

January 8, 2024

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gary Harms opened the January 8, 2024, regular 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 and Guest:

Tom DeLovely, Foreman
Eric Senarighi, Carlton County Riders ATV Club

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

MOTION (DePre/Olson): To approve the January 8, 2024, regular agenda with one change - to move Item 8f "Carlton County Riders ATV" to Item 6-1. Motion carried.

3. RECEIPT/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION (Olson/DePre): To approve the December 11, 2023, regular meeting minutes as recorded. Motion carried.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT.

a. Treasurer Cheri DeMenge provided the Treasurer's Report for December 2023.

MOTION (DePre/Olson): To approve the Treasurer's Report as presented with a cash balance of \$283,425.43 for the period ending December 31, 2023. Motion carried.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

Supervisors approved the regular claims and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) claims for payment.

a. Regular Claims

MOTION (Olson/DePre): To approve the payment of regular claims. Motion carried.

\$765.77	Late claims list for December 11, 2023: #5042 - #5043
\$5,714.08	Regular claims list for January 8, 2024: Claims #5044 - #5062
\$1,126.04	Employee payroll for January 5, 2024
\$1,943.51	Regular payroll for January 8, 2024
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\$9,549.40	Total

b. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Claims.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve payment of ARPA claims. Motion carried

\$225.00 Total

6-1. DISCUSSION: CARLTON COUNTY RIDERS ATV

Eric Senarighi, President of the Carlton County Riders ATV Club recalled when he was here in November of 2017 to support the Township’s passage of the ATV ordinance. Since then, the club has taken over the Fond du Lac State Forest trails and maintains all the trails from within Cloquet to Cromwell to Brookston. The club would like to establish the Ditchbank Road as a designated ATV route for purposes of mapping and signing.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve Res. No. 2024-007, authorizing the Carlton County ATV Riders Club to designate Ditchbank Road (the portion for which Perch Lake Township is responsible) as an official route from Cloquet to the Fond Du Lac State Forest trails. Motion carried.

The Township and club will cooperate to ensure that signs comply with the township’s road ordinance.

6-2 REPORTS

a. Cloquet Area Fire District (CAFD).

Harms had nothing new for the past month.

b. Big Lake Area Sanitary District (BLASD)

Supervisor Depre had nothing new to report.

c. Road and Bridge.

(1) Tom DeLovely, Foreman

No report.

(2) Steve Olson, Road & Bridge Supervisor

Olson reported that the County called about abandoned mailbox posts on Hardwood Lake Road.

(3) Discussion

Depre commented that recently, County maintenance trucks have not been used efficiently on township roads – i.e., trucks driving on Sundays with no snow and performing only minor tasks or driving on snow-covered roads without clearing the roads. He recommended that the Board should follow up with the County.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Old Housekeeping.

None.

b. American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Committee (Treasurer DeMenge):

(1) Yoga Classes

DeMenge asked the Board to approve five yoga classes at the Town Hall beginning in February, with expenses to be shared by ARPA and class participants. After a brief discussion, the supervisors approved the yoga classes.

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To authorize five yoga classes to be held by instructor Katie Swanson at Perch Lake Town Hall on Wednesdays, February 7 - March 6, 2024. Each class participant will pay \$10 directly to the instructor with the rest to be covered by ARPA funds. Motion carried.

(2) ARPA Balance Use of Funds

DeMenge estimated the current ARPA balance to be \$1,218.35.

Depre asked the Clerk and Treasurer to check if the funds originally authorized for a community gathering by a Town Board motion (May 8, 2023) must be “repurposed” by motion for the classes. (Eames will research the matter.)

c. Remove Connors Road from Certified Road Miles List to County

Perch Lake Township has not maintained Connors Road for years but has always included its portion of the road (without miles) on the Annual Certified Road Miles List. On October 9, 2023, the supervisors passed a motion authorizing the Clerk to seek guidance from Town Attorney Troy Gilchrist - should the Town Board undergo a formal abandonment process to remove the road from the list, or should they just remove it without any additional steps?

On December 12, 2023, Township Attorney Troy Gilchrist responded by email:

“If the town has not maintained the road for at least 25 years, then it is statutorily prohibited from doing so unless the electors vote at the annual meeting to allow the board to spend money on it. Since the town is not maintaining it, the road should not be included in the road miles reported to the county. When filling out the report, the town can eliminate it from the list and, to the extent the board acts on this list before submitting it, the board should just note in the minutes before making the motion that the road has been removed because is not maintained by the town. No other process is required to remove it from this list since that is just about the allocation of gas tax funds for town roads...”

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To remove Connors Road from the Perch Lake Township’s Certified Road Miles List to Carlton County. Motion carried.

d. Review/Approval of Draft Summary of Expenses before Submission for State Disaster Declaration 2023-SD-070.

