



# Fredenberg Township News



*A pleasant blend of progress and tradition*

Issue 9

VOL XXXIII

September 2021

## FREDENBERG TOWNSHIP NEWS

A monthly newsletter published  
by the Fredenberg Town Board  
Editor Monica Bruning

**This is not an official document and does not replace the requirements for the Board to post notices in posting. Minutes appearing in the newsletter are approved by the Town board.** All ordinances, policies and resolutions quoted herein and **monthly correspondence** is available for review in the Town Clerk's office. Anyone wishing to review them can leave a message and a time can be arranged for viewing. Copies can be obtained for the standard price as stated in the administrative policy.

Town Hall Office 721-3991  
Office Hours: Every Tuesday  
2 pm to 5:30pm

### TOWN BOARD

Clay Cich, Supervisor	590-5005
Debra Pawlowicz, Supervisor	428-4539
Walter Rapp, Supervisor	721-3761
James Ray, Chair & Road Foreman	721-5201
Tim Wagner, Supervisor & Vice Chair	428-9460
Pam Blekestad, Treasurer	721-3991
Monica Bruning, Clerk	721-3991

### DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

Keith Nelson (218)749-7108  
300 S 5th Ave  
Virginia, MN 55729  
Nelsonk@stlouiscountymn.gov

### DEPARTMENTS

Chief, Linda Bergstrand	349-2668
Recycling Center	721-3991
Assessor, County	726-2304
Town Hall	721-3991
Email	Fredenbergtpw@gmail.com
Website	Fredenberg.org

## August 4, 2021 TOWN BOARD ACTIONS

The monthly meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** at 7:09 pm by Chair Jim Ray. Also present were Supervisors: Clay Cich, Deb Pawlowicz, Walter Rapp, and Tim Wagner. Monica Bruning, Clerk & Pam Blekestad, Treasurer were present. 15 attended the meeting held initially in the Pavilion and 8 attended via Zoom. Because the Pavilion/hot spot internet connection was unstable for Zoom, the meeting was moved indoors. The Board recited the Pledge of the Allegiance. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Jim moved to approve minutes with changes. Tim seconded with proposed changes. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.** **TREASURER'S REPORT:** as of 7/13/2021, checking account has not reconciled yet due to a CTAS error of \$12,66.17. Checking account balance is \$352,886.76. Total funds are \$555,804.23, which includes 4 CDs totaling \$202,917.51. Pam reported that she updated contact/signing authority for National Bank of Commerce accounts. Monica and Pam registered for signing authority. Walter made a motion to accept Treasury Report, Clay seconded. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** **CORRESPONDENCE:** 25 total: 1 mail and 24 e-mails were received and reviewed by the Board. Deb questioned the email from attorney Steve Overum. Clerk will watch for charges on billing. **REVIEW OF BILLS:** Jim made motion to accept claims #10440 to #10451, totaling \$29,281.91 Lakehead Trucking billing included error. Reduce invoiced amount by \$50. Walter moved to approve with change. Clay seconded. **5 YEAS MOTION PASSED.** **REPORTS:** **Clerk** – Monica presented new Best Practice guidance from MAT regarding number of signatures. After discussion current procedure will remain (3 signatures on checks). Advice on monitor, hard drive, and printer discarding. Twp will have a drawing for the monitor and printer. Hard drive will be wiped clean and destroyed. \$150,000 ARPA funds are available to Township. Supplemental pay up to \$13/hour is available for research, application, processing, and accounting. Clay will lead application process. **Road Report** – Chloride on roads is done. Residents have complained about excessive speed on paved and unpaved roads. SLC discouraged signage of "Children at Play." Jim will explore self-contained radar for purchase. E Cook Road solution for challenges (e.g. wash boarding) are sought. **Fire Department** – During July, members responded to 13 calls including: 1 Fire; 7 Medical; 1 Mutual Aid-Medical and Fire; 1 Rescue; 1 Motor Vehicle Accident with injuries; 1 Public Assist. Nine members are participating in the 40-hour Emergency Medical Responder class. Members also trained on various equipment and procedures. The Fire Department still has room for more members. Stop by the fire hall on Thursday evenings at 7 pm to find out more. **Cemetery** – Resurfacing the driveway is expected to be done soon. **Parks & Rec** – Pickleball/tennis fencing will be finished next month. Classes are anticipated! **Community Center** – New custodian Jenn Nelson. The lock on the front door has been fixed. New vacuums have been purchased. HVAC finish work was completed including a door stopper. Jim will follow-up with electrician to

