

TOWNSHIP OF CLAY
CLAY TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
JULY 28, 2021, 6:00 PM
18650-290th STREET
PARK RAPIDS, MN

1. CALL TO ORDER: The July 28th, 2021, Meeting of the Clay Township Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Andy Kietzman, and those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL: Present: Chair Andy Kietzman, Supervisors Jeff Haukebo and Norm Leistikow, Treasurer Del Holz, and Clerk Margie Vik. Absent: None. Others Present: Hubbard County Commissioner Ted Van Kempen, Betty Haukebo, Alice Holz, and Marty Leistikow.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Clay Township Regular Meeting Minutes-May 26, 2021: A motion was made by Haukebo, seconded by Kietzman, and unanimously carried to approve the Clay Township Regular Meeting Minutes for May 26th, 2021, as presented.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Update on Hubbard County Issues: Ted Van Kempen stated, I am the Hubbard County Commissioner of District Five. I was appointed to the position in 2019. Prior to that I was a supervisor for Schoolcraft Township for 15 years. My goal is to build a relationship with all of the township boards. Because of the onset of COVID-19 my goal was interrupted.

Van Kempen informed the township that there are grant funds available through the American Rescue Plan for COVID related expenses. Your request for funds must be submitted by September 10th, 2021, in order to be considered. Mary Thompson from HLDC would be available to help you with the grant application. If the funds are not distributed, they will be used according to the county's discretion.

Van Kempen stated the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is attempting to acquire what is called the Old Sheep Ranch. The county is also looking at acquiring it. Someone has offered to purchase the land and anonymously give it to the state or county with the stipulation that it be used for camping, trails, ski hall, recreation, but no developments. They want it to remain for conservation purposes. There are still many unanswered questions surrounding the acquisition.

Kietzman stated if the property goes into a nontax status, the township would lose a percentage of our property taxes. But, if the property could receive PILK funds, that would offset our tax loss. The county gives the townships 10% of PILK funds, but they are not limited to that figure. If we could receive 15%, we would be okay. I think adding land to our natural areas is

important. I don't want to see it split up into smaller parcels. If we could find a way to adjust the PILK funds that would be key for our township.

Haukebo stated remember when Potlatch owned the land and privately leased it out, a lot of people were locked out. Taxes are important, but they are not the only thing. Van Kempen stated if Val Chatel was opened for recreation, it would increase the number of tourists visiting the area. Yet, if you can't create a viable business, how much do you spend? The estimate for the demo of Val Chatel is \$150,000. I feel that is not enough and the actual cost could be as high as \$400,000.00, which would have to come out of county park funds. Haukebo questioned if you don't use it for that, what would you spend it on? Van Kempen stated we could lower taxes, or use funds for the sheriff's department, community health, or social services. County timber sales are used for parks and recreation, so there are limited funds.

Kietzman stated there are too many unknowns. I can see the benefits with a campground in Clay Township. A ski hill would be beneficial to the scout camp, but at what cost? I'm interested to see where things go. I'm supportive of outdoor recreational opportunities. That's why we all live here. Van Kempen stated I lived in the Twin Cities. My wife and I moved up here for the outdoors and the recreational opportunities. But this purchase has to be thought out thoroughly. Kietzman stated people in this area support those types of businesses. They draw people here. That's a benefit besides the tax base, and once they visit, they may settle here.

Van Kempen stated I hope there will be grants available and I wonder if the county should be competing with other campgrounds in the area. We are currently dealing with establishing an ordinance for short term rentals in the county. We have to find a happy medium for everyone. When you rent a house, you have expectations that the water is good, etc. It should be a fair playing field. Kietzman stated we already have state run campgrounds, are we maxed out on camping spots? Van Kempen stated I now have an understanding of how you feel about the Sheep Ranch and can relay that to the county board. The supervisors thanked him for coming.

B. Gambling Permit: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, and unanimously carried to approve a gambling permit for UFFDA for a raffle on October 2nd, 2021.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Township Construction Update: Kietzman stated the town hall construction contract is almost completed. We need a sign, some landscaping work. The chairs should be delivered soon. I'll work on getting for blinds for the windows if we have enough funds left. We need to seed for grass. We'll also look into getting a table for the board depending on what funds we have remaining. As we begin to use the facility, we'll add to it as needed. Haukebo questioned if we had insurance yet. Kietzman answered no not yet. We'll start looking for that with MATIT.

Haukebo questioned are we going to allow the public to use the building? That could affect the insurance coverage. When the committee talked about building, it was discussed to not compete with Mantrap Valley Conservation Club (MVCC). What does our constituency want? Del Holz stated we should allow non-profits, and family gathering for our residents to use it. Kietzman stated we built the hall and the septic tank with the expectation there would not be high usage here. If we have to start pumping the tank, we'll have to figure that out too. Who would be responsible for damages? Haukebo stated I talked to Al Bruins and he didn't seem to think the competition would be a problem for MVCC. I'm wondering if there would be a fire

requirement. Kietzman stated we'd have to be inspected by a fire marshal to answer that. I'll check on the insurance issue and the fire marshal issue. Haukebo stated I'll check on if the property tax exemption status would change with rental use.

B. Road Work: Kietzman stated Carr's Tree Service has finished the road work on Jigsaw Drive right on budget.

7. APPROVAL OF TREASURERS REPORT: Holz presented his written treasurer's report to the board (see attached). Holz stated I received four additional invoices not included in the report. \$30.00 for HCTA dues on check #2265, \$8.92 for MAT conference call on check #2266, \$130.99 for Superior Locksmith on check #2267, and \$1,500.00 for Carr's Tree Service on check #2268. The new total for expenditures is \$15,711.19.

A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, and unanimously carried to approve the treasurer's report and to pay the outstanding invoices.

8. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

Chair Andy Kietzman

Township Clerk Margie M. Vik