

**FLORENCE TOWNSHIP BOARD  
MARCH 25, 2024 MEETING**

**Present:** Supervisors Mike Blair (chair), Ed Hruska and Jim McIlrath, treasurer Tom Gnotke, clerk Pam Miller. About 20 citizens attended.

**Minutes:** Mike called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and led us in the Pledge. February 2024 meeting minutes were approved as read. (Mike motioned to approve, Ed to second. Passed.)

Pam was welcomed as the new clerk. Mike was congratulated for winning another term as supervisor. The supervisors voted to keep him as board chair.

**Discussion of which newspaper** to use for our legal notices: Ed made a motion to keep the Lake City Graphic/Shopper. Jim seconded. Passed.

**Discussion of which bank** to use for township purposes: Ed asked if we're getting decent interest from our current bank, Associated. Tom: Yes. Our checking account is backed up by a money market fund that gets a little over 4% interest. Ed made a motion to stay with Associated; Jim seconded. Passed.

Tom offered the **treasurer's report for February 2024** (printout recorded and kept in print). A brief summary:

**Checking and money market balance at the end of January:**

\$1,081,366.26

**Total receipts in February:** \$58,544.92

**Total disbursements in February:** \$7,776.72

**Checking and money market balance at end of February:**

\$1,132,134.46 (a breakdown: \$159,870.55 is in the checking account, \$972,263.91 in money market account)

**A detail of note:** The snow plowing budget for 2024 is \$55,000. So far only \$2,160 has been spent, leaving \$52,840. (By comparison, by the end of February 2023, \$52,375 had already been spent.)

Jim made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as read; Ed seconded. Approved.

**Planning Commission report, presented by chair Joel Cannon:**

Three building permits, all previously approved by the Planning Commission, were approved by the board: They were:

1. Wayne and Rose Decklever, 29282 Lake Av., Frontenac, tearing down an old house and building a new one. Contractor is Winona Homes, Minnesota City, Minn.
2. Jake Meyer, 30887 County Rd. 2 Blvd., Red Wing. Home being built where they had a trailer that is now gone.
3. Paul Thompson, 1037 W. Elm St. Lake City, is his mailing address. He plans to build a single-story garage on his property at 36117 Hwy. 61 Blvd.

**Continued presentation by Joel:**

**Dispute between two Old Frontenac neighbors:** David Pribyl, 29407 Wood Av., and Thomas Fahnel, 29337 Wood Av., live on opposite sides of an unused and long-overgrown stretch of Barton Street. The street has never been accepted for maintenance by the township or vacated, so according to law, the two neighbors have mutual rights to maintain it. The Planning Commission recommended that the township vacate the street and split the right-of-way between the two property owners. However, Joel said, some mediation may be in order before that happens. Supervisors voted to send the issue back to the Planning Commission so those conversations can take place.

**Amundson patio issue:** David and Mary Beth Amundson, 28822 Lake Avenue Way, told the board that their circular patio was unwittingly built in violation of permit rules and property lines, straying onto public land facing the beach. Mr. Amundson apologized and asked the board if some resolution short of rebuilding the patio can be reached. The board sent the matter to the Planning Commission for further discussion, and eventually will decide what to do.

**Next up:** The matter of Bostonian Margaret Anteblian's deteriorating historic house on Garrard Avenue, sometimes called Locust Lodge or the old Westervelt house. Red Wing attorney Chuck Richardson, appearing on her behalf, said her response to the board's most recent letter to her, which asked her to submit a detailed repair plan by March and to have work begin by May, is that she needs more time. Mr. Richardson said she wants to repair the house but is limited by her current financial situation. He said she expects to close on the sale of her multimillion-dollar Boston Beacon Hill property late this summer or early this fall and then she'll begin renovation of the Frontenac house. Ed said she has another option: To sell the house. Mr. Richardson said she doesn't want to. He asked that the supervisors write him an email he can use to convey to Ms. Anteblian and her Boston attorney that they want her to sell the Frontenac house if her Boston deal doesn't come through soon. They will do so.

**Katy Beckman, chair of the Heritage Preservation Commission, then presented her report:** It turns out, she said, that a variance will be needed for Jeff and Ann Bolin's garage/workshop plan, which had already been approved by the HPC. But Goodhue County wouldn't give him a permit because it turns out the historic district's setbacks are somewhat different from the county's. So a variance request is next. Katy also said that HPC members have been trained to conduct oral history interviews for the Goodhue County Historical Society and a few are coming up. Second historical research grant update: "It's still

floundering at the state level,” but will eventually be completed. The HPC needs two new members. Jeff Bolin will join the commission and Pam Miller can stay on two-three while we look for new members.

**Parks Commission chair Jane Webster-Urbach presented its update:**

Ted Tollefson is leaving the commission, and Ann Bolin is coming on. The annual community potluck will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 20, at the Wakondiotia Park picnic shelter. Kayak rental will be \$75 a space through the end of April. T.J. Leonhardt from NRP will do a Valhalla Park walkthrough with us. The dead tree by the power line has not come down yet but will soon. (Update: It fell down by itself.) Commission is doing some research on a possible new/renovated picnic shelter near the playground, looking at funding options. There’s been a request to have a stop sign put by the Frontenac Station playground at the corner of Germania and Caledonia because cars tear by there. Jane reminded people that if anyone wants to be on the Park Commission’s email thread, to let them know. (The PC’s email address is [florencetownshipparks@gmail.com](mailto:florencetownshipparks@gmail.com).)

No report from **Friends of the Town Hall**.

**Old business**

Resident Dave Pribyl asked about the status of ash tree removals in the township, noting that many are still standing. It was explained that as many as possible, especially those that might create a hazard if they fell, were cut down using the grant money we got. Jane and others said the Planning Commission is likely to seek further grants for this cause.

**New business**

**Discussion of upcoming paving project bids:** State statute requires bids over \$175,000 to be sealed, and even for lesser bids, at least two quotes are urged. The supervisors said we have a lot of money in the

roads account right now, but looking at possible upcoming costs, it could go fast.

Descriptions of the projects seeking bids (Ski Road and 347<sup>th</sup> Avenue Way) will be published in the Graphic/Shopper.

**Annual road tour:** It will leave from the Whistle Stop at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 13. Open to all citizens if they provide their own transportation. Notice to be put in Graphic/Shopper.

**Two resolutions accepting donations:** Judy Johnson of rural Red Wing donated \$50 for the lilac giveaway. Riverlands donated \$10,000 for the Valhalla Park project. Pam will send donors thank-yous.

Denny Schumacher reminded the board that the **town hall's front steps** are in bad shape. Kerby Rigelman was going to look at them but supervisors haven't heard back from him. (It would be volunteer work if he did it.) Ed will talk to Kerby to see if he will do it.

**Ongoing issue of brush dump,** which has twice been illegally set afire: Dan Fox of Luhman's Construction said his company used to do the official burnings but the brush pile has gotten so big that a fire would have to be watched for 38 hours now, which might require more man-hours of pay than the township would want to spend. After some discussion, Dan said Luhman will see if it can figure out something that works for all.

**Motion made to adjourn** the meeting, passed. Adjournment at 7:35 p.m. The board then moved on to paying township bills.

Next regular meeting: 6 p.m. Monday, April 15, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Miller, town clerk