**Minutes cont'd:** finish work. Batteries for clocks will be replaced. Locked storage for events supplies in the building is needed. **Recycle Center** – Melissa Bell has been hired to fill in when needed. Dumpster locks have been replaced. **Preparedness Plan Update** – No updates. **Other Meetings** – None. **OPEN FORUM:** Patty Wheeler reported on an abundance of 'burn outs' on township roads and garbage in the ditches. She thanked Deb for coordinating Neighborhood Night Out – great for our community. Patty voiced concerns about Commissioner Nelson communications and lack thereof. A report is expected next month. Melissa Bell voiced appreciation for Neighborhood Night Out. Melissa requested more protection for the Twp on behalf of the Board of Supervisors (e.g. RE extractive gravel pits). Bruce Anderson voiced gravel pit concerns and reread Exhibit 7 from June 2021 Open Forum; requested more advocacy from supervisors RE gravel pits and possibly taking back zoning responsibilities; more transparency was requested. **OLD BUSINESS:** FCC – Room 2 ready for use and looks great. Thank you to Vesel Construction. Playground equipment – Costs started at \$14K but are up to \$28K across vendors now. Clay requests authorization for \$28K for new playground equipment before an 8% increase is added effective September 2021. Deb moved and Jim seconded that Clay have a ceiling of \$28K to order playground equipment. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** American Rescue Plan Act – Clay will take lead on completing the application. Jim made a motion to apply for ARPA funding and necessary work involved to apply. Clay seconded. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** **NEW BUSINESS:** Jim made a Motion to advertise for township snowplowing. Clay seconded. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** Clay moved to complete SLC permit for Car Show at Eagle's Nest on August 24, 2021. Deb seconded. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** Request granted to advertise for recessed Annual Township Meeting on August 24 in DNT and website. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** Civility Project and conflict resolution training was revisited resulting in a recommendation for no training at this time but encouraging each supervisor and community members to reflect personally on how to improve civility around township business. Further discussion is tabled for a later date, if needed. Clay recommended research be done on short term vacation rental homes in the area and what problems have been. Clay will follow-up. Neighborhood Night Out was well-attended. All extra work was greatly appreciated. Deb will send thank yous. Deb received a round of applause for time and effort put into the event. \$2175.29 was spent on the event. Newsletter Appreciation/Sightings section recognizing good will efforts among our citizenry will be added to the monthly newsletter. Please send siting entries/notes of appreciation to fredenbergtpw@gmail.com The Community Gardeners are requesting more land for vegetable gardens. A request was made to better understand needs. A newsletter article could run in the September edition. Brainstorming the light at the dam transpired and tabled for more discussion. Readvertise road mowing as no bids came in -- newsletter and DNT. No second meeting in August. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Jim made a motion to adjourn meeting, Walter seconded. **5 YEAS. MOTION PASSED.** Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.



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# 25 Tips to Make Your Home Firewise



Two homes were destroyed by wildfire near Brainerd on May 31, 2002. Over 100 more were threatened and evacuated. Eight other homes have been lost to wildfire in Minnesota since 1999. How do you keep your home from burning? There are four factors you can control that affect whether your home will survive a wildfire. They are access, site, structure and burning practices.

## Access

The access to your home not only affects how easily firefighters can reach and protect your home, but how easily other emergency vehicles can find and reach your home. It starts with signage. Your local fire department may know where your house is, but assisting departments won't easily find your home if your address is not visible from the road.

**TIP 1:** In mid-summer, when vegetation is fully leaved, go to the street and see if you can read your address. If you can't, you may need to move the sign or make it bigger. Remember that at times smoke or darkness may make it harder to see your address.

Once firefighters find your home, they need to be able to get to it. If your driveway is less than 150 feet long, firefighters can reach your home from the street. Your driveway should be at least 12 feet wide and be clear of branches 14 feet up. Longer driveways need to be 20 feet wide. The driveway should also have a firm, all-weather surface and any bridges or culverts should be rated to 10,000 pounds. Curves in long driveways need to be gentle to accommodate large emergency vehicles. Long driveways also need a turnaround near the house. Without a good access, and escape route, firefighters will not endanger themselves to save your home.

**TIP 2:** Widen your driveway to at least 12 feet, and prune overhanging branches to a height of 14 feet. If your driveway is longer than 150 feet, widen it to 20 feet. Also make sure your driveway has a solid driving surface and all culverts and bridges can accommodate heavy fire trucks.

**TIP 3:** If your driveway is over 150 feet long, make sure there is a large turnaround near the house. The turnaround radius should be at least 30 feet.

**TIP 4:** Look at the trees. If the trees are predominantly evergreens, which are highly flammable, a ten-foot minimum space between the crowns (branches of adjacent trees) should be maintained. This keeps fire from jumping through the crowns. Also make sure you maintain this distance from tree to house. You may need to remove a few trees.

