

## **Special Meeting Watab Town Board Minutes October 22, 2007**

The special meeting of the Watab Town Board was called to order on Monday, October 22, 2007 @ 7:18 pm. The purpose of the meeting was discussion of the snowplowing policy. Board members present were Supervisors Craig Gondeck, Brad McIntosh and Lloyd Erdmann and Deputy Clerk Maureen Graber. Others present included: Bob Erickson, Ed Kacures, Ray Thompson, Sandy Rajkowski, Brian Erdmann, Keith Krueger, Lloyd Hammerel, Dan Hammerel, and Brian Schoenherr.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Supervisor Gondeck explained that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the township snowplowing. He turned the meeting over to Bob Erickson. Bob, at the request of the board, had done a study on the costs of snowplowing over the years. Using two 10 year reports from the weather bureau, St. Cloud and Minden Township, he computed the cost of snowplowing per mile of township road based on 35 total miles. He also computed the cost per mile for each inch of snow for the season. These costs are broken down by each calendar year from 1998 through April 2007. He also projected the additional costs the township may incur in the remaining winter months of 2007. From January 1 through April of 2007, the township has spent \$ 44,729.00 on snowplowing. At this rate, Bob projects the total for calendar year 2007 may be \$ 67,000.

Supervisor McIntosh thinks we did a fair quote process when the snowplow contract was signed. The contract was awarded based on the township requirements and the cost per hour of plowing. The agreement is basically an open book.

Bob Erickson talked to the county about when they begin plowing when it snows. Benton County is not a good comparison since they have staff available as soon as it starts to snow. Bob Erickson contacted 11 other townships and asked for their snowplowing costs per year. Three townships responded. He used their costs to compare to Watab Township's costs, per mile for snowplowing. The costs for Watab far exceed the other three townships. Bob asked who determines when to plow. The contractor determines when to plow.

Bob gave the supervisors copies of two different sample resolutions to define snowplow policy. The supervisors also had a copy of the policy that went with the original quotes, which is part of the plowing contract.

A discussion ensued with the supervisors and the participants about snowplowing options. This included a discussion about the hourly rate charged per piece of equipment. Is it better to pay the contractor by the hour or should we have a bidding process for a flat amount paid for the entire winter season? The township would rather have the hourly rate for plowing and sanding to ensure good quality.

Another option is to include whether the township should designate what type of equipment to use. We need qualified people to plow the snow. If there is a certain area to plow, there should be one person to call to make the determination. Ray Thompson has a problem with someone having to call out the snow plowers. Someone needs to make that decision. If that

person is George Mastey, he must have some guidance. Supervisor McIntosh stated the contract says it is determined by the contractor.

There was also a discussion of good snow plow techniques. Many present had some experience snowplowing. These points are summarized below:

1. The person who is plowing must be experienced at plowing. This is important for time efficiency. Someone who is not experienced will take much longer to plow.
2. Several passes should not be made over the road with repetitive equipment unless absolutely necessary. The plow should have the wing functional to cover more of the roadway in one pass. Also, the same truck should be spreading salt and sand when necessary in the same pass.
3. All agreed on the necessity for safety on the roadways and the necessity to salt and sand for the school busses, on hills, etc.
4. Plow to the pavement. If the cutting edge is used, then no snow is left on the roadway to turn to ice so they do not have to come back and apply salt and sand later. If the blade is clearing the snow off the road, there is no need to salt and sand. If the plow leaves an inch of snow, then it may melt and freeze overnight and then it would need salt and sand later.

Supervisor McIntosh read from the contract regarding priority roads. The township laid out which roads must be plowed first in the contract. There is no limit on what equipment the contractor uses. The township is charged for the salt and sand when he uses it on the road.

Mr. Hammerel requests that Ivy Place to be considered a priority one road as they have necessary 6 a.m. medical treatments in St. Cloud three days per week.

The township can cancel the snowplow contract with 30 days notice. We are not sure which month the contract will expire. The quotes were based on equipment and experience. The township used to buy the salt in advance; we no longer buy it in advance. We pay the contractor \$500 per year to store the salt. Supervisor McIntosh wanted to know the salt to sand ratio. Supervisor Erdmann thought it was 15% to 20% salt to sand.

Supervisor McIntosh discussed what he thinks about 3" of snow triggers a plowing event. We could compare the times from the weather report when we received 3" of snow to the bills. Sandy Rajkowski noted there were several times the contractor plowed when there was not a 3" snow fall. They have asked him not to sand and salt their road.

Supervisor McIntosh stated we are going to tell the contractor we are going to be a lot more watchful over how much he plows. Supervisor Erdmann stated that we need to see when the roads are being plowed and give the contractor more guidance as to when he should plow. There was much discussion about how much snow fell and when he plows.

Ed Kacures stated the main issue is we are all concerned about the total costs. Supervisor Gondeck thinks that we should not have to baby sit the snow plow contractor. We do not baby sit the road consultant and we do not baby sit the building inspector. Ed Kacures stated

the supervisors are the watch dogs. They are the elected officials and they are responsible to keep the costs low. The additional amounts that were voted on for the road fund at the annual meeting of \$25,000 will all go to snow plowing if we don't get a handle on the costs.

Ed Kacures suggested the contractor write down on the bill whether it was an ice event or a snow event.

There was a discussion as to how many tons of salt and sand can be hauled in a truck. 13.5 ton in a truck was the best guess.

The contractor's bill was reviewed from the month of December 2006 and compared to the snow and ice weather report from Bob Erickson. There was little snow in the month of December (there was no day with a full inch of snow on the daily weather report) and the township was billed for snow plowing. Supervisor Gondeck made a motion for Bob Erickson and Maureen Graber to compare the weather report to contractor's billings for the last three winter seasons and talk to the contractor at the November meeting. Supervisor Erdmann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor McIntosh made a motion to move Ivy Place to the list of priority roads to plow. Supervisor Gondeck seconded the motion and it passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Graber, Deputy Clerk