

March 6, 2018 Watab Town Board Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Watab Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall on Tuesday, March 6, 2018. All board members were present: Supervisors Lloyd Erdmann, Craig Gondeck, and Todd Waytashek; Clerk Pat Spence; and Treasurer Maureen Graber. Audience members present were Ed Kacures, Jerry Kostreba, Ray Thompson, John Schram, Deb Poirier, Jim Rau, Robin Wollak, Steve Wollak, Jeff Wollak, Jessica Storkamp, David Johnson, Doug Harden, Paul Wippler, John Olson, Terry Knapek, Kevin Reiter, Dale Dirks, Linda Dirks, Karsten Braaten, Dick Raveling, Bob Raveling, Orrin Albertson, Michael Burton, and Jordyn Brown.

Following the Pledge to the Flag, Chair Gondeck called for a moment of silence for Brian Koester's family. The agenda was approved through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck and second by Supervisor Erdmann with the addition of Approval of the Fire Contract with Sauk Rapids and Update on Fire Negotiations by the subcommittee with Rice. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek and passed to approve the February 7th Regular Meeting Minutes as written. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to approve the Treasurer's Report given by Maureen Graber. She presented the board the checking and money market account balances: \$425,857.90 and \$400,254.28 for road projects, cash control statement, and bank statements. Treasurer Graber then asked the board for direction on billing Al Popp for a fire call from the Rice Fire Department. No name was given on the report from the Rice Fire Department, and it was coded as a cancelled call. The 911 dispatch report gave the name and timelines. The property owner says he didn't call 911; however, the 911 dispatch report shows that he requested a neighbor to call. The board wants more information before continuing to bill Mr. Popp; Supervisor Erdmann moved to table the issue until the board chair can speak with the Rice Fire Chief. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to pay monthly claims number 6640 through 6663 and electronic transfers for IRS, MN Department of Revenue, and PERA for withholding totaling \$13,192.86.

Citizen's Issues: There were concerns presented about snow removal. (1) Kevin Reiter reported three inches of snow and ice left on the sides of the roads; (2) Ray Thompson said that at 7:00 a.m. he met the snow plow coming towards traffic in the wrong lane on 95th Street; (3) Ed Kacures reported that 10th Avenue NW didn't get plowed during last week's snowfall, and that he has noticed that they are plowing without using the wing. He also questioned why the plows aren't using belly blades to get more of the snow off the roads; (4) Jerry Kostreba asked to have sand applied on the approach from 105th Street to Highway 10 saying that intersection is never sanded; and (5) Supervisor Waytashek had an email from a resident on 107th Street asking to have it plowed the full width of the street. Supervisor Gondeck responded that the plows would be going out tomorrow, and since the snow is so heavy they aren't plowing as close to the edges of the roads to minimize damage to mailboxes. Supervisor Gondeck added that he will discuss all these issues with the snow plow company tomorrow.

At 7:15 p.m., bids were opened for reconstruction of 85th Street NW. There were five bids:

- Knife River at \$308,980.37
- Kraemer at \$310,214.66
- C & L Excavating at \$323,135.35
- Rice Contracting and Development Services at \$327,106.74
- Helmin Construction at \$374,217.80

The bids were then opened for reconstruction of 95th Street NW between Highway 10 and Plaziak Road:

- Kraemer TE at \$144,782.78
- Rice Contracting and Development Services at \$144,836.64

- Omann Construction at \$148,335.61
- Knife River at \$148,806.70
- Helmin Construction at \$164,735.70

Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to have Town Engineer Nick Anderson review the bids and notify the township of their accuracy and completeness. Chair Gondeck thanked all those who took the time to bid on the road projects.

The board then discussed the two quotes received on the public-address system. A portion of one of the quotes was missing from the board packet information. Supervisor Gondeck said that MN Electronics had input for a sound system when the town hall was built. One of their quotes is for a wired system at \$6,256.00. A/VX LLC presented a quote for a wireless system at \$13,219.26; Supervisor Gondeck said that their quote for the wired system was at \$5,657.00. Ed Kacures recommended that the board visit sites where the equipment is installed, so that they can see how it is working before money is spent. The plan is for five microphones, with four at the board table and one for the podium/audience. Supervisor Gondeck will make visits so that a decision can be made at the next board meeting.

The Annual Township Newsletter has been received by township residents; there has been positive feedback.

