

2023 AVON TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2023

Call to Order: Clerk Stephen Saupe called to order the 2023 Annual Meeting of Avon Township at about 8:15 PM in the Main Chamber of the Avon Township Hall, 16881 Queens Road, Avon (MN). This meeting, like all Township meetings, was also available on Zoom at the following URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945> (Pass code: AvonTown).

Pledge of Allegiance: The pledge was recited.

Welcome & Introductions: Saupe welcomed approximately 25 residents to the Annual Meeting and introduced Town staff. These included: Craig Blonigen (*Planning Commission, PC*); Paul Buttweiler (*Deputy Treasurer*), LeRoy Gondringer (*Supervisor*), Marion Gondringer (*Deputy Clerk*), Joe Koopmeiners (*Maintenance*), Stephen Saupe (*Clerk*), Rich Sanoski (*Supervisor & PC*), Kelly Martini (*Treasurer*), Andrew Wensmann (*PC*), and Lori Yurczyk (*Planning Commission, Chair*).

Nomination and Election of Moderator: Joe Koopmeiners nominated Bob Yurczyk to serve as Moderator for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Richard Bresnahan. All in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Yurczyk took a seat at the dais and ran the remainder of the meeting.

Approval of Agenda: Rich Sanoski moved to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Kelly Martini. All in favor. Motion carried.

Election Results: Chad Klocker was elected to fill a three-year term (2023-2026) as Supervisor. Kelly Martini was elected to a two-year term as Treasurer (2023-2025).

Avon Fire Department Report: Supervisor Richard Bresnahan presented the Fire Department report because no one from the Fire Department was able to attend tonight's meeting. He reported that in 2022 in the Township there were 105 medical and 13 fire calls, and that these required 1091 and 263 hours, respectively. The Township fee for fire services in 2023 was \$86,173 and the proposed fee for 2024 is \$99,981, which is approximately \$10,000 more than the Supervisors had planned for at the audit meeting. We've been running deficits for a few years in the Fire Fund. Membership is currently at 23-24 firefighters. The department would like to increase the number to 26-30 and is seeking gender-equity. The department needs more space for equipment, including isolation and cleaning areas to remove toxins to which they are exposed during calls. A Fire Hall expansion (about 60 x 80) is being planned. A committee has been formed that includes members from the City and both townships. Gohman, Inc. was selected as the design/construction firm; they provided the best presentation, lowest cost, and have the advantage of having a firefighter on their staff as a project manager. Drawings should be ready later this year. The City has about \$272,000 in reserve that could potentially be put toward the addition. Our share of the project cost is estimated to be \$75,000 per year for 20 years. ARPA funds could potentially be used to buy down Township debt.

Road Report: Supervisor Rich Sanoski presented the 2022 Road Report (*appended*). In addition to routine maintenance, during the past year the Township resurfaced half of Parkwood Circle and reconfigured two cul-de-sacs (Plum Hill Lane and Parkwood Court). The Supervisors are committed to resurfacing 1-2 miles of road per year. Costs have gone up significantly in the past few years with a mile of road costing roughly \$250,000. This summer, the Supervisors are focusing on the NW corner of the township. They plan to resurface 190th Ave, Red Oak Circle, 185th Ave, and Two Rivers Road. The latter will be a joint project with cost sharing with Holding Township. The Township bought a new ditch mower (the old one was repaired and will be sold at auction this spring) and a tractor. Sanoski reminded

residents to not push snow onto roads and to give plow trucks a wide berth.

Planning Commission (PC) Report: Lori Yurczyk, PC Chair, presented the 2022 Planning Commission (PC) report (*appended*). She reported that the PC met 11 times and provided input to the Supervisors regarding annexation, plats, certificates of compliance, driveway permits, and encroachment agreements. The PC also held public hearings to consider an after-the-fact variance, as well as an interim use permit for a 1 MW solar garden (Gertken/Novel Energy). Specific activities are outlined in the appended report. Yurczyk said that the PC is looking for new blood and it is a good way to learn about township governance.

Joint Powers Board Report: Richard Bresnahan, the Township representative to the Joint Powers Board, reported that the Board did not meet during 2022 – there was no business to necessitate a meeting.

Minutes of the March 2022 Meeting: The Clerk briefly summarized the minutes of the March 2022 Annual meeting. Craig Blonigen moved to not require the minutes to be read aloud since a copy was provided in the agenda packet and that residents could read the minutes on their own. Joe Koopmeiners second. Motion carried.

2023 Board of Audit Report: A copy of the 2023 Board of Audit Report including the year-end Cash Control Statement and proposed budget was provided in the agenda packet agenda and is appended. The Clerk summarized the report which shows the Town's financial status. Lori Yurczyk moved to not require the report to be read aloud and to approve the report as written. Will Huston second. All in favor. Motion carried.

ARPA Report: Supervisor LeRoy Gondringer reported that the Township received about \$260K in ARPA funding. To date, some of these monies have been used to purchase a tractor, computers for town staff, and have been promised to Stearns County to help expand broadband in the Township. There is approximately \$186,000 remaining in the account. Craig Blonigen and Mark Casey both suggested using the remaining funds for 'necessities' such as a new snowplow and buying down debt. Kelly Martini moved to recommend using the remaining ARPA funds to help cover any Township debt for Fire Hall expansion, and if not used there, recommends to apply the funds to roads needing repair. Mark Casey second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Township Levy for 2024: The Supervisors recommended the following levy amounts for 2024: Total levy –\$644,100; General Revenue – \$109,350; Road & Bridge – \$379,750; Fire –\$150,000; and Capital Reserve –\$5,000. This represents an increase of more than \$100,000 from 2023. The majority of the increase is due to an increase in cost of Fire Protection Service and to cover the anticipated share of the Fire Hall renovation – approximately \$70,000 annually. After discussion, residents made motions to approve the following levy amounts:

Will Huston moved to approve a 2024 **General Revenue** levy of \$109,350. Lori Yurczyk second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Craig Blonigen moved to approve a 2024 **Road & Bridge** levy of \$379,750. Kelly Martini second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Paul Buttweiler moved to approve a 2024 **Fire Fund** levy of \$150,000. Mark Casey second. Vote tied. Motion failed. The results of the vote were discussed. Those opposing the motion suggested that an even higher Fire Fund levy was necessary since the fund has been persistently short. Those in favor suggested to wait and see actual costs of the Fire Hall expansion prior to committing even more tax money. After

discussion, Will Huston moved to approve a 2024 Fire Fund levy of \$150,000. Paul Buttweiler second. Motion carried.

Craig Blonigen moved to approve a 2024 **Capital Reserve** levy of \$5,000. Mark Casey second. Motion carried.

Joe Koopmeiners moved to approve a 2024 **Total Levy** of \$644,100. Craig Blonigen second. Motion carried.

Posting Places: Paul Buttweiler moved to approve keeping the Avon Township Hall and *The Store* as the legal posting places. Will Huston second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Legal Newspaper: Will Huston moved to approve keeping the *Star-Post* as the legal newspaper for the Township. Lori Yurczyk second. All in favor. Motion carried.

2024 Poll Hours: LeRoy Gondringer moved to hold the 2024 Annual Township Election from 2:00 – 8:00 PM. Frank Himsl second. All in favor. Motion carried.

2024 Annual Meeting Time/Location: The 2024 Annual Meeting will occur on the second Tuesday of March (March 12, 2024). Will Huston moved to hold the Annual Meeting in the Avon Township Hall, 16881 Queens Road, Avon (MN) at 8:15 PM. LeRoy Gondringer second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Board of Canvass meeting will be scheduled after the Annual Meeting.

Decision on Budget Amount for Memorials & Celebrations: Kelly Martini moved to approve a budget of \$250 to be used for Town memorials, awards, recognition, and community celebrations. Rich Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Additional Comments: LeRoy Gondringer recognized Ms. Bernadette Larkey, wife of Lee Larkey who served as moderator of the annual meeting for many years. Rick Pogatschnik recommended lighting in the parking lot, especially during voting. There is lighting available – the Clerk apologized for forgetting to turn it on during voting and will be sure to include it on our voting checklist for the future. Steve Saupe applauded Township residents for their commitment and gracious attitudes. Mark Casey said that the Township was lucky to have had fewer and lower tax increases than surrounding areas. LeRoy Gondringer thanked Richard Bresnahan for his outstanding service to the Township as Supervisor and on the Planning Commission.

Adjournment: Will Huston moved to adjourn the 2023 Annual Meeting of the residents of Avon Township at about 9:45 PM. Richard Bresnahan second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Saupe, *Clerk*

Signature: _____

date: _____

ATTEST

Signature: _____

date: _____

Bob Yurczyk, *Moderator*

Avon Township Road Report – 2022 Actions

1. Roads were inspected twice during the year (May, October) to assess their condition. In October, 41% of the roads were judged to be in excellent shape; 12.5% – very good; 25% – good; 5.4% – fair; and 6.1% poor. The average quality of all Township roads is 3.6 (*out of 5*).
2. The north half of Parkwood Circle was resurfaced. An engineer from StanTec was hired to help prepare bid documents. Knife River provided the lowest bid and completed the work.
3. The *cul-de-sacs* on Plum Hill Lane and Parkwood Court were reconfigured to minimize blacktop and save on road maintenance and plowing. The Township is considering vacating the unused portions of these road as well as an undeveloped road by Nob Hill.
4. The Township is planning to resurface 1-2 miles of roads this summer (190th, Red Oak Circle, Two Rivers Road, and 185th).
5. The Township completed routine maintenance – brushing, removing downed trees, trimming trees, filling potholes, shouldering work, replaced signs, etc. – on about 40% (25 of 61) of our roads.
6. Gravel roads were graded twice.
7. Weeds were managed by spraying in July.
8. Ditches were cut three times.
9. Roads were plowed and/or salt-sanded on 39 days. Several residents needed to be reminded to not push snow across the road (*illegal – misdemeanor*) and to move obstacles from the road right-of-way.
10. We continue to do the majority of our own truck maintenance.
11. Late spring storms washed out two culverts and resulted in significant damage to several roads including many of the gravel roads. A significant amount of soil also washed onto several roads including Norway Road. The Township applied for, and received, from FEMA more than \$23,000 to reimburse the Town for the cost of repairs.
12. A tractor was purchased with ARPA funds. Among other things, it is used for pulling the ditch mower.
13. A shouldering disk was rented to fix road shoulders.
14. Vandals have been stealing road signs. If you have information, please report them to the sheriff. Report missing signs to the Clerk or one of the Supervisors.
15. Several roads were crack-sealed by Midwest Asphalt.
16. Residents report that the construction of the noise barrier on the north side of I-94 has increased the noise volume on the opposite of the road. Residents of Upper Spunk Lake Road have inquired about the construction of a barrier on the south side of the road. A MNDOT grant program will need to be modified to allow the Township to apply for funding.

Summary: Overall, Avon Township roads are in decent shape. Several roads may require repair at the same time, which could be a financial burden. Additional funds for road maintenance would be helpful. We are lucky to have a full-time employee who closely monitors Town roads and handles the majority of our roadwork. We encourage residents to alert Supervisors to roads that need of attention.

Respectfully submitted, Rich Sanoski (*Supervisor, Road Manager*)

Avon Township Planning Commission Report: 2022 Actions/Activities Summary

1. **Meetings** – The Planning Commission (PC) met 11 times during the year on the last Wednesday of the month. The December meeting was cancelled due to lack of business. Current members are Craig Blonigen, Rich Sanoski, Stephen Saupe, Andrew Wensmann, and Lori Yurczyk (*Chair*).
2. **Plat / Driveways** – No plats or driveway permits were brought to the PC this year.
3. **Certificates of Compliance** – The PC considered a request for a Certificate of Compliance to adjust property lines because the existing line cut his home in half (Kelley, 37312 185th Ave) and a recommendation was forwarded to the Supervisors.
4. **Variations** – An application for an after-the-fact variance for (Amundsen; 19308 Two Rivers Road) to construct a deck and shed closer to the road than is currently permitted was considered (including public hearing) and a recommendation was forwarded to the Supervisors.
5. **Rezoning** – The PC provided feedback to a resident who inquired about rezoning his property (Stodolka – 36627 160th Ave) to be able to construct a residence with only one-half building credit.
6. **Conditional Use Permit** – The PC provided feedback to a resident (Bueckers, PID 03.01068.0030) who was considering a CUP for a conventional subdivision in the Conservation Overlay area.
7. **Interim Use Permit** – The PC considered an application for an IUP for a 1-megawatt solar garden (Gertken/Novel Energy). A public hearing was held and a recommendation forwarded to the Supervisors.
8. **Encroachment Agreements** – The PC considered a request (Carriveau, 33762 Highland Terrace) for an encroachment agreement to site a septic system in the township road right-of-way and made a recommendation to the Supervisors.
9. **Construction Site Permits** – the PC reviewed procedures for issuing CSP's in the Joint Powers area.
10. The Planning Commission was assigned to **provide the Supervisors with feedback** and advice on a variety of issues/topics including: ARPA funding (*i.e.*, purchase of Town computers), email accounts for Town staff; planning for a potential MNDOT grant to resurface Queens Road; connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail from Shorewood Drive, summer roadwork; hazard mitigation; ideas and editing of the township newsletter; planning for the Township Open House; provide recommendations regarding impacts to the Township of changes to the County 439 Ordinance.
11. The Planning Commission worked with **SWCD** to develop a plan to review and analyze plantings suggested for solar garden projects.
12. **Township Ordinance #5** – the PC reviewed Ordinance #5 and recommended to the Supervisors to extend permit expirations to one year.
13. **Broadband** – the PC met with County Administrator Mike Williams to discuss broadband expansion in the Township.
14. **Annexation issues** – The PC met with residents of Chinook Avenue about being annexed into the Township.
15. **Road vacations** – discussed potential road vacations on Nob Hill Drive, Parkwood Court and Plum Hill Lane, and provided a recommendation to the Supervisors.
16. **Noise abatement** – the PC met with residents to discuss possible measures to alleviate noise issues on Upper Spunk Lake Road.

Respectfully submitted, *Lori Yurczyk (Planning Commission, Chair)*

**Township of Avon
County of Stearns | State of Minnesota
Audit Board Report for 2023**

The Board of Supervisors for the Town of Avon met on February 2, 2023 in their capacity as the annual Board of Audit as required by State Law. All claims submitted to the Town during 2022 were brought before the Board of Supervisors. The Supervisors divided up roles to ensure different people were involved with the different parts of this internal audit review. Claims were randomly selected and examined in detail. A listing of the specific claims examined in the audit accompanies the 2023 Audit Board Minutes. A listing of all claims against the Township accompanies the monthly Clerk minutes. No discrepancies were found. No claims were denied for payment. All receipts submitted to the Town were similarly reviewed. A listing of specific receipts examined in the audit accompanies the 2023 Audit Board Minutes. A listing of all receipts received by the Township accompanies the monthly Clerk minutes. No discrepancies were found and the receipts were verified.

The financial records (year-end cash control statement & bank account summary) maintained separately and independently by the Treasurer and Clerk (Deputy Clerk) were identical. As a result of this audit, no discrepancies were found.

The year-end cash control statement for the Township as of December 31, 2022 is given below:

Clerk Financial Report 12/31/2022

Account Name	Beginning Balance	2022		Disbursements	Ending Balance
		Receipts			
General revenue	\$ 187,079.15	\$ 118,539.32	\$	123,820.17	\$ 181,798.30
Road and bridge	\$ 234,304.04	\$ 395,678.86	\$	405,642.49	\$ 224,340.41
Demolition CD	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$	-	\$ 2,000.00
Road Damage Deposit	\$ 2,950.00	\$ -	\$	-	\$ 2,950.00
Fire	\$ (19,088.24)	\$ 87,440.55	\$	72,062.00	\$ (3,709.69)
Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 53,345.95	\$ 2,030.57	\$	13,900.00	\$ 41,476.52
ARPA Grant	\$ 130,409.23	\$ 135,455.33	\$	84,251.26	\$ 181,613.30
Total	\$ 591,000.13	\$ 739,144.63	\$	699,675.92	\$ 630,468.84

The funds in Township Accounts as of December 31, 2022 are summarized below:

Bank Account Balances 12/31/2022

<i>Checking (American Heritage Bank)</i>	\$ 199,605.80
<i>Outstanding Checks</i>	0.00
<i>Deposits in Transit</i>	0.00
Checking Balance (American Heritage Bank)	\$ 199,605.80
Money Market (American Heritage Bank)	\$ 407,962.64
Money Market (Credit Union)	\$ 20,900.40
End of the Year Bank Subtotal Total	\$ 628,468.84
Demolition CD	\$2,000.00
Total	\$ 630,468.84

The Supervisors analyzed the receipts and disbursements for 2022, the budget for 2023, and then determined a budget for 2024. Based on their analysis, the Supervisors recommend the following levy amounts for 2024: Total levy – \$634,100; General Revenue – \$109,350; Road & Bridge – \$379,750; Fire fund – \$140,000; and Capital Reserve – \$5,000. The recommend levy amounts are higher than past years because the Township will be required to contribute to the Fire Hall addition being built by the City, the cost of road reconstruction has increased significantly, and inflation has increased.

Conclusion: The Township is in good financial shape and has been frugal guardians of Township funds. A surplus is being maintained to provide a cushion for future anticipated expenditures especially a new snow plow(s) and road resurfacing emergencies. The Township also has \$181,613.30 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Some of these monies are

pledged to Stearns County to improve broadband infrastructure; however, the remaining amount may be put towards lowering the Township annual contribution to the Fire Hall Addition project.

Avon Township Proposed Budget – Year 2024			
GENERAL	2024 Expense	2024 Income	2024 Levy
Payroll - wages, meeting stipends, PERA, Medicare, IRS, MN Rev	\$ 70,000.00		
Office - printers, furniture, expendable supplies, postage	\$ 2,500.00		
Mileage	\$ 600.00		
Election - judge stipends, machine rental, County admin. Fees	\$ 6,000.00		
Insurance - MAT Workers Comp; building, vehicles	\$ 3,000.00		
Township Admin - MAT Dues, wrkshps, conferences, Co Assessor fee	\$ 17,000.00		
Legal - Notices	\$ 1,000.00		
Legal - Attorney fees	\$ 2,000.00		
Utilities - electric, internet, propane, septic	\$ 8,000.00		
Utilities - garbage; sanitation, compost site fee	\$ 1,200.00		
Town Hall (Maintenance) cleaning supplies, concrete, garage door	\$ 3,500.00		
Town Hall - awards, celebrations, memorials, meetings	\$ 250.00		
Receipts (Permits & Fees) - CUP, IUP, variances, Cert of Compliance, liquor license, encroachment agreements		\$ 2,000.00	
Receipts (Services) - Special assessment searches		\$ 200.00	
Receipts (Interest)		\$ 1,000.00	
Receipts (Royalties) - Midcontinent Cable, Solar		\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund Total	\$ 115,050.00	\$ 5,700.00	\$ 109,350.00
ROAD & BRIDGE			
Payroll – maint employee, plow drivers, Medicare, IRS, MN Revenue	\$ 30,000.00		
Roads (Reconstruction) - Resurface, rebuild, improvements	\$ 300,000.00		
Roads (Maintenance) - Repair, tar patch, surveys	\$ 50,000.00		
Roads (Snow) - Salt sand	\$ 8,000.00		
Fuel - gas, oil	\$ 10,000.00		
Truck - maintenance, registrations, shop materials	\$ 16,000.00		
Weed control - seeder rent, chemicals, tree removal	\$ 5,500.00		
Signs - replacement, lost, stolen	\$ 250.00		
Receipts - County Gas & Gravel tax payments		\$ 40,000.00	
Road & Bridge Total	\$ 419,750.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 379,750.00
Fire Fund			
Fire - Annual protection fees	\$ 90,000.00		\$ 90,000.00
Fire - Fire Hall addition	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Fire Total	\$ 140,000.00		\$ 140,000.00
Capital			
Capital fund - snow plow, etc.	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
2024 Grand Totals	\$ 679,800.00	\$ 45,700.00	\$ 634,100.00