceed with setting up the training with the expenditure of $3200.00 plus travel costs, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor. Hannah will reach out for days/times that training is available in November and provide at the next meeting.

Legal Options – Overom Law provided a price of $200.00 per hour for legal services with paralegals at $75.00 per hour. Hanft and Fride provided a price of $250.00 per hour for partner services, $200.00 per hour for associate services, and $150.00 per hour for paralegal services. Couri and Ruppe, which is our current attorney, raised their rates to $285.00 per hour. Supervisor Juten made a motion to proceed with using Overom Law for any Township legal services, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor.

Installation of GCC Garage Propane Tank – Propane tank and heater have both been installed and garage doors have been ordered. Darin and Beau have purchased the insulation and will install it soon.

Shoreland Commercial Legal Zone Description – This legal description included past residents names so it was decided to hire Alta Surveyors to help rewrite the description. Chair Nelson made a motion to make the change in the ordinance with the new legal description that was provided by Alta, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor.

Normanna Road Issue – Supervisor Juten said he spoke with Sheriff Ramsay regarding the Normanna Road issue. Sheriff Ramsay said he has never heard from the property owners after he had attended the Town Board meeting and offered to help them file paperwork to evict the people squatting on their property. Sarah said she spoke with Mike Cole earlier today and he said things are getting worse. Mike stated there is constant noise at night including the use of a very loud generator. Sarah said she also spoke with the Biskey’s and according to James he

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has not filled out eviction paperwork yet and is in the process of hiring a lawyer first. His wife stated that she spoke with the parole officer of one of the squatters and informed them of the situation and was told that shortly after that the parole officer had informed everyone currently living at the property that they needed to be moved off the property by the end of October. Supervisor Juten will follow up with Sheriff Ramsay.

Locust Road – An anonymous complaint was discussed at the September 25, 2023 meeting. Mike said both he and Rick have driven by and noted garbage, several small unfinished wood structures, dome structures, and a travel trailer. Mike said he needs some guidance because while driving around the area, he has noticed other properties that seem worse than this one. Rick stated he is looking into sheds and how many are allowed without permits and the sizes that are allowed and unlicensed travel trailers and the licensing requirements. Mike stated that he was told there was septic at the location but not a well. The zoning officers will continue to research and move forward with the complaint.

STR Violations and How to Proceed – Carter questioned since the timeline for grandfathering in short term rentals has passed how the Township wants to proceed with the ones who have not applied for a permit. Supervisor Juten said he thought a letter needed to be sent out. Sarah provided Supervisor Juten with a sample letter from a neighboring township. Supervisor Juten read the letter and thought it was a good starting point. Sarah will get a copy of the letter to both Zoning Officers so they can proceed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Road Report – Minor washouts were noted during the road check, but most have since been fixed. Darin reported that the mower was fixed and he will also get out and perform final grading prior to freezing. Supervisor Juten said Scott Olson from St. Louis County reported some large protruding rocks on Boulder Lake Road. Supervisor Juten recommended putting a load of gravel over the rocks. Darin said he will try to grade first to see if he can pull enough gravel over the rocks. Chair Nelson made a motion to approve the expenditure for a load of gravel if needed, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. Two votes in favor, with Supervisor Juten abstaining.

Gnesen Community Center Report – Trick or Treat Trail will take place October 28th. Sarah spoke with Ken Gilbertson and he stated he has been doing some trail maintenance. Ken asked for permission to purchase a gallon of Round Up to deal with the Buckthorn on the trial. Supervisor Juten made a motion to approve reimbursing Ken for the purchase of Round Up, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor. Ken mentioned the flooding on the east section of the trail has gotten worse. Ken said he has an idea for remedying the problem and will meet up with Chair Nelson to discuss it.

Email from St. Louis County regarding Afterhours Incidents and Township Contacts – It was discussed and the contacts and order that Sarah will provide to St. Louis County will be Darin, Bruce, Beau, Supervisor Juten.

Permission for Clerk to Purchase a New Desk Chair – Supervisor Poppenberg made a motion to approve up to $300.00, second by Supervisor Juten. All vote in favor.

Ordinances – STR, Nuisance, and Amended Ordinance #10 have all been recorded with St. Louis County and brought to the Law Library.

**ZONING OFFICERS REPORT**: Working on second site visit backlog. Both Rick and Mike met with a representative from St. Louis County to discuss and better understand septic systems. Carter commented that MN Power is finalizing their last plat in Gnesen. There were several issues noted at the public hearing which was then suspended to give MN Power and residents time to resolve the issues. Carter questioned if some issues have not been resolved at the time of the reconvened public hearing should the commission approve the plat as presented rather than holding up the process. Chair Nelson said he would like to see MN Power find solutions for most residents but that it is the township responsibility to do what is best for the majority of the township and shouldn’t hold up the whole process for a few residents.

**CORRESPONDENCE**: None

Disbursement #15967 through #15995 and 5 EFTs were read, approved, and signed for payment for a total of $27,537.95 with a motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor to pay the disbursements.

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No further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. with a motion by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. No objections, meeting adjourned. (This meeting is taped for transcribing purposes only.)

Visitors attending the meeting: Jay and Marcia Haller, Carol Jacobson, Carter Williams, Pete Bergman

Employees present: Beau Halverson, Darin Franckowiak, Bruce Smith, Matt Thibodeau, Mike Polzin, Rick Hogenson

Employees absent:

**Upcoming meetings:**

Reconvened Public Hearing for MN Power – October 18, 2023 – 6:30pm

P&Z Meeting – October 18, 2023 - 7:30pm

Town Board Meeting – October 23, 2023 - 7:00pm

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

Sarah Blix, Clerk Mary Bjorklund, Treasurer

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Jon Nelson, Chair