

**FREDENBERG TOWN BOARD
SAINT LOUIS COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
May 6, 2015**

**TIME & PLACE: 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL/COMMUNITY CENTER**

The monthly meeting was CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Jeff Blix. Board members present: Supervisors Liz Blix, Walter Rapp, Mark Toms, Treasurer Bill O'Brien and Clerk Sherri Armstrong. Twelve residents and two guests stood with the Board to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 1) ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR: nothing
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Jeff Blix moved to accept the minutes of the regular and reorg meetings, Mark Toms seconded and minutes from the April 1 meetings were approved as written.
- 3) TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer indicated a quiet month.
- 4) CORRESPONDENCE: Fifteen (15) total items of correspondence were received during the month and reviewed.
- 5) REVIEW OF BILLS: Liz Blix moved to pay vouchers #8187 – 8203 in the amount of \$7,207.76, Walter Rapp, seconded and motion passed.
- 6) REPORTS:

The Clerk indicated she knew the tax statements had gone out as calls were coming in. She also received 2 complaint calls on “trashy” properties. Grant for the recycling center was submitted as well as quarterly reports and payments made. Century Link was contacted to perform an audit account of our services.

Road Report – the foreman indicates the roads are in good condition overall. He indicated there were issues on the Bear Island Road south of 2nd Ave, Freedomberg Lake Road with a run off problem and some downed trees in the ROWs. We need to replace snow fencing prior to the winter season. The foreman estimates about 50' needs to be purchased.

Fire Department – the department had a busy 2 months. In March they responded to one medical and 2 fire calls. In April they had 4 medical, one rescue and 8 fire calls. They stood by for the Vintage Snowmobile Run in March, fit tested the SCBA's and trained on ice rescue techniques. Fortuitously, as it happened, as they used it for a real life rescue of a dog that had fallen through the ice on Fish Lake. April had the 13 calls as well as monthly EMS and fire training along with work and business meetings. The fire calls were mostly wild land fires and included 5 mutual aid calls to neighboring departments. A containment system to fill the SCBA bottles was installed and exterior lights were replaced with high efficiency LED lights. They will be busy with their Annual Pancake Breakfast the opening Saturday of fishing season.

Law Enforcement - nothing at this time

Cemetery - the Twin Ports Genealogy group will be working to index our cemetery. Afterward this information will be given to us, the Duluth Public Library, Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Genealogical Society. Walter also indicated he had cleared away some braches from out there. Walter stated he was waiting to hear from the scout about working his Eagle Project at the cemetery.

Parks & Rec - we have some information on the hockey nets and will be ordering them soon. They pulled the outlet off the security light at the sledding hill and we have already seen a substantial decrease in the monthly fee.

Community Center - the fans have been installed in the basement. Jeff Blix moved we accept the proposal from Valure Drywall to fix the ceiling in the board room. Walter Rapp seconded and motion **PASSED**.

Recycling Center – the board looked at the estimates we had received for fixing the roof and Jeff Blix moved we go with Miller’s Exterior Remodeling and to also have them caulk the seams in the community center roof while they were here working, Liz Blix seconded and motion **PASSED**.

Other Meetings Attended – Supervisor Mark Toms and clerk attended the short course; the clerk also attended the SLATCO Annual meeting and the postal update meeting.

7) OLD BUSINESS:

- a) **Datka Road Park Update** – a draft copy of the proposed ordinance was gone over and suggestions made. The group will meet again on 18 May at 7pm.
- b) **Independent Audit** – the auditor will submit a couple of dates that work for him to meet with the committee. Those days were not available at the time of the meeting.
- c) **Mowing Contract** - several contractors were looked at. Mark Toms moved to accept Nick Stokes if the clerk was able to verify that the price included all the properties. He further moved if that was not the case, to go with the second lowest quote from Grass Is Greener. Jeff Blix seconded and motion **PASSED**.
- d) **Road Work Contract** - the board looked at two quotes; Jeff Blix moved to accept Lakehead Trucking for work from May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2016. Walter Rapp seconded and the motion **PASSED** with Mark Toms abstaining from the vote.

8) NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **Board of Appeals and Equalization Meeting** – Cory Leinwander and Noah Mittlefehldt from the County were present to discuss the process. Cory first handed the board a copy of the resolution to take back the local board. This year’s meeting will be an Open Book one presided over by the County. Due to changes in the board after an election and the unfortunate sudden resignation of a supervisor, who in the turnover was the only trained individual, the board lost the right to hold the meeting. Four of the five current supervisors are trained. With the issues over the previous assessor, the County was tasked by the state Department of Revenue to re-evaluate the entire township in one year. As there wasn’t sufficient time to do this for the 2015 tax season, the department allowed the county to go with the assessments in the system and to delay the new evaluation to the 2016 year. That meant that the current tax statements that went out saw a substantial jump in approximately 61% of the properties; 37% went down and 2% stayed the same. (**NOTE:** this ended up being a 24% increase in our tax base for the entire township). There were a few individuals present who expressed their displeasure with the increase. They were urged to call the county office to talk with the assessor who handled their property. The local meeting will be held on May 13th and you must be heard at that meeting or contact the office to be eligible to move your appeal to the county board. You can do this with a phone call, letter

or in person just as before. The board will be present at the meeting for input, but are not allowed to make decisions this year. There was also grumbling about the Hermantown High School bond referendum added to the taxes (which are not handled by the County or the township) and the fire hall bond. Both of these were voter passed issues. Cory stressed that they are required by statute to assess properties at the current market value. They gave the board copies of recent property sales for our area. These sales are then averaged to come up with a model to use for evaluations. There were some further grumbles that residents were not being compensated with enough services for their tax payments, but Cory indicated that they were not tied to each other. Jeff Blix asked if it was possible to put a tutorial for the methodology on the county's website for individuals and Cory said he would present to admin, but could promise nothing. (**NOTE:** the answer that came back from the county admin was that this would probably create more questions than answers due to the complexity.)

- b) **Miscellaneous** - Ed Proetz also had some complaints about the one-sided forum of the newsletter in the vote last November about the size of the board being in bad taste. He also complained about the website not being up-to-date which was addressed last month. He stated he couldn't get current phone numbers for the board, but it was pointed out that all current members and their numbers were on the front page of the monthly newsletter.
- c) **Resolution # 15-003 Donation from the Reservoir Riders** - Mark Toms moved we accept the donation of \$600 from the group to be used towards the purchase of hockey nets, Liz Blix seconded and the motion **PASSED**,

9) **ADJOURNMENT:** The board was reminded of all upcoming meetings. Jeff Blix moved to adjourn the meeting; Liz Blix seconded and we adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherri A. Armstrong,
Clerk