

Wacouta Township

April 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Following is a written text of business transacted by the Wacouta Board of Supervisors at its monthly meeting held on April 12, 2021. Board members present were: Chairperson John Plehal, Supervisors William Wells and George Thoma. Also, Laan Dommer, Clerk/Treasurer was present. The meeting was held with restricted attendance at the Town Hall, and by video conference, in keeping with pandemic restrictions.

- 1) Chairperson John Plehal called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- 2) Approval of the minutes for the March 8, 2021 meeting. Thoma made a motion to approve the minutes, Wells seconded. The motion carried.
- 3) Old Business
 - a) Elections & Annual meeting:
 - i) John Plehal briefly reviewed the Township Election on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. George Thoma was welcomed as the next Supervisor (term from March 2021 to March 2024). Thanks was extended to Kirk Stensrud for his years of service as previous Supervisor.
 - ii) John Plehal gave an update on the preparations for the annual meeting tomorrow, at the Round Barn. This is a continuation of the previously recessed Annual Meeting from March 13, 2021. A motion was made by Thoma to reimburse Kirk Stensrud \$100- for use of his facility, especially with the cold weather and need for heating; seconded by Wells. The motion carried.
 - b) Trail review:
 - i) Diane Mueller discussed the Emerald Ash bore that is starting along the trail. She indicated that chemical treatment is available for the approximately six trees that are on township property by the trail. Other optional treatments include watch and wait, or to take them down. The disease is persistent and she recommended speaking with an arborist. It was indicated that removing the ash trees will not take away the problem on other ash trees.
Secondarily, a request was made to take over payroll for the weed maintenance workers. Discussion was made regarding the effects on receipts that contributed to exceeding the threshold for an audit. A motion was made by George Thoma to again resume the payment of the weed maintenance workers, with reimbursement by Friends of Wacouta, for the 2021-2022 season; seconded by Wells. The motion carried.
Lastly, Mueller asked about funds spent to repair and sealcoat the trail. Plehal reviewed the expenditures and timetable of the repairs to the trail for this year and next fall.
 - ii) William Wells reviewed some of the issues with the pond overlook, off of the trail. State of Minnesota land is where trees and limbs may need to be removed. Further discussions with the Frontenac State Park ranger have to be planned. Wells indicated he would try to get more clarification if there are plans and any timetable.
 - iii) Signage: George Thoma volunteered to work on the trail and doggie bag signage.
- 4) New Business
 - a) Planning and Zoning: Note was made that there is a vacancy on the Planning Commission now. There was also a brief review of the Zoning Administrator office and position. No changes were suggested.
 - b) Mowing Bids: Two bids have been received for mowing of the trail. A motion was made by Wells to hire Larry Holst for mowing of the cemetery, ball park, and trail, or as needed, for the 2021-21 growing season; seconded by Thoma. The motion carried.
 - c) Annual reorganization for the Board of Supervisors:
 - i) Swearing in of newly elected officials: George Thoma had previously been sworn in as Wacouta Supervisor (2021-2024).
 - ii) Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair: Thoma nominated John Plehal for Chair, seconded by Wells. Thoma nominated William Wells for Vice-Chair, seconded by Plehal. Both motions carried.
 - iii) Designation of monthly meeting dates: John Plehal made a motion for the monthly meeting to occur on the following dates: May 10, 2021; June 14, 2021; July 12, 2021; August 9, 2021; September 13, 2021; October 12, 2021 (Tuesday); November 8, 2021; December 13, 2021; January 10, 2022; February 14, 2022; March 14, 2022. All meetings to start at 7:00 PM.
 - iv) Designation of official newsletter: Red Wing Republican Eagle
 - v) Compensation for officers: Chair, \$100/meeting; Supervisors, \$80; Clerk/Treasurer \$350/meeting. Additional meetings for these officers were to be made at 50% of the meeting rate. Also, the Zoning Administrator is compensated at \$150/month.

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- vi) Designated Supervisors responsibilities: Road and bridge supervisor to be Plehal; Planning Commission representative to be Thoma; Cemetery, Town Hall, & recreation supervisor to be Wells; Trail supervisor to be Plehal; signage supervisor to be Thoma; weed maintenance to be Wells.
- vii) Designation of posting place for legal notices: Town hall (bulletin board at entrance); Red Wing Republican Eagle for published Public Notices.
- viii) Designation of bank: Merchant Bank, Red Wing, Minnesota
- ix) Consider potential conflicts of interest: No conflicts of interest were stated by Plehal, Thoma, and Wells for 2021 and 2022. Thoma made a motion that this would not need to be a monthly stipulation, for 2021 & 2022, since it is stated at this time; seconded by Wells. The motion carried.
- x) Planning and Zoning Commission: Proper procedures for accounting and management are charged to the Zoning Administrator.
- xi) Confirm that the township financial reporting form has been completed and returned to the state auditor's office. Dommer stated that the required audit has been processed. The pending final approval of the audit and subsequent submission to the state auditor's office will follow signature of the Letter of Representation considered later tonight.
- xii) Identify upcoming training opportunities: Plehal indicated this has been done.
- xiii) Confirm names and addresses have been returned to the Minnesota Township Association offices: Plehal indicated this has been done.

A motion to accept all of the above reorganization plans was made by Thoma, seconded by Wells. The motion carried.

- 5) Review of splitting the current Clerk/Treasurer position:
Plehal discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages to the township of splitting the Clerk/Treasurer (C/T) position into separate Clerk and Treasurer jobs. The main advantage of this is the raising of the revenue threshold (currently \$233,000 per year for combined C/T, raised to \$1,040,000 for separate clerk and treasurer). Also, going over the threshold level requires an extensive, time consuming and expensive audit (this year the cost will be approximately \$7500). Separating the position basically eliminates the need for an audit, since the clerk reviews the treasurer's checks monthly. The main disadvantage is in finding an individual to fill the opening.
Dommer responded that he is willing to stay as clerk/treasurer, and subsequently treasurer, if this is approved, until an individual is found to fill the clerk position.
Plehal made a recommendation to support, as a Board of Supervisors, this concept of splitting the clerk/treasurer position into two positions. This recommendation was agreed to.
- 6) Wacouta Road Tour planning: A date of Monday, May 3, 2021, 5 PM, was scheduled for the road tour.
- 7) Zoning Administrator:
Fred Plaas was present to review current progress on permitting in Wacouta. He recommended some potential changes that may be considered to the fee and permitting structure. Plehal suggested that he come back to the Board with specific recommendations from the Planning Commission.
- 8) Wacouta 2020 Audit:
Dommer discussed completion of the 2020 Audit and that it will be sent to us in final form, by Lewis, Kisch & Associates, after the Board approves a Letter of Representation. This letter is to be sent to this firm, if representation is approved, on this date, Monday, April 12, 2021. The audit will be then be finalized and returned to us.
A motion to approve the Letter of Representation, and allow Plehal to sign this letter, was made by Thoma; seconded by Wells. The motion carried.
- 9) Treasurer's report – Laan Dommer presented bills in the amount of \$6,139.86 from March. Plehal made a motion to approve bills for \$6,139.86 and Wells seconded it. The motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Plehal, seconded by Wells. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m. The next monthly meeting is Monday, May 10, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

-Submitted by Laan Dommer