

ECKLES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
And Public Hearing
December 8, 2020

The Eckles Township Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair, Donald Hazeman. Vice Chair Cory Wilson and Supervisors, Darren Baumgardner, Elizabeth Hendricks and Mel Milender were present. Treasurer Debra Larson and Clerk Mary Lou Milender were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Attendees: Thore Thorson, Mark Fuller, Dale Wilson, Reed Olson, Fred Kelm, Spencer Black, Joe Beer, John Schocker, Ervin Blom and Andy Wells.

Approve Agenda: Vice Chair Wilson made a motion to approve the December 8, 2020 Agenda. Second by Supervisor Hendricks. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Supervisor Milender made a motion to approve the December 8, 2020 Consent Agenda. Second by Vice Chair Wilson. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

VISITORS:

Reed Olson gave a brief five-year Road Plan the county has put together. The only roads in Eckles Township that will be affected for improvement is County Rd 9 and US Hwy 2.

A question from a visitor regarding the Solid Waste Ordinance was addressed. If a complaint it goes to the township first, they can make a decision or recommendation for the solid waste. The Pinewood Rural Site was addressed. Several times residents have been to the site and the machine is not working, and their phone isn't answered all the time. Chair Hazeman asked Reed to see that someone makes a sign for the Pinewood Site to inform the residents what to do.

Motion by Supervisor Milender to recess the meeting and hold the Public Hearing. Second by Vice Chair Wilson.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Public hearing is being held to address the swap of Balsam Road E of CSAH 9 and County Road 515.

Chair Donald Hazeman opened the Public Hearing allowing public comments. A few comments were made regarding the costs to maintain 515 vs. Balsam Road. Vice Chair Wilson reviewed the costs we pay on our portion of Balsam Road. He indicated it still needs to be tarred in able to hold up to all the traffic. It is heavily traveled by big trucks. Balsam Road is a gravel road and we grade approximately 1.25 miles weekly. It is one of our most heavily traveled roads in the township. It is the shortcut to the NW portion of Bemidji. Balsam is a 7-ton road and will need to be upgraded to a 10-ton road in the very near future. The Town Board recently had Freeberg & Grund conduct cost estimates for road upgrades to 10-ton paved roads. The cost is approximately \$350 - \$400K per mile of road. We could save approximately \$500K of taxpayer dollars if we do not have to upgrade Balsam Road. 515 is a paved 10-ton road approximately the same length as our portion of Balsam Road. The exchange will remove a

**ECKLES TOWN BOARD MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2020
PAGE TWO**

potential liability and safety hazard from the township. Supervisor Milender is concerned about the cars going into the ditch on Balsam Road rather than staying on the road. The Township has the liability if anybody gets hurt.

Motion by Supervisor Milender, second by Supervisor Bumgardner to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

CONTINUATION OF BOARD MEETING

ROAD REPORT:

Mark Fuller addressed Jackpine Road east of 9. He asked if the board wanted an invite or do advertising. Mark will put the ad in the Pioneer in time for discussion at the January 12th meeting.

MNDOT may have grant money available through the LRIP. Once we know the details and requirements, we have two months to get the application to MNDOT. The part of Jackpine is already in the budget for 2021. Motion by Supervisor Milender, second by Vice Chair Wilson, to get the topols for Jackpine from Eckles to CTY Rd 9. Not to exceed \$3,000.00. Wilson and Milender will flesh out the application and meet with Mark. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

PLOWING SNOW INTO THE ROW:

A letter to the Eckles residents was drafted and approved which informed them they could not be plowing snow onto the township roads or ditches. The plowing of snow onto the roads and rights-of-way causes problems for the plows. Often times the ditches fill up or snow freezes into rock solid piles in the driven surface and may cause damage to road maintenance equipment, or piles of snow block the vision of oncoming vehicles. If any of the residents are plowing snow onto the township roads it may result in a fine up to \$1,000.00. Chairman Hazeman has made contact with the Pioneer to put an ad in the paper again regarding the same issues.

OTHER:

Chair, Donald Hazeman contacted Bruce Hasbargen again regarding the brushing that still needs to be done on Balsam Road and CSAH 9. Hasbargen claims his employees are not available to do the brushing at this time.

ROAD EXCHANGE:

Motion by Vice Chair Wilson that we do the road swap, but ask the county to have it take effect after the road restrictions are off. Supervisor Milender informed the board that two other LGU's have passed resolutions to accept the proposed swap. If Eckles Township does not pass it, it could invalidate the entire swap. Vice Chair Wilson changed his motion to include having the township write a letter to go along with the resolution accepting the exchange of Balsam Road for 515. Second by Supervisor Bumgardner. A roll call vote was called by Chair Hazeman. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. Motion by Vice Chair Wilson that we don't make the swap until the road restrictions are off, if the County will agree. Supervisor Milender seconded. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**ECKLES TOWN BOARD MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2020
PAGE THREE**

GRANT CREEK ROAD:

Vice Chair Wilson reported he had a conversation with Larry Tolman about getting some brushing done on Grant Creek Road. The landowner was amenable to allow Cory to mark the trees. Randy Lofgren will take down the trees. He will also take out the stumps and chip it so the road is much safer. Wilson would like to see Lammers do some ditching in the future.

RURAL FIRE ASSOCIATION:

Supervisor Milender informed the board that the City of Bemidji is in the process of hiring a new Fire Chief. They interviewed a very worthy candidate. However, when they offered him the job, he declined. In the interim, Chris Lobes will act as the Fire Chief, starting in the new year. In January, the Rural Fire Association hopes to hold their annual meeting in the new Fire Hall in Northern Township. This building will be leased for 15 years.

Motion by Supervisor Bumgardner, seconded by Supervisor Hendricks to adjourn. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Milender
Township Clerk

Donald Hazeman
Chairman