

# Watab News

2019 ANNUAL MEETING EDITION

## ANNUAL TOWNSHIP ELECTION AND MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, March 12, 2019, is the day for all Watab Township residents to participate in our grass roots government. There are two ways that your involvement is invited:

- (1) vote in the annual election, and
- (2) attend and participate in the annual meeting.

Polls will be open at the Town Hall between the hours of eleven o'clock a.m. and eight o'clock p.m. Positions up for election include a township supervisor (for a three-year term), a township clerk (for a one-year term), and a township treasurer (for a two-year term). Craig Gondeck and Steve Wollak have filed for the supervisor's position; Nicole Burski and Jon L. Hull have filed for the clerk's position; and Deborah O'Keefe has filed for the treasurer's position. Absentee voting information can be implemented by calling the Township clerk at #252.2239 (home) or #240.2270 (work).

The annual meeting will begin shortly after election polls close at eight o'clock p.m. A moderator is elected by those present; current Township officials offer requested information at the meeting but do not make any decisions during the meeting. This is your meeting – an opportunity to provide direction for local government.

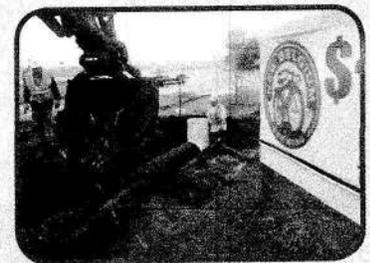
The following is a preliminary AGENDA for the meeting. Other items may be added.

- I. Call to Order (Clerk)
- II. Election of a Moderator by the Electorate
- III. Set the Meeting Agenda
- IV. Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes (provided by Clerk)
- V. Summary of 2018 Board of Audit (provided by Treasurer)
- VI. 2019 and 2020 Proposed Budgets
- VII. Input on Proposed 2019 Road and Bridge Projects
- VIII. Donation Requests for Recommendations from Electors to the Town Board (Non-profit organizations are asked to provide a spokesperson, a current financial statement, and references to the Minnesota Statute that governs donations from townships to their organizations.)
- IX. Proposed 2020 Township Levy:

A. General Fund	\$100,000	(no increase/decrease)
B. Road & Bridge Fund	\$475,000	(\$25,000 increase)
C. Fire District I	\$55,000	(\$8,000 decrease)
D. Fire District II	\$62,500	(\$5,500 increase)
E. Town Hall Debt	\$0	(\$22,000 decrease)
F. Road Debt Service	\$62,500	(\$500 decrease)
<b>TOTAL: \$755,000</b> (no increase/decrease)		
- X. Preliminary Results of Annual Election (Head Judge)
- XI. Other Items Added to Agenda
- XII. Set Location and Time for Next Annual Election and Meeting
- XIII. Motion to Recess or Adjourn the Annual Meeting

### INSIDE

- Reflections
- Emergency Road Repairs
- New Township Income
- Township Road Projects
- Adopt-A-Highway
- Growth in Watab Township



## Board Members

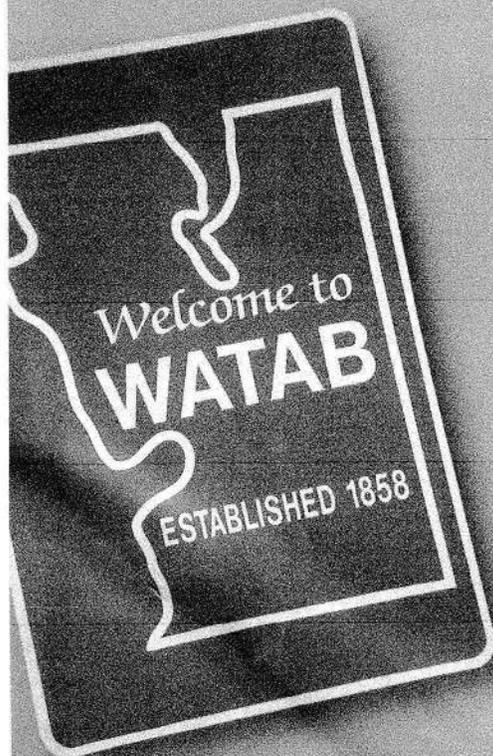
**Todd Waytashek - Chairman**  
Phone: 320.266.4909 (c)  
watabwaytashek@qwestoffice.net

**Craig Gondeck -  
Vice-Chairman**  
Phone: 320.492.6814 (c)  
320.393.3120 (h)

**Julie Johnson - Supervisor**  
Phone: 320.248.5245 (c)  
320.255.1454 (h)  
johnson4watab@gmail.com

**Jon L. Hull - Clerk**  
Phone: 320.240.2270 (w)  
320.252.2239 (h)  
watabcls@qwestoffice.net

**Deborah O'Keefe -  
Treasurer**  
Phone: 320.240.2270 (w)  
320.251.4874 (h)  
watabtres@qwestoffice.net



## Reflections

### What a year this has been!

Following 2018 annual Watab Township election activities, the successful Township Clerk candidate subsequently declined the position due to professional time constraints and family responsibilities. After being approached by Township supervisors about the possibility of applying for the position, I felt confident that previous work experiences and a desire for continued public service involvement would enrich me personally and serve Township residents as well. That shows you just how much I knew! Fifty years of experience with governmental accounting, payroll, record keeping, elections, census, labor negotiations, etc. in two Minnesota public school districts prepared me for many tasks, but provided no assistance at all when faced with these types of questions:

*"Can I grow chickens, harvest, and sell eggs on my Township property?"*

*"The railroad crossing arms are not working; who should I call?"*

*"Can I homestead on more than one Minnesota property?"*

*"Does the Township pay a bounty for gopher front feet or gopher back feet?"*

Obviously, every day brings new learning experiences for me. Fortunately, many agencies are available to assist Township clerks in successful completion of their responsibilities. Among others, Benton County, the Minnesota Association of Townships, and the Minnesota Secretary of State's office offer legal and professional advice. In addition, current and past Township officials are always willing to share a wealth of knowledge and experience. Sincere appreciation is extended to all Township residents who have exhibited patience and even humor as I weave my way through the maze we refer to as local government. As Watab Township's population continues to grow and diversify, it behooves each of us to become aware of the needs and desires of our neighbors and their families. That being said, why not embrace the mantra: "of the people, with the people, for the people?"

After all, we're in this together, and thankfully so. - Jon L. Hull, Clerk

### From TREASURER Deborah O'Keefe

My husband, Terry, and I have lived in Watab Township since 1994 on the Harris Channel. I was employed by the paper mill in Sartell in various positions for 20 years. After the mill closed, I took advantage of a training program and earned an Associate Degree in Accounting. I then worked basically as a receptionist, but also did payrolls, payroll taxes, and quarterly reports. I filed and paid client's state and federal taxes. I took care of paying the office bills too.

When Maureen Graber resigned as treasurer, I sent a resume to the board, had an interview, and was appointed treasurer for the township. The treasurer's job involves a lot more than taking in money and paying bills. There are many more responsibilities, reports, and overall obligations that are part of the job. I really enjoy the job even though at times it has been very stressful! There is an instruction book for the state's computer program, but there is no instruction book to help with the day to day duties that pop up all the time. But I still love the job! It is fun learning new things and talking to the people that call or stop in. The monthly meetings give me some excitement in my life.

This time around, I am running for the Treasurer's position and hope to be an elected official by the residents in the township. Thank you.

**Clerk's Financial Report for January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018 • TOWN OF WATAB**

**Statement of Indebtedness**

General Refunding Bond for Town Hall & Road Projects at 1.9% Interest  
 Paid on Principal in 2018: \$70,000.00      Remaining Balance Road Projects: \$427,738.00

**Statement of Investments**

Road and Bridge Fund: \$427,738

	Fund Balance 01/01/2018	Receipts	Disbursements	Purchase of Investments	Ending Balance 12/31/2018
General	\$179,792.85	\$167,675.42	\$198,174.44	\$ -	\$149,293.83
Road & Bridge	\$568,929.81	\$396,524.60	\$641,911.79	\$401,598.54	\$(78,055.92)
Rice Fire District I	\$18,601.10	\$67,204.82	\$44,057.64	\$ -	\$41,748.28
Sauk Rapids Fire District II	\$29,674.80	\$40,928.78	\$44,390.23	\$ -	\$26,213.35
Debt Service for Roads	\$60,907.55	\$59,866.54	\$59,802.50	\$ -	\$60,971.59
Debt Service for Town Hall	\$28,173.17	\$20,945.54	\$20,485.00	\$ -	\$28,633.71
Building	\$26.98	\$ -	\$26.98	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$886,106.26</b>	<b>\$753,145.70</b>	<b>\$1,008,848.58</b>	<b>\$401,598.54</b>	<b>\$228,804.84</b>

**Rice Park Board Steering Committee**

**Report by Supervisor Julie Johnson**

Since coming onto the Watab Township board one of my committee assignments is the Steering Committee of the Rice Park Board. Representatives from Watab Township, City of Rice, Benton County Staff and local residents are all members of the steering committee.

