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**Lutsen Township Board Meeting Minutes**  
**November 19, 2024**  
**Lutsen Town Hall**

**Present:** Ashley VanDoren, Carl Friesner, Lollie Cooper, Ginny Storlie, Steve Duclos, Samantha Mcquatters-Spangle, Chris Homyak

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Chairperson, C Friesner at 7:00 pm.

**Approval of Agenda:** C Friesner made a motion to approve the November agenda, C. Homyak seconded. Motion passed.

**Approval of October Meeting Minutes:** L Cooper made a motion to accept the meeting minutes, C Friesner seconded. Motion passed.

**Commissioner's Report: Ginny Storlie:**

- Cook County administrator retired due to family circumstances; Rowen Watkins from I.T. will take over as interim administrator for 12 weeks
- County Attorney Molly Hicken will retire January 2<sup>nd</sup>; Jeanna Monson currently residing as assistant county attorney will take over.
- Jason Hale Executive Director of Cook County HRA submitted a letter of resignation but will stay on to help train a replacement.
- Commissioners looking into hiring a company who researches and finds administrators; currently this company has hired on two new hires from DDA
- Schroader town meeting reviewed reimbursement from FEMA after the June washout and storms; limited funds were received for a few people however FEMA does not offer assistance to businesses so Bluefin did not receive anything. Supervisor Homyak; SBA generally does disaster loans for businesses.
- A request for a cell tower to be installed in the Schroader area that would help services for providers other than AT&T or Verizon. Planning and zoning reviewed the private piece of land and it was requested to have further conversation. Commissioners requested additional conversation as well when it was presented to them as it may be more useful if placed closer to Kramer Road or possibly a higher tower. A better servicing tower could also help the few EMT workers who do not have ARMOR radios and rely on their cell services for emergency calls.
- Howard Hedstrom came before the Commissioners board to inform then of his intent to sell the Superior Gold Course in Lutsen, currently it is struggling to make a notable profit although a large attraction to the Lutsen landscape for both locals and tourists from their golf course to their restaurant and additional drawer. Currently a lawyer is contracted and they are looking into finding a realtor that can evaluate 328 acres.

**Clerk's Report:** S. Mcquatters-Spangle **Deputy Clerk:** S. Hexum-Platzer

1. Correspondence: 10 voice messages; 2 redirected to planning and zoning, 8 forwarded to fire chief. 5 new hall rentals booked. Updated Compliance and Reporting Guidance (October 2024). Superior National Forest's Supervisor's Office Open House on November 12. Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant review; forwarded to supervisors and grant writer. Superior NF Wildfires Facts Sheet and Campfire & Fire Restrictions FAQ. North Shore Journal excerpt about Minnesota's Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC) program; forwarded to supervisors. CLOSING – BJA FY 24 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. OSA Weekly Update - October 18, 2024. City of Grand Marais Weekly Update. Invitation: 2024 Annual Conference of the MN Association of Townships, December 13-14 in St. Cloud. North Shore Management Board - Plan Update; forwarded to supervisors. public meetings to discuss the Lake Superior North Shore Management Plan update from Neva Maxwell; forwarded to supervisors. Remittance Advice Notification; forwarded to treasurer. Draft Decision Notice for the Gunflint and Tofte Gravel Pits Expansion Project. Superior National Forest to Resume Prescribed Burning. CCHE November Events Newsletter. OSA

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Weekly Update. Upcoming Road Closure for Public Safety During Tofte Landscape Project Work; forwarded to supervisors. IRRR Board Meeting Recap. December Variance Notice impacting Lutsen; forwarded to supervisors.

- Ordered wood stain for shed
- Ordered office supplies
- Operation Christmas application hours set up
- PERA webinar
- CTAS resource review
- Overhead door insurance check approved and sent
- Request for township to take ownership of fire hydrant information sent to supervisor Homyak
- Annual Township Road Certification
- Correspondence with Tofte fire on our fire charging policies and pay
- Lutsen fall celebration potluck; 43 attendees for 2024

**Treasurer's Report: Deputy treasurer Philip Creighton:** As of October 31, 2024;

North Shore Federal Credit Union-Checking \$252,072.98 General Building Fund-savings \$35,756.00; Fire/EMS truck fund \$151,072.25 totaling \$438,901.23; CD investments;

- 29-month CD at Grand Marais State Bank \$100,000.00
- 13-month CD at Grand Marais State Bank \$100,391.47
- 200,391.47 in CD's still acquiring interest

Total funds including CD investments \$639,292.70

Year to Date Receipts \$206,897.53; Year to Date Disbursements \$283,424.54.

