

# Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Residents of Avon Township

## Stearns County, MN

March 13, 2018; 8:30 PM

Avon Town Hall, 16881 Queens Road, Avon; <http://avontownship.org>

**Call to Order:** Supervisor Huston called to order the 2018 Annual Meeting of Avon Township at 8:30 PM.

**Pledge:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Introductions:** Township Board Members and staff were introduced. Approximately 25 residents were in attendance.

**Nomination and Election of Moderator:** Ms. Kelly Martini nominated Mr. Lee Larkey as moderator for the meeting. Mr. Eric Linn second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Election Results:** Mr. John Merdan was elected for a three-year term (2018 – 2021) as Supervisor, Will Huston was elected for a one-year term (2018 – 2019) as Supervisor, and Stephen Saupe was elected for a two-year term (2018 – 2020) as Clerk.

**Minutes:** In the absence of Clerk Stephen Saupe, Deputy Clerk Marion Gondringer read the minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting. Mr. Ken Mergen moved to approve the minutes as read. Second by Mr. Eric Linn. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Board of Audit Report:** Deputy Clerk Gondringer read the Board of Audit Report for 2017. Mr. Ken Mergen moved to approve the report. Second by Mr. Sam Linn. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Mr. Will Huston to approve/amend agenda to remove number 15 as discussed at the Supervisor's meeting, and add number 9a - Maintenance Report. Second by Mr. Ken Mergen. All in favor. Motion approved.

**Avon Fire Department report:** Avon Fire Chief, Joel Richter and Fire Chief Adam Pogatschnik presented the Avon Fire Department Report. During the past year the department responded to 58 medical and 15 fire calls in Avon Township, 29 medical/6 fires in Collegeville Township, 41 medical/11 fire in the city of Avon, and 18 medical/2 fire calls on Interstate 94, plus 6 mutual aid calls for a total of 186 calls, the highest number of calls ever recorded. Up from 170 calls last year. Total man hours was 2,386, up from last year by 136 hours. Chief Richter noted that this number does not reflect time spent in monthly required trainings, meetings, fundraisers, phone calls with different personnel, companies and agencies, mutual aid meetings, fire schools and continuing education, public education, plus many other items. Fundraisers were and will remain: Blattner Golf Outing, Spunk Days raffle and calendar sales. The fire department has no loans. The department has 28 current members. 24 are fully trained and licensed fire fighters and emergency medical responders. The department was awarded a FEMA fire-fighting grant in 2017 to buy new turn-out gear and breathing packs. The department acquired additional educational tools through donations and appreciates the continued support of Avon Township. Fundraising and grant applications for various fire department needs will continue. Chief Richter asks that residents keep trees and branches cut away from driveways and 911 signs to allow trucks to enter and exit safely. Mr. Eric Linn thanked the fire department for their continued support and service and encouraged a strong working relationship between the fire department and Avon Township.

**Road Report:** Supervisor John Merdan presented the Road Report (appended). Old Collegeville Road was resurfaced and all roads were rubberized if needed. The continuing plan of preventive maintenance on all roads includes: mowing road right-of-way, installing 911 signs, and repairing culverts and potholes. Constant vigilance and controlling methods are implemented in an effort to control noxious weeds throughout the Town. There are 70 different roads in the Town and work was done on 48 of them (68.6%). Some roads were worked on multiple times. Quite a few larger trees were removed along Upper Spunk Lake Road. We continue to remove trees and brush located in the road right-of-ways as well as doing our own weed and brush spraying and shouldering as needed.

The plows were sent out quite frequently this year and continue to be serviced and maintained by our maintenance staff. Approximately half of the salt sand remains. Some residents who were plowing snow across the road were sent letters requesting that they discontinue this illegal practice as it is dangerous to the plows and other vehicles. Also, residents with vehicles parked in the road right-of-way were notified of the need to move the vehicles. A student at St. John's, Connor Stark-Haws, created a GPS map and database of all signs in the Township.