Supervisor Gondeck determined that the blacktop on Burton Place varies from eighteen to twenty feet, and the right of way is twenty-eight feet. He met with Mr. Oltz, who was very concerned about the narrow street and difficulty of large vehicles meeting on it. Supervisor Gondeck recommended a traffic count. The board stated that the only way the street could be widened is if the property owners would donate the right of way. The street is in poor condition, even though it was crack filled in 2017.

The board tabled brush cutting until spring.

The board tabled licensing of rental property. Concerns were expressed about how it would be enforced, questions about the number of rental properties in the township, and whether most mobile homes in Rockwood Estates are owned or rented. Clerk Spence said that Brian Koester told her a large percentage of personal property taxes from mobile home owners in Benton County is not paid, so collection of a rental fee may also be difficult. It would also add administrative costs to the township for enforcement. Supervisor Waytashek said that before doing anything else, the board should wait for an opinion from the town attorney on the amendments to the ordinance for emergency service fees. Can the township pass the bills on to owners of rental property rather than owners of all property? The best solution, he stated, would be if Rice would drop medical calls as requested by the township. Terry Knappek asked that the board inquire about who owns the mobile homes.

Supervisor Gondeck has spoken to the Benton County Court Administrator about the status of the township's ability to receive a portion of the criminal fines collected on incidents that occur in our township. The Bureau of Criminal Affairs made approval of the township application in early October and forwarded it to the Court Administrator. The townships should have been receiving this fine revenue for several months and is disappointed with the delay. Supervisor Gondeck will follow up to make certain that everything is completed.

The Annual Election is Tuesday, March 13 from 11:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and the Annual Meeting will follow shortly after 8:00.

Chair Gondeck announced that this is the last regular meeting for Clerk Pat Spence and made positive comments about her service. The other board members and some audience members also made remarks. Maureen Graber read a quotation about Pat's role as a woman leader, and she let the audience know that the gifts and refreshments were paid for by the board members who presented her with a gift, and intermission was announced for everyone invited to share in cake and coffee. There were negative comments from some about interrupting the meeting for this purpose.

The meeting reconvened with New Business: Deborah O'Keefe was appointed by the board through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck and second by Supervisor Waytashek to fill the unexpired term

of Treasurer Maureen Graber until the 2019 Annual Election. She was presented with the Certificate of Appointment and received the Oath of Office at the end of the meeting.

Clerk Spence gave information on the process established by the Benton County Auditor for those who wish to become certified as future Election Judges. There is an application form on the county website on the auditor's page. Training will occur in June.

The Benton County Association of Township Meeting was held on February 15th at the town hall with officers from all except two townships. They are paying the township \$100 per year for hosting the meetings. Todd Waytashek was elected as the Alternate to the Benton County Economic Partnership and Craig Gondeck was elected Vice-President to the Benton County Economics Development Board to replace Clerk Spence. Supervisor Gondeck said that Brian Koester gave a report that residential property values would be increasing about ten per cent based on sales. Sheriff Troy Heck reminded everyone to be reporting suspicious behavior.

The board will plan a closed meeting to discuss improved security of the building and grounds. Clerk Spence advised them to be sure to follow the steps for closing the meeting and to make sure it is recorded and kept on file.

Supervisor Gondeck requested approval for battery replacement on Outdoor Warning Siren 2, which is located near Pine's Edge. He made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, to have Frontline replace the batteries. Supervisor Waytashek requested that the board learn from Frontline how supervisors can activate the sirens. The board discussed the need for a third outdoor siren to cover more of the township and the possibility of a grant from USDA. Terry Knapek recommended the town hall as a potential site.

Treasurer Graber reviewed the recalculations of the Road and Bridge Fund budgets for 2018 and 2019 based on changes in the Engineer's Estimates for 85th and 95th Streets for 2018 and for 105th Street as a potential 2019 project. Supervisor Erdmann said he hopes that 105th Street can be improved the entire length between Highway 10 and River Road and that an estimate should be requested to include the entire road. Jerry Kostreba agreed that the street needs to be widened. Supervisor Erdmann added that many roads need total reconstruction, since the levy hasn't been adequate to keep up with maintenance. Treasurer Graber recommended that the large cracks in the newest sections of Lakewood Shore Road be crack filled this summer.

The Central MN Water Education Alliance report was received by the township. Supervisor Gondeck expressed the value in the information shared at the meetings in preparing for MPCA audits and how the educational efforts fulfill the requirements of our township permit.

