

## Town of Gnesen-Annual Meeting Minutes-March 10, 2020

The Annual Town Meeting and Election of the Town of Gnesen was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. The polls opened at 5:00 p.m. and were closed at 8:00 p.m. Board of Canvass met at 8:15 p.m. with Chair Nelson and Supervisor Opack verifying the results of the election. The Annual Meeting followed at 8:30 p.m.

Clerk Lottie Haller called the Annual Meeting to order at 8:30 p.m. with twenty residents in attendance. The clerk and residents stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The clerk called for a nomination of a Moderator for the meeting. Gary Juten nominated Jon Nelson, with a second by David Opack. Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none Clerk calls for a vote on Jon Nelson. Motion to nominate Jon Nelson as Moderator-all in favor-no objections. Moderator Nelson swore in Lottie Haller by taking the Oath to serve as Clerk for this Annual Meeting. Jon Nelson was sworn in by Lottie Haller, Town Clerk, by taking the Oath to serve as Moderator for this Annual Meeting.

Moderator Nelson then stated that the business of the meeting was for the following purposes:

- 1.) To elect the following officer:  
One (1) Supervisor for a three (3) year term.
- 2.) To approve the Levy set at the Board of Audit Meeting, that was held on February 24, 2020.
- 3.) To finish any old business.
- 4.) To transact any new business for the good of the township.

Moderator Nelson asked the Clerk to read the election results.

Clerk-Total votes cast were 24.

Supervisor for the three (3) year term-Ed Franckowiak-24 votes.

There were no write-in votes for the Supervisor position and no blank votes.

Board of Canvass consisted of Chair Jon Nelson and Supervisor Dave Opack. The Board met after the polls closed and the ballots were counted, to check over and verify the election results that the election judges-Lottie Haller, Sarah Blix, Martha Ritter and Kitten Hutchings turned in. The Clerk declared Ed Franckowiak was elected Town of Gnesen Supervisor for a three-year term, ending in 2023.

Moderator Nelson asked the Clerk to read the minutes of the Board of Audit Meeting that was held on February 24, 2020 and the last Annual Meeting held on March 12, 2019 and the reconvened Annual Meeting that was held on August 12, 2019. Moderator Nelson asked if there were no objections that the minutes of these two meetings not be read, as all those attending this meeting were given complete copies of both meeting minutes and they were rather lengthy. Motion by Dick Haney, second by Ted Raymond to not read the minutes and Gary Juten made a motion, second by David Opack to approve the Annual Meeting and Board of Audit Meeting minutes, all in favor, no objections.

Moderator Nelson asked the clerk to read the Financial Statement of the Town of Gnesen for 2019. Clerk Lottie Haller read the Financial Statement report. Our balance beginning in January 2019 was \$479,033.16; total receipts for the year were \$912,210.60; total disbursements were \$574,467.79; ending balance for the year is \$816,775.97. (The Minnesota Association of Townships advises that we have at least one year's levy in reserve.) Clerk Haller mentioned that the Schedule 2 & 9 forms that we made available tonight break the information down in more detail such as how much money was received and how much money was spent on fuel, phones, security system and etc.

2018 Road Report was not prepared by the Town Clerk for inspection tonight as she did not have it totally done because of the time spent in moving the office over to the Community Center. David Opack gave a brief update on what we have done this year; culverts, gravel, chloride, snow plowing. Dave mentioned that we had to put in a new turn around at the end of Boulder Lake Road, so the County had a place to turn around. Dave stated that we had to hire a contractor to plow Berg Road because the County could not turn around in there. Dave also mentioned that we purchased a new John Deere grader and a snowplow for the truck we purchased from the DNR because of concerns about the County not doing our snowplowing in the future. This can also be used to plow the lanes over by Eagle Lake and Berg Road instead of hiring a private contractor. Dave stated that we have 17 miles of Township roads. Shelby Trost asked about a concern on the Van Road and the Clerk stated that Van Road is a County road and she would have to contact St. Louis County with those concerns. Rick Hogenson asked when he could discuss West Pioneer Road and Dave told him they could talk after the meeting about his concerns.

Moderator Nelson brought up for discussion the proposed levy for the year 2021, as proposed at the Board of Audit Meeting held on February 24, 2020.

