

**Watab Town Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 6, 2010**

The regular monthly meeting of Watab Township was called to order on Tuesday, April 6, 2010 at the Watab Town Hall by Board Chair Ed Kacures Jr. Other board members present were Supervisors Lloyd Erdmann and Craig Gondeck; Treasurer Eileen Saldana; and Clerk Pat Spence. Audience members present were: Maureen Graber, Traci Balder, Janet Schlichting, Rob Schlichting, Tom Holthaus, Mary Isaacs, Brad McIntosh, Douglas Boser, Paul Schwinghammer, Allen Saldana, Brian Erdmann, Kevin Reiter, Roger Peterson, Jim Hoihjelle, Rich Matthews, and Louis LeBlanc. The meeting began with the Pledge to the Flag. Supervisor Gondeck expressed sympathy to the families of John Scapanski, Adam Jedlicki, and Rick Hommerding, who all passed away during the past month.

Reorganization of the town board:

1. The Chair opened nominations for Board Chair; Supervisor Erdmann nominated Supervisor Kacures; seconded by Supervisor Gondeck; and passed. Supervisor Gondeck suggested rotating the Chair position as recommended by the Minnesota Association of Townships.
2. The Chair opened nominations for Vice-Chair: Supervisor Erdmann nominated Supervisor Gondeck; seconded by Supervisor Kacures; motion passed.
3. Rice Fire Board: Supervisor Gondeck nominated Supervisor Kacures; seconded by Supervisor Erdmann; motion passed.
4. Sauk Rapids Fire Board: Motion: Supervisor Gondeck nominated himself; seconded by Supervisor Erdmann; motion passed.
5. Benton Co. Economic Dev. Board: Supervisor Gondeck nominated himself; seconded by Supervisor Erdmann; motion passed.
6. Task Force on Mississippi River: Supervisor Gondeck questioned if we need someone to officially represent the board; Supervisor Erdmann agreed and said that if a board member wishes to attend, they should do so without official appointment; Supervisor Kacures also agreed.
7. Rice Chamber of Commerce: Supervisor Gondeck reported that he recently learned at a county meeting that the State Auditor said it is illegal for government units to pay dues to a non-profit organization such as the Chamber of Commerce. He made a motion to not renew membership or attend the meetings. He asked that the ruling be included in the written record: Motion was seconded by Supervisor Erdmann and passed.  
*The Attorney General's Office has determined that local units of government may not pay dues to a local chamber of commerce. However, because cities may appropriate up to \$50,000 to an incorporated development society or organization for promotional activities, a city could contract with a local chamber of commerce for one of the purposes authorized by statute, such as promoting the city. The chamber's use of the public funds would be limited to the statutorily authorized activities.*
8. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck to designate the official depositories of town funds: Falcon National Bank, Bremer Bank, and Edward Jones; motion passed.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Kacures to adopt Resolution 2010-4: Setting Meeting Dates for 2010. Motion passed. Meeting dates are: May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 9, December 7, January 4, February 1, and March 1.

Supervisor Erdmann suggested a reduction in board compensation to a \$60 per meeting fee and \$20 per hour for additional work rather than current rates of \$75 and \$25. Supervisor Gondeck asked how long the current rates have been in place. Supervisor Kacures moved to have it tabled for one month for the Clerk to research.

The agenda was approved as printed with the addition of the approval of liquor licenses. Mary Isaacs was noted as a presenter during Citizen Issues.

Approval of Minutes for the March 2 & 9<sup>th</sup> minutes: Supervisor Gondeck made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> regular board meeting and March 9<sup>th</sup> Board of Canvass; seconded by Supervisor Erdmann; and passed. Supervisor Erdmann made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; Supervisor Gondeck seconded; motion passed.

Annual Report by Traci Balder, Township Assessor: Traci presented a verbal and written report. Supervisor Kacures asked about previously omitted properties and if the town should be getting building permits paid now if people did construction without one. Supervisor Gondeck asked her if she is saving money for the township; the response was "yes". He also asked about ratios being set by the County Assessor. All townships saw a decrease in market values

except for Minden Township, because their sales were coming in within the ratio. Supervisor Gondeck commended her for the report. Ag land here is being valued against ag land in southwestern MN because of a law passed by the state legislature. Supervisor Erdmann asked if anything is being done about this. Traci was uncertain and said they wouldn't know for awhile. Supervisor Gondeck said that he visited with Representatives Larry Haws and Taryl Clark, and they said it would be dealt with at the legislature. Board of Equalization is April 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Supervisor Gondeck said that citizens are very impressed with her work, fairness, and flexibility in her schedule.

