

**MINUTES
UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 14, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Present: Bernstein, DeLoach, Groschen, Pehrson; Advisor: Christopherson;
Commissioner: McCune; Public Works Director: Reed

Absent: Fredericks without notice.

The meeting was held at the Town Offices Conference Room. Present there was the Town Clerk. The others were present via telephone conference. It was decided that though the Commission could meet in person to conduct the June meeting legally, the members preferred continuing via phone conference. The motions, seconds, and votes were stated by roll call as directed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Additions/Deletions): Hesse moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Bernstein seconded. Ayes all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 2020: DeLoach moved the approval of the May 14, 2020 minutes. Bernstein seconded. Ayes all.

CONSENT AGENDA: Bernstein moved to approve of the Consent Agenda as follows: 4A) Receive Utility Billing Payment Analysis; 4B) Receive Quarterly Sewer & Water Report; 4C) Receive Republic Services Monthly Service Report; 4D) Receive Quarterly Water Efficiency Rebate Reports; 4E) Receive Solid Waste Abatement Report. Pehrson seconded. Ayes all. There was discussion on the E-bill increase in the Utility Billing Payment Analysis and the calculated leaks and per capita usage in the Quarterly Sewer and Water Report.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner McCune was present to report on the Township's preparation to begin **crack sealing** and preparing for the **2020 street improvements**. He noted that due to the current environment of the global pandemic, the Town is taking advantage of the **competitive prices** that came in for bid on the project. The plan is to capitalize on the funding and bond rates to finish other improvements around the Town at the same time.

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McCune noted that **North Oaks Company** is looking to develop smaller developments along Centerville Road this year. Further north along Centerville Road, at County Road J near the I-35 exits there will be some **temporary traffic signals** implemented. Temporary means not permanent, but it was noted that the signals will be up until a master plan is created and implemented, which could be 3 or more years.

Township staff is working remotely and rotating staff in the office. Public Works staff are out, but adhering to the social distancing guidelines. The Township is continuing to modernize the office with **updated financial reporting software** sometime in the near future.

There was some discussion over the utility rate structure and it was noted that the structure will be revisited in the fall. The resident who was concerned with the rates was happy with that. The Township Attorney is working on new language over who is responsible for each curb stop. Both of these concerns came up while installing the new water meters. Absentee voting was discussed, but it was noted that the Township doesn't deal with voting, Ramsey County does. It was noted that Heritage Hall is still a viable spot for the voting procedures this fall, as residents can wait outside, and then maintain the social distancing inside. It will simply take a bit longer.

OTTER LAKE ELEMENTARY SPRINKLING: The Town Clerk reported that Supervisor Ruzek had brought this agenda item to his attention. Fifteen to 20 years ago Otter Lake Elementary school had updated the athletic fields. A deal was constructed that instead of providing capital in the form of cash, the Township would pay for the water usage on the fields. Ruzek brought this to Christopherson's attention to discuss with the Utility Commission because it has been so long since the deal has been made, perhaps the value is done. The Commission discussed this agenda item. It was noted that the school pays for the water consumption on the premises everywhere else except the athletic fields. There was discussion over the school's staff's ability to conserve water as there is no automated watering system. There was discussion of how the Elementary School is used for other Township activities, like holding the annual meeting and spring clean-up day. It was decided that staff will work on obtaining more information regarding this agenda item: the school's staff's opinion on installing an irrigation control system, some comparisons of water usage on the athletic fields verses athletic fields that the Town maintains, how much money the Town has paid for over the years as a result of this deal, etc. There will be more discussion at the June meeting.

Bernstein motioned to swap the Public Works Director Report for the Republic Services discussion in the order of the agenda. Hesse seconded. Ayes all.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT: The Public Works Director was present to report on the Public Works Department Activity for February 2020 through April 2020. There was some discussion over questions the Commission had. Regarding water meters, it was noted there are 84 installs left to schedule. This is currently on pause due to COVID-19. The Town Finance Analyst is working on getting details together for the

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next meeting. Residents without the new water meter installed were charged \$300 at the first quarter, but it was noted that no bills have gone out due to COVID-19. The non-responses go straight to the Ramsey County taxes.

There was discussion on the leaks from the consent agenda item Quarterly Sewer & Water Report. It was noted that the number could have gone down from the new water meters, but the formula for finding the numbers hasn't changed. It was noted that staff will revisit the calculation to make sure.

Reed reported that the **Hammond Road water tower** that was painted last year, will have to be drained this summer for the 1-year inspection of the paint. **Storm Water Projects for 2020** were reviewed and reported on: reestablish drainage flow along north side of railroad tracks between Division Street and Eagle Street; Water Quality Improvements to storm water discharge locations at both Park Street (Outfall 6) and St. Anthony Avenue (Outfall 5); Replace storm pipe running from Leibel Street under Highway 61 and the railroad tracks. It was noted that the outfalls have been talked about for a couple years, but things worked out with grant money for this year. The **Water System Improvement for 2020** was discussed. This project will start soon. The contractor is currently on site doing some well rehab work on Well 4. Reed explained how the well rehab goes. After another week of the rehab, the rest will begin. This project will help the Town blend water better to better ensure water quality. This project came about due to the levels of Manganese, a naturally occurring element, found in Township water to have been too high for infants. This was discovered in early 2019 and was corrected immediately through staff diligence and running the pumps consistently, mixing the water. This project will put less strain on the pumps.

REPUBLIC SERVICES – COLLECTION DISCUSSION – SPRING CLEAN-UP: The Town Clerk wanted to ask if the Commission had any questions or discussion of the scuffle at the beginning of the pandemic with the recycling company changing procedures, but then complying to previously set procedures. It was decided that it was just a panic of the current environment. One of the members noted he had ordered a different receptacle, which incurred a higher fee, but he hadn't received the receptacle, though he ordered it 2 months prior and the fee was implemented 2 months prior.

The Town Clerk spoke with Township representative Mathiasen that day and she discussed proceeding in the spring clean-up date but is putting together a report on how social distancing will be able to be implemented. The date is set for June 20th. There was discussion of postponing it or cancelling it. If the Town cancels the event, the SCORE funds will be lost. There was discussion of the process so far: all Republic staff will have personal protective equipment; there will be signage placed noting residents of the changes; most residents shouldn't have to exit their vehicles; any documentation such as utility bills and licenses can be shown through the glass window of the cars; there should be two locations one for recycling one for trash; etc.

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It was decided that the decision should be made at a later date, and once the Commission is up to date with Mathiasen's report. Bernstein motioned to adjourn at 7:25. Hesse seconded. Ayes all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan R. Cavanaugh
Recording Secretary