

Watab Town Board Meeting Minutes – February 3, 2014

The regular monthly meeting for Watab Township was held on Monday, February 3, 2014 at the Watab Town Hall. All board members were present: Supervisors Ed Kacures Jr., Lloyd Erdmann, and Craig Gondeck; Treasurer Eileen Saldana; and Clerk Pat Spence. Audience members were Bill Fahrney, Patrice Hedlund, and Bob Raveling.

Chair Kacures called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Following the Pledge to the Flag, there were announcements by Craig Gondeck: thanks to Tony Hommerding who recently retired as Chief from the Sauk Rapids Fire Department; thanks to SR Legion for a special bicycle for Andrew Zwack; thanks to Clara Knettel and Ray Schlichting for delivering meals for Catholic Charities each day as volunteers.

Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed with approval of the agenda with one addition of Bill Fahrney.

The Chair called on Bill Fahrney, current board chair of Collegeville Township. In 1990 he joined the St. Cloud Area Economic Development Partnership, which is now Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation. In addition to visiting businesses, he became especially interested in transportation issues. He detailed the history of air transportation for St. Cloud and the history of getting funds for major projects. He was at the Watab meeting to discuss how the board should continue to be aggressive in getting action on safety issues with Highway 10 through Watab. The board thanked him for his input.

Traci Balder, Township Assessor was present to give her annual report on the work she did in 2012. A special highlight she presented is that 15% of property tax revenue in Benton County goes to transportation. Traci reported that Watab is one of the busiest townships/cities with new construction. She reviewed 464 parcels during the year. All permits, callbacks, and Sections 1-6, 13, 17, 24, & 28 were completed in 2013 for the 2014 assessment. During the year, 11 new homes were built and there was one commercial addition. We have about a 1% tax capacity decrease. There is a one to one and one-half per cent increase in sales across the county. There were 106 sales in Watab. The county assessor has decreased all of the Little Rock Lake property about \$20,000 per house in value for payable 2015 due to lower sales prices. Property on the Harris Channel was not touched in land value. The county will continue to review the sales. Foreclosures went down; many of these homes have been sold and are being cleaned up. Land per acre is about \$3,500 throughout the county. Without new construction, we have a 1.4% loss in market value; with new construction it is a .39% decrease in estimated market value. The board thanked Traci for her good work. She will be out in Watab doing assessment work in May.

Minutes of the January 7, 20, and 28th meetings were approved through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed. Eileen Saldana gave the Treasurer's Report: \$180,719.20 cash balance. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed to accept her report. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Kacures and passed to authorize payment of the claims presented for numbers 5337 through 5353 and electronic transfers to PERA and IRS totaling \$17,633.57 and to withdraw the necessary funds; motion passed.

Old Business:

1. There has been no action during the past month on Highway 10 assess from Rep. Jim Newberger; the Clerk was asked to contact him and Senator Brown.
2. Rice Fire Contract: there was positive response by the board for the mayor's presentation; Clerk Spence was asked to update the Watab proposal for a 2.4% NTC base amount using the 2014 NTC report from the County Auditor's Office. Accept Rice's proposal for an hourly rate of \$350 and propose the Watab Addendum. The Clerk is to send the proposal to the City Clerk and Mayor with the request for Supervisor Kacures to present at the City's next meeting in February.

3. County Road 79 Railroad Crossing Project: Clerk Spence reported that she met with the County Engineer and that the project will move forward early this spring with Omann Brothers. They have their access permits and paid the additional insurance costs required by BNSF. The board appreciates Benton County support in getting this done by the low bidder.
4. West Lake Court improvements: Supervisor Erdmann reported that he will not be able to do any more design work until he can drill test holes to determine the base soils.
5. Newsletter Articles and Deadline for Printing: the board decided that the residents should receive the newsletter during the last week of February. All articles are submitted to the board chair; his wife will assist him. Clerk Spence will get the updated mailing list from the county. The board decided to again use Palmer Printing to publish the newsletter.
6. Donations for Newsletter: Clerk Spence reported that donations have been received from Marson Contractors, Commissioner Joe Wollak, Craig's Bicycle Shop, Lloyd's Contracting, and Fiedler Your Pumping Specialists. There is also a pledge from Boser Construction.
7. Tree Trimming on Lakewood Shore Road: Supervisor Gondeck reported that he reviewed his journal notes, and that he had previously contacted both Rice Contracting and Allen Saldana about the tree trimming project on Lakewood Shore Road, and they weren't interested at that time. Tonight he presented quotes from Rice Contracting and Development and Ray Thompson Excavating. Previously he had presented quotes from Ace Tree and Able Tree Service. The amounts of the quotes were reviewed; motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck to do the project at \$1,525 by Rice Contracting and Development, which includes hauling the brush away. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kacures; motion passed with Supervisor Erdmann abstaining since the low quote was from his brother.
8. MS4 Report: Clerk Spence reviewed the positive email response from MPCA regarding our permit application; she requested permission to present a summary of the application to the Lake Association at their next meeting. She also reported on the report from David Schwinghammer; the board requested that she forward a copy of his report to the party affected and to the board members.
9. Clerk Spence reported that Nancy Scott advises that the board not to go for an additional building permit fee at this time for Ernie Wollak's cold storage building.
10. Shoreline Alteration Permits: Clerk Spence will work on these for the dry hydrant system.
11. Follow Up on Board of Audit: It will be printed in the newsletter.
12. Snow Plowing: Supervisor Gondeck reported that Marsons have been out to plow 66th Street; there are good comments from the residents.

New Business:

1. Resolution 2014-2: Appointing Absentee Ballot Board. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed to approve the resolution and to authorize the Board Chair and Clerk to sign it.
2. Resolution 2014-3: Appointment of Election Judges. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed to approve the resolution and to authorize the Board Chair and Clerk to sign it.
3. Benton County Planning Commission regarding Tom Friedrich's request: Supervisor Gondeck made a motion to recommend his conditional use permit be approved by the Planning Commission. People have thanked Supervisor Gondeck for the township cleaning up the lot. Motion was seconded by Supervisor Kacures; and motion passed.
4. Annual Meeting Agenda: The board reviewed the draft presented by the Clerk and made two additions and suggestions on the order.
5. Sauk Rapids Fire Department Meeting with Townships on the new contract is set for February 19th; the board reviewed the mailing and proposed increases. Board doesn't feel it is right to

cover their accidental insurance; that should be covered by the city. Supervisor Gondeck will attend the meeting.

6. Items for Discussion at Feb 20th BCAT Meeting: the board will discuss our Highway 10 issues with the legislators who are present.
7. Communications: the board reviewed the communications received during the past month:
 - a. Public Notice will be February 4 through March 6 for the Watab MS4 Permit Application.
 - b. Email from David Van Diest regarding questions about the train sirens on Lakewood Shore Road.
 - c. Invitation to National Park Service Forum in Minneapolis.
 - d. Notice of the Sauk Rapids Fire Contract Meeting for Feb. 19th.
 - e. Request for funding from the Benton County Agricultural Society.
 - f. Response from Karri Thorsten on a proposed tax levy increase on Watab property taxes. A rough estimate is that each \$10,000 increase in the levy would result in about a \$10 increase annually for a home with estimated market value of \$200,000.
 - g. An Email from Patrice Hedlund and Ennis Arntson, residents of Oak Hill Estates, stating that an acceleration lane going north on Hwy 10 from 85th Street would give some minimal benefit, but one going south would be of no benefit, as a big issue is being able to get across the northbound lanes before they can even attempt to get into the southbound traffic. Also, they expressed appreciation for the efforts the town board is making and support the request for funding for at least one interchange at county road 4 and 78 with service roads to 85th Street on both sides of Highway 10.
 - h. Notice of the District 8 Bus Trip to the Capitol for Thursday, March 13. Supervisor Gondeck and Clerk Spence will plan to attend.
8. Supervisor Reports: Supervisor Gondeck reported that an outdoor warning siren with a mechanical system has an alarm sound that winds down; with an electrical system, the sound stops abruptly. Carlton County newspaper reported that the City of Carlton got a grant for a transportation study. Supervisor Gondeck asked if he could work with the clerk on seeing if Watab would qualify. He has also been organizing the storage room and asked for authority to purchase a shelf unit for up to \$60. Permission was given for both. Supervisor Gondeck also reported on the Rice meeting regarding the rail spur to attract grain elevators. The water meter is re-installed in the maintenance room; and a business he has been working with will build a home-based business in Watab.
9. Citizen's Business: there were no residents present at this time.

A motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Kacures, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 10:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence