

Watab Town Board Meeting Minutes December 3, 2013

The monthly board meeting of the Watab Town Board was called to order on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Ed Kacures Jr. All board members were present: Supervisors Kacures, Lloyd Erdmann and Craig Gondeck; Treasurer Eileen Saldana; and Clerk Pat Spence. Audience members were: Mark Wolvert, Kevin Reiter, Paul Jacobs, Jon Schultz, Doug Harden, and Bob Raveling.

Following the Pledge to the Flag, Supervisor Gondeck thanked all emergency service workers who have done so much in Watab Township the past month. He also reminded us of his and wife Jana's campaign to not drink and drive during the holidays.

The agenda was approved with a motion by Supervisor Kacures, second by Supervisor Gondeck and passed. The minutes of the November 5th, 6th, and 26th were approved through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Kacures, and passed. Treasurer's report was given by Eileen Saldana with a cash balance of \$175,206.67. She received the check for the November tax settlement from Benton County today. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Authorization to pay the monthly bills for claims through 5309 and electronic transfers for PERA, IRS, and MN Revenue totaling \$76,587.85 and authorization to pay Chuck Ertl for ditch mowing for the bill presented this evening and to withdraw the necessary funds was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed. The bill from Tri-City Paving for the remainder of the work on Lakewood Shores also includes Shoestring Loop repairs.

Jon Schultz presented a proposal of what they recommend for a water treatment system at the town hall. Currently, the water has a high iron content, is very hard, and there is a sulphur odor. What Schultz Soft Water recommends would treat both water inside and outside the hall. The township can rent or buy the equipment. Schultz Soft Water would honor a full credit of the rental price after nine months of rental toward the purchase price. Jon answered questions of the board regarding the system. Motion was made by Supervisor Kacures to rent the equipment (reverse osmosis, softener, and sulfur removal filter) for the nine months for \$1840, which includes the installation fees; motion was seconded by Supervisor Erdmann; motion passed. Installation is scheduled for Friday so those renting the town hall can use the water for drinking. The rental period will also help the town board assess the operating costs during the lawn sprinkling system. In the past, the township has had to have rust removed from the sidewalks, building exterior, and flag pole. It cannot be removed from the landscaping rock.

Railroad Crossing Update: Supervisor Erdmann reported that the Lakewood Shore Road is complete and ready to go for approval of the silent zone. Clerk Spence read an email from Chris Byrd to Jon Bogart and Omann Brothers to Chris Byrd stating that they want to get out of doing the project due to higher insurance requirements than they anticipated; the board questions their reason, since they state that the cost is only \$800 higher than they anticipated. Jon Bogart had phoned Chair Kacures this evening with three options to recommend to the Benton County Board to proceed: 1) not let Omann Brothers be released from their bond and force them to do the project; 2) let Omann Brothers out of the contract and release the bond;

or 3) not release the bond for the Omann Brothers contract and relet the bid and have Omann Brothers pay the difference. Chair Kacures recommended that one of the board and Chris Byrd attend a county board meeting to give our recommendation. Clerk Spence is to ask Tri-City what insurance requirements they had with the railroad, so the board knows if something different was required of Omann Brothers. Supervisor Gondeck made a motion to recommend to the county that the township pursue recommendation number three as stated above; second was made by Supervisor Kacures; motion passed. The board chair asked Clerk Spence to make the presentation to the county board of commissioners with County Engineer Chris Byrd. The Clerk was also asked to call the Federal Rail Authority contact about Quick Kurb as an option for quiet zone crossings.

Final Grant Report on Outdoor Warning Siren: Supervisor Gondeck reported that Tom Green will be out next week to make sure the pole is well set. Furthest distance that the siren has been heard is at County Road 13, Benton Beach, and Oak Hill Estates. There will be additional testing next week. Clerk Spence and Supervisor Gondeck met with the Sheriff's Deputy Troy Heck, and they will be activating it. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck and seconded by Supervisor Erdmann to authorize the final grant report to Benton Telecommunications Foundation; motion passed. The final grant report has already been mailed to East Central Energy.

Supervisor Gondeck reported on building maintenance: the exterior building was cleaned for rust during the past month. The rust stain won't come off the rock pedestal or landscaping rock.

Parking Lot Light Installation: four of the lights are installed and another bracket is ordered. We will have a significant cost savings on the electrical use going to LED lights and new fixtures.

Road Repairs: Allen Saldana completed what he could get done with his supplies this fall. Supervisor Gondeck reported that the STS Crew will do the crack filling in February. The tree trimming has been completed by the STS Crew. Supervisor Gondeck said that the township will need to hire a boom truck operator to trim the overhanging branches on Lakewood Shore Road. The board authorized him to go ahead and get that work done as soon as possible. Supervisor Kacures raised several sign issues. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to follow up with them. Supervisor Erdmann will let Tri-City Paving know that they need to get signs up that they took down during construction. Ferry Point mailbox issue; the board tabled action on this until spring.

