

Minutes of September 5, 2017 Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Watab Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Craig Gondeck on Tuesday, September 5, 2017. Board members present were Craig Gondeck, Todd Waytashek, Lloyd Erdmann, Pat Spence, Maureen Graber. Audience members were Ed Kacures Jr., Jeff Hanson, Jason Krueger, Diane Schulte, Michael Kephart, Jill Lindquist, Paul Lindquist, George Taylor, Karen Wolbeck, Roger Wolbeck, Alcuin Meemken, Arvo Tanner, Heather Schmitt, Nathan Schmitt, Corey Verley, Dawn Reiter, Dan Cairns, Ian Cairns, Joel Ylinen, John Olson, Kevin Reiter, Ed Popp, Bob Raveling, and Jim Witcomb. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek and passed to approve the agenda with the addition of a residential garbage issue on Highview Terrace and an inquiry about the size of the cul de sac on Indian Road.

Supervisor Erdmann asked for input on the design of 85th Street, which is scheduled for improvements in early summer 2018. Dawn Reiter asked if it will be the same size as Little Rock Road. It will not be that wide; it is designed to have a tarred surface of thirty feet. Twenty-four feet of that surface would be driving lanes, and the remainder would be a tarred shoulder that can be used for parking, walking, or biking. The shoulder area would be on the north side of the street. From the centerline of the street, twelve feet will be on the south section and eighteen feet on the north section. Lloyd explained that the road will stay within the current road right of way. One resident expressed concern that traffic will increase in speed with the widening of the road. Another said that he is keeping a list of the residents that are speeding. Paul Lindquist felt that widening the road is only a band aid for the real problem; there needs to be another access to the development. He was concerned how many more homes would be added to the developments without an additional access. Dawn Reiter inquired about progress toward another access. Supervisor Gondeck explained that landowners had been paid for a road that connects to 5th Avenue in the 1920's. The town board has had the documents recorded with Benton County, and MNDOT is interested in meeting with Lee Hanson and the township officials on establishing the road. It will be arranged soon. Corey Verley expressed concern about how the construction will affect drainage; Supervisor Erdmann will meet with him and the engineer. There was also concern about adding safe trails for walking in the development. Supervisor Erdmann explained that Benton County used Watab developers' park dedication money for the match in Bend in the River Regional Park, so the township doesn't have the funds to build trails in the development now. A question was asked about whether the road improvements match the specifications for other township roads. Most new streets are twenty-four feet of paved surface with two-foot shoulders. Arvo Tanner asked if there would be a line painted on the road for the shoulder; the response was affirmative. Al Meemken asked the board to build the street wide enough so two cars can easily pass and reminded the board of damage done to the shoulders by tree trimming trucks. He wanted to make sure the surface would be durable for vehicle parking. Supervisor Erdmann explained that the current blacktop is old and did not have a good base; it will be rebuilt with a thicker base and shoulders. Diane Schulte inquired if any of the trees were going to be removed on the south side of the road to eliminate some of the road icing in the winter months. She added that she strongly supports widening the street because of the difficulty in meeting a vehicle safely. Corey Verley asked that the board remove the gravel shoulder from the north side of the road and have it tarred. Supervisor Erdmann said that was a good suggestion, and that it would be better to have sod up to the edge of the blacktop. Al Meemken asked if the trees on the south side could be trimmed to reduce icing. The board responded that trees removal/trimming would be the responsibility of the owner of the development. Mailboxes will be replaced as part of the project with approved, swing-away type poles. Joel Ylinen introduced himself as a new member of the neighborhood and asked when construction is planned. It is scheduled for bidding in February and early summer construction after school is out. The road will be kept open during construction for the people

