

Minutes of the Watab Town Board Meeting on February 7, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of Watab Township Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Craig Gondeck. All board members were present: Supervisors Todd Waytashek, Lloyd Erdmann, and Craig Gondeck; Treasurer Maureen Graber, and Clerk Pat Spence. Audience members were: Ed Kacures Jr, Jason Krueger, Sandra and Allen Saldana, John Schram, Ray Schlichting, Ray Thompson, Mary Kivi, John Olson, Paul Wippler, Dale Dirks, Michael Burton, Tom Kubat, Gary Aschenbrenner, Robin and Steve Wollak, DJ Janski, David Johnson, Jessica Storkamp, Debra and Doug Harden, Darren Brutger, Richard Beehler, Brian Erdmann, Jeff Wollak, Kevin Reiter, Mitch Cottew, Julie Johnson, Elaine Watts, Brad McIntosh. Following the Pledge to the Flag, motion was made by Supervisor Waytashek to add brush chopping in township road right of ways; motion was seconded by Supervisor Erdmann and passed to approve the agenda with one addition. Minutes of the five January meetings were approved as presented through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck and second by Supervisor Erdmann. Treasurer Graber gave her report with a cash balance of \$415,240.85 and Money Market Balance of \$400,127.12. She also announced that she would be resigning her position as Treasurer effective on the Clerk's last day in office, as she said that she ran for the job to support her friend Pat, that the job has taken more time than she wants to work, and the meetings have been so unpleasant. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Waytashek and passed to approve the Treasurer's Report and accept her resignation effective on the Clerk's last day in office. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Gondeck and passed to pay claims totaling \$23,878.42 and the bill received today from Bogart, Pederson and Associates for \$2,201.25.

Citizen's Input:

1. Elaine Watts, resident of Sharon Place NW, asked a follow up question regarding rocks in the road right of way. Supervisor Gondeck said that he has contacted the homeowner, and they will be removed.

Old Business:

1. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to set February 20th at 7:00 p.m. as the time for the Special Town Meeting requested through two petitions of electors. Paul Wippler said that the Sauk Rapids Herald would extend the deadline for receiving the legal notice until 10am the following morning.
2. Supervisor Gondeck reported that the garbage has been cleaned up by the mortgage company at the Roseanna Beach Road property. He thanked residents for their patience.
3. Supervisor Gondeck said that he has investigated the issue brought forward by a resident complaining about real estate signs in the road right of ways. They must be kept out of the road right of way or be removed.
4. Two quotes for public address systems were presented by Supervisor Gondeck. The decision was tabled until the March meeting, so the board members have more time to review the quotes and options.

5. The deadline for the annual newsletter articles to go to the printer is February 19th at 9:00 a.m.
6. Supervisor Waytashek informed the board that there is no major tree trimming needed at this time and that minor work can be done next summer. He added that the township saved money by having board members do the work versus hiring a contractor.
7. Reconsideration of Changes to Ordinance 3: Establishing Fees for Emergency Services: Clerk Spence noted that a Public Hearing on this ordinance change was held in late 2016 and tabled. The purpose is to try to recover more payments from recipients of emergency services who live in rental properties, since they cannot be assessed for unpaid bills on property taxes. Supervisor Erdmann said that if someone is renting out a property, they should be doing due diligence on their renters; and if there is a problem, the owner should take care of it. Allen Saldana gave two examples of times when he did not believe it would be appropriate for the owner of property to be assessed for unpaid emergency services. Sandra Saldana commented that the ordinance would punish the rest of the residents. Julie Johnson asked the board if the township has a rental license policy. Clerk Spence noted that if the ordinance is passed, it could be litigated with a fifty-fifty chance of it standing depending on the judge. After further discussion, the board tabled a decision until the township attorney can advise on whether the language can be made specific to owners of rental property rather than owners of property.
8. Reconsideration of the Subdivision Ordinance: Clerk Spence said that Mike Couri informed the board that Michelle Meyer, Assistant County Attorney, didn't believe more work should be done on the ordinance because the County Board intended to turn the park dedication funds back to the townships. She said that she learned that isn't true from our county commissioner. The board discussed all the township park dedication funds being used as the matching funds for Bend in the River Park rather than for amenities in the developments where the funds originated. Brad McIntosh reminded the board of Darrell Park on Lakewood Shore Rd, and that Marty Reker had offered to give the \$600 per lot park dedication fee to the township rather than the county to develop the park when he platted Paradise Development; the county would not allow that. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed to request that Mike Couri continue to move the Subdivision Ordinance forward.

New Business:

1. Nick Anderson, Town Engineer, presented the plans for the 85th and 95th Street NW projects. Bids will be opened on March 6th at 7:15 p.m. He shared with the board the problems with MNDOT on drainage concerns; Supervisor Gondeck will meet with DNR for their access permit. All contractors interested in bidding should seek bid documents and plans from Bogart, Pederson and Associates. The board agreed that he should advertise statewide, and he will coordinate work with BNSF. Driveways on 85th Street that do not have culverts will not have them added. Supervisor Erdmann will speak with the property owner who has said his lot floods. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to go ahead with the bid process as stated above. Nick believes that the township should receive good bids this early in the year.

2. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to approve Resolution 2018-4: Agreement for staging the development of the wastewater treatment system in the Cove Development.
3. Watab Township will host the Benton County Association of Township Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 15th. Supervisor Gondeck said that he will present issues to be considered for the MAT L & R meeting. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to supply refreshments for the meeting.
4. Supervisor Gondeck reported on the SCORE Grant funds that were approved for Clean Up Day at \$12,286.88 and Adopt a Highway at \$1,875. This is what the township requested. He also told the board that he has learned that a new crack filling compound may be eligible for SCORE Grant funding. He also explained the difference between the actual costs and donated (in-kind) costs for the two programs.
5. Ray Thompson asked the engineer about drainage from 95th Street onto his driveway. The engineer and Supervisor Erdmann reviewed the plan with him and assured him that there would be no additional water coming onto his property with the new road.
6. Supervisor Gondeck gave a report on the Legislative Meeting that he attended sponsored by the St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce. The three main issues that were brought up to work on were: (1) change the law so that township payments for fire contracts cannot be used by cities for purposes other than emergency services; (2) have the law changed so that townships can continue to have 30mph speed limits in rural residential areas; and (3) work on removing unfunded mandates by state government.
7. The township will request speed studies for both 85th and 95th Streets NW following completion of the road construction projects.
8. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to approve Resolution 2018-5 Appointing Election Judges for the Annual Election and Establishing the Absentee Ballot Board. Clerk Spence recommended an increase in the rate of pay for the Election Judges. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to pay \$15 per hour for judges and \$20 per hour for the head judge. The Board of Canvass was set to follow the Annual Meeting. A question was asked from the audience on the candidates who are running for office. Clerk Spence answered that Julie P.C. Johnson and Lloyd Erdmann are the candidates for a three-year term as Supervisor and April Burton for a two-year term as Clerk.
9. The board discussed the proposal from Sauk Rapids for the fire contract with a six per cent increase due to the township's increase in Net Tax Capacity. The rate is 1.97% and the proposed contract amount is \$41,507. Supervisor Waytashek asked that the meeting be noticed so that all board members can attend if they wish. The meeting is at the Sauk Rapids Fire Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 14.
10. Treasurer Graber and Clerk Spence recommended reductions in the 2019 levy amounts to be considered at the Annual Meeting, since the board had asked to have time to review them after their budget planning meeting. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to recommend the following amounts: General Fund-\$100,000; Road and Bridge Fund-\$450,000; Fire District I - \$63,000; Fire District II - \$57,000; Town Hall Debt Service - \$22,000; and Road Debt

Service - \$63,000. Supervisor Gondeck said that for every million dollars increase in total building permit values, the township gains \$10,000 in revenue capacity.

11. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to authorize the purchase of new holders for the Quiet Zone signs.
12. Supervisor Gondeck said that there are grants available for playgrounds through U. S. Bank.
13. Supervisor Gondeck gave his inspection report on the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program and said all is going well.
14. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to renew membership in the Central Minnesota Water Education Alliance, which helps the township fulfill its public education component of our state MS4 permit.
15. The board discussed the issue raised by Ernie Oltz regarding the difficulty in meeting vehicles safely on Burton Place. The board believes that the right of way is 28 feet and will check the plat before Supervisor Gondeck speaks with him about the high cost to purchase property necessary to widen the street.
16. Mary Kivi asked for amendment to last year's annual meeting request for the Little Rock Lake Association Contract for Services. \$1,500 was suggested by the electors at the Annual Meeting for clean up of the DNR landing; now the LRLA would like to use the funds for the drawdown of Little Rock Lake. Mary gave a brief report on the drawdown, and a motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to authorize the signing of a new contract with LRLA for \$1,500 for the drawdown. The contract was prepared in advance by the Clerk and signed by both parties. Mary was thanked for her service to the community.
17. Clerk Spence gave a report on township record retention. The township adopted the State of Minnesota Record Retention Schedule, and she has prepared a written document noting which minutes are on file at the town hall and Benton County Historical Society. Board meeting minutes are to be in a permanent file. The following are on file at the Benton County Historical Society: 1889-1895 and 1940 – 1978. Those at the town hall are 1895-1916 and 1998-January 2018. Years missing are 1917 to 1939 and 1979 to 1997. She stated that she was not the Clerk when the old town hall was vacated. Supervisor Erdmann added that many old records went into a garbage truck during that year's clean up day, which was held at the town hall. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Waytashek, and passed to have these notes made part of the permanent record. Clerk Spence will transfer old minutes' books and copies of 1998-2017 to the Benton County Historical Society. Records must be kept in accordance with the Records Retention Schedule, which is on file in the Clerk's Office.
18. Communications: The Clerk received a letter from Kristi D. Stanislowski, retained by David Johnson regarding the planned extension of 5th Avenue NE. It has been referred to the township's attorney for response.
19. Brush Chopping: Supervisor Waytashek said that Benton County is brush chopping their road right of ways. Some of our township swamps are extending into township road right of ways. Since Chuck Ertl has the Ditch Mowing Contract for Watab, Supervisor Gondeck said he will speak with him about the work.

20. Supervisor Gondeck added that he would like to see the Fire Contract go back to a flat rate. Supervisor Waytashek said that he has studied the sample fire contract suggested by the League of Cities and Minnesota Association of Townships, which provides protection for both the city and the township. Mike Burton informed the board that he attended the Rice City Council Meeting to introduce himself as a representative of the township; also, he has spoken with fire fighters and the mayor and needs to sit down and have discussion. The board thanked him. One of the priorities the board would like in the contract is an annual meeting with the city; this has been requested for the past two contracts and denied by the city. Supervisor Waytashek asked Steve Wollak if he would be concerned about a conflict of interest in serving on the negotiating committee for the fire contract, since he is employed by the City of Rice; Steve responded that it isn't a problem. Steve then told Clerk Spence that she lied about the Graham Fire Contract being reduced at the last meeting.
21. Clerk Spence suggested that the Supervisors need to have a plan for appointing a replacement for the Treasurer for the remaining year of the term. Ray Thompson said he would like the position on the ballot; and the clerk told him that the appointment process must follow state statutes, and that the ballots are already printed for the Annual Election. Clerk Spence was asked to place an ad in the Sauk Rapids Herald to advertise the position with request for resumes by February 23rd. Supervisor Erdmann expressed his concern about the township having both a new Clerk and Treasurer.
22. Ray Thompson asked the purpose of Urban Township Powers.
23. Manhole covers on Second Street NE in Oak Hill are dropping; a board member will need to speak with owners to repair before the roads are accepted as town roads. The township road plan calls for an engineer's inspection before the roads are accepted.
24. Supervisor Erdmann asked residents to give board members input for future road repairs/projects.

Citizen's Input: Ray Thompson made inappropriate, personal comments regarding Clerk Spence's verbal retirement announcement at the last meeting and her past in Little Falls.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Spence