We meet quarterly to hold discussion forums of "what's happening" in our local park region.

Bend in the River Park is a good example of what is discussed. This 289 acre park located on the River Road and abutting the Mississippi is within the boundary of Watab Township but it also is very near the city limits of Rice. Many Rice residents walk the 1.4 miles to and through the trails established within the park boundaries.

We encourage Watab residents to bike, drive or walk to the park and explore its beauty within our township.

## Many Jobs...

With a township population of over 3,228, Watab Township has a population larger than the cities of Rice and Foley. Each Township supervisor has to tackle many jobs. The Township Board passes a resolution annually to approve most of these tasks. Other responsibilities are added through Board action as they come up. Tasked with properly handling the finances and administration of the Township, we have to make the best decisions we can based on the information we have at the time and in the best interests of the entire Township. We have had many successes in the last year, such as:

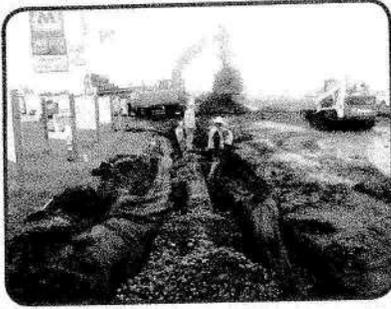
- **Tackling major road projects:** Here we saved close to \$15,000 by contracting a road inspector over the engineering firm having a person on site throughout the projects.
- **Pothole patching:** Supervisor Waytashek did the work and saved roughly \$2,200 this year, less than half the previous method.
- **Installation of a microphone system so audience members can hear meeting discussions:** This was tackled by Supervisor Johnson which included follow-up when one of the components failed early on.
- **Fall Clean-Up Day was a success!** People started lining up at 5:30 a.m. Extra volunteers from the Little Rock Lake Association helped make the project flow smoothly. We look forward to continued participation from the Lake Association in the future.
- **Crack filling:** Supervisor Gondeck continues to organize this effort which is saving us several thousand dollars. We currently have some mix left over from last year so we should be able to start earlier this year.
- **Grants:** The Board has done all grant applications in-house as we have over the last several years. This saves paying a grant writer a percentage and reducing the effectiveness of grant efforts.
- **Sign refacing:** Supervisor Gondeck has undertaken the project of refacing damaged or faded signs within the Township at a cost of around \$10 each versus roughly \$50 each. This brings faded signs back into compliance while reducing costs and resources.
- **Snowplowing of the Town Hall:** Previous snowplowing has cost \$75 per hour or roughly \$125 to \$150 per snowfall. Supervisor Waytashek has been doing it at the supervisor's rate of \$25 per hour, saving \$100 or more each snowfall.

I also want to make special note of our Clerk and Treasurer. Both are new this year. They both tackled their jobs with enthusiasm and, while we may have had a hiccup here or there, they always get the job done. The learning curve was pretty steep, and they both did an excellent job. Thank you!

- Board Chair Todd Waytashek

## Emergency Road Repair

The Board had very numerous complaints on the potholes on Sues Road, in front of Pines Edge. The issue was virtually no drainage with the road surface actually being lower than the surrounding ground. This leads to water standing on the road surface, seeping into cracks and then freezing. This breaks up the asphalt, which gets bounced out by tires or plowed out with snow removal. This has been patched many times over the last years.

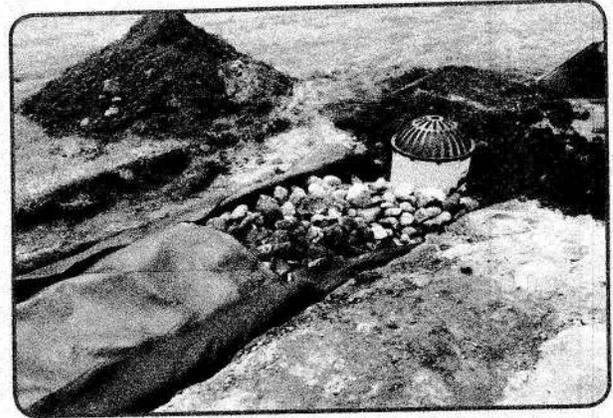


Sues Road isn't set for replacement for several years yet, so we felt it was time to try a different approach. We researched possible solutions and felt a French Drain System would best serve as a solution at the lowest

cost. A French Drain is basically a trench filled with rocks that reaches below the frost line so it can function year around. The rocks allow the water to quickly pass

down the trench and dissipate into the subsoil. Rice Contracting and Development Services was able to take care of the installation in June. So far this system has handled the rain. We will see shortly how it does through the winter. I want to thank everyone for their patience as we address issues throughout the Township.

