

**Draft Minutes of the Watab Township Annual Meeting  
March 13, 2007**

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new town hall was called to order by Chair Craig Gondeck at 8pm. He thanked everyone for coming and stated that this is the people's building. He thanked the former members of the board who had the vision to put away money for the building fund because they believed in township government. He recognized with appreciation the building task force which was established three years ago: Ron Hommerding, Ed Kacures, Lloyd Hammerel, and Kaye Bechtold. Ed thanked other members of the task force and expressed his hopes that the new building will be able to serve the needs of the township for the next 30 years. Chair Gondeck said that during the past year the task force became the building committee. He then called on Ron Hommerding, the Construction Manager for the project. Ron stated that at last year's annual meeting he presented a budget of \$141 square foot; currently the cost is at \$100 per square feet. The building is designed for expansion by the back wall being removed so that the meeting room could be enlarged by another half of the size of the meeting room. He commended Boser Construction for a great job and said there were lots of good subcontractors. He added that the building has infloor heat; airconditioning, and a forced air furnace. The infloor heat temperature will be left at 50 degrees; one hour before a meeting the furnace can be turned on to bring the building to 72 degrees. There are also four offices. He closed by saying that without the four people dedicating their time on the Building Committee we wouldn't be in a new town hall tonight. Chair Gondeck thanked citizens for their strong support and encouragement to go ahead with the building project; he believes money was spent wisely. The Building Committee joined the Town Board Members for the actual ribbon cutting.

Clerk Pat Spence called the 2007 annual meeting to order at 8:30pm. Those in attendance included the following: Craig Gondeck, Delroy Rothstein, Donna Rothstein, Ed Kacures, John F. Ohan, Walter L. Jansen, Earl Harden, Steve Wollak, Paul Schwinghammer, Ron Hommerding, Jim McMahon, Joe Wollak, Jim Hovda, Deb Erdmann, Lloyd Hammerel, Rita Hammerel, Carol J. Schmitt, Mary Winskowski, Ray Thompson, Gerald Solarz, Earl Tuttle, Cliff Weitgenant, Maureen Graber, Don Hammerel, Floyd Erdmann, Phylle A. Erdmann, Simon Syme, Ronald Syme, Wendy Pikus, Mary Schindler, Jerry Kostreba, Ray Schlichting, Rosie Johnson, Duane Johnson, Marlen Johnson, Marcia Johnson, Dave Watts, Sandra Saldana, Allen Saldana, Eileen Saldana, Donna Poganski, Barb Beniek, Geno Geniek, Lloyd Erdmann, Bob Rowley, Bob Erickson, Dustin Vaverek, Rick Kampa, Don Landwehr, John C. Saldana, Jr., Jana Gondeck, Brad McIntosh, Phyllis Post, Jerome Post, Bruce and Judy Christofferson, Pat Spence, Jan Solarz and Donna Poganski. Following the Pledge to the Flag, the clerk asked permission to suspend with the reading of the agenda since everyone had a printed copy; all concurred. The Clerk asked for nominations for people to serve as the Moderator of the annual meeting. Craig Gondeck nominated Ray

Thompson; seconded by Allen Saldana; nomination was approved. Ray Thompson nominated Ed Kacures; seconded by Mary Schliner; nomination was approved. Ray Thompson declined nomination, and Ed Kacures was elected as Moderator. On a motion by Ray Thompson and second by Lloyd Hammerel, the minutes of the 2006 annual meeting were approved as printed.

The Clerk gave the Treasurer's report. A motion was made by Barb Beniek and seconded by Geno Beniek to approve the report. There were no questions. The report was approved.

Bob Erickson, the Township Engineering Consultant, gave a road report. The town board started three basic studies during the past year, because of the growth of the township: (1) reviewed old and new plats in the township; (2) did a 5-year road plan to help plan and economize on future costs; and (3) developed a roadway ordinance for specifications for town roads. He explained that we are fortunate in the township to have mostly sand base, so we have very few road problems. Bob said that in 2007 we have very little roads to repair; total cost will be about \$20,000; in 2008 costs will be ; and in 2009, we estimate costs of \$600,000 for rebuilding 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (Zwilling Road); in 2010, about \$110,000 of work is projected; other roads will not need work until after 2010. Some may not need work for 10 to 15 years in future. He stated that if anyone has a problem with your road, they should contact the town board so that the plan can be adjusted. Bob used visuals to show the plan; and added that the main purpose of the plan is to help the town board estimate project costs and revenue needed. He said that the board would prefer that requests for road work come in writing so there is a paper trail to help us be more responsible. The Town Board has developed complaint forms which we want to respond to as quickly as possible. He then asked if there were any questions from the citizens, because it is very important to have the public informed. He assured the citizens that we have an active board and good staff. Geno Beniek asked whether the roads in Pirates Cove are public or private; the answer is that there are both types. The road ordinance will spell out what the township's obligations are in private developments. Bob said that we are getting ahead of problems with this town board because of its work.