The township discussed the Annual Park Dedication Fee Report from Benton County. The 2017 year-end balance was \$10,237 in the portion for use in the township; \$4,668 is for park and trail connectivity. Supervisor Erdmann said he will ask residents at the Annual Meeting about having a township park department to gain control over how the funds are spent instead of Benton County directing them. None of the park dedication funds have been spent in the developments where they were collected.

Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed to enter a two-year contract with the City of Sauk Rapids for fire protection for the southern two-thirds of the township. The Watab contribution for each year will be \$41,507. The fire call cost will increase from \$365 to \$390. The increase in the contract amount is due to the increase in the township's Net Tax Capacity and is at the rate of 2.07%. Both Supervisors Gondeck and Waytashek attended the contract meeting and reported that the township donations are used exclusively by the fire department. Supervisor Waytashek and John Olson met with the Sauk Rapids City Administrator, Finance Director, Fire Chief, and two council members to discuss the potential of Watab becoming a substation of Sauk Rapids Fire Department. Supervisor Waytashek said that it was an exploratory discussion with no preconceived ideas and that it was a good brainstorming session. They advised Watab to explore whether it has the personnel interested in becoming fire fighters who are available to cover day and

nighttime hours. John Olson agreed that it was a very open discussion looking at a variety of ideas, what the township needs to address, and to see what the pool is of personnel to staff a substation. Without an adequate number, it wouldn't make sense. If there is an adequate number, then we could explore the other questions. Jerry Kostreba questioned why the levy recommendation for Fire District I is so high. The year-end balance needs to be adequate to pay the bills for the first six months of the following year, since the tax levy payments are made in late June. Without the carryover, the bills could not be paid. Dick Raveling asked how much uncollectible debt the township is carrying and said you must have fund balances to pay the bills.

Clerk Spence reviewed the correspondence: (1) a letter from Benton County requesting input on administrative land splits in the agricultural and rural agricultural districts by March 8th. The board did not feel that this is a Watab issue. (2) The Public Hearing to consider Benton County Ordinance #462 to amend the membership requirements for the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment will be on March 8th at 7:05 p.m. The Board of Commissioners Hearing is on March 20th at 9:30 a.m. (3) The township received a letter from David Johnson's attorney regarding the proposed extension of 5th Avenue NE requesting that the township withdraw its grant application; it was turned over to the township attorney. (4) Chris Byrd, County Engineer, has received notice that the Fifth Avenue extension grant was not selected for funding for the 2017 Local Road Improvement Program Solicitation. (5) The Benton County Senior Deputy Auditor sent a letter letting us know that there is now an online election judge application that will be used to apply to be an election judge. All current judges and those interested should go to the Benton County website Auditor-Treasurer page and select Elections to find the application form. (6) The board received a letter from the Benton County Agricultural Society requesting a donation for the county fair; the board will have the letter read at the Annual Meeting to find the citizens' wishes.

Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to pay Maureen Graber \$25 per hour to train the new Treasurer, Deb O'Keefe as needed. Clerk Spence reminded the board of contracts that expire this year: MS4 consultant, snow plowing, ditch mowing, and Rice Fire Contract. The School Referendum will be on May 8th and Watab Town Hall will be a polling place; they will also pay for Watab Election judges. Finally, the building permits and building plans are permanent records of the township, and storage space is getting limited; so she recommended that the board look into having them scanned using the same service as the Benton County Recorder's Office.

Other upcoming board work includes continued training of Supervisor Waytashek as the MS4 Administrator and arranging for a meeting between the General Contractor and Oak Hill Home Owners' Association. Supervisor Gondeck attended their recent meeting and said they are going to have one garbage hauler in the development and have a website for reporting suspicious activity to the Benton County Sheriff. He said they are very happy with the township board. The Greater St. Cloud Development Board will be meeting quarterly rather than monthly. Supervisor Waytashek asked the Clerk to notice the Little Rock Lake Association Drawdown Meeting, since more than one town board supervisor may want to attend. He reported suspicious activity at his home on the weekend with a trespasser on his property and warned everyone to be watchful for their neighbors. Supervisor Gondeck said that there was a major drug bust in the township in the past few days; he recommended that any suspicious activity be listed on Facebook on the Rice Crime Alert page and to call sheriff's office.

Under Citizens' Issues, John Olson asked for an update from the subcommittee on Rice fire contract negotiations; Mike Burton said that they are in the process of scheduling a meeting. Dick Raveling requested that signs be added near 8795 Lakewood Shore Road that say, "School Bus Stop Ahead." He would also like to have an agenda item added for the Annual Meeting calling for a Ballot Question in 2019 to consolidate the two fire districts.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence