

January 11, 2020

**PERCH LAKE TOWNSHIP
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ZOOM MEETING WITH COUNTY ENGINEER**

I. COUNTY ENGINEER STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Jin Yeene Neumann, County Engineer
Rick Norrgard, Assistant County Engineer
Will Bomier, Permits Agent
Ron Stigers, Highway Technician
Greg Thompson, Designer

II. PERCH LAKE TOWN BOARD CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gary Harms opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. with a roll call.

Members: Chair Gary Harms, Supervisor Steve Olson, Supervisor Keith DePre,
Treasurer Cheri DeMenge, Clerk Lora Eames

III. PURPOSE OF MEETING:

Town Chair Harms explained that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss:

- a grant application to the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) for the Township's Watkins Spur Project; and
- a safety issue on Reponen Road.

IV. LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (LRIP) APPLICATION AND STATUS OF WATKINS SPUR PROJECT.

(1) LRIP.

Harms announced that Perch Lake Township was interested in applying for the LRIP Grant and using the funds for its Watkins Spur project. Harms asked for the County's input and support, including a resolution with the Town's application (due March 3, 2021).

County Engineer Neumann made the following comments:

- Other townships had approached her office regarding this grant program.
- The state has provided \$1.5 million for all townships in Minnesota.
- Perch Lake must be able to show the regional significance of its project or its application is a "long shot." Watkins Spur is a dead-end road with no regional or recreational significance.

Regional significance is defined on page 2 of the application – “. . .provides capacity or congestion relief to a parallel trunk highway system or county road; connects to a regional tourist destination; connects to the regional system, trunk highway, or a county road . . .”

After some discussion, the Town Board supervisors agreed to review its options concerning the LRIP grant; and the County Engineer offered support if the Board follows through by completing a grant application.

(2) Status of Watkins Spur Project.

Neumann reported that the construction costs would run \$167,000, and the engineering costs would run about 10% of the project costs, assuming no significant issues. Harms asked about the potential for cost savings by tying this project in with the Big Lake Road resurfacing to be done in the summer of 2021. Neumann responded that the County plans to bid out its Big Lake Road project at the end of February 2021; therefore, the Township should plan to bid out its project at the same time.

Supervisor Depre asked about having driveways instead of a road. The engineers responded that such a project (i) would not comply with the County’s driveway policy; and (ii) would have more of an impact on wetlands than what is being planned now.

Bomier provided an update on the Watkins Spur project:

- The project is mostly permitted; the FDL permit’s public comment period for the Army Corps of Engineers’ wetland permit will close at the end of January.
- The wetland credits qualified and will not cost the township anything.
- They need additional right-of-way from a landowner.

Olson will provide Bomier with the landowner’s contact information.

V. REPONEN ROAD.

Supervisor Olson described the problem with Reponen Road: Drivers are not negotiating the 90-degree corners on the road, especially the one near 1075 Reponen Road. Olson had Scott Baker, the Traffic Services Coordinator, install improved signage. However, Olson remained concerned and discussed other possibilities – lighted signs, additional patrols, etc. Should the Town re-engineer the corners? What is the Town’s responsibility? Does the Town have liability here?

Norrgard responded that the Town had done what it could by installing improved signage. He pointed to the potentially high cost of engineering 90-degree corners and obtaining right-of-way.

VI. CLOSING COMMENTS.

The supervisors discussed the feasibility of the LRIP application. After some discussion, their initial consensus was that the completing an application would be a challenge because they would have to compete with all townships for \$1.5 million; and show Watkins Spur as a project with regional significance. They would discuss this again at the monthly meeting later in the day.

In addition, the supervisors discussed how to pay for the Watkins Spur project. They expressed concern about the spending so much of the Town’s budget - \$167,000 - on one project; and considered that Watkins Spur residents may have to be assessed after all.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Harms adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Town Board

Lora Eames, Clerk

Gary Harms, Chair