100-GENERAL FUND- Total Levy for 2019 was \$124,000.00; beginning balance was \$361,222.39; actual expenses paid in 2019 were \$381,094.48 of which the expenses for the Planning & Zoning, Community Center/playscape/architect/Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Fire Department and Town Hall were included. Levy for 2020 is \$124,000.00. Proposed levy for 2021 is \$258,000.00, which would include \$74,000.00 budgeted for the Community Center/grader loan yearly payment and \$60,000.00 budgeted for the Fire Department Contract for fire services. Revenue for the General Fund for 2019 is \$747,720.60 which includes the loan amount; taxes; building permits/variance/conditional use permits/additional fees; and town hall/community center rentals/deposits/security; newspaper ads; interest; GCC membership/donations/private donations, dugouts, kitchen remodel in the Senior's Room, picnic tables, etc. Ending balance for the General Fund was \$727,848.51.

201-ROAD FUND- Total Levy for 2019 was \$80,000.00; beginning balance was \$87,191.77; actual expenses paid in 2019 were \$166,793.31 which included the \$70,000.00 down payment on the grader; culverts, snowplowing, gravel, chloride batteries for mower, tree removal, etc. Levy for 2020 is \$80,000.00. Proposed levy for 2021 is \$80,000.00. Revenue for the Road Fund was \$158,490.00. Ending balance for the Road Fund \$78,888.46.

410-Capital Improvement Fund- Total Levy for 2019 was \$6,000.00; beginning balance was \$30,619.00; actual expenses paid out in 2019 were \$26,580.00, which included purchase of a new truck and a snowplow for the truck. Levy for 2020 is \$6,000.00. Proposed levy for 2021 is \$6,000.00. Revenue for the Capital Projects Fund \$6,000.00. Ending balance for the Capital Project Fund \$10,039.00.

**Total Balance** for all funds \$816,775.97.

Gary Juten asked how we are sitting financially on our Planning & Zoning. Moderator Nelson explained some of the issues we had to address this past year and the income and expenses in that account. Moderator Nelson asked if there was any other discussion on the proposed levy. Ted Raymond made a motion, second by Matt Thibodeau, all voted in favor of the proposed total levy for 2021 of \$344,000.00, which is the same as the 2020 levy. He also gave a brief update on the broadband issue and our failure to get the broadband grant and that we will put in another application in August to try get a grant.

Sarah Blix, Secretary for the Planning Commission gave the annual report. There were 25 building permits turned in for 2019. Moderator Nelson thanked the Planning Commission for all their hard work volunteering on the Committee. The Township has hired ARDC to come up with a Comprehensive Plan for the Township.

Kathy Buran and Dick Delano were recommended for re-appointment to the Planning Commission for a three (3) year term expiring in 2023 and the Town Board will vote to approve them at the next Town Board Meeting to be held on March 23, 2020. Joe Ferguson was recommend for appointment to take Sarah Stock's position on the Planning Commission for a three (3) year term expiring in 2023 and the Town Board will vote to approve Joe at the next Town Board Meeting to be held on March 23, 2020.

Moderator Nelson asked if there was any other old business. Hearing none, Moderator Nelson moved on to New Business.

- a. Motion from Matt Thibodeau for authorization to expend \$2,000.00 in township funds for National Night Out which will be held on August 4, 2020 in conjunction with an Open House so residents can see the remodeling, the playscape, disc golf and we will have games with prizes for the kids. Dick Haney second the motion, all voted in favor.
- b. Motion by Matt Thibodeau to set the location for the next annual meeting to be held at the Gnesen Community Center. Cheryl Larson second the motion, all voted in favor.
- c. Motion to set the time to convene and call to order the next annual meeting to be held on March 9, 2021 was moved by Matt Thibodeau, second by Cheryl Larson, all voted in favor.

During the coming year, the Township notices will run as legal ads in the Duluth News Tribune. They will also run in the Gnesen Community Newspaper, when the time frame works. Posted notices will be at the Gnesen Town Hall/Community Center, Gnesen Convenience Store, Island Lake Inn, and the Sportsmen's Inn.

There was much discussion on switching our bank from Wells Fargo to National Bank of Commerce who will give us a lower interest rate on our bond if we switch everything over to them. Motion by Ted Raymond, second by Gary Juten to move our banking to National Bank of Commerce. After more discussion, Moderator Nelson suggested an amendment to the motion to have the residents authorize the Town Board to do a financial analysis and make sure it would be worthwhile to switch banks. All those in favor signify by saying yes. All voted in favor.

Our Attorney is Couri & Ruppe and there are no plans to change that unless there is any concern from the Planning & Zoning Board to do that.

Moderator Nelson stated that the Certification/Reorganization Meeting would be held on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. We will meet at the Gnesen Community Center and the Town Clerk will post the time and date here at the Community Center.

The next annual meeting and elections will be on March 9, 2021.

Sarah Blix has a group of volunteers to work with her to install the playscape this spring. Moderator Nelson thanked Sarah for all the work she and her husband and kids did on the remodeling of the Community Center.

Dick Haney has been working on the trails. This spring we will be putting in a boardwalk over the northeast corner of the trail, which is very wet. This will be a nature trail with interpretative signage that goes with it. Dick helped map the trails and clear out the trails and he will help build the boardwalk. Moderator Nelson thanked Dick for all his help.

There is a disc golf club in Duluth and through Ken Gilbertson they have done a lot of work clearing for a nine-hole disc golf course that they will be putting in this spring.

Dugouts-Sarah Blix stated that Jason Arnold said his family would like to provide the funds to rebuild the dugouts in memory of his dad, Jerry Arnold. The Blix family, Jason Nelson and Neil Weberg built the dugouts. This spring Sarah will get them stained and the backstop will get painted.

Kitchenette-The Opack family provide the funds to do the facelift on the kitchenette in memory of their mom, Tina Opack, who was an active member of the Senior's Group that meet in that room.

New office-Sarah Blix, her husband Randy and their kids did all the work to remodel the classroom into our office. Matt Thibodeau said to let the minutes reflect our thanks to the Blix family, Tom & Lottie Haller for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Rental fees-The fees were discussed. Moderator Nelson stated that we want to make sure the township residents have access to the gym, batting cage and pitching machine without much cost but we want to make sure we are getting what we need to get from the non-residents that rent it.

Janitor-We are talking about hiring a janitor with more regular hours-Monday, Wednesday and Friday so we can keep up with keeping this place clean and prepared for people that are reserving it. We think we are well on our way to making this a real gathering place for our community.

Tim Cernohous asked about the grants we talked about last year. Moderator Nelson told him we got the DNR Grant for the trails, disc golf and playscape and the CDBG Grant for the handicapped accessible bathroom. Moderator Nelson mentioned the students from UMD helped not only with the grant applications but with all the planning that had to go into this. They also got a lot of information on the Township and we are hoping to make that available so people can learn more about the school and the township.

Historical site-We are looking into the pros and cons of getting this school declared a historical site.

Emergency shelter-Moderator Nelson said once we are done with all the remodeling work, we will get in touch with the American Red Cross to come out and look through the building to make sure we have done everything that needs to be done to make it an emergency shelter. We will work with the fire department, township staff and the American Red Cross to run the building if an emergency ever occurs.

Town Hall-Gary Juten asked what are the plans for the Town Hall building. Moderator Nelson stated that we will be discussing what to do with the building but there are no plans to sell it, to keep it as Township property.

Moderator Nelson asked if there was anything else the residents wanted to discuss. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. with a motion by Cheryl Larson, second by Ted Raymond, all voted in favor. Meeting adjourned

Residents attending the meeting were: Lottie Haller, Jon Nelson, Tom Haller, Dave Opack, Ed Franckowiak, Sarah Blix, Tim Cernohous, Cheryl Larson, and Matt Thibodeau. Kevin Middleton, Shelby Trost, Kitten Hutchings, Dick Haney, Ted Raymond, Gary Juten, Rick Hogenson, Kent Carlson, Diana Brainard, and Jacob Nustad-Peluso.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lottie L. Haller, Clerk

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Jon Nelson, Moderator

These minutes are not official and subject to change/correction when approved by the electors at the Annual Meeting to be held on March 9, 2021. (This meeting was taped for transcribing purposes only.)