Road inspection will be on April 14, 2018, departing from the Town Hall at 9:00 a.m. Residents may join. Motion to approve the Road Report by Mrs. Bernadette Larkey. Second by Mr. Will Huston. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Maintenance report:** Supervisor Will Huston presented a report on general maintenance issues. Rain gutters were

installed on the Town Hall to direct water to the rain garden located north of the hall. This was prompted by Stearns County who provided a grant for the rain garden. Some windows were replaced under warranty at no cost to the Town since installation labor was completed by our maintenance employee. The new boardroom table was donated by two members of the community, at no cost to the Township. The loan for the Town Hall will be paid off in 2019. We applied for a MNDOT grant for Norway road to redo the entire stretch from the City out to the Town line. We found out last month that we were not awarded the grant but will reapply next year. Mr. Lee Larkey commented on the lack of potholes in our Town roads and commended the Supervisors and our Maintenance employee. Motion to approve the Maintenance Report by Mr. Jeff Lange. Second by Mr. Mike Linn. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Appropriation of Township budget for 2019:** The proposed budget was presented (appended). The Supervisors recommend a budget amount of \$424,100. Motion by Mr. Ken Mergen to approve proposed budget for 2019. Second by Mr. Will Huston. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Eric Linn inquired if there was a reason the Supervisors could not sit up front so that all could hear and see each other better. Ms. Kelly Martini told him that this is an annual meeting and the Supervisors are not in charge of the meeting, the moderator is in charge.

**Levy for 2019:** The Town has not increased the levy amount since at least 2010. Motion to approve General Revenue Levy by Mr. Ken Mergen. Second by Sam Linn. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion to approve Road & Bridge Levy by Ms. Kelly Martini. Second by Mr. Paul Buttweiler. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion to approve Fire Fund Levy by Mr. Ken Mergen. Second by Mr. Dean Martini. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion to approve Capital Reserve Levy by Ms. Kelly Martini. Second by Mr. Mike Linn. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion to approve total levy by Mr. Jeff Lange. Second by Ms. Kelly Martini. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Planning Commission Report:** Presented by Mr. Ken Mergen. Our five member Planning Commission is currently down to three members with the passing of Mr. Gerry Kremers, and the appointment of Mr. Will Huston to Supervisor, there are two openings on the board.

During the last year the Planning Commission made recommendations to the Supervisors on a variety of requests by residents. The Eric Larson property, originally part of the Ritzer property located in the Avon Hills Overlay District, was granted a variance and a driveway permit. A solar farm was permitted on the Brian Gertken property on Smiley Drive. 2018 should be the last year of the operation of the Ramler Gravel Pit currently being run by Knife River.

The Blattner Energy maintenance facility addition, located in the Township, was discussed. Mergen stated that this property lies in the Shoreland District which is governed more strictly by the County in the state of Minnesota.

Huston stated that the Township has adopted the Stearns County Ordinance and their full time staff are well trained in what is needed in all permitting processes. The Township and the County work together to balance our roles and focus on keeping the lines of communication open to enable Township awareness and keep decisions as local as possible. However, reports which inform us of permitting actions are issued after the permits are granted. Both Mr. Eric Linn and Mr. Don Winkels expressed the preference for the County to keep the Township more aware of what is happening in the Township in relation to permits and other actions taken. Mr. Mark Preusser asked if the County must at least follow Township rules if those rules are stricter than the County rules. Mergen stated that it is already set up that way, with the exception of shoreland which is still prioritized by the County as defined by state law. One of the most recent issues being discussed is the bike race which takes place on Avon Township roads. Mr. Eric Linn expressed thanks to Mrs. Gerry Kremers in relation to the service given to the Township by her husband, Gerry. A new start time of 7:00 PM was adopted by the board for all Township meetings. The previous time was 7:30 PM. Motion by Mr. Eric Linn to approve the Planning Commission report. Second by Don Winkels. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Joint Powers Board Report:** Presented by Mr. Ken Mergen. Our relationship with the City remains very positive. The City of Avon has some water drainage problems and is working on improving various areas of drainage going in both the South and Northeast directions. The Cliff Mitchell property was subdivided to allow attaching the property onto adjoining parcels owned by his children. The board reviewed and renewed the Memorandum of Understanding with the City. The bike race which runs through Avon Township and the City of Avon has gotten to be a safety hazard. This was discussed at length but was tabled until the next meeting. Motion by Mr. Sam Linn to approve the Joint Powers Board report. Second by Mr. Mike Linn. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Bike races on Town roads:** Mr. Huston stated that the race being discussed tonight departs from the City of Avon onto Tower Road, 360<sup>th</sup>, and then onto County Road 9. These roads offer hilly terrain which is desirable for bike racing. By