The next item of business was to establish the levies for 2008 payable taxes. The Clerk stated that the levies as recommended by the town board would increase taxes by about \$18 on a home valued at \$240,000. The town board recommended a \$15,000 levy for the General Fund. Ray Thompson made the motion to approve the recommendation; motion was seconded by Don Landwehr and passed.

The board recommended \$120,000 for the Road and Bridge Fund. A motion was made by Jerry Kostreba and seconded by Lloyd Hammerel to accept the recommendation. Del Rothstein asked if that would allow enough money to be put aside for rebuilding 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Zwilling Road). Supervisors McIntosh and

Erdmann both stated that they thought more money would be needed. Bob Erickson said that a lot of the costs come from new development, but that these increase the tax base. Brad McIntosh added that some costs can be charged to the developers through the developer agreements. Bob Erickson said that it is important to have a reserve of money in the road and bridge fund, so that we can do more of the work with local contractors as this saves money. Don Landwehr made a motion to amend the amount for the road and bridge fund to \$160,000; motion was seconded by Barb Beniek. Continued discussion included a question by Bruce Christofferson if there is a ratio of expenses for private versus public roads. The Clerk said that this has not been determined, but that extra turn lanes and signage can be charged to the developers. Del Rothstein stated that he feels \$160,000 is an excessive amount and recommended a levy of \$145,000. Ray Thompson applauded the current town board for wanting to invest in roads; he said that years ago the board members all lived on county roads and didn't want to spend enough money to keep the town roads in good repair. Barb Beniek said the additional levy to \$145,000 would increase tax cost by another \$4 over the \$18 stated by the clerk on the \$240,000 home. A vote was taken on the motion to levy \$160,000. On a show of hands, there were 17 in favor and 22 opposed. Ray Thompson made a motion to levy \$145,000 for the Road and Bridge fund; motion was seconded by Del Rothstein and passed unanimously.

The board recommended a \$70,000 levy for the Fire Fund. Ed Kacures asked Craig Gondeck to speak on the recommendation. Craig said that Rice Fire Dept. does an excellent job fighting fire; but, we have had issues with their financial reporting and management of funds. Last January we got a bill for a 12% increase; the board made one payment for the year with a 3% increase as stipulated in the contract. Craig said that in May we learned from the fire chief that the Fire Department has a fourth fund that had not been recorded in the fire board finances. He said that Watab did not turn the Rice Fire Department in to the state and that the town board has been taking a bad wrap from the Fire Department. He added that Rice is currently being audited by the State Auditor. He said that Watab has agreed to pay the 12% increase if they can provide records of legitimate expenditures. Craig explained the ratio of cost between the two fire departments; Sauk Rapids contract is for \$22,000 to provide protection to the southern 2/3 of the township; Rice contract is \$38,000 for the northern 1/3 of the township. Rosie Johnson asked Craig if Rice is giving us information on accidents which had been requested. Craig said that after three years of asking we still do not have the information, but he is working with the Mayor on an agreement. Ray Thompson moved acceptance of the board's recommendation for a \$70,000 levy for the Fire Fund; the motion was seconded by Craig Gondeck and passed.

The recommendation from the town board for the Building Fund levy was \$25,000. Jerry Solarz moved approval of that recommendation; the motion was seconded by Geno Beniek and passed.

Supervisor Brad McIntosh reported that last year we were informed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) that Watab Township has to be part of the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems (MS4) plan mandated by State of MN. He said it requires a lot of knowledge and because we didn't have all that knowledge, we hired Red Barn Ridge to help us with the plan. He said that the state officials have been very cooperative, and that we are still working on the final details. Paul Schwinghammer, Red Barn Ridge, was invited to come forward. Paul read the annual report:

Watab Town must enter an annual report into its records as part of its MS4 stormwater program commitments. The Town has applied for a MS4 permit with the State of Minnesota. The application, with its 6 Minimum Control Measure BMP sheets, has been "accepted" by the MPCA and will be placed for public scrutiny and/or input. The public will be allowed to comment on the Watab SWPPP as a whole. Red Barn Ridge has completed its commitment to the application process. Red Barn Ridge has been paid for all services rendered.

Paul added that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates that each state must comply with the MS4 Stormwater Law. As of today, Watab is in compliance. We now need to move into the implementation phase of the MS4 program. MPCA will audit us for compliance. Bob Erickson asked if some of the costs could be assessed to the developers. Paul said that to do so we need to create an ordinance on how we will fund our program. Many municipalities put in a stormwater permitting process; this will require our township to do inspections. The public can be educated to help with this. Bob Erickson asked if we can use other municipality's ordinances. Paul said there is a lot of good resource material out there; we will need to review it. Brad McIntosh said that he will meet with county officials next week to review their ordinance; perhaps we can have the same ordinance as the county, which would make it easier for contractors. It is federal and state law, so we need to keep moving with the process.

Bruce Christofferson, President of the Little Rock Lake Association, reported that the lake association members have been working for the past few years as a volunteer group to eliminate curly leaf pond weed in Little Rock Lake; they have worked with the Soil and Water Conservation and DNR. The DNR has allowed individual property owners to treat the lake in front of their property; Little Rock Lake Association has a management plan to treat the general part of the lake at a cost of \$58,000 to \$60,000. He asked for another \$2,000 donation from the township toward this work. The current treatment donations and grants total \$8,922.. Geno Beniek asked if the cure is better than the disease. Bruce said that the treatment is not a one-time fix; repeated treatment is needed. Zebra mussels might also be a future problem; Simon Syme asked if curly leaf pondweed can be prevented from reestablishing itself. Cliff Weitgenant made a motion to give \$2,000 to the Lake Association this year. Brad McIntosh wanted the Mississippi River to be included. Maureen Graber seconded the motion; and said that nothing can be done to treat the river without DNR approval. Geno Beniek called the question; motion passed.

Geno Beniek made a motion to have the Sauk Rapids Herald as the town's official newspaper; motion was seconded by Donna Poganski and passed.

Barb Beniek made a motion that we continue to use our current posting places; the motion was seconded by Jerry Kostreba; and motion passed. Rosie Johnson asked if the slides could remain for a longer period of time on Channel 3; the clerk will inquire about this.

The Clerk recommended that Falcon National Bank and Bremer Bank both serve as official depositories of funds for the township. Motion was made by Ray Thompson and seconded by Rosie Johnson to approved the recommendation; motion passed.

Supervisor Erdmann made a motion that next year's annual meeting begin at 8pm at the town hall on the second Tuesday of March; the motion was seconded by Walter Jansen and passed.

The Clerk reported the election results. There were a total of 156 voters out of a possible 1803 registered voters prior to the election. Six persons registered on election day. Craig Gondeck was elected to a three-year term as Supervisor with 140 votes. Eileen Saldana was elected to a two-year term as Treasurer with 133 votes. They were congratulated for their reelection.

Ron Hommerding invited citizens to donate historic photos of the township to help decorate the walls of the new town hall. Bruce Christofferson asked about moving the annual election to November. Lloyd Erdmann would like to have on a special ballot for next year's annual election increasing to a five-member board; Carol Schmitt stated that she doesn't feel we need to have any more board members. Geno Beniek said he would favor expanding the board so they didn't get burned out. Mary Winskowski agreed with Carol Schmitt, stating that she doesn't thin board members are burned out or they wouldn't run for reelection. Lloyd Erdmann said he is looking for more citizen involvement and more input for decisions. Del Rothstein asked when we voted on a 5-member board last time; Pat Spence said it was voted down on last year's ballot. Carol Schmitt made a motion to let it rest for a couple of years; Del Rothstein seconded the motion; for—26; opposed—12. Motion passed. Bruce Christofferson moved that we keep the annual meeting on the second Tuesday of March; Craig Gondeck seconded the motion, because he feels we would get caught up in the county, state and federal elections and lose emphasis on township government. Jerry Kostreba agreed with him, because he feels March is a less busy time to come to the meeting. The motion passed.

Craig Gondeck acknowledged Boser Construction for their excellent work on the construction of the new town hall. Pat Spence thanked Craig's family members for choosing colors for the building materials.

Donna Poganski, the head Election Judge, said that people during the day asked if the building would be available to be rented. Craig said that revenue we bring in for rent of the town hall could cause us to lose our tax exempt status. We could charge a damage deposit. Geno Beniek said that he supports renting it for family gatherings; a rider on homeowners insurance could cover any damages. Lloyd Erdmann said that he thinks township residents should be able to use the building. The board will look into this in the near future.

Jan Solarz asked who is going to clean this building; one of the supervisors responded that Erika Erdmann had cleaned it.

Rosie Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10pm; motion was seconded by Geno Beniek and passed.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence