

ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 5, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Terry Pihlainen, Supervisor
Cheryl Lane, Treasurer
Catherine Kimar, Clerk

Connie Lacko, Trustee
Brian Bresette, Trustee

II. AGENDA

A motion was made to accept the agenda as amended (under new business, supervisor added E. Whitefish Rd and F. Tyoga Trail Contract).

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Connie Lacko
Motion carried.

III. MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

IV. REPORTS

A. Financial Report

A motion was made to pay the March 31 year-end and April monthly bills as presented:

March 31 FY-end

- » \$2,647.67 for the general fund, checks #5000-5030;
- » \$10,372.78 for the fire fund, checks #2030-2039; and
- » \$5,268.55 for the solid waste fund, check #1195.

April

- » \$6,163.38 for the general fund, checks #5031-44; and
- » \$4,500.00 for the fire fund, check #2040.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Catherine Kimar
Motion carried.

AA motion was made to approve the March 31 and April balance sheet and profit & loss statements for the general, fire, solid waste, and tax funds as presented by the clerk.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Connie Lacko
Motion carried.

Roll call vote:
Ayes: Cheryl Lane
Terry Pihlainen
Connie Lacko
Brian Bresette
Catherine Kimar

<u>March 31</u> Gen: 711,928.40 Fire: 293,734.90 SW: 152,830.10 Tax: 1,038.97

B. Assessor Report

No report was received from the assessor.

<u>April 5</u> Gen: 706,255.02 Fire: \$289,234.90

C. Zoning Administrator Report

The clerk read the report from the zoning administrator (*copy on file*) on vacation rentals, shipping containers, and a potential Blight Ordinance.

D. Fire Department Report

Chief Kimar read the Fire Department Report (*copy on file*).

E. Planning Commission Report

They held elections – Brian Mahoney was elected chair, Michael Tarr was elected vice-chair, and Erin Leahy-Putvin was elected secretary. The clerk mentioned that the Planning Commission should start reviewing the Master Plan and then Zoning Ordinance for the required update in the next year.

F. Supervisor Report

The supervisor reported on the following:

* Lake Superior Boat Launch

- Talking with the US Forest Service about the fairness of the \$3,000 the USFS is putting in (mostly hours of workers that are not detailed as to what tasks they are performing – the job description lists labor at extremely high rates). The board was concerned about what work is actually being done at the site on the vault toilet, sign, road, and other infrastructure.
- Road signs were never changed to the new name (MDOT permitting has changed since).
- The vault toilet was locked the entire pandemic and was unusable to the public.
- They requested a completed form about objectives and goals established, and this form was supposed to be submitted in 2019 when the agreement started, but a copy was just sent to the township recently.
- The USFS has received an application from a private charter fishing service for the right to use the ramp for two years. The board discussed this matter – it was noted that this may interfere with public taxpayer use, that it opens up the doors to multiple businesses using the ramp, and that with two charter fishing business already located within the township – it is using their tax funds against them.
- The ramp cannot be cleared until the weight restrictions come off the highway at this time, and they are looking at using a large crane to move rocks further from the ramp every 2-3 years. This machine does not need to go into the water and thus would not require a US Army Corps of Engineers permit.

A motion was made to approve the cost of up to \$3,000 to rent a longstick excavator (with skilled operator) to clean the rocks of the Lake Superior boat launch of rocks for a longer term period.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

Roll call vote
Ayes: Cheryl Lane
Terry Pihlainen
Connie Lacko
Brian Bresette
Catherine Kimar

A motion was made that the Onota Township Board formally recommends against granting approval for Black Shadow Guide Service to use the Lake Superior Boat Launch.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

Roll call vote
Ayes: Cheryl Lane Abstain: Catherine Kimar
Brian Bresette
Connie Lacko
Terry Pihlainen

The clerk will write up a formal version of this resolution and submit it to the supervisor by the

end of the week so it can be turned over to the Forest Service.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was received.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:44 pm

Comment was received from: Char McDonnell on the Zoning Administrator updating the Master Plan, Terry Lane on (1) garbage pickup schedule, (2) the cell tower progress (the last ETA was end of May – beginning of June) and (3) the road improvements budget.

Closed: 7:52 pm

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Board Policy

As requested at the last meeting, the clerk included the financial portion of the board packet. The board tabled this matter until the next meeting so that they could review this section in the meantime.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Quickbooks

Quickbooks is retiring the software the township has and it will not work any longer, as of May 31. The clerk recommended that the township go with a standalone option for a 3-year license, as it would be a one time cost of \$400 instead of annual fees of \$700.

A motion was made to approve up to \$400 for the mandatory upgrade for Quickbooks.

Motion: Catherine Kimar

Support: Brian Bresette

Motion carried.

B. Audit Cost Approval

The clerk said the annual audit was due to be done in May by Anderson-Tackman.

A motion was made to approve up to \$6,100 for the annual audit.

Motion: Catherine Kimar

Support: Terry Pihlainen

Motion carried.