Clerk Spence reported that she filed the annual Standard and Poor Report; it involved projections for the next two year's budget cycles.

New Business included:

1. 2013 MS4 Permit and TMDL application: Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann to authorize the application; motion was seconded by Supervisor Gondeck; motion passed. Clerk needs to submit the application by December 30th.
2. Clerk Spence read the planning commission agenda item within Watab Township area. Supervisor Gondeck made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, that the township has no issues with the public hearing agenda item for Sonia and Frederick Schnapp asking for a conditional use permit for alternative flood proofing; motion passed.

3. The board set the 2014 budget meeting for Monday, January 20th at 7pm.
4. 2014 Annual Township Newsletter: The board wants to go ahead with planning for the newsletter and asked Clerk Spence to list topics for the January meeting. The board agreed that we need to have an earlier deadline for printing so that it's completed by the middle of February. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to work on the list for potential donors.
5. Rice Fire Contract: Supervisor Kacures went to the Rice City Council meeting last evening. The only contract they discussed was Langola Township's, which includes two per cent of NTC for a one-year contract based on 2012 NTC from Benton County; there is also a charge of \$350 per call. The Clerk was asked to call Mayor Dale Rogholt and find out what the status is of our contract negotiations, since the township's contract ends December 31st. Questions the board wants answered include: 1) Why was Chair Kacures invited to the meeting and nothing discussed? 2) When is the city taking up Watab's contract? 3) Can we get an extension for three months based on ¼ of last year's contract amount? And 4) Can the mayor authorize that? Supervisor Gondeck said that he researched and learned that Gold Cross is part of Mutual Aid with the City of Rice, so the information that Councilman Al Voigt gave at the November meeting was false. There should be no charge to the township for mutual aid calls, including assists to Gold Cross. Based on the November meeting, there was discussion about a fire contract with the elimination of medical calls, which was suggested by Councilman Voigt. Graham Township is requesting a fire contract that eliminates medical calls due to the high expense. The Clerk was asked to provide the board with the number of calls for fire only for the past five years for next month's meeting. She was also asked to check with the township attorney if we can bill the trailer court for unpaid emergency calls, which is where most of the medical calls are made. Currently, the township has over \$10,000 of unpaid emergency calls for Rice service area. Most of them have been placed for collections.
6. Monthly Correspondence: Supervisor Kacures read the letter from Clerk Spence to Firearms Instruction: Jan and Jim Hovda for the donation for a folding table for the town hall and her letter to Benton County Planning Commission regarding the town board's recommendation on the application for billboard signs. Clerk Spence reported on the letter from Karri Thorsten regarding the December 11th meeting for election officials at the county board room; the letter from Heather Bondhus, Senior Deputy Auditor, regarding Watab special assessments to property taxes (only two of the seven can be processed); the Minnesota Association of Township request for the Worker's Compensation Annual Audit; and thank you cards from Rinke Noonan and Kenneth Schulte. The board received an invitation from him to a dinner at the Sauk Rapids VFW.
7. Supervisor Reports: Supervisor Gondeck reported that the SCORE grant process has changed. He would like permission to ask for a SCORE Grant for the township's Adopt a Highway. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Kacures, authorizing him to submit the application; motion passed. He also reported on pricing from Newman Signs to put identification numbers on culvert posts for MS4, his meeting with Dave Schwinghammer about a site with a possible MS4 violation (the township will

receive a written report), and two snow plowing complaints. There was no report for the development meeting.

8. Work Plan for the Month: Supervisor Gondeck will pick up the chairs for the town hall this month; he will attend the development meeting; Supervisor Erdmann will contact Tri-City Paving about the signs; and Clerk Spence will submit the MS4 Permit Application and TMDL Permit.

Citizen's Issues included:

Kevin Reiter asked about the Brian Erdmann pit; Dave Schwinghammer will be sending us a written report with his recommendations. Paul Jacobs asked if the township has given Benton County any money for the railroad crossing on County Road 79; he asked about private donations and if they have been received? Are we setting a precedent by doing a county road? Supervisor Kacures responded that this is a special project for a railroad crossing and not for road maintenance or road repairs. Supervisor Erdmann responded that it was approved at an annual meeting and overwhelmingly approved; donations will be received when the project is a reality. Paul Jacobs asked about the Standard and Poor Rating. Clerk Spence responded that the township had received an A rating, which is the highest rating a township can receive; it had helped save over \$105,000 in interest with the refinance of the township debt. The board thanked Clerk Spence for her work on that process.

A motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann and seconded by Supervisor Gondeck to adjourn the meeting at 9:34pm; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence.