

Watab Township Annual Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2012

The 2012 Annual Meeting was called to order at 8:01pm on Tuesday, March 13th by Clerk Pat Spence. Following the Pledge to the Flag, Craig Gondeck nominated Ed Kacures Jr. for moderator. There were no other nominations and Ed was elected on a unanimous ballot. He gave announcements about cell phones to be silenced and invited everyone to pick up an agenda. Those present who signed in for the meeting were: Craig Gondeck, Pat Spence, Paul Jacobs, Roselyn Johnson, Duane Johnson, Guy Sence, Gordon A. Rehder, Dolores V. Rehder, John Olson, Ernest Oltz, Scott Schlichting, Donna Poganski, Art Betker, Brian Erdmann, Wendy Erdmann, JoAnn Baumgart, Jeff Fandel, Julie Fandel, Maureen Graber, Phillip J. Nelson, Allen Saldana, Ed Kacures, Lionel Kull, and Geno Beniek. Additions or corrections to the agenda included the following: Joan Baumgart asked to give a presentation regarding a benefit, and the Benton County Agricultural Society requested to be added to the agenda regarding a donation to the fair board. Approval of the agenda with these additions was given through motion by Craig Gondeck and second by Maureen Graber; motion passed.

Reading of the Annual Audit report: Clerk Pat Spence went through the annual statement of income and disbursements giving the balances of each fund. The audit was completed by the Board of Supervisors on January 24, 2012; there were no negative findings. Total of all fund balances is \$400,909.50. Each member of the audience received a written copy of the financial report for 2011. Clerk Spence also went through the 2011 Watab Income and Expense Report.

Lloyd Erdmann gave a report on the 2011 road projects. Seal coating and crack filling for a total distance of about four miles was completed on the following township roads last summer: 115th Street, 105th Street, Saldana Road, and Plaziak Road. Total cost was \$72, 875. He felt that the contractor did a good job and hopefully it will save these roads from major repairs in the next few years. There was also a collapsed culvert on the minimum maintenance road that was replaced. Saldana Excavating and Aggregate also did blacktop patching in the spring.

The Railroad Quiet Zone Report was given by Jon Bogart, Engineer, and Supervisor Lloyd Erdmann. During the past year the township worked with Burlington Northern and Jon Bogart on the feasibility and estimated costs for two quiet zones. The Lakewood Shore crossing costs more than funds which were available this past year. Plaziak Road north of Lakewood Shores needs to be resurfaced. The board would like to combine these projects so that fill can be used from the hill on Plaziak Road on the crossing. County Road 79 project was given approval for a study at the April 2011 meeting. Lloyd has a letter from the county giving their permission to do a study. The engineer's cost estimate for a quiet zone on County Road 79 is \$30,000. Lloyd reviewed the interest which was expressed at last year's annual meeting for Quiet Zones. Jon Bogart explained that the quiet zone crossing on County Road 79 is just a few hundred feet; it involves a median. Lakewood Shore and Plaziak Road involves 2,700 feet to be redone on Plaziak Road and 1,200 feet on Lakewood Shore. Lakewood Shore project ends at Iten Road. Jon is projecting a cost of \$235,000. Mining fill from Plaziak Road would save about \$10,000. Jon has a set of plans that are full-size conceptual plans for review on the side table in the hall meeting room. Lakewood Shore Crossing has been in need of major repairs: steep sides, too narrow, four-wheelers have broken down the sides, and large boils have developed in the blacktop. The major windstorm two years ago makes the train noise much more audible in the neighborhood. Maureen Graber said she would greatly appreciate getting that crossing done. Paul Jacobs asked how much the quiet zone portion adds to the cost: the cost addition for the quiet zone on this road project is for the curb and gutter, which has a cost of about \$15,000. The railroad hasn't given the exact cost of moving

the signal on one side of the road. Rosie Johnson asked for clarification on why the township can't move ahead with County Road 79; Lloyd explained that he is trying to solicit pledges from residents to contribute towards the project. So far he has \$4,500 in pledges after talking with just a few people. He will go to Benton County again to see if they will move forward when he has more pledges. Lionel Kull spoke in favor of the Lakewood Shore Crossing and said that he is very pleased. Pat Spence asked about the budget amount for moving the signal; Jon Bogart said that \$10,000 is budgeted.

Requests for Donations:

- Guy Spence, President of the Little Rock Lake Association, gave the following comments: There are 142 members in the organization. He requested a \$1,500 contribution for the association to install buffer strips and to educate residents on their importance; this request is for the same amount as the previous year. He described what buffer strips contain and their purpose in reducing shoreline erosion and filtering out pollutants that flow into the lake from lawns. Aquatic plants that are added to many of the buffer strips cause the sediment that is floating in the water to settle to the bottom, which reduces murkiness. They also serve as a barrier for Canada geese. The lake association started installing buffer strips in 2000 and made a concerted effort in 2009 to expand the effort. 58-60% of the lake is naturally buffered so additional work by the association makes a big impact. The donations and volunteer help are greatly needed. He also asked for those interested in having a buffer strip to contact either him or Maureen Graber. They will use Conservation Corps members and the STS crew to help with the work. Jeff Riedeman will hopefully be netting the carp from the lake this spring. He could net 200,000 lbs. Carp are extremely destructive to plants along the shoreline, destroy habitat for native fish, and cause murkiness of the water. There should be almost an immediate effect to clarity of the water by removing this amount of carp. The LRLA works closely with Benton County Soil and Water District. They are working to reduce farm runoff. He stated that the association greatly appreciates the past support of the township. Motion was made by Lionel Kull to donate \$1,500, seconded by Rosie Johnson; motion passed.
- Keith O'Brien from Rice Recreation presented participation in the program in a verbal and written report. He described the programs offered by Rice Recreation. Programs are offered on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Watab participation was 30% in the summer recreation ball program; 73 athletes were registered. It was a poor year for the skating rink. After-school participation ran Tuesday through Thursday from 3:30 to 5pm. He detailed the activities for each month. He is proposing moving the skating rink to the softball fields. Current site would be converted to a basketball court. Lionell Cull moved to donate \$3,000 to Rice Recreation; motion was seconded by Maureen Graber. Paul Jacobs mentioned that we should be sure to include the note that this is for two years because the check was lost by the City of Rice for last year's donation. Someone asked why it wouldn't be \$4,000, but no amendment to Lionell's motion was offered. Motion was passed for \$3,000 contribution to Rice Recreation.
- Tracy Scapanski appeared for the Benton County Agricultural Society. She thanked the township for the \$500 donation last year and said it went to great use. She is a fair board member and said that the fair will be celebrating the 100th anniversary this summer, so they want to do extra things to mark this occasion. The fair brings 80,000 people to the fair grounds. Any donation would be appreciated. She invited residents to share ideas at open meetings of the fair board, which are the second Tuesday of every month at 7pm at the fair board office on the fair grounds. Fair is July 31 through August 5 in 2012. Motion was made by Lloyd Erdmann to donate \$500, seconded by John Olson, motion passed.

Presentation of budget projections was made by Clerk Spence for 2012 and 2013. The amounts levied tonight are for collection of revenue from property taxes paid in 2013. The residents decide what the amounts should be. Recommendation of the board for the General Fund is \$75,000, which is a \$25,000 reduction from the levy for this year. Motion was made by Maureen Graber to levy \$75,000 for the General Fund, and seconded by Guy Spence; motion passed. The Road and Bridge fund recommendation by the board is for \$205,000. Motion was made by Brian Erdmann to levy \$205,000, and seconded by Paul Jacobs. Lloyd Erdmann said that it wouldn't leave a very adequate fund balance; he thought the amount should be increased. Motion passed for a levy of \$205,000 with a small number opposed. The Fire Fund board recommendation is for \$70,000. Ed Kacures said that the board will be negotiating with Rice for a new contract. Watab has submitted a proposal to Rice, but there haven't been any negotiations. There is a new two-year contract with Sauk Rapids. Lionell Kull asked if \$70,000 would be adequate. Maureen Graber made a motion to levy \$70,000, seconded by Paul Jacobs, and motion passed. The Building Fund recommendation is for \$25,000; Brian Erdmann made a motion to levy \$25,000 for the Building Fund, Wendy Erdmann seconded the motion; motion passed.

Resident's Concerns: Rosie Johnson asked about dogs running loose in the township. She is upset about cleaning up after other people's dogs in their yard. She asked what can be done. Craig Gondeck said that about three or four months ago he talked with the MAT attorney about this issue. If we have a township dog ordinance, we have to take care of the animals. State and county law only covers dangerous animals that are running loose. All agreed that at this time, it would be costly to enforce a dog ordinance at the township level, but the moderator asked everyone to try to be courteous to their neighbors by keeping their dogs on a leash or in their own yards. Paul Jacobs said that he has been a taxpayer here for 7 years; he made the recommendation that with \$128,000 in investments at very low interest the township should be paying off more principal on its loans. A town board member explained that much of the current interest account will be used for the Lakewood Shore/Plaziak Road project, so this may not be feasible. Joann Baumgart talked about a benefit for her neighbor, Dirk Holler, on March 30th at 4:30pm at the Sauk Rapids VFW. American Heritage Bank is also accepting cash donations. Ernie Oltz from Burton Place asked the board to rebuild Burton Place since it is only 18 feet wide and very difficult to meet buses or garbage trucks. He said it was resurfaced a number of years ago, and it was a poor job at that time. The aggregate is peeling. It should perhaps be extended for the future development beyond the end of the board. Ed Kacures said that the board will inspect it in April. Lloyd Erdmann said that there are right-of-way issues on the road with only 24 feet of right of way.

Joe Wollak, Benton County Commissioner, gave a report from the county. County Engineer Bob Kozel has retired. Chris Byrd, Assistant, is Interim Engineer. He is a registered engineer from Kansas. Recruitment for a new Department of Development Director is ongoing. They will be interviewing soon. Interim Director is Chuck Marohn; he is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Sheriff's contract with Foley ended for their police protection, so the county cut those three positions. He explained that the Gravel Tax issue is an ongoing problem. There will be an independent audit conducted through leadership of Karri Thorsten, new Auditor-Treasurer. 90% of the operators were in compliance. 2010 census is causing the county to redistrict; process will begin in April. There will be public hearings. County Road projects he announced were: the northern part of Co. Rd. 78 will be blacktopped; south part of 78 hopefully started later; county road 33 done to Jack Frost; and Co. Rd 73 from Rice bridge to Half Way Crossing. Jan Solarz asked about the abatement project for county road 3 to Lake Station. Joe said nothing is finalized. Lionell Kull asked about cutting three deputies; Joe said that they were transferred to the jail, because there were job openings there. Scott Schlichting asked about the 20-year plan for Highway 10 changes south of the Kings Inn.

Elector recommendations for the newspaper for legal notices: Brian Erdmann made a motion to use the Sauk Rapids Herald, second by Lloyd Erdmann; Paul Jacobs said to check on the meeting time in their notice; motion passed.

Elector recommendation for posting places: Paul Jacobs made a motion, seconded by JoAnn Baumgart to use Channel 3, the township website, town hall, and outside Pines Edge for posting places; motion passed.

Outdoor Warning Siren Grant Application: A report was given by Craig Gondeck. He described the process the board has used since the August 13, 2010 storm for emergency management. Homeland Security currently has grants for outdoor warning sirens. The township is applying for \$100,000 in grants to install a minimum of three outdoor warning sirens in Lakewood Shores, High View Terrace, and Oak Hill/Golf Haven Estates. The township will need to put up a 25% match. Allen Saldana asked about the liability if the warning doesn't go off. Kevin Reiter asked about the payback time when bills are submitted. Gilman and Watab are applying for a grant. Geno Beniek asked Craig to repeat the proposed sites. Allen Saldana asked about the maintenance cost. Craig said that using the solar system there is not an annual fee and maintenance would be very minimal.

Craig Gondeck reported on Watab Clean Up Day: 280 people came through. Location was changed to Twin Pines parking lot. Clean Up Day has greatly reduced illegal dumping. A SCORE grant from Benton County covers most of the costs. He listed the number of appliances that was brought in and the amount of solid waste collected. There will be another clean up day in the fall. Craig was thanked by the moderator for all his work on organizing and running Clean Up Day.

Setting time for 2013 annual meeting: Craig Gondeck moved to have the election from 11am to 8pm, Bob Raveling seconded, motion passed. It will be held on the second Tuesday of March in 2013. The Annual meeting will immediately follow the polls closing.

2012 Board of Equalization is April 5th at 2:30pm. Craig Gondeck said that property tax statements have a large change this year. Homestead credit was removed by the state legislature. He explained that the board passed a resolution asking the legislature to repeal the law. He encouraged residents to contact legislators and ask for reinstatement of the homestead credit.

Pat Spence and Lloyd Erdmann were re-elected. There were 42 voters. 39 ballots were cast for Pat Spence for a two year term as Clerk and 34 votes were cast for Lloyd Erdmann for a three year term as Supervisor. They both ran for re-election with no opposition.

Clerk Spence thanked Fiedler's Pumping for hosting the refreshments for the annual meeting.

Motion was made by Gordon Rehder , seconded by Geno Beniek to adjourn at 9:50pm. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence