

Greetings!

Julie Johnson, Chair

Hello Residents. 2019 was a busy year in the township. A new website, new emails, two road projects, a new Developer's Agreement and finally a new Subdivision Ordinance was created. The year went very fast and we are again almost at the time of the annual township election. As more and more information changes to electronic format so must Watab Township. This year the color version of the annual newsletter is available online at www.watabtownship.com. You can print or simply view it there. The Township continues to cut costs by streamlining documents to the website for view and downloadable format.

We were all fascinated by the Little Rock Lake drawdown event this August and September. The Little Rock Lake Association has done an incredible job and we will all benefit from their hard work. A great big THANK YOU to their fantastic team of volunteers.

Roads continue to be our primary focus. In the past 2 years we have done projects on Saldana Road (95th Street NW), 85th Street NE, 85th Street NW and Frost Road. Many potholes were filled, plus 4 major patches were completed. 2020 will see a major project done on 105th Street NW. Many Rice and Watab residents travel that road so an alternative route will be advisable for some time this coming summer. Watab also continues to work on a quiet zone for the 105th Street Crossing.

2020 will bring some major work for the board on MS4 Ordinance and Permitting. MPCA is renewing their permit and that will trigger a renewal for Watab Township as well. More information will follow as that progresses.

I do encourage residents to participate by voting and attending the annual township election day. Tuesday, March 10th, 2020. Enjoy 2020!

Watab Township Annual Meeting Notification

The town of Watab will hold its annual election and meeting on Tuesday, March 10th, 2020.

Election poll hours are from 11:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. at which time the voter will elect:

- A. Clerk for a two-year term of office
- B. Supervisor for a three-year term of office
- C. Ballot Question pertaining to appointed versus elected clerk position.

The annual meeting will commence at 8:15 p.m. to conduct all necessary business as prescribed by law. The annual election and meeting will be held in the Watab Town Hall located at 660 NW 75th Street, Sauk Rapids Minnesota. Absentee ballots may be obtained from the Town Clerk at 320-240-2270 or via email to set appointment at watabts@gmail.com.

Email & Electronic News:

Several emails have changed for Watab Township. The township is in the process of sunsetting the old "qwestoffice" email and it will disappear completely over the next 3 months. The clerk's new email is watabts@gmail.com

Also! Sign up for electronic updates from the township. On the lower left page of the newly designed website is a form to enter and submit to receive emails, updates, agendas & minutes, and the latest happenings.

The newsletter this year is in black and white to save taxpayers costs. If you would like a color copy simply go to www.watabtownship.com and print a color copy off at home.

Financials

Deb O'Keefe

Below are the year end 2019 financial statements. For a full detailed report please attend the annual meeting in March or access online at the township website.

Revenue/General Fund:

Beginning Balance	\$149,293.83
Receipts	\$187,377.08
Disbursements	-\$185,633.48
Ending Balance	<u>\$151,037.43</u>

Road/Bridge Fund:

Beginning Balance	\$ (78,055.92)
Receipts	\$521,693.54
Deposit from Sale of Investments	\$148,000.00
Disbursements	\$607,920.82
Ending Balance	<u>\$ (16,283.20)</u>

Fire District 1 (Rice)

Beginning Balance	\$ 41,748.28
Receipts	\$ 75,381.33
Disbursements	\$ 45,490.56
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 71,639.05</u>

Fire District 2 (Sauk Rapids)

Beginning Balance	\$ 26,213.35
Receipts	\$ 57,812.78
Disbursements	\$ 46,717.00
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 37,309.13</u>

Debt Service Fund (Road Project 5th Ave)

Beginning Balance	\$ 60,971.59
Receipts	\$ 63,762.98
Disbursements	\$ 55,142.41
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 69,592.16</u>

Indebtedness Balance - December 31, 2019

\$395,000. Note: The indebtedness list in the 2019 newsletter was incorrect. The year end balance was \$465,000.00 (12/31/2018)

Budget/Audit Report

Julie Johnson

Each January the Watab town board meets to conduct its annual audit of the previous years financial records and to set the preliminary budget for the current year plus make recommendations for the annual meeting to set the Levy for the next fiscal year.