**-Supervisor Todd Waytashek**



## Costs for Emergency Calls

If you call 911 and live in the service area of the Rice Fire Department (north of 95th Street), the Rice Fire Department is dispatched. The township pays \$350 for the first hour of each call and \$300 for each additional hour of service in addition to the semi-annual contract amount. The 2019-2020 fire contract is \$23,996.82. The change to this current contract was the service call charge for a cancelled call. The previous contract called for a \$350 payment. The new contract charge for a cancelled call is now \$300. Watab Ordinance 3 establishes the fee charged to the resident is 75% of the cost for the first hour and 100% for any additional hours of service. Nonresidents are charged the full amount. Insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid generally will not reimburse for First Responder medical calls. Medical bills typically are the bills that the township takes a loss on because of non-payments. Gold Cross Ambulance is also dispatched, and they do all the billing to the home owner. They do not charge unless they transport a patient. If you wish to avoid the charge for First Responder medical service, please tell the dispatcher when you call 911 that you only want the ambulance.

The township was billed \$19,200 in service calls by the City of Rice in 2018. There were ten fire calls, thirty-six medical calls, one cancelled call, and six rescue calls. A few calls required more than one hour. The township was reimbursed \$6,631.08 for these calls. Some residents and nonresidents still have time to pay their bill before accruing interest. Some of the above bills were just mailed, so hopefully, the township will receive some additional payments.

The southern two-thirds of Watab Township is served by the Sauk Rapids Fire Department. The annual contract is \$41,507. The cost per resident is \$390 per call for the first hour and \$265 for each additional hour. They do not provide First Responder medical service and do all billing directly to those who receive the service for a rescue or fire call. The township was billed \$730 for calls in 2018 and received reimbursement for \$1,120. Some of this was for 2017 calls. The township only makes payment for calls when someone does not pay the City of Sauk Rapids. Residents who pay a bill to the City of Sauk Rapids can request a reimbursement of 25% of this bill from Watab Township by providing a copy of the receipt to the Watab Treasurer.

**- Treasurer Deborah O'Keefe**

## The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program • Supervisor Todd Waytashek

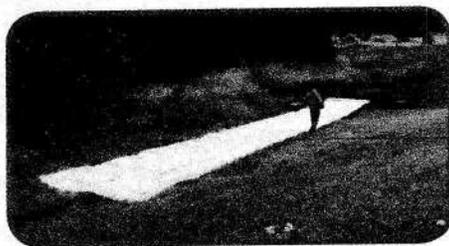
The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program is the inspection arm of our MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) program which is very solid in the Township. The State of Minnesota inspected both the 95th Street NW and 85th Street NW projects; we passed with a 100% rating!

I want to thank Wayne Cymbaluk of WC Environmental, LLC, Nick Anderson of Bogart, Pederson, and Associates, Road Inspector Lloyd Erdmann, Supervisor Craig Gondeck, and especially contractors Knife River and Kraemer Trucking and Excavating, Incorporated, for their strong efforts in making this work.

### 95<sup>th</sup> Street storm water prevention program activities



Before



After

## WATAB TOWN HALL – a popular place to gather!



One of the many satisfying responsibilities of the Watab Township clerk is coordination of events at your Town Hall. What a great way to meet neighbors and their families! In addition to Township Board activities, there were over one hundred activities scheduled in the Township Hall during 2018. These involved the American Legion Auxiliary, art classes, Benton County organizations, Cub Scouts, the Minnesota DNR, election and election judge training, family events, homeowner association meetings, the Little Rock Lake Association, local businesses, SCSU public health classes, and others. What a diversified group we have served! Not on do these folks treat our property with respect, they truly appreciate the accommodations as well.

If you are interested in renting your Town Hall, please call the Township Clerk at work (#240.2270) or at home (#252.2239) for assistance. Additional rental information can be found on the Township's website as well. While a number of obstacles have been encountered, we are currently exploring the possibility of maintaining a Township Hall usage calendar on both Facebook and the Township's website for your convenience.

Thank you for letting us know how we might better serve you in the usage of Township facilities. We want your event to be a memorable one for all participants.

- Clerk Jon L. Hull

## Biking News A report by Supervisor Julie Johnson

In early summer 2018, the Texas 4000 riders traversed through Watab Township, traveling north along the River Road on their very long trek from Austin TX to Anchorage Alaska for a total of 5027 miles mostly on their bicycles. I was able to open the town hall so they could have a morning breakfast break and bathroom stop. Each rider is typically a college student with a history or close family/friend with a cancer history. The ride raises over \$640,000 on this annual trek. There are 3 routes of riders. We hope to host them for a camping overnight in the township in 2019. You can find out more at their website: [www.texas4000.org](http://www.texas4000.org).

There are many residents who bike, run or walk along the many miles of township roads please be sure to slow down and pass carefully so that we can all enjoy our beautiful scenery here in Watab Township.

## New Township Income Becomes Available

In 2017, Township Supervisors Gondeck and Waytashek and Township Clerk Spence attended a Minnesota Association of Township's legal short course. One of the presentations was entitled "Courting Prosecution by the County Attorney on Behalf of Townships for Better Local Government" presented by Peter Ivy, Chief Deputy Carver County Attorney. He stated that county attorneys would assist township boards in setting up joint power agreements with the State of Minnesota to collect fine dollars from the State. Watab Township made the request for assistance with the Benton County attorney but were unable to get assistance from him.

The Board then requested assistance from the Township's attorney, Mike Couri. He donated his time and attended a Benton County Association of Townships meeting to explain to all the township boards that townships can now receive two-thirds of the fines that are paid to the courts for convictions of crimes occurring in your township. Several steps need to be taken to make this possible.

- Supervisor Todd Waytashek

- 1) The Township obtained an ORI number (originating agency identification number) from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- 2) The Township passed a resolution approving a joint powers agreement with the State of Minnesota.
- 3) The Township notified the Benton County attorney of its ORI as the county attorney provides prosecution for the township and will work with the State on the prosecutions and allocations of the fines.
- 4) The Township notified the Benton County Sheriff to put its ORI information on any tickets issued in the Township.

In November of 2017, the Township was notified by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension that the agreements had been approved and had been sent to the Benton County attorney to set up Minden and Watab Townships with the Sheriff's Department.

Finally, in August of 2018, the Township began receiving payments. The \$2,952.43 has been deposited in the Township's Road and Bridge Fund. Previously, all of the fine dollars were retained by the State.

## Annual Township "Clean-up Day" Program Report

The 14th annual Township "Clean-Up Day" was held on Saturday, September 15, 2018, in the Pine's Edge parking lot. Early birds were lined up at 5:30 a.m., sharing stories and drinking coffee together, before the event which was scheduled to begin at 7:30 a.m. Over 275 people came through the line that day, and Watab Supervisor Gondeck also made 15 remote location pick-ups during that time to assist residents who were not able to personally bring articles to the site. Participants were lined up all day long, in two lines, donating their designated treasures. Appliances were handled by Central Minnesota Recycling, and Republic Services provided dumpsters and compactors throughout the effort. All did an excellent job! Items disposed of included, among other things, hot tubs, furniture, lawn mowers, and kitchen and laundry appliances. No tears were observed being shed as owners disposed of these items.

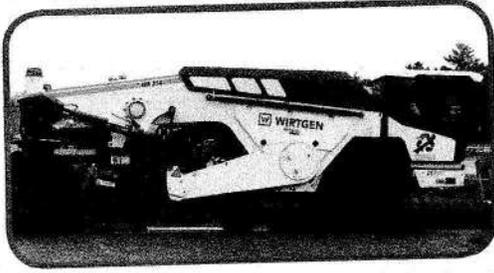
The local Food Shelf brought in a record number of food items; 340 pounds were donated.

Our goal is to keep Watab Township clean and tidy because, for one reason, properties sell at a rapid rate and, for another, the Township Board of Supervisors and residents take great pride in keeping our neighborhoods clean and tidy.

Sincere appreciation is extended for the efforts of the SCORE Committee comprised of Mark McNamara, the Benton County Department of Development, and Benton County Commissioners whose support makes Watab "Clean-Up Day" possible. Supervisor Gondeck also expresses his gratitude to staff who assisted and to all residents who participated in this recycling effort. THANK YOU!

- Supervisor Craig Gondeck

# Township Road Projects



Grinding blacktop on 95<sup>th</sup> Street

2018 was a busy year for roads in Watab Township. The 95th St NW construction, postponed from 2017, was completed along with the Quiet Zone and

85th St NW, east of Highway 10. Running these larger projects at the same time was challenging. The Board hired Lloyd Erdmann to handle the site supervision and held meetings each week on site for updates. Lloyd's bid was 1/3 less than having the engineering firm handle it, and his extensive knowledge and ability to work with the contractors saved the Township considerable time and money. He did an outstanding job of keeping all Supervisors informed, much appreciated!

Due to excessive engineering costs with something like 32 changes on 95th St NW, we are trying a different approach for the road projects this year. We have held meetings on the proposed projects and came to the table with no pre-conceived plans, only rough numbers on the costs for various approaches to each road, empty notebooks and pens ready to write. We listened to the issues, concerns, and desires of those affected and are trying to incorporate them up front. Our hope is to significantly reduce the engineering costs and put the work in a better light.

Plans in 2019 are to address 85th St NW, west of Highway 10, Burton Place, Burton Court, and Frost Road. We are trying to complete these roads under \$300,000. The intent of moving these forward is to save \$175,000 from 2019 and use it to help fund the 105th St NW project in 2020.

105th St NW has been promised by previous Boards. The work is needed, especially east of the railroad crossing. The road is beginning to slough off from the center line. An unplanned advantage of postponing 105th is we will fix it after the traffic increase in 2019 when Benton County tackles County 55. We anticipate traffic will bypass the construction area and take 105th across to 15th Ave N and then down, or to Highway 10. By waiting until 2020 we are putting the extra wear on the old road, not damaging the new road, and building the funds to do it without borrowing. This will also give us a little more time for railroad coordination for the final Quiet Zone project in the Township.

Looking forward beyond 2020, we are reviewing smaller road projects to try doing the same thing in 2020-22, i.e.

small projects only and push money into a large project in 2022. West Lake Road is the most likely candidate for 2022, although there may be more pressing needs before that.

Ongoing maintenance, the Sentence-to-Serve program again handled the crack filling and ditch clearing. Supervisor Gondeck takes care of coordinating and supervising this program. Ditch mowing is contracted through Chuck Ertl. Snow plowing is contracted through Marson Construction for the next two years. Rice Contracting & Development Services again handled the road grading. These contracts are covered by the same contractors as the previous two years. If you know of issues with any of these areas, please contact a Supervisor so we can address them immediately. That said, we are getting good value for all work performed, and all contractors are responsive to issues and concerns.

Supervisors took over the pothole patching, saving the Township \$2,300 over previous methods. Supervisor Waytashek took care of the potholes, using an air compressor to blow them clean, filling the holes, and then packing them tight with a plate compactor. This should make a solid bond with the surrounding asphalt, lengthening the time the patch holds and further reducing costs. We will be watching to see if this is in fact true.



Paving on 95<sup>th</sup> St. NW



Quiet Zone on 95<sup>th</sup> St. NW

Last fall we added four truckloads of gravel to the loop at the end of Ferry Point. This was needed due to large potholes where buses, garbage trucks and other traffic have been splashing out the mud. This was done two years ago as well. It may be time to seriously consider paving that circle.

Also, in the fall, Marson Construction addressed a large developing pothole on Shoestring Loop. In doing this they used a slightly different technique than normal. If it works, then the problem is solved, if not, they agreed to go back to the previous method and not charge us for the trial. Thank you to Marson for helping with a last-minute issue, and hopefully everything works out for the best.

- Supervisor Todd Waytashek

## Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Trained Election Judges Needed

State and County officials are already putting out the word that trained election judges will be in short supply for what is expected to be a very busy 2020 election year. That being said, Watab Township also wishes to offer its thanks and appreciation to the following who served in last year's school district election in May, the primary election in August, and the general election in November. These public servants included: Carole Garloch, Frank Hard, Jon Hull, Marlene Hunt, Clara Knettel, Linda Langer, Deborah O'Keefe, John Olson, Lucy Palmer, Donna Poganski, Sandy Rau, Joyce Segler, and Sheryl Weitgenant. As the Clerk is the election administrator for the Township, I am so grateful for your efforts.

November's general mid-term election saw a record number of Watab voters executing their public duty as voters in the Township. Thirteen judges worked the Watab polls with a total of 1,392 registered voters casting their votes and a 68% turnout. In addition, 91 new voters were registered. Those are great numbers, but we can do better.

Election judge training is scheduled and administered by the Benton County auditor's office. The County will

notify voting jurisdictions of this training and, then, Watab Township will post those opportunities. Once training is completed, you are qualified to serve as an election judge in Benton County jurisdictions for a period of two years. There will be no test following the classes (I PROMISE!) Hourly pay for election duties varies among the various jurisdictions, but you will also be paid for the training. If you wish to become designated as a "head judge" additional training is required.

As a side note, Minnesota law requires polling places to have an equal number of persons with party affiliations (Republican or Democrat – Independents are not recognized by the State) for certain tasks such as road-side voting. Right now, we are in need of Democratic affiliated judges. So, all you "DFL-ers," show them what you've got! Seriously, though, all are welcome regardless of your political persuasion.

I look forward to working with you as we provide this opportunity to Township voters.

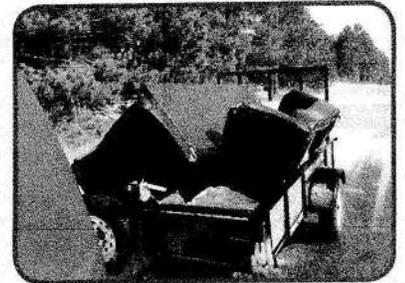
**- Jon L. Hull, Watab Township Clerk**

## Adopt-A-Highway Program as reported by Supervisor Craig Gondeck

The "Adopt-A-Highway" program originated sixteen years ago here in Watab Township. Program participants are all volunteers. These people keep the roads clean in front of their property or around roads they have adopted. Volunteers consist of residents, neighborhood groups, profit, and non-profit organizations. If necessary, Supervisor Gondeck advises these participants about safety equipment, program instructions and guidelines, and availability of garbage bags. Watab Township assists with removal of large items that are beyond the means of volunteers for disposal. Furniture is recycled, tires and appliances are disposed of properly, and bicycles are recycled at Craig's Bike Shop (Craig Gondeck, owner), and donated to needy area families. All Watab Township roads have been adopted. With help from the Sentence-to-Serve crew, the Township is able to keep ditches clean of debris and fallen trees. A pile of mulch is available at Watab Township Hall at no cost to residents.

Anyone interested in the "Adopt-A-Highway" program can call Supervisor Gondeck at #320.492.6814. If you

personally witness any illegal dumping, get the vehicle description and license plate number, and then call the Benton County Sheriff's office or one of your Township supervisors to report the incident.



Appreciative acknowledgements are extended to the SCORE Committee, Mark McNamara of the Benton County Department of Development, and Benton County Commissioners for making this project available to our residents.

In addition, Watab Township Chairman Waytashek, would personally like to thank Supervisor Gondeck for all his extra efforts in the adoption of 100% of Watab Township roads with the "Adopt-A-Highway" program. Way to go, Craig!

## Tax Capacity and Roads

Township	2018 Tax Rates	Township	2018 Tax Rates	City	2018 Tax Rates
Alberta	15.872%	Mayhew Lake	15.604%	Foley	80.949%
Gilmanton	18.136%	Maywood	10.789%	Gilman	24.331%
Glendorado	9.361%	Minden	8.494%	Rice	33.645%
Graham	14.017%	St. George	19.361%	St. Cloud	48.195%
Granite Ledge	11.392%	Sauk Rapids	11.212%	Sartell	41.389%
Langola	24.464%	Watab	16.896%	Sauk Rapids	47.536%
				Royalton	47.536%

The Table above is the Benton County printout of certified tax rates for all townships and cities in Benton County MN. Watab Township falls close to the average of all townships in the county. While most of Watab Township residents saw an increase in property taxes for 2019 we, the board are proposing no change in the levy for 2020. This should help stabilize our property tax rates and allow the township to continue to plan for needed road construction projects over the next few years. The township hall paid its last bond payment in 2019, the town hall is paid off! Going forward those allocated levy dollars (roughly \$22,000) have been moved to the road and bridge fund, for future road projects thus the levy will remain the same.

Watab Township has 36+ miles of paved roads and many are in need of overlays, seal coating, repairs or rebuilds. In 2018, the board created a 10 year road plan plus we standardized and updated our road specifications. The board will continue to monitor and plan for the future needs of our many roads.

- Supervisor Julie Johnson

## Growth in Watab Township

The population from the Minnesota State Demographer's Office estimates it at 3,228 residents and 1,228 households with an average of 2.64 persons per household for 2018. The 2020 census will give us a more accurate number and will be completed for Watab Township by Benton County. Other Benton County units of government have population and household estimates for 2018 shown on the chart below:

Township or City	2018 Population	2018 # of Households
Mayhew Lake Township	856	294
Langola Township	941	357
City of Rice	1,323	488
Minden Township	1,666	660
City of Foley	2,717	1,019
Watab Township	3,228	1,228
City of Sauk Rapids	13,884	5,499

Since 2007, Watab's population has increased by approximately 109 people and seventy-seven households.

As Watab Township grows in population and the value of new construction and building improvements each year, the tax burden is spread over more properties and people. In 2018, the valuation for new building permits was \$6,324,500. This is the amount that residents have stated for the value of their projects to the Building Inspector. When the Township Assessor values the properties, the value amounts are often higher; this is the amount that is used to determine your property tax levy. Forty-seven building permits were issued in 2018, and this includes sixteen new single-family homes. This is very similar to the growth experienced in 2017.

**Sixteen new single-family homes were built in Watab Township in 2018.**

- Clerk Jon L. Hull

## Levy

The Board is proposing a levy of \$755,000, the same as last year. The levy is split as follows: \$55,000 for Fire District 1, \$62,500 for Fire District 2, \$100,000 for the General Fund, \$475,000 for the Road and Bridge Fund, and finally \$62,500 for Debt Service on the current Road Bond. The Town Hall Bond is paid off.

The reduction in Fire District 1's levy reduction is due to a substantial reduction in unpaid medical call that satisfies bonding recommendations for fund balances. The \$5,500 increase for Fire District 2 is to begin bringing the fund balance to meet bonding recommendations. The General Fund is not changing. The proposed increase in the Road and Bridge Fund is to start putting money away for a future major road project, most likely West Lake Road. (More on roads elsewhere in this newsletter.) This fund is not in line with bonding recommendations, and we are not making an attempt to bring this in line at this time. For sake of discussion, \$475,000 would require a fund balance of nearly \$600,000 or an increase of \$125,000. I believe this should be a future goal once the other three funds meet the requirements.

Now for some general knowledge. The levy has to be certified to the County Auditor by September 30. We do have some time to discuss if there are additions, deletions, or significant changes. Once the levy is voted on at the Annual Meeting, the Board can still reduce the levy, but not increase it.

Bonding recommendations are 126% of the obligations of that fund. As an example, if a fund had obligations of \$100,000, the bonding recommendation would be 126%, or \$126,000 in that fund. The bond rating is like a credit score, the better it is the cheaper you can borrow money. While the Board has no intention of borrowing money at this time, we feel it is advantageous to maintain the best rating we can should there be an emerging and unforeseen funding requirement. Supervisor Gondeck brought up the argument that, if we are not going to borrow, it is not necessary to have the extra in the funds. This is true, a valid point, and worth Township discussion at the annual meeting.

A final thought, once a township is levying \$1,000,000 or more, there is a State statutory requirement to have an independent outside audit every year. This will be an additional annual expense somewhere between \$4,000 - \$10,000. We have not hit this level and hope to avoid it for a while longer by staggering the larger road projects.

- Supervisor Todd Waytashek

## Township Contact Information

### Road or Snow Plowing Issues

Supervisors .....(#'s below)

### Building Permits:

Nancy Scott, All Spec Services LLC ..... 320-293-5298

### Land Use Permit:

Todd Waytashek ..... 320-266-4909

### Land Disturbance Inspections:

Craig Gondeck ..... 320-492-6814

### Burning Permits:

Al & Bev Haehnel ..... 320-252-0316

Al & Lori Schlein ..... 320-251-3183

DNR Website:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/fire/questions.html>

### Adopt a Road & Clean Up Day:

Craig Gondeck ..... 320-492-6814

### Town Hall Rental

Jon L. Hull ..... 320.240.2270  
320.252.2239

See Township website for additional information.

### Election Questions

Jon L. Hull ..... 320.240.2270  
320.252.2239

See Township website for additional information.

### Fire Bills

Deborah O'Keefe ..... 320.240.2270  
320.251.4874

### Supervisors:

Craig Gondeck ..... 320.492.6814  
Julie Johnson ..... 320.248.5245  
Todd Waytashek ..... 320-266-4909

**Town Hall:** ..... 320-240-2270

**Township E-mail:** ..... watabts@qwestoffice.net

**Township Website** ..... www.watabtownship.com

**Facebook** ..... Watab Township

**Mailing Address** ..... 660 75th St. NW,  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379



### Like Us on Facebook

Watab Township is on Facebook. We would like you to be a "friend" on Facebook so that we can pass on items of interest and hear your ideas and concerns.

# Watab News

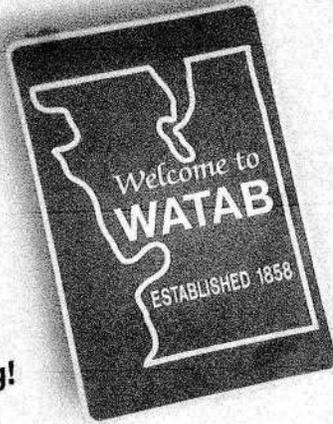
2019 ANNUAL MEETING EDITION

Watab Township  
660 75<sup>th</sup> St. NW,  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
St. Cloud, MN  
Permit No. 2650

## These Stories & More Inside

- Reflections
- Emergency Road Repairs
- New Township Income
- Watab Township is Growing!



Resident of:  
140 75th St NE  
Rice, MN 56367-9676



Newsletter photography - Board members  
Articles submitted by: Town Board Members

Designed & Printed by Palmer Printing, Waite Park, MN

Please recycle this publication. Thank you.



618

