

## Greetings!

### Julie Johnson, Chair

As I approach the end of my sixth year on the board, I have been reflecting a lot on what has changed and improved over that time.

The biggest change so far has been the Board's laser focus on road construction improvements. The Board has tackled collector roads, residential roads, overlays, culvert cleaning, ditch mowing, created 5- and 10-year road plans, as well as improving the overall road conditions throughout the Township.

It has not always been easy. Everyone has opinions and concerns and we do try to listen to each of them. There are some things we cannot change. Trees must be removed to make way for proper drainage, ditches, visibility, and to remove disease. Trees in the right-of-way damage roads fast; their roots heaving and buckling, causing multiple problems. Keeping roots out of the right-of-way will lead to better, longer-lasting roads. If you do plant trees, please make sure they are not placed in the Township easement or right-of-way platted areas.

Since I started in April of 2018, the following roads have been rebuilt or overlaid:

85<sup>th</sup> Street NE & NW  
95<sup>th</sup> Street NW (Saldana Road) to the RR tracks.  
Frost Road RR tracks to the River Road  
Peace Rock Road (overlay)  
Sanbur Trail (overlay)  
Sharon Place  
Indian Road  
Sucker Creek Bridge  
Sucker Creek Road  
West Lakewood Shores  
Sues Road  
Gannett Road  
Johnson Road (Overlay)  
Lake Andrew Development Roads (5 roads)  
Ferry Point (2024)  
Lakewood Shores Road (2024)

That is 20 roads in 6 years! Truly a huge undertaking. We are also waiting to hear about a grant I wrote and submitted to complete the west end of 95<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Finally, in 2025 or 2026 we will tackle West Lake Road and Court. There are some serious water issues that will need to be worked through on that roadway. After that work is completed, Watab will have all their collector roads finished. Then we will turn to neighborhood roads, working

in sections: west of the Lakewood Shores area, Deerwood and Oak Court, Shoestring Loop/Timberlane Loop, Oak Hill Roads, 107<sup>th</sup>/109<sup>th</sup> Street NE, and 105<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, and finally Plaziak Road and the north section of 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW.

Finally, the ARPA dollars granted to Watab Township have restrictions regarding allowable expenditures. Watab paid off the BNSF final quiet crossing invoice of \$96,000 using those dollars. We have also renovated the Town Hall with a new boiler for the in-floor heat system, a new water softener and filter for the iron in the water, new carpet, painting, renovated and refreshed bathrooms, updated the security system, fixed some windows, refreshed the landscaping, and put on a new roof. We have a multifunction building that is great for Township use. (You can contact the clerk to rent the building for your parties or special events and meetings.) The final balance of the ARPA dollars will be spent on Ferry Point and Lakewood Shores Road to finish those projects.

So, enjoy this mild winter! Go take a walk outside, pick up trash to keep our Township clean, get to know your neighbors, help improve in small things, or just enjoy a good book. Spring is almost here!

## Watab Township Annual Meeting Notification

The Town of Watab will hold its Annual election and meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

Election poll hours are from 12 noon until 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect:

Supervisor for a 3-year term of office.

The Annual Meeting will commence at approximately 8:15 p.m. to conduct all necessary business as prescribed by law. The Annual meeting will be held at the Watab Town Hall.

Please contact the Township Clerk (320-240-2270 or watabts@gmail.com) if you would like to receive an absentee ballot via mail, or if you would like to set up an appointment to vote absentee.

## Financials

### Mary Shearer, Treasurer

Below are the 2023 year-end financial statements. For a full detailed report, please attend the annual meeting in March or contact the Treasurer for an electronic copy.

### Revenue/General Fund:

Beginning Balance .....	\$133,644.92
Receipts & Investments .....	\$436,659.74
Disbursements & Purchase of Inv.....	-\$456,017.24
<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b><u>\$130,976.22</u></b>

### Road/Bridge Fund:

Beginning Balance .....	\$215,558.75
Receipts .....	\$650,520.95
Sale of Investments Deposited .....	\$825,025.00
Transfer from Bond .....	<u>\$1,626,441.30</u>
Disbursements .....	\$1,243,415.28
Purchase of Investment .....	\$ 1,557,116.65
<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b><u>749,832.39</u></b>

### Fire District 1 (Rice):

Beginning Balance .....	\$108,325.35
Receipts .....	17,426.05
Disbursements .....	<u>29,210.53</u>
<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b><u>\$96,540.87</u></b>

### Fire District 2 (Sauk Rapids):

Beginning Balance .....	\$61,469.18
Receipts .....	60,389.06
Disbursements .....	<u>55,598.00</u>
<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b><u>\$66,260.24</u></b>

### Debt Service Fund (Road Project 5<sup>th</sup> Ave):

Beginning Balance .....	\$79,585.29
Receipts .....	59,789.34
Disbursements .....	<u>60,697.50</u>
<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b><u>\$78,393.79</u></b>

### ARPA Fund:

<b>Ending Balance .....</b>	<b>\$120,141.38</b>
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### Savings & Investments:

Road & Bridge (Falcon Bank) .....	\$749,832.39
Intrafi (Falcon Bank) .....	\$181,818.80
Ehlers Investments (Bond).....	\$1,762,238.26
Bldg. Savings Acct. (Falcon Bank).....	\$11,695.75

## INDEBTEDNESS BALANCES:

### 2013 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bond

December 31, 2023 .....	\$190,000.00
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(Note: Bond Matures in 2027)

### 2021 Road Reconstruction Bond

December 31, 2023 .....	\$3,214,955.73
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### 2022 Lake Andrew Special Assessment Bond

December 31, 2023 .....	\$930,000.00
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## SALARIES:

Supervisor Johnson .....	\$2,587.50
Supervisor Wollak .....	\$3,612.50
Supervisor Arndt .....	\$1,825.00
Supervisor Little .....	\$300.00
Clerk Sauer .....	\$19,360.00
Treasurer Shearer.....	\$13,267.50

## Budget/Audit Report

### Julie Johnson

Each January the Watab Town Board meets to conduct its annual audit of the previous year's financial records to set the preliminary budget for the current year, make recommendations for the Annual Meeting, and to set the Levy for the next fiscal year.

The Board met Tuesday, January 23, 2024, to conduct a full review of selected records for 2023. Both the Clerk's and Treasurer's books are in balance. The Township is in excellent financial shape, and we have made strides to reduce costs and be more efficient with your tax dollars. Below are some of the miscellaneous receipts received in 2023.

BCA Fine Shares .....	\$2,162.19
Ag Market Value Credit.....	\$2,554.55
Gravel Tax .....	\$2,085.95
Franchise Fees .....	\$13,056.96
Town Hall Rent .....	\$2,525.00

In 2023, the Board approved hiring the accounting firm Conway, Deuth, & Schmiesing to have a full audit of the 2022 accounting records. This was done at the recommendation of our bonding company to ensure secure, competitive rates for any future bonds. The audit was completed with only a few changes, recommendations for the treasurer, and an overall good report.

## Proposed Levy 2025

### Julie Johnson

The Watab Township Levy for 2024 was \$780,000. Below is the proposed 2025 levy that will be finalized at the Annual Meeting. This represents an overall increase of 3.59%.

General/Revenue Fund.....	\$80,000.00
Road & Bridge Fund.....	\$400,000.00
Fire District 1 Fund.....	\$15,000.00
Fire District 2 Fund.....	\$50,000.00
Bond Fund (Road Project) .....	\$60,000.00
2021 Road Construction Bond.....	<u>\$260,000.00</u>
<b>Total Proposed Levy.....</b>	<b><u>\$865,000.00</u></b>

## Tree Trimming 2024

### Julie Johnson

Tree trimming quotes were issued for three roads this winter. Sucker Creek Road north of Sharon Place and Burton Court Northwest will be cleared 15 feet from the edge of the tar in most areas and limbs cut back to the tree to a height of 15 feet. All shrubs will be cut, mowed, and removed. This will ensure our right of ways stay open for snow removal, invasive species and keep visual site lines open.

The Lakewood Shores project was quite a bit more extensive with dozens of trees removed and the right-of-way fully cleared. This road is set for construction during the spring and summer of 2024.

## Adopt-a-Road Project

### Steve Wollak

Have you ever wondered about those Adopt-a-Road signs you see along the road that display the name of a group of people, business, or organization? They represent volunteers who have "adopted" that stretch of road for the purpose of keeping it free from litter.

The section of road is typically 2 miles long and volunteers are responsible for picking up debris along that stretch of road for 2 years at least twice per year, usually spring and fall. In return, they are recognized for their service on a sign.

Adopt-a-Road is an invaluable service to our community in terms of cleanliness and aesthetics. If you are interested in serving our Township in this capacity, please contact the Clerk for a packet of information.

## Building Construction 2023

### Nancy Scott, Building Inspector

2023 Total Permits.....	102
Total Single-Family Homes.....	11
Total Manufactured Homes .....	0
Commercial Construction .....	1

2023 Total Building Permit Valuation: \$16,117,000.00

- Two large commercial projects: CarCo & Pilgrims Pride accounted for \$7 Million in economic growth in the Township.
- Watab Township valuation total for 2023 was double that of 2022.

## Mailboxes

### Kathy Sauer, Clerk

Even though we haven't had much snow this year (at the writing of this article), we all know that could change at any time!

Each year we receive calls and reports from residents reporting that their mailboxes have been hit and damaged by the snow plow. The snow plow drivers have a difficult job; they try to be very careful, but due to the various heights and placements of mailboxes, mishaps are bound to happen. The Township strongly encourages swing-away mailboxes. This will limit, if not eliminate, damage to your mailboxes. If you do not have a swing-away mailbox, you will be responsible for repairing or replacing your mailbox.

If your road is scheduled for construction, the Township will provide swing-away mailboxes to you free of charge.

## Election Year 2024

### Kathy Sauer, Clerk

Buckle up! We have 4, yes FOUR, elections this year!

March 5:	Presidential National Primary
March 12:	Township Election
August 13:	Primary Election
November 5:	General Election

Watab residents will vote at the Watab Township Hall. Polls will be open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm for each election, with the exception of the Township election on March 12 when the polls will be open from 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

If you are not registered to vote, you can go to the Office of the Secretary of State's website and register online: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/>, or you can register at the Town Hall on election day with valid identification.

## REMEMBER TO VOTE!

### Reserve the Town Hall

#### **Kathy Sauer, Clerk**

Need a venue for your event? The Town Hall is available at a reasonable cost. We have hosted baby and bridal showers, family gatherings and reunions, graduation and birthday parties, Christmas parties, memorial services and weddings.

Forms and other information about fees and damage deposits are on the Township website. If you have further questions, please contact the Clerk.

### MS4 Annual Report

#### **Julie Johnson**

Source: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us>

What is an MS4?

A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) is a conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, storm drains, etc.) that is also:

- owned or operated by a public entity (which can include cities, townships, counties, military bases, hospitals, prison complexes, highway departments, universities, sewer districts, etc.);
- designed or used for collecting or conveying stormwater;
- not a combined sewer;
- not part of a publicly owned treatment works.

MS4s in Minnesota must satisfy the requirements of the MS4 general permit if they are at least one of the following:

- located in an urbanized area and used by a population of 1,000 or more;
- owned by a municipality with a population of 10,000 or more;
- have a population of at least 5,000 and the system discharges to specially classified bodies of water.

Minnesota state rule (Minn. R. 7090) establishes criteria and a process for designating future MS4s.

The MS4 general permit is designed to reduce the amount of sediment and other pollutants entering state waters from stormwater systems. Entities regulated by the MS4 general permit must develop a stormwater pollution prevention program and adopt best practices. Learn more on the [Complying with the MS4 General Permit](#) page. A general permit covers multiple entities with similar operations and types of discharges. Issuing general permits allows for faster and more efficient permitting compared to issuing individual permits.