The board met, Tuesday, January 21, 2020 and did a full review this year of every receipt and disbursements as the township has experienced several turnovers in the clerk's position. Both the Clerk's and Treasurer's books balance. One correction was needed in both sets of records and was made the last week of January 2020. The township is in good financial shape and we have made strides to reduce costs and be more efficient with your tax dollars. Below are a few of the miscellaneous receipts received in 2019.

BCA Fine Share	\$2,312.78
Town Aide	\$ 564.00
Market Value Credit (Ag)	<u>\$1,704.00</u>
Total Misc. Receipts	\$4,580.78

Proposed Levy 2021

Watab Township Levy for 2020 is \$755,000.00 Below is the proposed 2021 levy that will be finalized at the annual meeting.

General/Revenue Fund	\$ 80,000.00
Road & Bridge Fund	\$525,000.00
Fire District 1 Fund	\$ 45,000.00
Fire District 2 Fund	\$ 55,000.00
Bond Fund (Road Project)	\$ 60,000.00
<u>Total Proposed Levy</u>	<u>\$765,000.00</u>

1.32% Increase or \$10,000 from 2020 Levy.

Fire Contracts: What do I owe? Julie Johnson

Every year the town officers receive many questions, calls and emails concerning Fire, Rescue and Medical call billings. So, here is how it works. 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 contract 2-year contract with Watab Township. Both contracts cover only the cost to cover the **availability** to have fire, medical and rescue services. It is a service umbrella and helps offset their budgets. Each call from Fire District 1 is billed to the township. Watab in turns bills each individual who needed services for the service call itself. Each citizen is responsible for their call costs. The township covers the first \$75 of a resident call.

For Fire District 2 the city of Sauk Rapids bills Individuals for their calls. Mayo Ambulance is the rescue service provider and they bill calls direct as well. Any unpaid calls are then billed to the township for payment. The 2020 contract is currently under review and the City of Sauk Rapids is asking the township to take over the billings to individuals who have used services. Watab Township sets a levy each year to cover the costs of both the contract and any unpaid calls that the township must pay. The cost total of these bills has varied over the years so we use an average. Watab must keep a positive balance at year end as we are billed monthly by both departments. Any late unpaid calls are assessed to properties owned by call individuals if a property can be located. Any other unpaid bills are sent to collections for payment.

It is vital you as a citizen pay your bill if you use either Fire, Medical or Rescue services.

Most insurance companies will cover the calls, but not all. Watab has great service coverage by both departments and they are well trained individuals.

Reserve the town hall

Steve Wollak

Did you know you can reserve the town hall for most any day for special events?

The town hall has been used a lot this past year. It is a great place for groups of less than 100 people for family occasions such as Holiday, retirement, bridal or baby showers, plus birthday parties. Our new website has a calendar on the main page that shows if the hall has a meeting, event, or is reserved and the times. You can check that your date is available anytime! Click on the township tab at the top of our home page and hit "town hall rental". Everything is there you need.

Submit forms via email & mail your checks to reserve your date.

Town Hall Rental Fees:

\$0 Local youth service groups

\$0 Local government entities

\$0 Watab Home Owner Associations & LRLA

\$75 Residents

\$100 Non-residents

\$75 Non Profits (with proof of 501c status)

\$100 For Profit entities

Other fees and damage deposit and rental forms information are on the township website. Or simply email the clerk and they will be able to help.

Watab Communications

Website: Watab Township hired a local web designer to revamp and update our township website. For a very low cost we have a beautiful new design with most all of the information from the old site. The new website also allows us to update it more easily.

Plus, we created a town hall calendar so that if you want to book the hall for an event you can check the calendar to see if the date is open first. Then simply download the rental forms, fill out and email (or mail) to the clerk's email address and send in your payment. This new system for town hall rental is going well also helps the Supervisors see when we need to open the hall.

Facebook: Do you have great pictures of the township you'd like to share. Like "Watab Township".

Road Reports 2019

Todd Waytashek

2019 saw Watab Township tackling the west end of Frost Road and 85th St NW, west of Hwy 10. Rice Contracting was awarded the contract for both and had the majority of work done on both sites before July. The Board again hired Lloyd Erdmann to handle the site supervision and held meetings each week on site for updates. 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!

Burton Place was set aside temporarily. We received mixed and conflicting thoughts and ideas on how to address the road, and with the extensive right of way (ROW) and drainage challenges we decided to take the time to focus on this road individually and solve the problem, not overlay and kick the ROW can down the road. Watch for future efforts on Burton Place.

Burton Court saw an unplanned patch of a garbage truck sized pothole. Initial plan was to cut the existing pavement and patch this hole. As the contractor was cutting, the existing pavement continued to crumble. We held an emergency meeting on site and decided to not waste money on a patch that may be compromised by the rest of the road. We stopped and filled the hole with gravel until we can address the entire road. Thanks to Rice Contracting for calling attention to this and saving the Township money.

80th Street NW & 115th Street NE also major patch work. Thank you Marson for tackling this! Drivers, please note, this and many other road problems are either caused or made worse by cutting corners short and leaving the paved surface. Please swing wide enough to stay on the pavement, you'll help save money by avoiding unplanned patching.

Striping on 95th, 85th (both sides), and Frost Rd. were held back. We were advised by our engineer that the bids we got were high, and we can get better rates with more mileage. We intend to add 105th to the striping and see if we can work with the County and other local Townships to combine for a volume discount.

2020 will see 105th St. NW widened to 12-foot lanes and 3 foot paved shoulders and repaved full length. We are working with BNSF to try to get the quiet crossing done at the same time. The Board met with BNSF, Federal Rail Agency, and the engineering representative onsite. The major discussion revolved around making the crossing compatible with the agricultural activities on the west side of the tracks. Planning continues for the quiet crossing as it is a lengthy process that the township hopes will be completed in 2020.

Plans in 2021 are for several overlays. The thought is to spend less and add the remaining

Road Report – cont.

levy amount to the certificate of deposit for future road work. West Lake Road will need major work and we want to make sure we can cover contingencies without borrowing. You will see some soil boring going on this year as we gather subsoil data to get a good understanding of the rebuilding challenges.

Ditch mowing is contracted through Chuck Ertl. Snow plowing is contracted through Marson Construction through the end of this season. The contract will again come up for bid over the summer. Rice Contracting 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.

This year we went with using hot patch for filling potholes. Marson was contracted and provided the service. In the spring of 2019, Supervisor Waytashek repaired 4-wheeler damage in the ditch along 115th St NW and re-leveled the Ferry Point cul-de-sac. 4 wheelers, please do not spin your tires in the ditches. The sand we have in this Township does not stand up to any abuse.

Sentence to Serve (STS)

Steve Wollak

STS did a good job this year for Watab. The STS crew is a division of the department of corrections through Benton County Sheriff's Department. Some of the work they have done for Watab this past year consists of tree trimming and crack filling. The county highway department donates their equipment time and the township purchases the sealant. We pay STS \$150/day for their labor. It doesn't matter if there are 3 or more offenders as there is always a Supervisor with them at all times. These people want

to do a good job because if they don't their supervisor will not ask for them the next day. In August of 2019, Darin, went out on medical leave so work stopped for some time. Since then, he has recovered and is back to work. We have a lot of crack filling that needs to get done and hopefully we can it all completed in the next year.

National Night Out

Julie Johnson

August 6, 2019 was a fabulous evening in the township. For the first time Watab hosted a National Night Out site with an ice cream social, yard games and activities. Over 100 residents and children came and enjoyed a beautiful summer evening at the town hall. Both the Sauk Rapids and Rice Fire Departments sent engines and fire fighters to the delight of our younger residents. The Township hopes to continue this event and grow in size. Getting to know your neighbors is a wonderful community event. Enjoy the pictures below. THANK YOU to the Rice & Sauk Rapids Fire Department, Sheriff Troy Heck & ISD 47 Superintendent Aaron Sinclair for the great turnout!



Watab/Langola Clean Up Day September 14, 2019

Julie Johnson

The annual township cleanup day was held at the south end of Pines Edge Grocery Store lot. This year we used USPS to bulk mail the flyers to many homes and the result was overwhelming! We collected close to double what we have done in previous years. To say that we learned a **LOT** would be an understatement.

There are many items we will not accept going forward (shingles, construction debris) being the two major items. It just takes too long to process. This event is designed to clean up broken items, small items, tires, metal, appliances and other items that won't fit in your garbage. We simply aren't set up for construction debris. That should be a dumpster at your construction site. Due to the site conditions (it rained 3 inches that week) it was very wet and hard to navigate.

The township does desire to continue this fabulous project. Benton County Score Grant pays for 75% of the township cost. Watab Township pays 25% of the total cost. Langola Township also paid \$1,000 to Watab Township in 2019 to help offset the costs. It all helps to keep our ditches and roads clean and free of debris. Watab also wants to thank the Little Rock Lake Association for their fantastic volunteers on cleanup day. They worked long and hard in difficult conditions and we couldn't have done it without them. Look for news on Clean Up Day 2020 on the township website.

Clean up day 2020 is tentatively scheduled for

Saturday, September 19th, 2020

7am – 12noon



Little Rock Lake Association Volunteers.



The very long line up.



Rice Food Shelf donations. THANK YOU!

Little Rock Lake Drawdown

A few images of what caught our attention this summer in the township. Congratulations to the Little Rock Lake Association for their tremendous work on this project. We are excited to see the results this summer!



Views from the lake during the drawdown and tires collected.

Emergency Management

Todd Waytashek

The past spring saw an ice buildup up-river and the threat of flooding along the Mississippi and Little Rock Lake. Benton County Emergency Management, Langola and Watab Townships developed a plan and passed information tracking the ice and river levels.

As the Emergency Management Coordinator for Watab, I handled checking levels twice a day at Gordon Bridge and the DNR landing across from the King's Inn. When the ice broke north of Rice, I began checking and reporting constantly until the water started back down. I also reported to Benton County and Langola, and posted the same info on our website. Thankfully we were spared any serious flooding, suffering only some water standing on roads around the lake.

Additionally, Benton County was gifted 28,000 sandbags from the DNR. They immediately turned around and gifted them to both Langola and Watab. I delivered the 3 pallets to Rice Hardware, who stepped forward and handled distribution for both Townships on a first come first serve with a 1,000 bag limit per household. Thank you Wippler Hardware!

This year, with the soil saturated and large amounts of snow north of us, the State is again calling for the possibility of flooding this coming spring. Benton County, Langola, and Watab will meet in February to coordinate and adjust the plan as needed. I will again track and report. Please take a look at your situation and plan ahead. If you will need help sandbagging, arrange it. If you need sandbags, buy them. Last year there were no more available sandbags in the State system, and their recommendation was to order them online.

Emergency Management – cont.

Other emergencies, we have tornado warning sirens up in our Township. Please check to see if you can hear them; they are tested the first Wednesday each month. Benton County also put one up this year at Benton Beach, that should help the north and east ends of the township. There are a few of us who are trained SkyWarn observers, don't be surprised to see us parked on high vantage points when bad weather approaches.

Watab Township Contact Info.

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

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