#### Citizen's Issues:

1. Renewal of Liquor Licenses: Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Kacures, and passed approving on sale, intoxicating liquor, and Sunday sale of liquor for Oak Hill Golf Course. Motion was made by Supervisor Erdmann, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed approving on and off sale, intoxicating liquor, and Sunday Sale of liquor for Rumors Bar & Grill. Motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed approving off sale license for Pines Edge Liquor. Businesses were commended by the board.
2. Mary Isaac questioned why she couldn't have an item listed on the agenda. She said that she feels the board is trying to hide things and that the board is too highly paid. She said the county is lowering taxes except for the township where taxes keep going up and up and up. If there is wasteful spending going on for wages, then maybe there is other things going on that shouldn't be happening. She said she is losing trust. She wants to see monthly expenditures for wages. Supervisor Gondeck told Mary that the County Commissioners increased their salaries 10 to 14% last year. Brad McIntosh asked if the town board got paid on March 18<sup>th</sup> to watch the ice go out. The Clerk said that she would print the Net Pay Distribution Report, the Disbursement list, and copy the pay statements each month and make them available at the board meetings. Brad McIntosh stated that he came to a meeting and asked if we could have a time sheet generated electronically, because he can't read Supervisor Gondeck's time sheets. Louie LeBlanc said that he was on the board six years ago and board salaries have tripled since then, and now we're obligated to a big town hall, and big township taxes up 42%. Maureen Graber said that she's done some studying on the data practices act, if the documents are available electronically they can give it electronically, if not they don't have to supply it. She added that she wouldn't do the work for less than \$25 an hour, that this board is working hard, she likes that Supervisor Gondeck is passionate about township work, and that Supervisor Erdmann has been asked to do things and doesn't get them done. Paul Schwinghammer requested to have citizen comments at the end of the meeting and kept to a shorter time frame, since he is tired of listening to the same people's complaints.
3. Review and Approval of the Monthly Bills: Supervisor Gondeck made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Kacures to approve payment of monthly bills and to withdraw the amounts from the appropriate accounts; motion passed. The Clerk asked for approval of loan payments to: Bogart Pederson and Associations and Harddrives for the retainage on Riverview Loop: Supervisor Gondeck made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann to pay the bills pending review by Jon on the Harddrives bill and authorizing the chair to sign the paperwork; motion passed. Supervisor Gondeck made a motion to pay Knife River the \$4,100 due, because the town attorney said it was illegal to withhold the payment; Supervisor Erdmann seconded; motion passed.

#### Old Business:

1. Jon Bogart spoke about getting quotes on completion of Fifth Avenue. He presented a handout with his estimate of \$97,589.50 for completion of Fifth Avenue. He sees prices increasing in the future because of speculation on oil. Supervisor Erdmann made a motion for Jon to go out for quotes for the wear course on Fifth Avenue; seconded by Supervisor Kacures; Supervisor Gondeck said that he's upset that Knife River isn't taking care of the damages; if Jon gets favorable quotes let Clerk know to call a special meeting for action on this added to the motion; motion passed with the amendment.
2. MS4 enforcement contract with Red Barn Ridge LLC: Paul Schwinghammer said that Maureen will be handling the annual report, but he wanted to talk about the contract that he and Supervisor Gondeck discussed. He wants to rescind his willingness to contract with the township because of comments made by Brad McIntosh at the last meeting, alleging that Red Barn Ridge was padding their pockets with township dollars. He was appalled that he was not respected, and he had quoted very low rates for doing the work, because he lives in the township. He recommended going out for bids and withdrew his proposal. Supervisor Gondeck noted how many hours Paul had also donated to the township on MS4 work. Supervisor Kacures said that he regretted Paul's decision. Maureen Graber has volunteered 150 hours on paperwork, but is also stepping down. She suggested the board contract with a professional consultant who charges \$95 per hour (Shannon Smith at wetlandcreations.com 320-630-6229). Supervisor Gondeck said that other LGU's are

getting paid more for the inspections than Paul was requesting; he will contact other LGU's for bid proposals and the issue was tabled until next month.

3. Township Newsletter: good comments; Supervisor Gondeck said that he would like to sell advertising to help defray the expense and was given permission to do so; the Clerk asked for an earlier deadline for submitting articles.
4. Sentence to Serve Funding Update: Supervisor Gondeck met with legislators Taryl Clark and Larry Haws about continuing STS funding at no cost to the township; he asked for a letter to be sent to the commissioners to restore funding that the legislature cut out. It might cost the county another \$9,000.
5. Landfill Public Hearing: Supervisor Gondeck met with Joe Wollak and Henkemeyer; they put in another permit stipulation that there won't be any more burning or the landfill would be closed.
6. Revisit Cost to Clean Up Indigo Road House Fire: Supervisor Gondeck asked about checking on resolution for what is assessed against that property and clarifying with Benton County.