Supervisors reviewed a draft claim to be submitted to the state for the reimbursement of township expenses for recovery from the winter storm of December 13-16, 2022. Eames and Olson worked on it together – Eames provided claim documents and Olson provided the narrative, maps, and photos.

Total expenses	\$78,766.11
Expected reimbursement (75%)	\$59,074.58

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve the draft summary of expenses for Storm Disaster 2023-SD-070, dated January 8, 2024, for submission to Wayne Lamoreaux, PE, Homeland Security & Emergency Management, 445 Minnesota Street #223, St. Paul, MN 55101. The summary included total expenses of \$78,716.11 and an expected reimbursement of 75%, or \$59,037.08.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. New Housekeeping

None

b. Consent Agenda.

The supervisors approved the consent agenda with one motion without discussion or debate.

MOTION (Olson/Depre): To approve the following items on the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.

- (1) Approval of schedule of regular meeting dates for 2024, to include the designation of Monday, October 14, 2024, Columbus Day, as a non-holiday for the purpose of conducting public business. *Stat. 645.44, Subdiv. 3*
- (2) Approval of compensation and mileage (as needed) for officers and deputies attending training and non-regular meetings, including online courses. *Stat. 367.05, Stat. 471.665.*
- (3) Approval of additional posting sites for meetings and other notices besides the Town Hall and Recycling Shed - Big Lake Golf Club, Lounge on Big Lake Shores, Sawyer Community Center (if open), and website. *Stat. 366.01, Subdiv. 8.*
- (4) Designation of Town's depositories: Frandsen Bank, Members Cooperative Credit Union, and Cornerstone State Bank as an alternative if needed. *Stat. 118A.02.*
- (5) Designation of Town's official newspaper as the Pine Knot. *Stat. 331A.04.*
- (6) Adoption of 2024 IRS standard mileage rate. *Stat. 471.665, Subdiv. 1; Stat. 367.05.*

c. Annual Resolutions Authorizing Contracts with Interested Officers

The supervisors reviewed annual resolutions authorizing contracts with interested officers.

- (1) **MOTION (Depre/Olson):** To approve Res. No. 2024-001, authorizing a contract with interested officer, Supervisor Gary Harms. Motion carried.
2 in favor/1 abstaining – Harms.
- (2) **MOTION (Olson/Depre):** To approve Res. No. 2024-002, authorizing a contract with interested officer, Treasurer Cheri DeMenge. Motion carried.
- (3) **MOTION (Depre/Olson):** To approve Res. No. 2024-003, authorizing a contract with interested officer, Clerk Lora Eames. Motion carried.

- (4) **MOTION (Depre/Harms):** To approve Res. No. 2024-004, authorizing a contract with spouse of interested officer, Supervisor Steve Olson.
2 in favor/1 abstaining – Olson.
- (5) **MOTION (Harms/Olson):** To approve Res. No. 2024-005, authorizing a contract with interested officer, Supervisor Keith Depre. Motion carried.
2 in favor/1 abstaining - Depre.
- (6) **MOTION (Depre/Olson):** To approve Res. No. 2024-006, authorizing a contract with spouse of interested officer, Clerk Lora Eames. Motion carried.

d. Annual Town Board Election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

MOTION (Depre/Olson): To approve the re-election of Gary Harms as Chair and Steve Olson as Vice-Chair. Motion carried.

e. Annual Town Board Member Selection of Assignments.

The supervisors made no motion to change current assignments.

f. Carlton County Riders ATV Club – Ditchbank Road & Designated Route

Moved to Item 6-1.

9. VISITOR COMMENTS.

Resident Kurt Besser asked about Connors Road. Olson explained that the Township’s portion of Connors Road going west from Reponen Road has been on the Certified Mileage List for years (listed without miles). Today, the Town Board passed a motion to remove Connors from the list. No one has done maintenance on the road for 25+ years; in fact, it is underwater now. The Town Board’s motion does not rescind an existing road order. The Board has no plans to rebuild the road, and they could not do so without approval from electors at an Annual Meeting.

Supervisors and residents noted that Enbridge is on the road now, doing preparatory work to take out the old line this summer.

Treasurer DeMenge announced that the Certificate of Deposit (CD) will mature soon, and she asked if she should check available rates. Depre offered a motion to authorize DeMenge to obtain the best rate and reinvest the CD. After some discussion, Harms asked if this discussion could wait until the next meeting. DeMenge explained that she would have to take action soon. (She had not received timely notice of the pending maturity date.) Supervisors agreed that she should check available rates, but no one officially seconded Depre’s motion and Chair Harms did not call for a vote.

10. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Harms adjourned the meeting at approximately 07:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Town Board

Lora Eames, Clerk

Gary Harms, Chair