state law the Woe-Be-Gone trail cannot be used for races. Since we have had some complaints about this race by Town residents in the past couple years, the Township recently began requiring a permit for bike races in an effort to build awareness and have input. Some residents have been yelled at while in their yard, have been spoken to harshly or been told to get off the road. This past year was very foggy and the race was not postponed even though it created a safety issue. Huston clarified that the Township permit we require states that we take no liability for any incidents as Stearns County holds all liability. The race in question is the only race of this nature since others are simply tours and do not involve competition but are simply recreational. Mr. Mergen stated that this race has grown in participants which extends the length of time it takes for racers to complete the course. Mr. Eric Linn pointed out that professional bike races typically shut down roads on the route to increase safety and asked if more police could be enlisted to help as racers are not stopping and following traffic laws as the rest of the public must do. Huston stated that an officer is present at the entrance of County Road 9 north of the Hall, but we could explore the possibility of requiring more policing since they are required to follow all traffic laws and it has been observed that laws are not always obeyed by racers. He explained that the Township already requires posting in advance. Supervisor Mike Linn stated that at the last Board meeting the Supervisors put this race on a one year probation in reference to more signage, more patrolling, whether the racers cross over the centerline of the road, respect of township residents and other concerns. The Supervisors will re-evaluate after the race this year.

**Legal posting places:** Mr. Eric Linn moved to designate the legal posting places as Avon Township Hall, *The Store* and *Dahlin's*. Second by Mr. Mike Linn. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Legal newspaper:** – Motion by Mr. Eric Linn to designate the legal newspaper as the *Albany/Avon Enterprise*. Second by Mr. Jeff Lange. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Election Poll hours:** – Motion by Mr. Eric Linn to set the 2019 election poll hours at 2:00 to 8:00 PM and the 2019 Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday of March at the Avon Township Hall at 8:30 PM. Second by Mr. Ken Mergen. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Memorials and awards:** Motion by Eric Linn to set the amount for memorials and awards at \$250. Second by Mr. Mike Linn. Mr. Stanley Streit inquired if the Township would be able to help with funding for the St. Anna ball club. Mr. Ken Mergen asked him to attend the next Planning Commission Meeting for discussion. Mr. Larkey asked for a vote on the motion made. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Township Website:** Huston states that the site is up and running well.

**Future Annual Meeting Topics:** Mr. Eric Linn asked what the biggest concerns are in moving forward as a Township. Mr. Huston stated the building is almost paid off. Roads are very expensive to repair and remain one of our biggest concerns moving forward. We did not get the grant for over \$600,000 toward resurfacing but we will reapply next year. Road inspection will address re-shouldering needs. Mr. Greg Schirmers asked about widening Norway Road when it is resurfaced. Huston stated that Norway road plans include widening the road by two feet.

Mr. Eric Linn asked if the Township has historical photos of those people who have served the Township in the past. He suggested framing photos of those who have served and hanging them in the Hall because it would be interesting for visitors who come to the hall to see who has served.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Ken Mergen moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 PM. Second by Mr. Will Huston. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Deputy Clerk signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Moderator signature** \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lee Larkey, 2018 Moderator

# AVON TOWNSHIP ROAD REPORT

## MARCH 13, 2018

Old Collegeville Road was resurfaced. We rubberized all roads that needed it. We continue do preventive maintenance on our roads when needed including mowing road right-of-way, installing 911 signs, and repairing culverts and potholes. There are 70 different roads in the Town and work was done on 48 of them or 68.6% of all roads. Some roads were worked on multiple times. We continue to cut trees and brush in the right of way, do our own spraying and also some shouldering. Quite a few trees were cut on Upper Spunk Lake Road. We controlled noxious weeds throughout the Town.

The snow plows were serviced and maintained by our maintenance staff. We sent the plows out quite frequently this year. Our salt shed is a little less than half full. Some residents, who were plowing snow across the road were sent letters requesting them to stop because this is illegal and dangerous to the plows. Also, residents with vehicles parked in the road right-of-way, were requested to move the vehicles. A student at St. John's, Connor Stark-Haws, created a GPS map and database of all signs in the Township.

Road inspection will be on April 14, 2018 and anyone can come along with us. Meet at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by John Merdan, Supervisor

### 2019 proposed Budget

	2017 Budget		2017 - Actual		2018 Budget		2019 Budget	
	Expense	Income	Actual Expense	Actual Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income
<b>GENERAL REVENUE</b>								
Payroll - including meeting wages, monthly stipends, PERA, Medicare, IRS, MN Revenue	31,000		32,677		38,000		34,100	
Office - printers, furniture, expendable supplies, postage	1,000		789		1,200		1,000	
Mileage	1,500		1,049		1,500		1,500	
Elections - judge stipends, machine maintenance, County admin. fees	5,000		1,396		5,000		3,500	
Financial - County assessments, Truth-in-taxation, safe deposit box, bank fees, consultant fees	13,500		14,959		14,600		15,500	
Insurance - MAT Workers Comp; building, vehicles	7,000		12,426		7,000		13,000	
Township Administration - MAT Dues, workshops, conferences	1,700		3,059	237	2,500		3,000	
Legal - Attorney fees	2,000		920		2,000		1,000	
Utilities - electric, internet, propane, septic	3,000		2,290		3,000		3,000	
Utilities - electric, internet, propane, septic	7,500		7,404		7,500		7,700	
Utilities - compost site; garbage; sanitation	1,000		1,065		1,200		1,200	
Town Hall (Financial) - Facility debt payment; land tax	76,000		74,613		77,000		75,000	
Town Hall (Maintenance) - landscaping, windows, cleaning supplies			224		250		250	
Town Hall - including awards, celebrations, memorials, meetings			54		250		250	
Miscellaneous	9,300	2,000	2,859	3,271	6,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Receipts (Permits & Fees) - CUP; IUP; Variances; Cert of Compliance; Plat signing; Alcoholic beverages license; Driveway, Noise			750		500		500	
Receipts (Services) - Special assessment searches		2,500	3,592		2,500		3,500	
Receipts: Royalties (i.e., Midcontinent Cable/Solar)		4,500	157,197	7,851	167,000	162,000	6,000	156,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>159,500</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>157,197</b>	<b>7,851</b>	<b>149,347</b>	<b>167,000</b>	<b>162,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>
<b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>								
Payroll - maintenance worker & plow drivers including PERA, Medicare, IRS, MN Revenue	48,000		46,484		48,000		48,000	
Roads - Reconstruction & improvements	125,600		25,621		129,700		129,700	
Roads - maintenance & repair; crack filling	11,300		9,946		18,000		18,000	
Fuel, oil	11,000		3,511		4,000		4,000	
Truck maintenance & registrations	14,000		5,045		14,000		14,000	
Salt sand	18,000		2,117		10,000		10,000	
Shop Materials	1,200		1,392		1,200		1,200	
Mowing - tractor rental, equipment purchase			1,392		1,800		1,800	
Weed control - chemicals, spray equipment			5,180		500		500	
Animal Control			54		100		100	
Signs	2,000		424		800		800	
Receipts (County) - Gas & gravel tax		32,000	39,868		32,000		32,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>231,100</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>99,775</b>	<b>39,868</b>	<b>228,100</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>196,100</b>	<b>32,000</b>
<b>FIRE</b>								
Fire protection fees	68,000		68,704		63,000		70,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68,704</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>63,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT</b>								
Capital fund - including voicing machines (chipper & truck in 2017)	2,000		27,275		2,000		2,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27,275</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>460,600</b>	<b>36,500</b>	<b>352,951</b>	<b>47,719</b>	<b>277,957</b>	<b>458,100</b>	<b>462,100</b>	<b>38,000</b>
								<b>424,100</b>