Roll call vote

Ayes: Cheryl Lane

Brian Bresette

Terry Pihlainen

Connie Lacko

Catherine Kimar

C. Furnace Maintenance

A form was received from Swick regarding furnace maintenance for the township hall. The clerk asked if she should turn this form in. As the furnace is only serviceable by Swick, the board agreed that it should be submitted with the annual fees. The firehall furnace should be under maintenance with Trudell. The clerk said she would contact them to request an agreement form.

Pertaining to the firehall, the supervisor also mentioned that the seasonal work needed to be done on its generator could be done any time from now on.

A motion was made to approve up to \$500 for Wolverine Power Systems to come re-set the generator at firehall and do other maintenance as specified in their estimate for repair.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen

Support: Catherine Kimar

Motion carried.

D. Great American Disposal schedule

The clerk noted that GAD had stopped picking up the dumpsters on Tuesdays, according to their billing, and wanted to communicate with the rest of the board before she contacted them.

The board felt GAD should resume going down Peter White Road, as they did previously, as well as continue the Tuesday pickups year round. It was agreed that the clerk would contact GAD's office personnel and notify them while the supervisor would contact the manager. The board expressed concern on the volume of trash the current dumpsters held (versus an 8 yard dumpster). The decision was to withhold action on this until the clerk and supervisor had talked to GAD about the situation.

E. Roads

The supervisor and a trustee rode around the Road Commission engineer and discussed areas of concern: Sand Lake Rd by bridge, Shelter Bay Rd, Onota Hill approach culverts, and several other areas in the township.

The Alger Co Road Commission prepared a cost for Whitefish Road to be paved (just over \$91,000), which the supervisor pointed out is a specially discounted cost due to the availability of asphalt from Bacco Construction doing work in Alger County at this time.

A discussion was held, with the clerk and treasurer expressing objections to spending this much on a 0.5 mile section of road with only a few residences. They said they understood the importance of helping fund road work, but questioned the choice of project. For the future, Trustee Bresette recommended the township board go back to updating the capital improvement plan and planning ahead for financial costs (as was done up until 2012).

A motion was made to fix Whitefish Road as to the Alger County Road Commission estimates (total cost of \$91,452).

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Terry Pihlainen
Motion carried.

Roll call

Ayes: Brian Bresette
Terry Pihlainen
Connie Lacko

Nays: Cheryl Lane
Catherine Kimar

The township clerk expressed concern that a family member of Trustee Lacko who owned property on Whitefish Road would financially benefit from this cost approval and suggested she should abstain from the motion due to conflict of interest. The supervisor said he thought she could vote if she wanted to. Trustee Lacko then voted aye and the supervisor declared the motion carried. The clerk stated she would contact the attorney in regard to this matter.

F. Tyoga Contract

John Highlen presented the contract and agreement to the township board and citizens present (a copy is on file). The Friends of Tyoga group and volunteers would do campground prep & maintenance, trail work, install the infrastructure, and work the DNR to use larger boulders to block the non-usable campsites from use. Five of the sites on the north loop are not as overgrown and usable – John Highlen suggested that the best solution would be to place the portable toilet unit on the 5th site as well as some large boulders in combination with brushing the other sites.

For fee collection – he recommended that the township have a bonded official or employee collect the funds from the pay pipe. A township resident with experience in fabrication is going to be asked to build this, but it will need to be cemented into the ground securely. The DNR requires the option of garbage disposal – he recommended that signage be posted to direct campers to pack all their garbage out and dispose of it at the township dumpsters.

The rental and portable toilet estimates were obtained from Stenberg Brothers - delivery fee of \$20.00 + \$285.00. The other board members suggested getting estimates from Tri-County Septic in Alger County because they were a local business and had lower rates.

For enforcement, it was suggested that the local DNR officer who lives on Johnson Lane and possibly an Alger County sheriff deputy would be responsible for checking the sites.

A motion was made to approve the DNR contract for the Tyoga campground as presented and opt for the handicapped portable toilet, with costs to be presented for approval next month.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Connie Lacko

Roll call

Ayes: Brian Bresette
Catherine Kimar
Cheryl Lane
Connie Lacko
Terry Pihlainen

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 8:39 pm

Comment was received from: Terry Lane on his disappointment that the township was using a large amount of money to upgrade Whitefish Road instead of fixing Peter White Rd - he felt the township roads were being ignored by the county and also that the township should find another solid waste vendor; Char McDonnell asking for the exact cost the township was expending on Whitefish Road improvements.

Closed: 8:46 pm

X. BOARD CONCERNS

Catherine – large hole in the driveway across from the firehall, possibly a collapsed culvert.

Terry – it is important that the recycling survey is sent out by the clerk soon. The clerk objected and said she did not have time with the 5/4 election, and it was not her statutory duty to send out township publications. The trustees suggested that the Planning Commission send out the surveys instead.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 pm.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Catherine Kimar
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Onota Township Clerk
Proposed: 4/5/21
Approved: 5/3/21