who live on 85th Street, but a temporary exit through Golf Haven Estates by the pump house will be used by other residents. Nathan Tykwinski of 8560 1st Avenue NE sent an email that was read by the Clerk. He supports widening the road, advocates for adequate striping to show drive lanes with minimal shoulder width on the south side of the road. He suggests "No Parking" signs on the south side of the road and to leave most of the improved shoulder surfaces on the north side to allow for pedestrians to travel safely and vehicles to park on that side. He also suggested adding road markings at the intersection of Highway 10 for straight, left, and right turns; "no parking" signs on the last section of roadway on the north side towards the west side end of 85th Street nearest Highway 10. He is also concerned about current speeding on the street; widening will make the traffic go faster. He wants no less than two signs coming east bound into the development from Highway 10 that indicate the current speed limit and post the speed limits leaving the developments west bound near 1st Avenue NE and NW. Paul Jacobs also sent an email questioning why there would be a walking path on a busy road near Highway 10. Al Meemken added that people should be concerned about their kids riding golf carts and four wheelers on the streets without supervision. Corey Verley said that residents are driving fifty miles per hour or more in the neighborhood and there is no patrol. The town board said they would encourage the Sheriff to add more patrol in the developments. Corey also asked how much further north the street will be than it is now; Supervisor Erdmann said that it will be eight feet further north. Michael Kephart asked if this is a final plan and who would be responsible for moving sprinklers. Supervisor Erdmann stated that the board will ask for a change in the plan to remove the gravel shoulder on the north side. Sprinklers should not be in the town road right of way currently; if they are, they need to be relocated at the property owner's expense. Dawn Reiter asked if the town board tallied the voting of residents at the previous public input meeting, or if that was a waste of the residents' time. Supervisor Erdmann explained that the board took the input into consideration, and heard that parking was needed on the north side, the street needed widening, and they didn't want a separate walking/bike path. Corey Verley asked if someone could come to his property and show how it will affect him. Supervisor Erdmann will meet with him on the drainage plan and added that the slope will be reduced from what it is currently. Nathan Schmidt said that he moved in in March and wondered if all the drainage needs to be on the road right of way. Supervisor Erdmann said that it will be entirely on the road right of way. Ed Kacures challenged the board on scheduling 85th Street before doing the 105th Street improvements and Quiet Zone for the railroad crossing there. He said that people had been promised that 105th would be done three or four years ago. Supervisor Gondeck said that he hasn't had any calls on 105th Street but many on 85th. Other board members added that the projects were scheduled as funds are available and based on the number of people affected by the projects. Supervisor Gondeck thanked all the residents for their input.

The minutes of July 26, August 1, two meetings on August 8, 19, 21, 22, and 29 were approved through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed. Acceptance of the Treasurer's report with a cash balance of \$699,312.59 was given through a motion by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed. A motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann to pay Claims 6484 through 6511 and electronic transfers for MN Dept. of Revenue, PERA, and IRS totaling \$18,690.94 and withdraw funds from the appropriate funds; second was by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed.

Citizens' Issues: Diane Schulte said that last fall she requested that Supervisor Gondeck check on all the tumbleweeds in the development. The gravel pit by Oak Hill Estates is full again and will be blowing in. Also, there are vacant lots in Golf Haven Estates that aren't being maintained. She is also upset about pet owners not cleaning up after them on the streets. Supervisor Gondeck said that it would be an issue for their home owners' association. Craig Hanson said if trees are removed on the south side of 85th Street, more tumbleweeds will blow into the development. Clerk Spence suggested planting a buffer of shrubs; Supervisor Erdmann offered Craig a woven wire fence that he owns.

New Business included:

