

April 11, 2022

**PERCH LAKE TOWNSHIP
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gary Harms opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with a roll call. Supervisor Keith Depre hosted the meeting on Zoom.

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

Contractor: Tom DeLovely (Foreman)

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To approve the April 11, 2022, agenda as presented. Motion carried.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve the March 14, 2022, regular meeting minutes as recorded. Motion carried.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve the April 6, 2022, Board of Appeal & Equalization minutes as recorded. Motion carried

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To approve the April 7, 2022, Special Meeting for Funding of Infrastructure Projects - minutes as recorded. Motion carried.

4. ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF NOTES OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMITTEE (ARPA).

Chair Harms acknowledged receipt of the April 4, 2022, ARPA Committee meeting notes.

(Future ARPA Committee notes will be listed in the "Review and Approval of Minutes" section.)

5. GUEST INVITED BY CHAIR: HANNAH ALSTEAD, SENATOR TINA SMITH'S OFFICE.

Hannah Alstead, a representative from Senator Tina Smith's Office, could not make the meeting. However, Chair Harms reported that she contacted him and advised him to send a letter detailing the Town Board's project requests. (Alstead will visit with the Board at another time.)

6. TREASURER/CLERK REPORTS.

a. Review/Approve Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Cheri DeMenge provided the Treasurer's Report for March 2022.

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To approve the Treasurer's Report as presented with a cash balance of \$483,223.68 for the month ending March 31, 2022. Motion carried.

b. Informational Clerk's Budget Report.

- (1) Clerk Eames reported that Perch Lake Township:
 - (a) has billed the Cloquet Area Fire District \$2,906.70 for the reimbursement of Station 2 costs.
 - (b) will receive the significant funds in the first half of 2022:
 - May – approx. \$61,000 in ARPA funds.
 - June – approx. \$113,000 in property tax settlements.
- (2) Monthly Operating Budget for March 2022

Projected Revenues	\$194,367
Projected ARPA \$	61,000
Revenues Received YTD	-23,737
Not Yet Received	<u>\$231,630</u>
Projected Expenses	\$396,712
Disbursements Made YTD	-45,586
Under Budget YTD	<u>\$351,126</u>

7. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

The supervisors approved the following claims for payment:

a. Regular Claims

MOTION (Depre Olson): To approve payment of regular claims for March 2022.

Motion carried.

\$1,709.82	Late claims list for March 2022: Claim Nos. #4661-#4663
5,284.76	Regular claims list for April 1-30: Claim Nos. #4664-#4675
809.09	Employee payroll for 2022
3,890.02	Regular payroll for 2022.
<u>\$11,693.69</u>	Total

b. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Claims.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve payment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) claims:

Motion carried.

\$729.87	ARPA claims for March 14, 2022.
715.00	ARPA claims for April 11, 2022
<u>\$1,444.87</u>	Total

8. REPORTS.

a. Cloquet Area Fire District (CAFD).

Chair Harms had nothing new to report, except for the ongoing process to hire an Administrative Director.

b. Big Lake Area Sanitary District (BLASD)

Supervisor Keith Depre reported the following:

- The Township has listed the sanitary sewer project on the request list to Senator Tina Smith for infrastructure funding.
- The Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee will have a new representative from the Sawyer area; more to come after FDL’s general election. The new representative may influence the future of the sewer project.

c. Road and Bridge.

(1) Foreman Tom DeLovely had nothing new to report.

(2) Supervisor Steve Olson reported the following:

- The Township has submitted Lakeview Drive and Ditchbank Road on the request list to Senator Tina Smith for infrastructure funding.
- Carlton County is reviewing its road maintenance contracts with townships. They anticipate price increases. This will be discussed at the Carlton County Association of Township Officers (CCATO) meeting on April 26.

(3) Gary distributed a draft letter to Senator Tina Smith, dated April 11, 2022, providing details of three projects:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Ditchbank Road and Bridge Repair	\$2,000,000
Lakeview Drive	\$2,000,000
Big Lake Area Sanitary District	<u>\$20,000,000</u>
	\$24,000,000

After a brief review, the supervisory consensus was that the letter was ready to send.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Old Housekeeping Items

None.

b. American Rescue Plan Act

(1) Updates

Clerk Eames had no new updates to report. However, she did mention that the Township’s first expenditure report to the US Treasury is due by April 30, 2022.

(2/3) Report of ARPA Committee of April 6, 2022

Clerk Eames reported that she and committee members had prepared questions for the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) regarding what the Township could legally do with community events, farmers markets, and craft fairs. They had heard back from MAT Attorney Kari-Christian Johannessen on some questions and were

waiting for answers to some follow-up questions. (Eames had distributed copies of these legal opinions to Town Board and committee members.)

Based on these opinions, the committee members, by consensus, decided to:

- Avoid a voucher program for seniors since this would require a complex grant program and confidential income information from applicants. (There are other ways to support seniors in the community.)
- Put a hold on the community event at the Big Lake Resort & Golf Club due to statements from MAT on what can be done on private property.

Eames reported that committee members discussed whether they should hold a community event or a National Night Out. The distinction is important because a community event would have to be approved by the taxpayers at the next Annual Meeting in March of 2023; whereas the National Night Out event is based on an existing statute and does not require voter approval. Once committee members have decided on the type of event, they will need to consider where to hold it. They cited parking and space concerns at the Town Hall and considered the possibility of renting space elsewhere – a church parking lot or another site.