#### New Business:

1. MS4 Annual Report: Supervisor Gondeck made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed authorizing the board chair to sign the annual report. The board members reviewed pictures sent by Bill Mayland to Maureen Graber. Supervisor Gondeck was asked to inspect.
2. April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am was set for the annual road tour beginning at 7:30am.
3. Authorization for payment to organizations approved by electors at annual meeting: Supervisor Erdmann made a motion to approve the donation of \$2,000 to Rice Recreation and \$1,200 to Little Rock Lake Association as approved by the electors at the annual meeting; seconded by Supervisor Gondeck; and motion passed.
4. The Clerk asked to have the board cancel the disability insurance coverage for a savings of \$855 through MN Benefit Association; motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed ratifying Clerk Spence's recommendation.
5. Joan Spiczka would like to speak to the town board about the continuation of her contract for maintaining the township website.
6. Rice Fire Contract: last month Supervisor Kacures asked Clerk Spence to write a letter to the Mayor of Rice, and later he asked her to hold off. Now he would like a letter to indicate to the city and fire department that they are operating under an unapproved budget, because they have not called for a Rice Fire Board meeting. He would like a copy of the letter to go to the other townships and sent by registered mail to the Mayor. Motion was made by Supervisor Kacures, seconded by Supervisor Gondeck, and passed authorizing the letter. Supervisor Kacures asked for board approval to have the town attorney review his figures; approval was granted.
7. Ditch Mowing Contract: tabled until next month. Supervisor Gondeck said that he included \$3,000 in the SCORE Grant application for ditch mowing.
8. Benton County Economic Development Committee: Supervisor Gondeck asked if an update on the computer system is needed for the town hall. He also reported on new businesses looking to locate in the area.
9. Benton County Mitigation Plan Meeting: Supervisor Gondeck talked about a loan program for people who want to raise cabins above flood level; the town hall would be used as a command center if there was a hazardous spill; the City of Sauk Rapids has an agreement with Lake Andrew for receive a dry hydrant system to draw water from an irrigation well at Lake Andrew. This will cut response time for fire fighting. Jim McDermott said that Watab is in good position for grant funding which will come in August.
10. 2010 Township Flood Report: Jim Hovda called Supervisor Gondeck at 6:15am on March 18<sup>th</sup> and then had several calls from other township residents. Jim McDermott was at a meeting in the Twin Cities so Brad Bennett and Supervisor Gondeck were delegated to emergency relief. They got a semi of sand and blocked off roads; he gave hour by hour reports, Supervisor Kacures took over after Supervisor Gondeck left for work. State Emergency Operations Center office ordered the dam to be opened by the paper mill, and the water started to go down at 7pm. A few houses were sandbagged. Supervisor Erdmann also helped. Two homeowners vacated their homes and went to the Holiday Inn. Supervisor Gondeck will pursue getting some emergency equipment for the town hall through Benton Telecommunications Foundation. He was asked to work further with Jim McDermott, because of his fire department experience and asked to get further training. Supervisor Kacures suggested that Supervisor Gondeck look into reimbursement in the future from the county if Jim isn't available and he has to take over. Supervisor Gondeck said that Jim would like a deputy appointed in each township to assist him. There is a grant program for upgrading septic systems. Supervisor Erdmann talked about the importance of having a pump to move water away from the structure inside the sand bags.

11. Reports on complaints: Fifth Avenue road bladed after many complaints; frost heaves to look at on spring road tour; some heaves are being caused by cable being laid under the road; Supervisor Gondeck suggested having road contractors or utility companies put up a bond before doing work; pothole that will be taken care of by Allen Saldana; Roger Peterson would like a no outlet sign by the golf course. Want a "No public access" sign by Mark Beckman's house.
12. Allen Saldana said that the railroad approaches are too steep; it's a safety issue because there's a large drop off and the town board should look into this. Supervisor Erdmann said that we can't go within 10 feet of the tracks. He will contact the BN road boss and check on this.
13. MAT Short Course: Supervisor Gondeck & Kacures and Clerk Pat Spence and Treasurer Eileen Saldana attended the spring training. Supervisor Gondeck asked to have us look at what it would cost to drop out of MAT and join League of Cities. The Clerk was asked to check on this.
14. Eric Burski turned in gopher feet. The Clerk will contact him to get a number; payment was authorized at \$2 per gopher trapped through a motion by Supervisor Kacures and second by Supervisor Gondeck.
15. Supervisors gave brief reports including the reminded that the urban short course is April 22<sup>nd</sup>, road tour on April 24, and board of equalization on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gondeck, seconded by Supervisor Erdmann, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 10pm.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Spence Clerk