1. Grace Apartment Proposal for Roseanna Beach Road: Mike Nwachku withdrew his application for two CUP's on this project. They were scheduled for consideration/action by the Benton County Planning Commission on August 24th. The township's Building Inspector has put a Stop Work Order on the reconstruction of the storage garage on site, since the owner had indicated to the Building Inspector that he was getting a Building Permit to re-shingle and reside; instead, he rebuilt the roof. This was discovered when the Building Inspector and Supervisor Craig Gondeck went to the site for the arranged meeting with the owner for the inspection. Since that time, the Building Inspector has sent the owner a letter regarding the Stop Work Order including directions that he must provide photographs of each step of the reconstruction or remove what was done, apply for the correct permit, and pay the fees. Karen Wolbeck, resident of Roseanna Beach Road, asked if neighbors would be notified of any new hearings at the county level. She said there has been a problem with the county notifying the residents of the hearings. Supervisor Gondeck said he would remind the Director of the Department of Development of the need to send neighbors the notices. Commissioner Ed Popp said he believes the County Attorney is considering the Conditional Use Permit through a new approach and wonders why that office is advocating for the applicant rather than township. The town board members expressed concern about the new director not understanding the state law on Shoreland Management and the county development code. Commissioner Popp thanked the Town Board for its role in interpreting the state law and ordinance as it relates to the application by getting its attorney involved.
2. 95th Street Drainage: Clerk Spence reminded the board that the Engineer needs to get a meeting set with DNR to get a plan approved. Supervisor Erdmann agreed to contact Jon Bogart.
3. Pothole Repair: Supervisor Gondeck said that he filled potholes on 85th, 95th, and Shoestring Loop during the past month. Treasurer Graber reported that a pothole that was repaired on Lakewood Shore Road needs additional work. Arvo Tanner asked the board to check on a sewer grate with cracked concrete in Oak Hill Estates; Supervisor Gondeck will inspect it. Also, he said that there are cattails growing by the stormwater pond, and it looks like the ponds need to be dredged.
4. Supervisor Gondeck moved to table the consideration of a Single Garbage Hauler due to many big issues currently before the board.
5. Supervisor Gondeck presented a quote from Burski Excavating for tree trimming in the amount of \$6,800. Clerk Spence said that there weren't funds budgeted for that amount. Supervisor Erdmann suggested that the board members trim the low hanging branches where there have been complaints from the bus company.
6. Supervisor Waytashek summarized the tour that the Emergency Services Committee took of the Palmer Township substation of Clear Lake Fire Department. The substation also includes a town hall and community center and is built with concrete tip-up walls. The next meeting for the committee is September 19th at 6:30 p.m. Arvo Tanner said that there is a Fire Chief living next to him in Oak Hill Estates; he also advocated for community fundraising for a new fire department to help build community. John Olson, committee member, summarized the committee's work as a process of gathering information by visits to other township departments, looking at alternatives, and estimating costs for a capital and operating budget. When the committee completes this work, they will hold township meetings to present findings and get feedback.
7. Supervisor Gondeck presented the complaint about garbage piling up at a residence in Highview Terrace. Woodchucks and cats are digging in the piles of garbage bags. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to meet with staff at Benton County Department of Development on the issue.

8. Crack Filling of township roads (Sucker Creek, Oak Court, Heron Road, half of Indian Road) is complete and within the budget. Supervisor Gondeck said that he plans to attend the St. Cloud Maintenance Expo to try to get a pre-order discount for the township on crack filling material for next year's work.
9. Sign Update: Supervisor Gondeck said he learned that the township can save on sign replacement by applying a new face on it instead.
10. MAT District 8 meeting was attended by the entire board; all felt that the agenda was disappointing.
11. Clean Up Day is September 16th. Supervisor Gondeck said that he would be picking up items from five remote locations. He thanked Commissioner Popp for supporting the SCORE funding to the township. Treasurer Graber informed the board that someone has dumped shingles on the minimum maintenance road near Lakewood Shores Road.

