Lake Eunice Township

Treasurer: Ann Hixson Supervisors: Ed Clem, Gerald Johnson Chairman: Jason Rosing Wayne Jacobson, Al Bergquist

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The Lake Eunice Township board held a special meeting at the town hall on July 13th, 2021 at 7:00 pm.  All board members were present as well as John Olson from Apex Engineering. In total, there were 14 residents that live on Buckhorn present. Please see attached attendance sheet. Jason Rosing opened the meeting and then introduced Mr. Olson.

Mr. Olson presented the findings and updates to the surface improvements in regards to Buckhorn Road. The board has asked for some updated information on special assessments and also a consideration with 2.5 inches of pavement. Mr. Olson noted the total cost of the project has decreased with the adjusted pavement. The township received a grant from the DNR for approximately $108,000. The remaining balance is now $89,000. In addition, the construction schedule discussed. The board feels this is a project that can be done spring, 2022. Bid letting could be done over the winter.

At the prior meeting, the board had asked Apex Engineering to develop a special assessment process related to taxable market value. This was presented to the board and also the residents in attendance. The board reviewed this new possibility and then the meeting was opened for questions from residents.

A resident from Buckhorn Road asked what is the interest rate and how long the loan would be for this special assessment. Jason Rosing advised that the interest rates now are very low and we would try to adjust accordingly. Also, the board does support a ten-year loan. Discussed was that Apex Engineering would suggest a 5-year loan-but it is up to board discretion.

The depth of the road was discussed by residents. Is the 2.5 inches to board is recommending adequate for this road? Residents are concerned as large campers, boats etc. travel that road on their way to the public access. The board commented that the most recent road projects were done at that depth and they are satisfied it would be sufficient. Also, residents were concerned about the round about that may be needed at the end of the road. They want to make sure when it is dug out, it will have a chance to settle. The board assured the residents the road will be done to specs. In addition, the board must work with Becker County Engineering about the grade plan. Residents report there is some drainage issues which need to be addressed.

Many residents had comments about the funding scenarios offered by Apex Engineering. Residents suggested that Lake Eunice Township contribute to this road project even more than what has been put in with the DNR grant. The board reiterated that it has been the policy of the board to not contribute to dead end roads, which Buckhorn Road is. Jason Rosing reminded the residents of the meeting minutes from May, 2003. These minutes indicate the board specifically denied a petition from the residents of Buckhorn Road to asphalt a partial road. In addition, the board has had communication with Carl Malmstrom, Lake Eunice Attorney, who advises the board is to be careful in changing a long-standing policy. Residents had many comments in regards to this. Residents feels that everyone benefits from this road being asphalted-the campgrounds, community members and everyone that wants to get on Leaf Lake through the public access. Residents did ask the board to reconsider their policy of not paving through roads and make an exemption. The residents feel this is a unique road due to the public access. The board feels at this time they have already contributed much time and effort by applying for the grant and securing the grant to help assist with this cost of this road. In addition, the board pointed out the only reason a DNR grant could be secured, was because it has a public access. If there was no public access, there would not be any opportunity to use the $108,000 towards the total costs and the residents would be assessed 100 % of the costs of the road. The board also advised they will be paying all the engineering costs, costs to Apex Engineering and also board time and legal fees for the special assessments. The board did budget for those expenses in 2021.

There was discussion about the frustrations residents have about the traffic and the turnarounds on that road. The board did discuss the possibility of providing better signs to direct traffic. The board will discuss with the DNR about providing better signs.

The residents also had concerns about the timing of the project. They noted spring is a very busy time on that road and there is high traffic with people returning to the lake. They’re worried about potential damage to the road. The board assured the residents, the road will have “road closure” signs and also the township can alert residents prior to the road closing so people can make accommodations. Also, in regards to signs, Jason Rosing reported we could look at getting more traffic signs posted.

Resident had questions about that road after it is asphalted and who is responsible for maintaining that road. The board assured the residents that after the paving is completed, the township is responsible for the cut outs, cracks etc.

A resident brought up the possibility of using a TIF grant to cover the costs of the road. The resident indicated these types of grants are typically used for new development to pay a portion of the taxes. Apex Engineering commented on that process and agreed it was typically used for new developments. Also, this process would decrease the townships overall general fund which would defeat the purpose of the special assessments. Heather Anderson will contact Carl Malmstrom, township attorney about that possibility and report back to the board.

Residents had questions about being able to do their own personal driveways at the same time as the main road. Residents were told typically many residents will do that during the process and they will know the contractor that is doing the mail road and they can call them to get pricing etc. at that time.

Much discussion about the equity of the special assessment processes presented- a parcel process and the taxable market. The board and Mr. Olson discussed the process and how to make it as equitable as possible. Many scenarios have been discussed. The board asked residents if we could take an informal vote on what they would like to see. This is not a formal vote and the board did not vote on which process they will be using.

2 voted for a per parcel special assessment-which would make their total payment approximately $3,682.

16 voted for taxable market value.

Residents brought up concerns with people parking along side of Buckhorn Roads which causing congestion. Residents were told the township could put in no parking signs and they could call the Becker County Sherriff’s Department about that.

The board also had to consider a variance tonight. The DNR does require 11-foot lanes with 2-foot shoulders. The variance would support a 10-foot lane with 2-foot shoulders. The variance was brought for vote. The board passed this unanimously.

In addition, the board needs to consider a resolution for improvement on this road designating the Becker County Highway Department as the engineer for this improvement. The resolution passed last month indicated Apex Engineering as the engineer in error. This was passed unanimously by the board.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:52 pm by Wayne Jacobson and seconded by Ed Clem.

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Heather Anderson, Township Clerk Date 15320 Blackhawk Road Audubon, Minnesota 56511

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