

Watab Town Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Watab Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Watab Town Hall on Tuesday, March 4, 2014. All board members were present: Supervisors Ed Kacures Jr., Craig Gondeck, and Lloyd Erdmann; Treasurer Eileen Saldana; and Clerk Pat Spence. Those in the audience were: David Schwinghammer, William Novak, Steve Blitvich, John Olson, Douglas J. Boser, Delroy and Donna Rothstein, Arvo Tanner, Kevin Reiter, and Brian and Wendy Erdmann.

Following the Pledge to the Flag, Supervisor Gondeck made announcements. Approval of the agenda was given with the additions of the Adopt a Road Grant and Storage Shelf through motion by Supervisor Gondeck and second by Supervisor Erdmann; motion passed. Approval of the February 3 minutes was given through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed. The Treasurer's Report was given by Eileen Saldana with a checking account balance of \$162,752.20 at Bremer and Falcon National Banks.

A 3.2 Beer and Wine Liquor License Application for Twin Pines Restaurant was presented by Steve Blitvich, who has recently taken over management of the Twin Pines complex. He presented the application which was approved by the board through a motion by Supervisor Gondeck, second by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed. The Chair and Clerk signed the approved application.

Approval of the monthly bills and authorization to withdraw funds from the appropriate accounts was given for claims 5354 through 5372 and electronic transfers for IRS and PERA totaling \$11,124.72 through a motion by Supervisor Erdmann, second by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed. Authorization was given for an additional check to cover the registration fees of \$50 each for Craig Gondeck, Eileen Saldana, and Pat Spence to attend the Minnesota Association of Township's Spring Short Course this month.

Old Business:

- A. Highway 10 Access: Clerk Spence reported on the response from Senator David Brown and Representative Jim Newberger following her contact with them after last month's board meeting. They have introduced language for the bonding bill to fund one interchange at County Road 4/79 with frontage roads running north to 85th Street on both sides of Highway 10. This does not guarantee funding, but the board feels it is a very positive step forward.
- B. Outdoor Warning Siren: Supervisor Gondeck reported that the siren will be tested tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. The siren now has a separate code with Benton County. He asked for input from the residents on the distance it is being heard. It is not heard distinctly in the Ferry Point Addition.
- C. Annual Newsletter: Supervisor Kacures reported that Palmer Printing will mail the newsletter tomorrow or Thursday. It is twelve pages this year with the extra articles that the board decided to include. He presented copies to the board.
- D. Rice Fire Contract: Supervisor Kacures presented the results of his meeting with the Rice City Council meeting last evening. He has been at their last two meetings. On December 23, Rice had a council meeting when Supervisor Kacures presented the proposal that City Councilman Al Voigt and the City Attorney proposed, which included 2.35% of Net Tax Capacity; the contract had been given to Supervisor Gondeck by Marie Weinand, the City Clerk. When Supervisor Kacures presented the signed copy to the council, he was told that the contract they gave the township was a mistake. The council countered with a contract at 2.6% of Net Tax Capacity Rate. Supervisor Kacures brought that back to the January 7th meeting of the town board. The

board decided to compromise and countered with an offer three weeks ago at 2.4% of NTC, which is higher than the 2.35% the other townships are paying. Watab had recently received information from Benton County that the NTC for Watab Township decreased for 2014. So rather than agree to a 2% increase over the 2012 NTC, which Rice included in their contract proposal, the town board decided that it would be more consistent to use the latest NTC available from Benton County. This is past practice with the Rice Fire Contract. At the February city council meeting, a member was absent so they wouldn't discuss the Watab Fire Contract. At that meeting the Mayor presented Supervisor Kacures with copies of the fire department financial report and budget. In 2013, Watab had no fire calls, 42 medical calls, and 7 others for a total of 49, which was 31% of the calls for the Rice service area. Mayor Rogholt personally presented the financial report to the Watab Town Board on January 28th. At the March 3rd council meeting, Councilman Al Voigt said that the council could not consider the new proposal, because they hadn't heard the official notice that Watab hadn't accepted their previous offer. When Supervisor Kacures responded that Watab wouldn't have submitted a different proposal three weeks ago if they were accepting Rice's proposal, the council said that they weren't ready to talk about the Watab contract at that meeting. Councilman Al Voigt asked for a meeting of both boards on March 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council meeting. Clerk Spence was asked to notice the meeting and let the City Clerk know that the town board will attend. Supervisor Kacures closed by saying that the town board has been trying to negotiate a contract since September, and the council has set up many delays and roadblocks.

- E. Sauk Rapids Fire Contract: Supervisor Gondeck attended a February 19th meeting with the City of Sauk Rapids Administrator and other townships served by the Sauk Rapids Fire Department regarding a new two-year contract. The City was proposing that the townships each pay \$2,000 per year for Accidental Insurance for the firefighters. Both Watab and Minden Township felt that the city should pay for this, since it is a city benefit. Supervisor Gondeck said that he knows of no other fire department in the area that offers this insurance. Approval was given to pay for the insurance through a three to two vote; Mayhew Lake, Haven, and Sauk Rapids Townships voted in favor; Watab and Minden Townships voted against. The new contract will be mailed to the township in the near future. The new contract cost will be \$33,835.
- F. Tree Trimming on Lakewood Shore Rd: Brian Erdmann has the contract and will do the work in March.
- G. Shoreline Alteration permits: Following discussion, the board directed the Clerk to make the shoreline alteration permits for the dry hydrant system for the locations of the DNR Landing on Little Rock Lake at the public access and on the Mississippi River in the southern part of the township.
- H. Clerk Spence presented materials for board review that she will present at the annual meeting; she asked for their input before Monday. The board authorized the purchase of refreshments and the color printing of a road report.