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/business-with-us/municipal-stormwater-ms4>

When building in Watab Township you will need a construction stormwater permit (or MS4 permit) if you live in one of the three developments: Oak Hill, Lake Andrew or Pirates Cove (see website); you will also need a permit if you are building along any of the three waterways in the Township; Mississippi River, Harris Channel, or Little Rock Lake. Finally, if your project is over 1 acre in size, you will need the Township permit and, additionally, the state permit from the website listed above.

### Watab/Langola Clean-Up Day

#### **Jessie Arndt**

On Saturday, October 7, Watab Township hosted a Clean-up Day for local residents. The yearly event is meant to help residents de-clutter their properties as well as to keep junk items from finding their way into our road ditches and green spaces. Overall, we were able to fill three dump trucks and a 40-yard recycling container with items that were no longer being used. Most of the items brought in were free for residents to drop off with others requiring a small, discounted fee for disposal. Watab Township has and will continue to invite residents of Rice and Langola Township to participate as well. In the fall of 2024, Watab will again be hosting this event. Rice and Benton County offer similar clean-up/amnesty days to promote junk clean-up in the area. We encourage everyone to plan on attending these events in the future! We will get dates on our website when we finalize the 2024 plan.

A special thank you to those who make this day possible: West Central Sanitation, Opatz Rolloffs, volunteers from the Little Rock Lake Association and Langola Township for a generous financial contribution.

## Emergency Services

### **Kathy Sauer, Clerk**

Each year the town officers receive many questions, calls, and emails regarding invoices for Emergency Services (Fire, Rescue, and Medical).

The Township has two fire districts: Fire District 1 is the Rice Fire Department; Fire District 2 is the Sauk Rapids Fire Department. Each entity has a separate 2-year contract with Watab Township. Both contracts cover only the cost of **availability** to fire, medical, and rescue services. It is a service umbrella that helps offset their budgets.

The Rice Fire Department serves the northern section of the Township and the Sauk Rapids Fire Department serves the southern section of the Township. The dividing line is 95<sup>th</sup> Street NW.

The Rice and Sauk Rapids Fire Departments bills the Township each month for services they provided within the Township. In turn, the Township bills the person(s) who received the services. Township residents receive a 25% discount on the charges issued by the Fire Department. **Each person utilizing either Sauk Rapids or the Rice Fire Department is responsible for the cost of their call.**

Cancelled calls happen; however, once fire department members leave work to get outfitted and trucks are moving, costs are incurred even though they may not come to your home. We strongly encourage you to test your alarm systems to ensure they are set properly.

Ordinance 3 is the legal document establishing fees for emergency services in Watab Township. The Board is currently considering updates to the Ordinance for clarification. The Ordinance can be found on our website.

If you have received an invoice for emergency services and have questions, please contact the Township Clerk, Kathy Sauer.

## National Night Out

### **Kathy Sauer, Clerk**

As part of National Night Out, Watab Township hosted an ice cream social on August 8, 2023. It was well-attended with officials from the Rice and Sauk Rapids Fire Departments showcasing their fire trucks and latest equipment.

**We are so grateful for the service they provide!**



## Contact Information

Town Hall Phone Number 320-240-2270  
660 75<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Kathy Sauer, Clerk watabts@gmail.com  
Mary Scherer, Treasurer watabtres@gmail.com

### Supervisors:

Julie Johnson johnson4watab@gmail.com  
Steve Wollak swollakwatab@gmail.com  
Jessie Arndt jarndtwatab@gmail.com

## Email and Electronic News

Sign up for electronic updates from the Township. On the lower left page of the website is a form to enter and submit to receive emails, updates, agendas, minutes, and the latest happenings. You may also request to be added via email at watabts@gmail.com.

Check out our website for forms and information:  
<https://www.watabtownship.com/>.

## Watab Township Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, March 12, 2024**

**Vote 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Annual meeting will start at  
approximately 8:15 pm**

**Watab Town Hall**

