

TOWN OF ERIN PRAIRIE  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 20, 2025

The January 20, 2025 Board Meeting was called to order at 6:15pm. by Chairman John Van Dyk at the Erin Prairie Town Hall. Present were Board members John Van Dyk, Dennis Mitchell, and Mike Monteith, along with a number of Township Residents.

A motion was made by Dennis to approve the agenda as presented. Mike seconded the motion which passed by affirmative vote.

Brian Smestad was present and introduced himself as a candidate for the open St. Croix County Circuit Court Judge position. He briefly talked about himself and his qualifications for Judge. Brian will be on the February 18 Primary Ballot along with two other judge candidates.

Mike made a motion to approve the December Board Meeting Minutes as written. Dennis seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

In our checking and Money Market Accounts at this time we have \$166,025.84. We received the Local Road Improvement Project funds we had been awarded, which is \$25,293.42. And also have received the first 2025 Transportation Aids check in the amount of \$31,898.94. The bills were then reviewed and discussed. Dennis moved to pay the bills and approve the treasurer's report as presented. Mike seconded the motion which passed by affirmative vote.

Todd Dolan, our building inspector, was present to discuss a few changes he made in the contract for the upcoming year. He will now charge \$55.00 for a Plan Review Fee. A few other changes in charges for various inspections were mentioned. Todd has a two year contract that renews on March 1, 2025. It will be placed on the agenda of our February meeting for the contract to be reviewed and signed for renewal.

Russ Kievinemi from Cedar Corporation was present to discuss the Agricultural Road Improvement Grant (ARIP Grant) that the township has been awarded. Cedar Corporation helped write and submit the grant application for us to reconstruct and pave 190<sup>th</sup> St. from County Road G to 140<sup>th</sup> Ave. The township received a 90% grant which means the estimated cost for the project is \$881,000 so the township will receive 90% of the cost of the project. The township will be responsible for the remaining 10%. As the township incurs the costs the reimbursements will be made quarterly. The Township will need to submit four times a year to receive the reimbursements. The engineering expense can be submitted also. Cedar Corporation will start engineering in the spring and submit for bids in October. April or May of 2026 the work will actually begin. Because of waiting until fall and 2026 to begin the work the bid prices should be good. Cedar Corporation will reach out for bids for the work that needs to be completed. Four inches of asphalt will be put down. The ditches will be reconstructed and driveway culverts will be replaced as needed. When the project is completed the road will no longer need to be posted. A motion was made by Dennis to sign a contract with Cedar Corporation to complete this ARIP Project. Mike seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Town residents were present to comment about the proposed Ten Mile Creek Xcel Energy Project. Once Xcel sends its project proposal information to the state, which is expected to be in June, then we will know more about the project and if land owners in the township have signed up to be part of it.

Following are comments and information that was shared by township residents.

It was mentioned that land with Solar Panels on it remains zoned Agricultural and is taxed the same. This does not change the zoning.

On the Public Service Commission website it can be seen that Northern States Power has about 7,000 acres near Portage that are going into solar. The Township had no say in whether this would be allowed or not. A project such as this was also started near Range, WI. There were concerns that some roads would be broken up. Signs were put up so certain roads were not allowed to be used for completion of the project. An agreement could be put in place that states if roads were broken up Xcel would be responsible for fixing the roads as needed. The request could also be made to keep the solar panels away from developments or places where there are numerous housing units. Once Xcel submits their application for the project there will be a case number that can be used to identify the project and ask questions about it. The request for restrictions could then be submitted.

This solar project in St. Croix County would change the structure of the community. A County coalition could be put together to work with Xcel and make recommendations. Xcel will take into consideration local ordinances. Tara Greiman who works with Farmer's Union had attended our November Board Meeting and had said the best thing to do is work with Xcel and set in place things that will benefit the community. Mike mentioned he also spoke with several Chairmen that are in communities that have Solar Projects. They also said that the best thing to do is work with the company and try to get Good Neighbor Provisions in place.

The comment was made also that Xcel has said they are self managing this project. They admitted they have made mistakes in how some things were handled. We need to start saying now what we would like if the project does go through. There will need to be setbacks from roads and houses. In Portage, WI there were chickens that were worked around in an effort to preserve them. If there is something we as a community see needs attention we have to ask that care is given to address that. The Board needs to have an opinion on this.

The next meeting will be held Monday, February 17 beginning at 6:00p.m.

A motion was made and passed to adjourn at 7:50p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie Mitchell, Clerk/Treasurer