**TIP 5:** Look at the vertical arrangement of the vegetation. Is there continuous fuel (grass, leaves, branches) reaching from the ground to the crowns of the trees? This is called ladder fuel because it provides a "ladder" for fire to climb from the ground to the crown. Eliminate this ladder fuel by mowing tall grass, trimming shrubs and pruning the lower branches off trees up six to ten feet.

**TIP 6:** That firewood pile so conveniently placed by the back door should be moved outside the home defensible zone by March each year. Sparks from a wildfire can easily catch in firewood piles, and the intense heat of those burning piles next to the house will catch the house on fire.

**TIP 7:** Each spring clean leaf and needle fall that accumulates in foundation plantings, next to buildings and under decks. Take special care to clean out dead leaves from arborvitae next to buildings. Better yet, replace those arborvitae with leafy plants.

**TIP 8:** Use rock and stone landscaping materials next to buildings.

**TIP 9:** Clean up the home defensible zone. Remove old cars, lumber piles, downed trees and other debris. Is there enough space for firefighters to protect the backside of the home? Remove obstructing debris and trees and make sure fences have easily accessible gates.

**TIP 10:** Keep the lawn watered and mowed short (3 inches or less) on all sides of all buildings. A short, green lawn will not carry fire.

**TIP 11:** Clear a 10 foot space around propane tanks. Keep this space in gravel, rock or short, well-watered grass. Propane tanks should be located at least 10 feet from the home.

As we look beyond the thirty-foot home defensible space, the woods one hundred feet beyond our house is another thing to look at. Reducing fuels in this area will reduce the intensity of an approaching wildfire. Trees might need thinning (removal of some) to increase their spacing. This is especially important for evergreens, which typically have been planted or naturally seed at high densities. Pruning the remaining trees up six to ten feet and reducing underbrush can also help reduce wildfire intensity.

**TIP 12:** Remove enough evergreen trees in the 100 foot perimeter of the house, so their branches are at least 10 feet apart. Prune the lower branches of the remaining evergreens up six to ten feet, but no more than 1/3 of the total live crown.



## Site

The site your home is on is even more critical than the access. In rural areas, fire departments are seriously understaffed for handling large wildfires with hundreds of homes at risk. Your home may need to stand without firefighter protection. How your home is situated on the lot will determine whether it can survive alone and also whether firefighters can defend it. The critical area is the thirty feet directly surrounding your home. This is called the home defensible zone. If there are any outbuildings within these thirty feet, the home defensible zone needs to be extended thirty feet beyond those buildings. Inside the home defensible zone, anything flammable needs to be removed or modified.

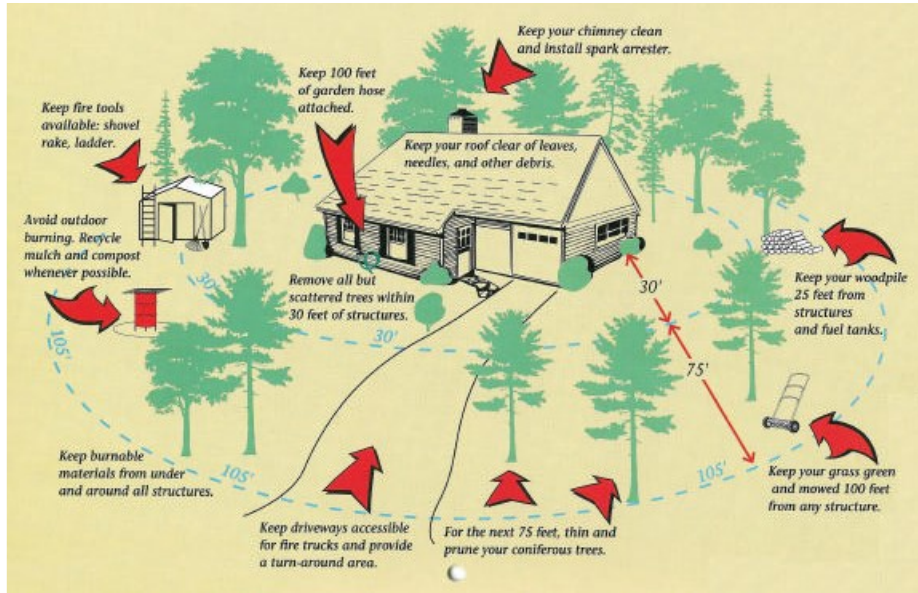


Figure 1: Courtesy Wisconsin DNR

## Structure

The next factor to look at is the structure itself. Most of the home modifications needed to further reduce wildfire risk can be expensive. They include residing with brick, stone, stucco or steel, replacing shake roofing with class A shingles or steel, and enclosing foundations with steel or masonry. Some less expensive modifications can be made to other parts of the home.

