

**January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002**  
**Rockford Township**  
**Regular Meeting**

The January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 regular Township meeting was held at the Rockford Town Hall. Members present were Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Taylor was absent. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge to the Flag was recited.

The Board reviewed the agenda and moved the continued items after item #6 on the agenda, and added an item #11 – culvert on 30<sup>th</sup> Street. The agenda was then adopted with the changes. Minutes from the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and the December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001 emergency meeting for funds transfer were distributed to all Board members prior to the meeting for review. Motion by Beise second Walker to accept both sets of minutes as printed. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

Greg Eckblad was in attendance to discuss with the Board the possibility of a variance on one of his lots. The Board suggested a site inspection. Motion by Beise second Walker to have a site inspection to check the setbacks on Mr. Eckblad's property, on January 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. on Halsey Avenue. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

Ward Huston was present to inquire about the possibility of changing the zoning on a property he is interested in purchasing. The property is 9-acres located at 55 & Division, the SW corner and zoned residential Large Lot. Mr. Huston was requesting to change the zoning to B1 for mini storage and a u-pick pumpkin farm. The Board informed Mr. Huston that changing zoning of property in the land use plan is really hard to accomplish. The Board stated that there is a small possibility of changing the zoning if a hardship to the land is proven. The Board brought up reviewing the land use plan due to the changes within the Township and the 55-corridor project. Motion by Wetter second Beise to set a special meeting to review the Township's land use plan, and to possibly make some recommendations. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried. Special meeting for the land use plan will be held February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at 4:00 p.m. The Board suggested for Mr. Huston to keep in touch with the office regarding the land use plan.

The west side of Dean Lake (20<sup>th</sup> Street SE) was discussed. The Board will start to gather information on a possible land acquisition in order to possibly build a cul-de-sac so the Township plow and grader can turn around. Motion by Beise second Walker to table this item until the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting so more information can be obtained. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

**Continued Items:**

Final draft of the Annexation Compensation Policy was passed out for approval. Motion by Beise second McDougall to go along with the Attorney and accept the Annexation Compensation Policy contingent upon improving the policy in the future, and start working with the Cities. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker Opposed none, motion carried. McDougall thought it was a good starting point in working with

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the cities and will help with communication. The Chair will set up a meeting with the City and Township's Annexation Task Forces.

Job Descriptions continued from the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 meeting. Motion by Beise second Walker to table until the January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 meeting, the Chair amended the motion to include that this item **will** be voted on at the next meeting. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

Utility Companies/Township Road Ordinance – Continued from December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 meeting. It was brought to the attention of the Board by the Maintenance Crew that something needed to be done about low utility wires. It was mentioned that the Township had some kind of ordinance/policy regarding a 19ft from ground to wire span so that the plow boxes do not cut the wires when sanding. Motion by Beise second McDougall to send letters to the utility companies informing them of the ordinance/policy, and invite a representative out from each company to show the problem the Crew is having with the wires, and any company that does not respond to the letter will be in violation of the ordinance/policy. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried. As far as the utility ordinance was concerned Motion by McDougall second Beise to review information, put together an ordinance parallel to the County's ordinance, have the Attorney review it, and bring back to the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

Residential problems in the right-of-way – Continued from the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 meeting. The Chair asked to have the item put on the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, because he has not checked out the problems as of yet.

Discussion of the petition received at the December 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 meeting regarding the position of the Clerk/Treasurer going from a hired or appointed position back to an elected position. The following discussion went back and forth so many times that the Clerk grouped the points everyone wanted to make individually. Supervisor Beise stated he had no idea about the petition until the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 meeting, and could not believe that 3 Board Members signed it. Beise said if this was such a big problem for the 3 Board Members why didn't the whole Board discuss it at a meeting. Beise heard of no problems or complaints about the office, or the Clerk. Beise asked Supervisor Wetter who carried the petition. Beise also stated that at least with an appointed (hired) Clerk/Treasurer you get qualified people verses elected in which you might get a person who does not know anything. Supervisor McDougall stated she had no idea about the petition until the December 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 meeting, and was shocked by the names that made up the petition, especially that 3 out of 5 Board members signed it. McDougall said she planned on talking with some the residents who signed the petition. Supervisor McDougall also wanted to know from Supervisor Wetter who started the petition, and that she had no problem with putting the question on the ballot, but wanted to know **why** the citizens wanted the position elected instead of appointed.

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Supervisor Wetter in response to Supervisor Beise, and McDougall said that Duane Rolstad started the petition, and he (Wetter) just helped getting the language for the petition. No explanation as to **why** the citizens wanted the position elected was given. Wetter said that the choice of an elected Clerk or appointed Clerk should be given back to the residents to vote on. Supervisor Wetter in response to a resident's question about the advantages of the position being elected and not appointed said the position would not be tied to pay equity. Wetter also pointed out that the Clerk's Office has turned over every 2 years, just the same as an elected Clerk. The citizen asked why the Township has gone through 2 hired Clerks; Wetter did not want to comment on this issue. The citizen responded that the Township needed continuity in the one very important position that keeps the Township unit together, and was giving up that continuity worth going back to an elected position. The same citizen stated that it doesn't make sense to train someone in every two years. The citizen mentioned the majority of signatures on the petition were from the 3 Supervisor's families, and that it looks like 3 families are trying to make decisions for the whole Township.

Supervisor Walker said he didn't mind signing the petition because it allows the people to vote on the option. Walker commented he delivered a signed petition to Supervisor Wetter.

Another citizen stated that all this was voted on 5-6 years ago and passed, why would the Township want to go backwards. He stated it makes sense to have someone in the position that doesn't have to be retrained every 2 years and knows what he or she is doing. The citizen also said that the present Clerk does not live in the Township so there is no political b.s. going on, which is why the whole a issue was voted on 5-6 years ago.

Supervisor Wetter asked if there were any more comments, there were no more, which ended the discussion.

Setting of the Board of Audit and the Wage/Benefit/Appointment meetings. The Clerk told the Board they needed to set a date for the above meetings. Monday January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at 4:00 at the hall was decided. The Clerk will post notice.

The Chair asked the Clerk if she wanted to discuss the Clerk's office to be an open or closed session. The Clerk wanted it open. The Chair wanted to know about reports from C-TAS, the software from the State of Minnesota, the Clerk's Office uses. The Chair wanted to know why there were funds transferred when it seemed there was enough money. The Clerk explained that the Auditor's report was used which had the general fund in a deficit at the end of 2000. The Clerk consulted the Auditor who recommended not having a starting balance every year with a deficit, and said a transfer of funds could be done at the end of the year or at the Board of Audit meeting, it was up the Clerk how they wanted the books to read at the end of the year. The Clerk agreed with the Chair that looking at the funds report after the fact, it looked like there was enough money, but was confused when comparing the auditor's report. The Clerk stated she felt rushed to have this information, and that she was never trained in on budget/funds

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deficits, and she takes C-TAS classes when ever offered at Township seminars, which seem to help a lot in the job. The Clerk did inform the Board that there would be budget reports at the Board of Audit meeting. No other complaints or comments were noted.

The culvert on 30<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. was discussed. The Board agreed that the Township, if possible, should have who ever the County bids to carry out the project, also do the Township's culvert. It was also mentioned that cement culverts, although more money, were more durable in the long run.

**Public Comments:** Paul Aarestad from 45<sup>th</sup> Street S.E., presented to the Board a signed letter against the raising of 45<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. above the 100-year flood mark. A group of residents were requesting the Board to carefully reconsider the impact of proceeding with the project. The Board did inform Mr. Aarestad that the Township is working with County Soil & Water. Meeting with the 45<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. residents was mentioned. Mr. Aarestad also wanted to thank the Crew for keeping the road plowed, and that they did a great job.

Pam Kelley was inquiring about the web page, and how there has been no changes on the way it looks in 10 months, when pictures of the Township were supposed to be on the website. Mrs. Kelley did not know that the Clerk received some information from the web-master and that he was supposedly working on the pictures this week. Mrs. Kelley also stated that she disagreed with the web-master regarding digital cameras, and that digital cameras are nicer than a 35mm.

**Supervisors:**

**Karen:** Handed out a draft of the newsletter, and have any comments back to her by 10:00 a.m. January 9<sup>th</sup>. Discussed Highway 55 Corridor meeting. Informed the Board that the ceiling tiles were going to be done this week.

**Matt:** Will check out a pilot program with the State of Minnesota and a wireless Internet access for the Township.

**Dennis:** Also discussed the Highway 55 Corridor meeting. Informed the Board that the mini storage plan by the car dealership was voted down because it was not in the land plan.

**Leander:** Set the Land Use Plan meeting for February 5<sup>th</sup> 2002 at 4:00 at the hall.

**Maintenance Crew:** Informed the Board they met with Soil & Water regarding the culvert off of Halsey by the lake. Soil & Water did not recommend the Township doing anything with it due to it being off the right-of-way.

**Clerk:** Cross Roads Animal Shelter dropped off a contract for the Board to modify to fit the Townships needs. The Clerk wanted feed back at the next meeting. The Clerk might take off the holiday on January 21<sup>st</sup> because her kids have no school.

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Motion by Beise second Walker to approve the funds report totaling \$491,915.38 as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001 in checking, savings, CD's, petty cash, minus dedicated funds. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise, McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried. Motion by Beise second Walker to approve payments from 12/12/01 through 12/31/01 totaling \$4,751.02 paid by checks #10289 through #10312, and payments from 1/1/02-1/8/02 totaling 6,170.90 paid by checks #10313 through #10332. Voting in favor Wetter, Beise McDougall and Walker. Opposed none, motion carried.

All agenda items being completed and being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

*Sandra O. Wetter*  
Chair

*Lee Bohall*  
Clerk