2024 General town Budget \$41,450.00, 2024 Fire District Budget \$201,645.00 for a total budget of \$243,095.00.

2024 General town Levy \$30,000.00, 2024 Fire District Levy \$145,000.00 for a total 2024 Levy of \$175,000.00

**C Friesner made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. L Cooper seconded. Motion passed**

Researching additional CDs to invest in at both banks currently used by the township treasurer VanDoren found North Shore federal credit union is currently has a shorter penalty of 3 months as opposed to Grand Marais state bank's 6-month penalty but the credit union will not have coverage for funds over \$250,000. NSFCU has a currently special 5-month CD at 4.59% or a regular 12-month CD at 3.09%. GMSB current special is a 5-year CD for 4.75% and their regular is 12 months at 2.7% however GMSB would be willing to match any local CD interest offered but will be unable to match the penalty. The town board expressed interest in the 5-year CD; Fire chief Duclos advised that the fire tender truck will need refitting within the next five years to the tune of \$40,000. The board reviewed the earmarked larger spending items needed over the next few years such as air packs emergency response items and larger bills and the possibility of putting partial investments of the current Fire/EMS truck fund. **Supervisor Friesner made a motion to have treasurer VanDoren invest \$100,000 from the current Fire/EMS truck fund into the GMSB 5-year CD at a rate of 4.75%, L Cooper seconded. Motion passed.**

#### **Review and Approval of Claims:**

- Clerk S. Mcquatters-Spangle provided the invoiced November Claims. Details; 12 claims for a total of \$12,514.58 This included \$4,700 to overhead door to pay the deposit to repair the garage bay door near the fire trucks after the initial insurance check has been received. \$1,841.24 for FRC LED lamp head for the fire truck. \$2,706.20 for maintenance to the Fire cloths heavy duty washer and new board installation.  
**C Friesner made a motion to approve claims, C Homyak seconded. Motion passed.**
- Clerk provided November payroll; 5 Claims for a total of \$2,035.33  
**C Homyak made a motion to approved payroll. L Cooper seconded. Motion passed**
- Claims approval and Payroll distributions were signed by Supervisors; copies are on file in the town office.

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### **Fire and EMS Chief's Report: (Steve Duclos)**

- Over the last month Lutsen emergency response teams received 2 fire calls and 4 EMS calls
- Training included winterizing the fire trucks; draining the tank and blew the lines out.
  - Identified landing zones for a helicopter during the winter season
  - Pack testing
  - Pump operations and truck checks
- New MSA air packs have been ordered for Fire and should be arriving soon with payment to be due after the new year as approved by the board. The old Alex air packs while testing had another one fail in the last month during back checks, currently all these packs are serviceable still but will all the consistent failures are not compliant with OSHA in our area. Due to all the issues experienced with the Alex air packs it would be best not to sell the remaining packs to anyone in Cook County who have been experiencing the same issues and instead donate to a fire crew who have no options for air packs which would include a bottle and a mask; somewhere possibly in dire needs such as hurricane hit areas or possibly Ukraine. Fire chief Duclos will research and review the best place to donate; the town board agreed.
- Plans to stripe off the paved area in front of the fire bay doors as there has been many issues with people parking in front of them and blocking the fire trucks. New signage will possibly be going up as well.
- 3 new members completed their EMR classes; new personnel to take fire class 1 and 2 later on this winter
- Officer nomination for Junior captain to take place this next month; current incumbent Brandon Gillespie.
- Cook County received a grant for radios, Lutsen fire has to opportunities to turn in 10 older ARMOR radios and revied 10 newer ones; many of the older versions no longer have repairable parts and are unserviceable but this does not include the home base or truck radios. 1 radio in the brush truck was replaced back in 2019 and it is worth budgeting to replace another truck radio in the next few years.  
Fire chief Duclos is also looking into purchasing two dual band radios in the future which with incorporate VHF which is still used by wild land and FEDs along with the ARMOR radios for better access, ideally leaving one of each permanently in the truck for the group leader to communicate with forestry and DNR.
- Last 3 sets of turnout gear will arrive within a few weeks
- Talks of placing a wind sock around the Lutsen ball field; as more helicopters land for emergency use in Lutsen and the increase in wind storms use of a wind sock will better accommodate the piolets handling of the helicopter when landing. Currently fire does have lit cones for quick placement.

### **Supervisors' Report:**

#### **C Friesner:**

- Attended and hosted the fall potluck
- Aided manual labor in new shed seal staining
- Worked with fire chief on line stripping near fire bay doors
- Talk with the water association about fire hydrants
- Advised citizen to attend meeting to review convention over
- Contracted McMillan tree removal for 2 fallen tree at ball park

#### **L Cooper:**

- Worked with WTIP for updates with Lutsen township
- Attended and hosted the fall potluck

#### **C Homyak:**

- Set up for fall potluck
- Worked with insurance companies for possibility of owning fire hydrants
  - Gitchi Gami trail meeting; to discuss during new business
  - Talked with water association about owning fire hydrant; currently waiting for response from insurance company about the logistics.

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- Insurance replacement on EMS truck lights
- Insurance for replacement of fire bay garage door; overhead door company
- Waiting to hear back from insurance on different or extra fire department insurance
- Attended chamber legislative lunch in; discussed ISO rating with citizen per request

#### Old Business:

- Consideration to make Lutsen township suitable for emergency shelter; generator. (Discussion located under commissioner report) ***Supervisor Friesner will contact Hank and Mal on getting a slab poured and possibly getting the generator ordered. Will call and talk to North shore plumbing about connecting generator to building needs and heating requirements; Supervisor L Cooper will be the main contact for Mr. Keyport about his hazard mitigation request.***
- Review of townhall insurance and look into new insurance companies. Supervisor Homyak will continue to liaison with other insurance companies to compare costs and coverage of needed items. More information above.
- Overhead garage fire bay doors damaged; **first downpayment sent to Overhead Door Company; estimated 6 weeks for order to be manifested and received.**
- Request for Lutsen township to take over ownership of Lutsen fire hydrants; **Supervisor Homyak has reached out to MATIT on logistics and liability of ownership; currently waiting to hear back.**

#### New Business:

- Approval of plowing bid for Lutsen township; **C Friesner made a motion to accept the plowing bid from Fred Schmidt, C Homyak seconded. Motion passed.**
- Approval of sanding bid for Lutsen township; **C Friesner made a motion to accept the sanding bid from Patrick Reeves, C Homyak seconded. Motion passed.**
- Ball Park fence repair from 2 fell trees; Matt Kartes has been asked to review the repair possibilities.
- Citizen request for installation of personal convection oven at town hall kitchen; not currently in attendance  
Tabitha Blanchard requested discussion about installing a personal high end convection oven she has received through a grant to help grow her cottage license baking business but currently does not have the space to house and would require a 240 outlet. It was questioned if the housing of this oven would be available to other rentals using the kitchen or if it would be reserved solely for her personal use; the amount of electricity required to the daily operation of her baking business, the renting logistics or the space and each time a rental is needed and the liability of the town hall for housing this oven. **C Homyak agreed to discuss the possibility of housing a personal convection oven with insurance; Treasurer VanDoren will discuss with electricians about measuring the electricity usage of a machine; C Friesner will reach out to Tabitha with the boards concerns and all will reconvene at the next meeting.**
- Gitchi Gami Trail update; the trail has been finished but due to the recent wind storms is undergoing downed tree removal; current talks about developing the trailhead at the bottom of the ski hill over the next year. Grant fund have been retained for 2027 for bridge construction with the possibility of switching of the funds for an early grant if available; engineering is currently underway for bridge construction in the event building can begin earlier than 2027
  - Gitch Gami trail plowing; the Gitchi Gami meeting advised letting the Lutsen township take charge of plowing needs for the trail; concerns over maintaining the trail during the winter as the current end of the trail leaves pedestrians accessing the highway at a narrowed curved bridge which is a major safety concern, advised waiting until the trail connects across the creek. Another concern is not having a budget planned out for winter plowing of the trail currently.
  - Gitchi Gami trail signage; concern over lack of signage at the bottom of ski hill as the Gitch Gami trail don't not allow motorized recreational vehicles but shares the same access point as the snowmobile trail. Requested signage to differentiate the trails at the next Gitch Gami meeting.

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- Gitchi Gami Letter of support; Gitchi Gami trail association is requesting a letter of support for the transportation alternatives program for GGST development from steam engine road to a frontage road on MN-61. This is a request for \$480,000 through the TA program. **C Homyak made a motion to write a letter of support for the transportation alternative grant. C Friesner seconded. Motion passed.**
- Town hall rental questions on behalf of Judy Sillman; Currently renting out the townhall on most Sundays for an Eagle brook church viewing group Mrs. Sillman has requested to download the groups app on the smart TV located in the townhall; Unanimous agreement that placing personal applications on the townhall equipment should be avoided as it sets a precedent for all rentals and no personal log ins or applications should be left on the rental space TV.

The group also asked if they could except a gift donation of a sound bar for the TV from Eagle Brook Church and mount to the wall under the TV? The board asked for clarification of this donation, would it be to the rental group for personal use of only the Eagle Brook Church group or if this donation would be to the township and there for available to all rental and township use? If this donation is solely for rental group, then the board would like to politely decline as the town board is solely liable for all property currently kept within the townhall and have to insure this piece of equipment; they cannot do that if it is not owned by the township.

**Donations:** Heather Derewenko on behalf of Marland Hansen and Mary Brisance on behalf of Marland Hansen.

**C. Friesner made a motion to accept, Copper seconded. Motion passed.**

**Citizen Comments: N/A**

**Adjournment:** C Friesner made a motion to adjourn; seconded by L Cooper. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:29pm

Respectfully Submitted,

S Mcquatters-Spangle; Townhall Clerk

Carl Friesner; Chairperson