New Business included:

1. Jim Whitcomb, Property Management Director for Benton County, presented a proposal for township feedback regarding Potlatch Corporation's request to remove trees from Bend in the River Park. They would like to remove pine trees and all non-native trees on the eastern side of County Road 55 within the park. They would give \$30,000 to Benton County in payment for the trees, and that money would go into replanting. Supervisor Erdmann said that he is totally opposed to the proposal, since home owners near Pines Edge get their windows etched by blowing sand. Removal of the trees would make the problem much worse. Supervisor Erdmann added, "Spring dust storms make the ice on Little Rock Lake black; trees were planted to prevent erosion; we need more trees, not less." He recommended that the county plant oak trees, and when they are established, some of the pine trees can be removed. Supervisor Gondeck said that he is also opposed. His uncle taught Forestry classes in Foley, and he and his students helped plant some of the trees to prevent erosion. Jason Krueger asked how many acres would be affected by the tree removal. Jim responded it would be ninety-two acres. Commissioner Popp said that some of the pine trees are dying. He wants to know what the township wants and said that he is not personally in favor of clear cutting the trees. Ed Kacures and Supervisor Erdmann asked Commissioner Popp why the City of Rice was being asked for input; his response was that they want a trail to connect the city to the park. Supervisor Erdmann added that the Little Rock Lake Association would most likely be opposed to this proposal, since it would put more solids in the lake. Arvo Tanner said that with the spread of Oak Wilt Disease, planting oaks could be disastrous. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to let the Benton County Board know that Watab Township is totally opposed to Potlatch's proposal to clear cut the trees.
2. Fire-Wise Grant Funds: there is money available from the DNR to help fund access to irrigation systems by fire trucks. Traut Wells just did a project for Sauk Centre. Cost is about \$1,500 for the bypass system. DNR will pay for half. This was tabled.
3. Ferry Point Right of Way Issue: a resident has given a complaint on a person putting light poles in the right of way. They are twenty-two feet from the centerline of the road. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to check on where the property lines are located. John Olson said the lights illuminating the curve are helpful.
4. Supervisor Gondeck will represent Benton County at the L & R Meeting in St. Cloud. The board discussed items to present.
5. Watab Township will host the Benton County Association of Township Meeting at the town hall on Thursday, September 21st at 7:30pm. Watab will provide the refreshments.
6. Sauk Rapids Herald is changing its publication day to Saturdays.

7. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Waytashek and passed for Supervisor Gondeck to attend the MS4 training in Rogers on October 24th.
8. The 2018 Levy has been certified to Benton County at the amounts approved at the March and July Annual Meetings.
9. The Annual Financial Disclosure Form has been submitted to Ehlers.
10. Board Member Reports: (a) Supervisors will trim branches; (b) Waytashek will get building costs for next Emergency Services Committee meeting; (c) Supervisor Gondeck will work on the culvert mapping, make a list of Storm Spotters in Watab, coordinate Clean Up Day, and put up the speed limit sign on the east side of the Lakewood Shore Road railroad crossing.
11. Communications: Jason Rausch has had issues with the school bus refusing to stop at his home on Indian Road due to concerns about the cul de sac. Clerk Spence was asked to contact the Superintendent of Schools if Jason is unable to resolve the issue. School buses have plenty of room to turn at the cul de sac; and there are no low-hanging branches. Clerk Spence read the letter written to the board from Karri Thorsten explaining her resignation as Benton County Auditor-Treasurer. Clerk Spence was asked to send her a thank you letter on behalf of the board. Ed Kacures requested being included as a signator.

Citizens' Input included:

1. The first property as you enter 85th Street east off Highway 10 is becoming a junkyard. Al Meemken asked to have it cleaned up. Commissioner Popp said the county could enforce their ordinance. Supervisor Gondeck will bring the issue to the Department of Development.
2. Roger Wolbeck said there is a tree growing through an old car on Roseanna Beach Road. Supervisor Gondeck will bring a photo of it to the Department of Development.
3. Lloyd Erdmann asked Commissioner Popp to thank Sheriff Troy Heck for the cooperation of law enforcement on some recent criminal activity in the township. He especially noted the work of Deputy Young, who helped him greatly,
4. Karen Wolbeck also commended the Sheriff's Department and added that residents should be watching for strange activity in their neighborhoods and reporting it in a helpful way to law enforcement.
5. Arvo Tanner asked about the zoning for the house on 85th with all the wrecked cars; they are also an environmental issue. Supervisor Gondeck will review the issue and report it to Benton County.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 9:25pm.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence