

Becker Town Board Meeting
Special Meeting 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 15, 2023
12165 Hancock Street



Attendance

Board members: Chair Brian Kolbinger, Vice Chair Brad Wilkening, Luke Babler, Joe Danielson, Robin Boros, Clerk Lucinda Messman, Treasurer Tanya Danielson, Deputy Treasurer Marilyn Danielson

Absent: none

Others: Kelli Bourgeois – Township Attorney (arrived 5:15), Ben Wilkening – Township Planner

Zoom platform was available for any member of the public who wished to attend virtually.

Meeting called to order at 5 pm. Quorum verified by Chair Kolbinger.

Road discussed first.

- Working on CIP
- Working through potholes and where we may be able to microseal some roads. Looking at things in sections.
- Are gravel roads on plan to tar? Yes and no. Looking at the new microseal process rather than the double chip seal. It will not be quick and no set timeline as the best process is determined.
- Garden Grove's double chip seal needs to be redone this year. 2 years with no work on that process. It is cracking now.
- Micro overlays instead may be different as they allow cracks to move back together and reseal in warm weather.
- Goal is to maintain what we have.

Discussion of letter received from City of Becker (attached).

- Letter received giving 30 day notice/timeline for the Township to figure out how they wish to handle permit processing and building inspection services. Several issues
 - The Town Board found out that the City of Becker had hired a building official on February 27, 2023. One week prior to the letter.
 - The City inspector does not have qualifications to handle septic. Every home/business in the township utilizes septic (other than the clusters).
- 30 days is not enough time to responsibly research alternatives. The clerk did send an email to the City the same day as the letter was received stating this. Response, they felt was that 30 days is plenty of time.
- Babler: This feels like the City desires us to walk away from this agreement.
 - There was no conversation regarding the hiring of an inspector. We just found out two weeks ago that they had hired a new building inspector and were told the inspector was fully qualified.
 - Now we are told the inspector is not qualified to handle septic.
 - At this point I feel this is their way of ending the planning and zoning agreement.

- Boros: This letter is pretty heavy handed. 30 days to try and determine something like this. I would believe they have spent more than 30 days in making their decision.
- Discussion of item 2b in the letter. Is this obligatory with Orderly annexation or exactly what are the impacts?
- Planner and Planning and Zoning reviews discussion, including a review of all fees related to permits for the past two years.
- Discussion of the item regarding septic and Sherburne County.
 - Clerk checked with Sherburne County.
 - Marc and Lynn both indicated interest in opportunity to provide price if the Township would go for RFP, though they are not looking to add work to their inspectors.
- Discussion of the many items involved in permit processing
- Engineering – we still have Bogart-Pederson. They do this now and will continue to provide that service
- Planning and Zoning
 - If we do not utilize the City Inspector, they will not process building permits
 - They would be willing to continue to review permits for planning and zoning
 - Ben Wikstrom has been appointed the Township Zoning Administrator. He handles our planning and zoning reviews for use permits at this time as well as floodplain items and any other issues that arise. He does not review every building permit at this time.
 - If we process permits on our own, Ben's time would go up.
 - Q: Would any of the planning and zoning review fall to Bogart Pederson? Not really, they do the engineering reviews.
- Ben was asked if he would be willing to handle all planning and zoning reviews required for permit processing. Wikstrom: Yes. I am typically, on site 3 of 4 weeks. Ideally, an online system is simplest, though if I have to be on site every week, we will determine this and I can take on the workload either way.
- Danielson: You are fine coming up here or online? Yes. Online offers more flexibility.
- Babler: We need to be sure and get to electronic submissions and all in order to save on staff time.
- Clerk: Have reviewed two different software options and spoken with Metro West about electronic.
 - Permit Works – when brought to City attention, they stated too expensive. Approximately \$15,000 per year
 - MS4Front – Brief demo seen and it looks like a good fit.
 - Metro West would like to use something at least iPad size if reviewing electronic records.
 - They also stated that commercial still requires paper plans.
 - Metro West is willing to help however needed.
 - Bogart-Pederson is willing to help however needed
 - Most items will not change for them
 - Dan & Mac at their office would assist with the MS4Front software
 - Most difficult part right now is not knowing exactly how we need assistance.
- Discussion of hiring outside firm to handle all of this (such as Rum River Consultants – they offer full service) vs. bringing in house. What are limitations?

- Outside firms are set to go now, but need to learn our codes.
- Outside firms are not here everyday. It is a benefit to our residents to have people on-site they can speak to and ask questions.
- For Township, it will be clumsy to start. Key factor would be moving to full electronic for all the reviews. Electronic submission will be needed as well.
- Discussion of how Baldwin Township handles – 100% by Rum River, no questions answered at Township level.
- Discussion of consistency of City employees? There have been 10 planners over the past 10 years. What happens if this inspector leaves? Where does that leave us at that point?
- Metro West is a known value. They provide all the services we need currently.
- Board expressed concerns about the staff at the Town Hall.
 - Do you have enough time to complete this? Clerk: I have spoken with all staff and in our opinion, we should be able to handle this. There will be very busy weeks, but overall we should be able to adjust staff so we can complete.
 - If brought in house, what other demands will there be?
 - Storage of data (there is a large amount on City server now)
 - Large format scanner?
 - Our system is PID based, the current data storage is based on address
 - Credit Card machine/agreement
 - Hardwiring some of the devices
 - Wilkening: Those are all easy to overcome, concern right now – are there any other large costs that would be involved? Things that are yearly like software? Equipment upgrades?
 - Kolbinger: We need to keep our eyes open on costs as this is going to increase the workload on all of our staff.
- We can go out for RFP in the future if necessary.
- Township Attorney discussion of item 2b in the city letter.
- Attorney recommendation – a lot of information tonight. Letter can be drafted and if the board still feels that bringing permits in house is best, it can be acted upon on Monday. That will provide time for staff to research more costs.
- Board consensus. They will wait until next Town Board meeting to make a final decision.

Meeting Adjourned 6:11 pm.



 Brian Kolbinger, Chair



 Lucinda Messman, Clerk