

Monthly Board Meeting  
Minutes  
March 9, 2016

**TOWN of BIG LAKE**  
*"Sherburne County's First 5-Member Township Board"*  
P.O. Box 75, Big Lake, Minnesota 55309

On Wednesday, March 9, 2016 the Big Lake Board of Supervisors met at the Big Lake Town Hall located in the Big Lake Lions Park Community Center at 21960 County Road #5, Big Lake Township, Sherburne County, State of Minnesota. The meeting was tape recorded for transcribing purposes only.

Chairman Hofer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There were 5 people in the audience at the start of the meeting. Roll call was taken by the Chairman.

Board Members Present:     Bob Hofer, Chairman  
                                  Norm Leslie, Supervisor  
                                  Bruce Aubol, Supervisor  
                                  Steve Pflughaar, Supervisor  
                                  Ken Warneke, Treasurer  
                                  Laura Hayes, Clerk  
                                  Samantha Peterson, Deputy Clerk

Board Members Absent:     Larry Alfords, Supervisor

All present stood and recited the pledge of allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**BOARD OF CANVASS**

Chairman Hofer announced the Annual Township Board of Canvass election results from the March 8, 2016 election. 35 ballots were cast from the 4,732 registered voters in Big Lake Township.

The tally sheet indicated the following:

Supervisor Seat #4	Bob Hofer	32
Supervisor Seat #4	Jared Johnson	1
Supervisor Seat #4	Carl Aubol Jr.	1
Supervisor Seat #5	Norm Leslie	35

The Election Judges indicated by their signatures that the tally is correct. Election Judges serving were Gloria Hensel & LaDonna Hensel, Rita Petersen, Ron Tobeck, Debbie Workman. Supervisor Pflughaar motioned to certify the official canvassed

results of the March 9, 2016 Town Election. Supervisor Aubol seconded. All present were in favor. The Board members signed the Board of Canvass Certification.

Supervisor Leslie motioned to approve the agenda. Supervisor Pflgebraar seconded. All were in favor. The meeting proceeded in accordance with the agenda as presented.

Supervisor Aubol motioned to approve consent agenda items. The consent agenda consisted of: a) Approval of Minutes: Regular Monthly Board Meeting 2-10-16 & Second Monthly Board Meeting 2-24-16. b) Approve Resolution 2016-04 Accepting Donation to the Big Lake Fire Department/\$800. from the Monticello Lion's Club. c) Approve List of Claims & Payroll. Supervisor Pflgebraar seconded. All present were in favor.

## **OPEN FORUM**

Big Lake City Administrator, Clay Wilfahrt presented a memorandum reviewing the City's plans and actions taken to-date for a solar farm; and, inquired if the Township would be interested in allowing an annexation of the 27 acre parcel.

On January 13, 2016 the Township recommended approval of 4 variances to setbacks from 50 feet to 20 feet from the property lines. The Township recommended denial of a variance from a requirement to setback a pole the same distance as the height of the pole. (SolarStone has since informed the City that the pole may no longer be required.) The Township also recommended denial of a variance to forgo vegetative screening of the site as required. SolarStone proceeded to seek approval from the County after the Township meeting. At that time the County denied all 6 variance applications despite the Township's 2 favorable recommendations.

The County will be establishing a decommissioning fee to protect County taxpayers from solar companies abandoning the sites and leaving the cost to recycle the panels (which are hazardous waste.) on the taxpayers. The County plans to establish a \$25,000 per megawatt decommissioning fee of which 25% is payable up front, and another 25% is payable over the next three years. For a 4 megawatt solar garden, Solar Stone would need to put \$50,000 up for escrow in the first three years. If SolarStone were able to fit five megawatts, that number increases to \$62,500.

SolarStone has indicated that under the County's proposal, the project would likely not move forward due to the financial constraints of the decommissioning fee and the variance denials.

Because of the financial constraints, SolarStone has asked the City to consider an annexation of the property. According to Administrator Wilfahrt, by annexing the property, the City could waive the decommissioning fee requirement and instead "hedge liability" by using the lease funds to build a decommissioning fund and self-insure the City.

To annex the property, the parties would need to complete an orderly annexation agreement similar to the agreement that the City and the Township entered in to for the City's Waste Water Treatment facility.

The Solar Garden property is taxed on a production tax basis, and SolarStone anticipates paying about \$1,500 annually in production taxes.

Administrator Wilfahrt inquired if the City brings forward an annexation request, would the Township entertain discussion. Supervisor Aubol questioned acceptance of this from Xcel Energy and suggested Solarstone start with an interconnection agreement with Xcel.

Supervisor Leslie noted that as building and development increase in the Big Lake City and Township shared areas and topics of mutual interest rise, if it would be beneficial for the City and Township to begin meeting quarterly to discuss issues. Administrator Wilfahrt acknowledged the benefit of this proposal.

Treasurer Warneke inquired about the City and Township bond sale and abatement hearings. He advised this was not brought to the Township for input on the shared venture. He inquired how much money would be saved by refunding the bonds; and, if it was worth the costs involved to seek refunding. Administrator Wilfahrt advised approximately \$140,000. would be saved by refunding. Treasurer Warneke inquired who the vendor is, noting an email was received from Deb Wegeleben on March 4 advising the Township this was happening. That email was the Township's only information on the matter. Administrator Wilfahrt advised he will provide information to the Township regarding the bond sale tomorrow.

Sherburne County Sheriff's Department, Commander Steve Doran presented the monthly call report to the Board. He advised there were 224 calls for service, with no overly concerning activity. The Board had nothing to report to Commander Doran.

Big Lake Fire Chief, Paul Nemes advised the department received 8 calls in February and 6 to date in March. Monthly training drills will be on SCBA use and familiarization with the equipment. Firefighter Bob Christenson was in charge of the BL Relief Association chili feed and contest. \$1,500. was raised for the Big Lake Foodshelf and there were approximately 24 entries for the chili contest. It is anticipated that burning restrictions and possibly a burning ban may go into effect this spring due to the dry conditions and standing dry grasses. Assistant Chief Ken Halverson presented the annual Fire Department Report last night at the Annual Town Meeting. On the Capital Improvement Plan, Tender 17 is scheduled for replacement in 2017 with an anticipated cost of under \$200,000. The Fire Department has established an internal review committee for full SCBA replacement, which is scheduled for 2016. The SCBA's are 14 years old and can no longer be hydro tested. The department would like to stay with either Scott brand or MSA. They are the major manufacturers and are the brands used by neighboring community fire departments.

## **BUSINESS FROM THE CLERK**

2) Other-Updates-Meetings – Clerk Hayes presented the draft agreement for cost share of election equipment that is being worked on currently by the Sherburne County Attorney's office. The equipment will have a 4-yr payback that will be due each year for 4 years, starting in 2017 and ending in 2020. The Township will have the option of paying the cost upfront once invoiced in 2017 or annually for 4 years. This will be interest free and the payment will be due in June after the period one settlement has been received. Clerk Hayes advised that the most significant change to this agreement is that Sherburne County will be paying for the ongoing maintenance costs on the new election equipment. The previous agreement for the Auto Marks and M100 election equipment was a reimbursement back to the Townships. The board had no comments or concerns with the draft agreement as presented.

## **BUSINESS FROM THE SUPERVISORS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **TOWN ROADS**

1) Other-Updates-Meetings – Treasurer Warneke advised Jeff Rhodes has been doing some crack filling and will be replacing some signs damaged this winter; and, 3 mailboxes damaged by snowplowing. Treasurer Warneke and Chairman Hofer will meet with Township Engineer, Ross Abel after tonight's meeting to finalize 2016 road project bid preparations.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Hofer advised he had nothing to report at this time.

### **SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**

Other-Updates-Meetings – The Supervisors had nothing to report at this time.

## **BUSINESS FROM THE TREASURER**

a) Monthly Report – Treasurer Warneke advised approximate total fund balances are \$1,300,900. The 100 General Fund and 202 Road Fund interim financial reports were reviewed. Treasurer Warneke advised the Township will need to cut back on the amount of road sweeping that is done this year. 2015 road sweeping was twice as much as budgeted. Supervisor Leslie motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report. Supervisor Pflieger seconded. All present were in favor.

b) Adopt 2016 Budget –

Treasurer Warneke reviewed the proposed 2016 budget summary.

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
General Fund	\$329,200.	\$324,600.
Road	\$836,000.	\$865,500..
Big Lake Fire	\$147,000.	\$157,000.
Bailey Cemetery	\$ 4,000.	\$ 4,000.
Elk River Fire	\$ 14,000.	\$ 28,000.
Fire Debt Svc	\$ 36,000.	\$ 54,000.
Ind. Park Debt Svc	\$ 65,000.	\$ 52,000.
B.L. Fire Capital	\$ 1,500.	\$ 76,000.
Econ. Development	\$ _____ .	\$ 49,000.
General Capital	\$105,000.	\$ 65,000.

Treasurer Warneke advised he rolled the 2015 budget into the 2016. He budgeted \$14,000. for elections and \$65,000. for clean-up day. \$120,000. For seal coat projects and \$330,000. for overlays. Last year's street sweeping budget was \$20,000. \$49,000. was spent on it. Hauling is a major part of the cost of sweeping. The Township has spent more than it has taken in for the past 4 years, purposely relying on reserves to cover the difference. \$137,000 has been used from reserve funds and the Township remains financially solvent.

Supervisor Pflgebraar motioned to approve the 2016 Budget Proposal. Supervisor Aubol seconded. All present were in favor.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Supervisor Leslie to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor Pflgebraar seconded. All were in favor. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Hayes, Clerk

Robert Hofer, Chairman