Eames discussed the combined farmers market and art/crafter fair, which committee members believe is doable. The Committee will provide details later.

Committee members will launch the “Getting to Know Your Neighbor” program by opening the Town Hall to the community from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 1, 2022. Eileen Christopherson volunteered to be the first monitor. Committee members will set up the Town Hall for coffee, refreshments, cards, games, and a book exchange. There is no planned agenda.

Both supervisors and committee members (in separate meetings) agreed that the Township should announce the “Getting to Know Your Neighbor” event by mailing a post card to residents, running a press release in the Pine Journal and Pine Knot, reserving free space on community calendars, and posting the event on the website.

Comments from supervisors:

The supervisors asked why the committee members would consider holding an event on church property (which is also private property). Committee members raised concerns about parking and space on Town Hall property. The supervisors encouraged the committee to consider holding a National Night Out on Town Hall property (and not elsewhere) for two reasons:

- The church parking lot under consideration is not a better option; in fact, it is smaller than the Town Hall parking lot.
- The concerns about parking on Big Lake Road should not be a big issue.

Harms asked if afternoons in the “Getting to Know Your Neighbor” program would encourage more persons to come. DeMenge responded that the committee would put out a suggestion box to see if residents preferred different hours.

Supervisors questioned the committee’s interpretation of the MAT Attorney’s opinion that the Township could not hold an event on private property. Committee members

should check further. The problem may lie in what the Township can use tax dollars for, not necessarily where.

c. Report on Spring Short Courses Held Virtually March 15 and March 16.

Depre, Harms, and Olson attended the supervisory course virtually. (DeMenge and Jeanette Olson attended the Clerk/Treasurer course virtually.)

The supervisors reported that one topic of interest was how townships acquire and manage cemeteries. They briefly discussed the status of Perch Lake Cemetery, located on Twin Lakes Drive - whether it was a public or private cemetery. This could be important if someone asks the Township to take over and/or maintain the cemetery. Clerk Eames reported that she knows the cemetery sexton is Eric Holte; also, she was sure the cemetery is managed by a nonprofit.

The supervisors were open to hearing from Perch Lake Cemetery. However, no one from the cemetery has approached the Board.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. New Housekeeping Items

None.

b. Set Date for Road Inspection Tour

The supervisors set a tentative road inspection tour date of 9:00 a.m., Monday, April 25, 2022.

c. Review/Approve Quote for Townhall Gutter Protection.

Chair Harms discussed the problem with the gutters – too high over the fire hall side of the building. Al Soukkala previously cleaned the gutters. Now they are plugged up and no one can safely clean them. So, Harms provided a quote from Gutter Helmet:

Gutter Helmet of Northern Minnesota
4971 McComber Road
Duluth, MN 55803

Original	\$9,702.00
Discount promotion	\$1,940.00
Total	\$7,762.00

After some discussion, the supervisors wondered if the Station 2 staff could help clean the gutters for now. (Harms will check with the CAFD Chief Buhs.) Also, Olson would like to do additional research.

d. Request from Ulland Brothers to Waive 5% Bond on Contract.

Chair Harms opened discussion by stating that Ulland Brothers has signed a contract for the Watkins Spur Paving Project. Their contract already includes a bond.

Supervisor Olson reported that Ulland had contacted him a couple of weeks ago and asked to have the requirement waived because of the short duration of the project.

The supervisors pointed out that most governmental entities require bonds. In addition, Omar's Sand & Gravel submitted a business check of 5% instead of a bond. Supervisors declined to discuss the matter further.

e. Removal of Shed on Steve Watkin's Property Prior to Road Construction

Resident Steve Watkins had previously signed a document authorizing the Township to remove the shed from his property prior to the Watkins Spur construction. The Board left the removal of the shed out of the project because they thought it would be easy to have someone take it. However, they recently became aware that insurance was an issue.

Therefore, they asked Foreman Tom DeLovely to remove and dispose of the shed as part of his contract. (They needed no motion since this was consistent with DeLovely's contract.)

f. Discussion/Action to Hire Sewer Designer for Evaluation of Town Hall Septic.

Harms mentioned that the County has a list of vendors. Olson justified the need to hire a sewer designer – the Town Board must determine if there is an appropriate spot for a septic, considering the separation from the well.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve a contract with DeCaigny Excavating, Inc., for the site evaluation and design of the Perch Lake Town Hall septic system; provided that if Matt DeCaigny is unable to complete the work, the Road Supervisor should select another designer from the County's list. Motion carried.

Supervisors needed the evaluation to determine their next step – whether to continue with a holding tank for take the next steps to acquire land from the adjacent propertyowner Sandra Warpula. In addition, Olson noted that the expense would be taken from ARPA funds.

g. FDL Communications: Utility Permit

Olson reported that FDL Communications has revised its original permit; they will be laying more fiber optic on Township roads, namely Kotiranta Road, Salmi Road, Twin Lakes Drive, and Enger Road. He recommended approval of the permit.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve a new permit for Fond Du Lac Communications for laying of fiber optic cable in Township roads. Motion carried.

11. VISITOR COMMENTS

Olson discussed the mechanism for converting a private road to a township road – one must bring a private road up to standard (at his/her own expense), obtain signatures on a petition; then, bring it to the Annual Meeting for a vote. He advocated for having standards on what the Town Board would accept.

12. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Harms adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Town Board

Lora Eames, Clerk

Gary Harms, Chair