

**ORONOCO TOWNSHIP  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 10, 2020 8:15 PM**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The annual Oronoco Township meeting was called to order on March 10, 2020 at 8:15 pm by clerk Lucy Shonyo. There were 10 people present. Kim Stanton presided as moderator.

These documents were distributed: proposed agenda, minutes of the 2019 annual meeting, Board of Audit minutes from Feb 3, 2020 and the 2019 Financial Report including road, levy information and township revenues and expenditures.

The agenda was accepted as presented.

The meeting paused to allow time for attendees to read the 2019 minutes. A motion was made by Michael Clemens and seconded by Charlie Lacy to forgo reading the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

The **Board of Audit** met February 3, 2020. The minutes of that meeting were distributed. They explain the monthly process of reconciling financial accounts between the clerk and the treasurer. An audit required by the State of MN was also completed and financial reports requested by Olmsted County were submitted. The Board of Supervisors reviewed all invoices paid and receipts received from July 2019. All were found to be correct.

**Supervisor Charlie Lacy gave the road report.** Ryan's Bay Road work will proceed this year. The township is having difficulty getting needed right of way easements from landowners of two parcels. An independent appraisal company has been hired. The township expects to use a statutory process available to townships for roads to acquire the needed easements. This is a joint project with Zumbro Township, Wabasha County.

Roads are the township's biggest expense. The Board will be reviewing the current road policy that assigns road paving expenses to either landowners or the township. Roads have a lifespan and Oronoco Township has many paved roads approaching the end of their lifespan. The township needs to ensure the roads within developments meet county standards before the township takes them over. It was suggested that the township declare itself a "gravel road township". Landowners would "own" blacktop surfaces. When paved roads deteriorate, they would revert to gravel unless property owners agree to pay for the re-paving.

The Board will conduct a road tour this spring to assess and prioritize needed road maintenance.

**Pine Island Fire District Chief Brandon Sather and Kyle Dessner were present to give their report.** The highest volume of calls come from Oronoco Township. The fire district has a five- year plan to raise the cash needed to buy a new pumper truck. They also hope to purchase a new used tanker.

**Chris Inman, Director of Oronoco First Responders, reported 77 calls in 2019, mostly medical.** Gold Cross is dispatched at the same time as First Responder's. [First Responder's don't transport.] Who arrives first is largely dependent on proximity of the call to Gold Cross or First Responder's.

First Responder's biggest challenge is staffing; they are always looking for new members.

Supervisor Tammy Matzke asked about the services and equipment that will be required with the former Fisherman's Inn becoming a new county public launch site. She also noted the need to educate people about safe boating practices. County Commissioner Mark Thein noted that the former ski shed could possibly be used as a public safety shed, allowing rescue equipment to be stored close to the launch site. Olmsted County Sheriff Dept will be patrolling the area.

**Supervisor Charlie Lacy spoke about Oronoco Township Planning Advisory Commission (OTPAC).**

OTPAC usually meets only when there is a public hearing. They are currently working with Olmsted County on updating Oronoco Township's Land Use Plan. Lori Berg was just appointed to OTPAC. The Board represents many views on things that come before them.

**Supervisor Tammy Matzke spoke to rural broadband** and its importance to rural businesses and rural families. Oronoco Township is an underserved broadband area in Minnesota. Many communities are forging public/private partnerships with broadband providers to provide service to citizens. Three possible tracts for the township are 1. Build our own network, 2. Contract with area providers to provide service, and 3. Contract with an area provider with township supplementing hookup costs. The Board of Supervisors is proposing adding a broadband revenue line to our levy in the amount of \$50,000 to support broadband service. State grants are available, but providers have indicated they prefer to work directly with townships or municipalities.

There was discussion about whether getting involved in utilities was right for the township, about how many people need this service, or don't want the service. The connection would be brought to the house and the owner would decide whether to "flip the switch" and pay for service. Having broadband connection enhances property values.

**Kim Stanton reviewed the 2019 Financial Report** explaining some significant activities and expenditures. Oronoco Township's total revenue was \$827,915, disbursements \$735,984 with an ending balance of \$598,968. Liabilities include the notes for King's Park Septic (\$43,400) and Cedar Beach Septic (\$266,060). The township has special assessments in place for these septic projects as well as road projects Shorewood Lane Paving, River Hill Paving and the 18th Ave Extension Paving. Road maintenance and repair, including snow removal, continue to be the township's largest expense. There is an estimated \$400,000 of chip sealing needed. The Ryan's Bay Road project will cost an estimated \$180,000. We will be paying more for fire protection because the PIFD will be purchasing a new truck. Oronoco Township is #3 in population among townships in Olmsted County. We are #10 in per capita taxation.

The **Proposed Levy** was discussed. The "Money Raised by Tax upon Taxable Property" was appropriated as follows: **General Revenue:** Michael Clemens made a motion to fund at the 2018 level, \$69,000. Mark Thein second, motion carried. **Road & Bridge:** Mark Thein made a motion to fund at \$652,860. Neil Stolp second, motion carried. **Fire and First Responders:** Mark Thein made a motion to fund at \$110,565. Tammy Matzke second, motion carried. **Rural Broadband:** Michael Clemens made a motion to fund at \$50,000. Mark Thein second, motion carried. The total levy approved is \$882,425.

**Election Results** – There were 13 voters. **Supervisor Seat A**, 3-year term – Tammy Matzke, 12 votes; **Supervisor Seat C**, 2-year term – Charlie Lacy, 13 votes; **Clerk**, 2-year term – Lucy Shonyo, 13 votes. The Board of Canvass accepted the election results at a meeting after polls closed and before the annual meeting.

A motion was made by Charlie Lacy to set the **2021 Annual Meeting time at 8:15pm, to be held at Oronoco City Hall/Community Center**. Mark Thein second, motion carried.

A motion was made by Mark Thein to authorize the Town Board to spend the yearly sum of up to \$1,000.00 for the purposes of **citizen or board member recognition**. Michael Clemens second, motion carried.

There was a consensus that the town board continue to support the Oronoco Cemetery, allowing for needed repairs, maintenance, and restoration.

Mark Thein made a motion to continue to support **Oronoco Food Shelf** at \$1,250/year. Neil Stolp second, motion carried.

Neil Stolp mentioned the persons who were apprehended who were taking mail from mailboxes. They were apprehended because citizens were paying attention. He also noted that allowable phosphorus levels seem to be going up in fertilizers. This is not good for our water. Be aware of what you are using.

There was a discussion of the possibility of hiring extra Olmsted County law enforcement coverage for Oronoco Township. Some felt we were already paying for coverage with our tax dollars. Mark Thein stated we should try to do something through the Olmsted County Township Officers' Association.

Michael Clemens asked about Oronoco Auto Parts. Charlie Lacy responded that the business has paid back taxes owed and that the grandfather status of the prior business had expired. The MPCA investigation is on-going, and no info is being shared by them. Fencing has been removed/stolen, so there is concern about spring high water carrying tires into the river. Olmsted County knows of our concern.

Michael Clemens asked about the Prairie Island Indian Community and possible roads that will be required. Charlie Lacy responded that that need is not expected. There were only three Oronoco Township parcels that were part of the sale.

At 10:20 pm a motion was made by Mark Thein to adjourn. Tammy Matzke second, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Shonyo, Clerk

Kim Stanton, Moderator