**TIP 13:** When updating your home, consider less flammable materials such as brick, stone and metal for roofing and siding.

**TIP 14:** Does fireplace chimney have an effective spark arrester? Inspect your chimney annually for cracks in the brick and liner. Clean fireplace and wood stove chimneys at least twice annually.

**TIP 15:** Clean the roof and gutters of leaves, needles and other debris each spring. Clean accumulations of leaves from windowsills.

**TIP 16:** Make sure the soffits are enclosed with a solid barrier and that vents are screened with a fine mesh to keep out flying embers.

**TIP 17:** Radiant heat from a large wildfire can actually ignite sheer curtains inside of homes through large glass windows. Consider closeable shutters for large windows.

**TIP 18:** Enclose foundations of homes, outbuildings and trailers, plus decks and overhangs with solid flame-resistant sheeting to keep sparks from igniting materials underneath.

**TIP 19:** Make sure you have smoke detectors on each floor of your home and check them each fall to make sure they work. Burning Practices & Other Fire Hazards. The burning practices of you and your neighbors can contribute to the risk of home loss from wildfire. The number one cause of wildfires in Minnesota is escaped debris burning fires.

**TIP 20:** If you burn leaves and debris, consider alternatives like composting.

**TIP 21:** Make sure recreational fires are made in a fire-safe pit or container and completely extinguished before leaving. Before lighting any outdoor fire, check for local restrictions and permit requirements. Avoid lighting fires when high winds, high temperatures and low humidities are present or predicted.

**TIP 22:** Do not dispose of ashes until they are cold to the touch.

**TIP 23:** Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. Keep those safety cans in a fire-resistant metal or brick building or your garage.

**TIP 24:** Are there any branches close to power lines on your property? Ask the power company to clear them.

**TIP 25:** Make sure motorized garden equipment, such as lawnmowers and chainsaws have approved and functioning spark arrestors.



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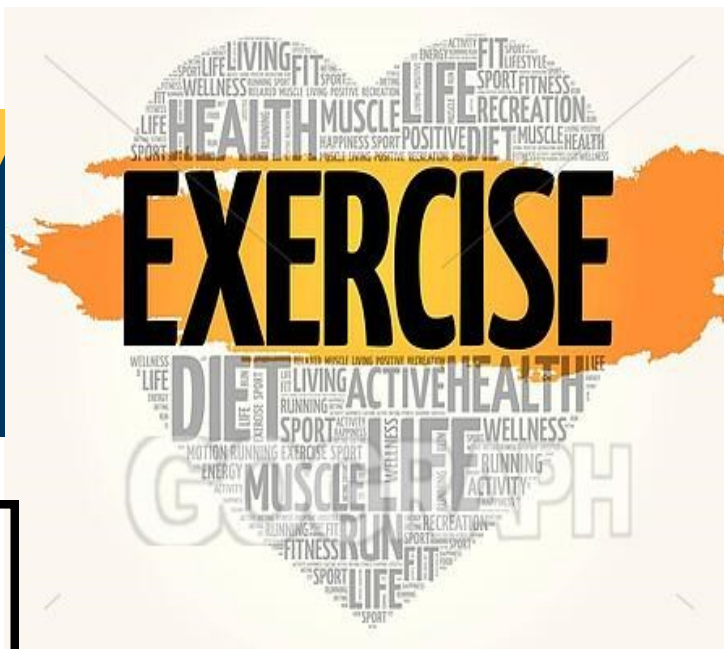
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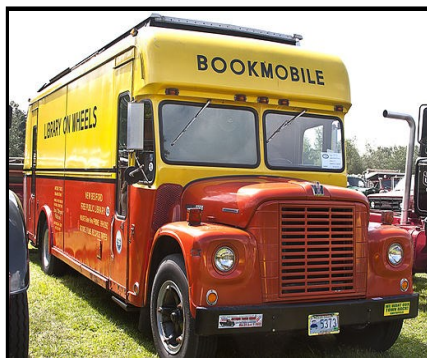


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newspaper/paper and glass/plastic/tin cans.

**HOURS**

**Wednesdays 5 pm to 8 pm**  
**Saturdays 9 am to 1 pm**

**NEXT FREDENBERG TOWN  
BOARD MEETING**

**September 15  
October 6**

**WEDNESDAY  
AT 7:00 PM @ Town Hall  
and via  
Zoom (see website for info)**