New Business:

- A. Lake Andrew Development has three more lots that have been sold. A realtor said that the sales are likely due to the Fifth Avenue road project. There were questions about the septic system and roads from Doug Boser; Del Rothstein asked about the design of the septic system.

The MPCA and county govern the septic system. Kevin Reiter asked about the utility easement vacation on the adjoining property.

- B. Conditional Use Permit for home-extended business in Lot 4, Block 1, Martin Estates: Bill Novak, owner of Anywhere Log Furniture, would like to build a new home and relocate his business to this location. He was seeking the township board's approval for his conditional use permit application to Benton County. It is currently zoned R-2. He has talked with most of the neighbors, and they have received the meeting notice for the Planning Commission's meeting. Supervisor Gondeck presented letters of support from Jay Saldana and Walter Burton, residents of this neighborhood. Bill presented a diagram of the placement of the buildings. Supervisor Kacures asked if Bill had spoken with all the neighbors and if he had their support. He said he would talk to them. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to recommend that the Planning Commission approve the conditional use permit for his new home and business.
- C. MS4 Contract: Dave Schwinghammer presented various MS4 issues. Paul Schroeder from Westwood Design has sent plans for the Benton County improvements to Bend in the River Park. They will forward the SWPPP to the township and make application for a MS4 permit, which will cost \$2,000 as a small construction project. After review of the plans, Dave made the following recommendations for erosion control: (1) use a kid and wildlife friendly erosion control blanket, rather than plastic netting; (2) use six-foot bio-rolls in conjunction with the erosion control blanket; and (3) send the SWPPP for review. Dave also noted that during the past couple of weeks there have been questions on borrow pits and whether they need an NPDES permit. Borrow pits are not covered under MS4, since they need a separate permit from MPCA and that agency has the permitting and inspection authority. Dave recommends that we not become involved in those inspections. The township should inform the borrow pits of their requirements. All of them need a pollution prevention plan. Any complaints that the township receives from citizens should be forwarded to MPCA. The township decided that they will not do any inspections. Finally, Dave announced that he will no longer be able to provide service to the township as the MS4 Contractor because of health issues. The board thanked him for his excellent service. Clerk Spence offered the name of an interested person who does MS4 contracting for other townships; she was informed of him through Katie Winkelman, Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District. Supervisor Erdmann said he would also contact someone tomorrow who might be interested.
- D. Signs for the railroad crossings: this was tabled until after the road tour, so all signs can be ordered at one time.
- E. Design of the Future Railroad Crossings: Supervisor Gondeck inquired about the design plans for the County Road 79 crossing. Future crossing improvements will be discussed at the annual meeting for voter input. Supervisor Kacures will ask for input on whether or not the township should plan to create more quiet zones at crossings.
- F. Alternate Debt Service Collection: Supervisor Gondeck presented information on a different collection agency from Minneapolis that uses personal visits to collect unpaid debt; the clerk will look into this company and the services they provide.
- G. Sucker Creek Bridge: Supervisor Gondeck reported that the bridge didn't get the highest rating possible, because the county inspector didn't know how deep the pilings are installed. Improvements to the bridge are not in the county's five-year plan. Supervisor Erdmann said

that the bridge was built in July or August of 1965, because the previous bridge was washed out in the spring flood that year. Brian Erdmann suggested that the bolts be tightened this winter. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to get information from Chris Byrd on the bridge.

- H. Setting of the Board of Canvass meeting: The board decided to notice it for March 11th following the annual meeting; if the annual meeting ends at a late time and/or there are a large number of ballots to review, they will recess until March 12th at 8:00 a.m.
- I. Communications: Supervisor Kacures presented newspaper articles concerning county storm warning training and minutes from the commissioner's meeting regarding County Road 79; Clerk Spence presented the MN LTAP Technology Exchange paper highlighting an article on engaging the public in infrastructure investment, as well as other letters and emails. Supervisor Kacures presented the official rail study for the City of Rice from Miles Seppelt to place on file.
- J. Supervisor Reports: Supervisor Gondeck was notified that Watab's Adopt A Highway grant was approved for \$1,700 by Benton County; the storage shelf and sign rack will be ordered through that grant. Next month, he will submit the grant for Watab Clean Up Day. Supervisor Gondeck also reported that at the monthly development meeting, employers reported that a high percentage of job applicants don't pass the drug test, so they cannot be hired. He is also working with another home-based business interested in locating in Watab. Supervisor Erdmann inquired about membership in surplus services; Supervisor will talk to Benton County officials about adding the supervisor's names under the county's membership, so they can purchase items there. The board also discussed phone calls regarding snow plowing.
- K. MAT Short Course: Training for the board will be on Tuesday, March 25th at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud.
- L. March Calendar and Work Plan: tomorrow the clerk and head election judge have machine testing for the election; Thursday night is the Benton County Association of Township meeting; March 13th Supervisor Gondeck and Clerk Spence will go on the District 8 bus trip to the capitol. Also, they will work on the required sign inventory.
- M. There were no citizen issues.
- N. MPCA is using the hall on March 13th.

Supervisor Erdmann made a motion to adjourn, second was by Supervisor Kacures, and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:31pm.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence