

**TOWNSHIP OF CLAY
CLAY TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 16, 2022, 6:00 PM
18650-290th STREET
PARK RAPIDS, MN**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The November 16th, 2022, 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 Mike Lichter, Treasurer Del Holz, and Clerk Margie Vik. Absent: None. Others Present: Kristine Case and Kent Wolf.

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-September 28, 2022: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Lichter, and unanimously carried to approve the Clay Township Regular Meeting Minutes for September 28th, 2022, as presented.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Acquisition of Property from TCF: DNR representative Kent Wolf stated the issue to purchase property from Potlach was first presented to the Clay Township Board back in 2018. We would like affirmation from the board that you are still willing to support the purchase. Potlach sold their properties in question to the conservation fund (TCF). The state has reviewed all of the available parcels and have picked the ones that they want, which includes the property known as the “Sheep Ranch”, that is located in Clay Township. This purchase has been fast tracked because it is of special interest to us. The payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) that are being presented tonight will change over time. We believe the TCF has the best intentions for this property. Support was acknowledged by Clay Township for this purchase back in 2018. We are looking for a renewed letter of support from the board.

Kietzman questioned will the state ever acquire sections 12 and 13, the property in between the Paul Bunyan Forest and the Sheep Ranch? It seems logical to tie all those lands together for public use. Wolf answered he didn’t know.

Haukebo questioned how would the Deep Lake Park be affected by this? Wolf stated the county is aware of the proposed project and we are working with them on their acquisition.

A motion was made by Haukebo, seconded by Kietzman, approving a letter of support be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the purchase of the property known as the “Sheep Ranch”, located in Clay Township.

Discussion: Kietzman stated the township has always expressed strong interest in public lands for recreation. With this purchase 2,500 acres will stay in one piece, which is in line with the township’s interests. Haukebo questioned are there any strings attached to this purchase? Wolf stated the belief is that development will not be allowed on the parcel, and that the state will manage the timber land. Once purchased by the state, the property will become non-taxable and the township will receive PILT dollars to compensate for that. At the time of purchase the land will be assessed a new value, and then will be reassessed every five years. A minimum of 10% of the PILT generated from the parcel will go to the township. There is a portion of the funds that are discretionary and are controlled by the county. A township doesn’t do as well with a PILT payment as opposed to taxable land, but you can approach the county to ask for special considerations. Kietzman stated there is potential to do that down the road. The change for the township would be fairly minimal. If the Sheep Ranch land goes public, the proposed Deep Lake Park would be popular for campers. It would be a very nice campsite within the Paul Bunyan Forest.

The vote was called.

The following Supervisors voted yes: Haukebo, Kietzman.

The following Supervisors voted no: None.

The following Supervisor abstained: Lichter.

The motion carried 2-0.

The clerk was instructed to email a letter of support of the property’s purchase to DNR Representative Kent Wolf.

B. Liquor License: A motion was made by Lichter, seconded by Kietzman, and unanimously carried to approve the renewal of an on/off sale 3.2 beer license and an on-sale wine/strong beer license for Emmaville Store/Café.

C. Zoning Issue: Haukebo stated Chip Lohmeier, from Hubbard County, wanted to know how the Deep Lake Campground project fits into Clay Township’s zoning ordinance. The property in question is currently zoned conservation. Clay has two zones, rural residential and conservation. Resorts and camp grounds are allowed in the residential zone, and public parks and playgrounds in the conservation district. We could either amend the zoning code and put the campground usage in the conservation district, or we could change the property zoning to rural residential, where it is allowed. Either option would require holding a public hearing.

Kietzman stated he is currently serving on the Deep Lake Steering Committee. They are planning to allow tent camping close to the lake. Further away from the lake they will have drive through gravel pads for campers and RVs, one dozen sites for tents and one dozen for campers. There will be an opportunity for fishing, but maybe no motors, only canoes or kayaks. They are also putting in a fat tire bike trail, and will have cross country ski trails.

Haukebo added there will also be a separate campground for four wheelers and ATVs. Lichter stated that will be a small access. They don’t want the ATVs or any motorized vehicles

in the park. Riders need access to load and unload near the ATV trails. The ATV clubs are putting on a lot of pressure to open up the camp for ATV use.

Haukebo stated I explained to the county the time requirements to hold a public hearing. We could do it at one of our regular meetings when they are ready. Do we want to initiate the public hearing process? Kietzman stated he would check on their status and would report back to the board.

D. Road Report: Lichter stated I drove all of the township roads before the recent snowfall. Everything looked in good shape. I attended a Lake Emma meeting and they were talking about a new polymer base that the county is pushing. It is a better binder, and there is no issue with gummy roads. I was thinking we could use that on Jigsaw Drive between Cumber's pit and County Road 4. The county uses it on gravel roads in front of houses for dust control. The purpose is to maintain the binder and hold the road in place. It would be a good investment for us. We might get better longevity for that part of Jigsaw.

Holz stated we did chloride on Jigsaw two years ago. It's very expensive and very hard on the cars. Haukebo stated if we want it for dust control, that is a legitimate reason. Why would we say no? Lichter stated it's expensive. We'd use up our road budget right away. Haukebo stated but it's a legitimate request for dust control. Kietzman stated we'll have to weight the need versus the cost. Lichter stated he would get the numbers and present them at a later meeting.

E. Designate Polling Place: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, to designate Clay Township as a mail-in precinct, with Hubbard County Courthouse serving as it's designated polling place.

Discussion: Haukebo stated several residents have asked since we have this nice facility will we ever go back to having an in-person election? Some people would like to come in and vote. Kietzman stated the challenge was getting election judges and also the cost for programming the election counters. Vik stated changing to an in-person election can be done by a vote of the board, and then following the state's guidelines. Holz suggested bringing the issue to the electorate at the annual meeting.

The vote was called. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Meeting Schedule: A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Haukebo, and unanimously carried to approve the Clay Township's meeting schedule for 2023 for the fourth Wednesday of the months of January, February, March, April, May, July, September, and the third Wednesday of November, all at 6:00 p.m., to be held at the Clay Township Town Hall.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Town Hall Issues: Kietzman stated the Town Hall Project has been completed. The door closure, and grate have been installed. They had to remove the whole square of concrete to put in the new grate. The parking lot was expanded. The sign was hung on the building. The final invoice has been submitted for payment.

7. APPROVAL OF TREASURERS REPORT: Holz presented his written treasurer's report to the board (see attached). He added that he had been researching wages with the other townships. Clay Township has not changed their pay scale since 2005.

Kietzman stated the electric expenses should be identified as an operating expense and not from the town hall funds. Holz stated he would transfer those expenses starting with January 2022 to December 2022.

A motion was made by Kietzman, seconded by Lichter, 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 Lichter, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

Chair Andy Kietzman

Margie M. Vik
Clay Township Clerk