



Forest Township
Rice County
3625 Millersburg Boulevard
Faribault, Minnesota

Tuesday, March 14, 2023
1:00 PM
Annual Meeting minutes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Ashley Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Members Present: Ron Gernandt, Charlie Peters, Elaine Trnka, Ashley Anderson, William Malecha

5 residents present

2. ELECT MODERATOR

Bob Duban made a motion to elect Steve Trnka as the 2023 Forest Township Annual Meeting Moderator. Greg Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 8, 2022

Ashley read the minutes from the 2022 annual meeting.

Charlie Peters made a motion to approve the minutes. Greg Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

4. 2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

Elaine presented the 2022 Forest Township financial report and discussed each fund including receipts, disbursements, and fund balances.

The township sold the grader. The new grader was purchased with both ARPA funds and road and bridge funds. No loan was used to purchase the grader.

Greg Duban made a motion to accept the financial report. Bob Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

5. SELECT OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Bob Duban made a motion to select Northfield News and Faribault Daily News as the official publications for Forest Township. Greg Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

6. SELECT NOTICE POSTING PLACE

Bob Duban made a motion to select the Forest Town Hall as the official posting place. Greg Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

7. SET TIME FOR THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Bob Duban made a motion to hold the 2024 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 1:00 PM. Elaine Trnka seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. FIRE DISTRICT 1: LONSDALE – There are no unpaid fire calls in Forest Township. They had 25 calls, 7.5% of total calls. They ordered a new tanker, which came in about \$60,000 more than anticipated. They want to raise Forest’s annual fee for service by \$5,760. There is enough in the reserve, so the board does not recommend a levy increase at this time. This year they will make some upgrades to the Fire Hall. They are fully staffed and foresee about 4 retirements.
- b. FIRE DISTRICT 2: NORTHFIELD –Forest Township accounts for 13.38% of the Townships in the Northfield Rural Fire Protection District. Gerry Franek retired in early 2022. 1st Assistant Chief, Tom Nelson, served as the interim chief until he became the department’s first full time chief on February 1, 2023. For the last several years NAFRS operating budget was \$800,000. In July 2023, the board approved a 2023 budget of \$1,220,000, a 52% increase. The increase is due to: replenishing the operating reserve fund due largely to major equipment repairs, full-time chief salary and benefits, training costs which were delayed by COVID restrictions, and an increase in personnel costs related to complying with minimum wage requirements for officers stipends, expected increase in hours for inspections, and converting the administrative assistant to full time. NAFRS saw an 66% increase in the number of calls from 2022, up from 2012, a period where the populations was relatively stable.

9. FOREST TOWNSHIP ROAD REPORT

Forest Township didn’t get the crushed rock they wanted in 2022. In response, they are changing the way they are bidding gravel to ensure the board gets the gravel they request by the date they request it. The Township continues to keep up on the brush and culvert maintenance. The roads look good, especially with all the snow the township got this year. As for upcoming road projects, the Township is looking at adding more rock to gravel roads and looking to do fill and shoulder work on asphalt roads. They put on 80 loads of crushed rock last summer, which is not as much as they usually put on.

10. 2024 TAX LEVY

a. PROPOSED REVENUE FUND: \$60,000, same as 2023

Bob Duban made a motion to keep the revenue fund at \$60,000, same as 2023. Greg Duban seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

b. PROPOSED ROAD AND BRIDGE: \$175,000, same as 2023

Greg Duban made a motion to keep the road and bridge fund at \$175,000, same as 2023. Elaine Trnka seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

c. PROPOSED FIRE DISTRICT 1: \$32,000, same as 2023

Greg Duban made a motion to keep the Fire District 1 fund at \$32,000. Charlie Peters seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

d. PROPOSED FIRE DISTRICT 2: \$21,500, an increase of \$1,500 from 2023

Bob Duban made a motion to raise the Fire District 2 fund to \$21,500. Ashley Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

11. OLD BUSINESS

a. GRADER

The board traded the older grader for a new CAT grader with a new wing and front plow. The board sold the old grader privately for \$120,000. They have had no issues with the machine and have a 3-year warranty on the drive train. The operators have had no complaints. There are no issues with the truck.

b. ARPA FUNDS

The Township received \$141,739 from the American Rescue Plan and used it on a capital purchase for the new grader and now have zero dollars in the ARPA account.

c. TOWNHALL RENTAL

The rental fee for the town hall for private rentals is \$75. Non-profits and governmental agencies can apply for a free/reduced rate. The board thanked the Sportsman's Club for the partnership in the Town hall and their contributions.

12. NEW BUSINESS

a. FOREST BRIDGEWATER JOINT POWERS DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Forest and Bridgewater Townships created a Joint Powers to stay ahead of the development in the I35 corridor. Bridgewater has a development opportunity in their township. There has not been a lot of interest in Forest. There is no water or sewer there and there is no interest on behalf of the municipalities in bringing water or sewer to the Development District. Forest continues to work with Rice

County to stay involved in decisions being made about land in Forest Township along the I35 corridor.

b. TRUCK

Ideally, it would be nice to turn equipment every 10 years. The truck is a 2017 and it is a 2 year wait for new equipment. The truck has been reliable. The board paid \$195,000 for it. The Township can purchase vehicles under the state contract. The Township prefers to stagger large equipment purchases.

13. ADJOURN

Greg Duban made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:42 p.m. Jan Gillen seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Anderson, Clerk, Forest Township.