

Greetings!

Julie Johnson, Chair

Another year has come and gone and suddenly it's 2023. This is the end of my fifth year on the Board and I can honestly say I have learned so much being a Board Member about how local government works and functions.

There are challenges for sure but there is a great feeling of accomplishment when you've worked through issues and concerns to come to a resolution that works for the parties involved.

The current board has worked hard on completing several large projects this last year with many challenges. Our roads have been and continue to be our main focus. We have modernized our system and updated many older procedures to work in the current world. There are still many rules we must follow and that poses challenges to properly share information.

Sometimes you can call one Supervisor only to learn that you actually need to contact a different one. We try to post this under duties on the website to save some time as each Supervisor can only share information through the Clerk due to open meeting law. Our meeting minutes are always on the website after they are approved.

We also hire firms and people who are professionals in their work area. There are many duties that need to be done and if it wasn't for local sources, a lot less would get done.

As always, feel free to contact any of your five local government elected officials and staff with your concerns. If we don't know the answer, we will direct you to the correct person or try to find out for you.

Spring is on the way, and I can't wait to get out and about and enjoy warmer weather.

Watab Township Annual Meeting Notification

The Town of Watab will hold its annual election and meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

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

- A. Supervisor for a 3-year term of office

The Annual Meeting will commence at approximately 8:15 pm to conduct all necessary business as prescribed by law. The 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.

REMEMBER TO VOTE MARCH 14!

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.

Financials

Julie Johnson

Below are the 2022 year-end financial statements. For a full detailed report, please attend the Annual Meeting in March or contact the Clerk for an electronic copy.

Revenue/General Fund:

Beginning Balance	\$140,917.30
Receipts	229,458.93
Disbursements	-236,731.30
Ending Balance	<u>\$133,644.92</u>

Road/Bridge Fund:

Beginning Balance	\$170,721.04
Receipts	621,060.87
Sale of Investment	960,000.00
Disbursements	1,247,527.27
Purchase of Investment	1302.36
Transfer to Governmental Fund	<u>287,393.53</u>
Ending Balance	<u>\$215,558.75</u>

Fire District 1 (Rice)

Beginning Balance	\$123,203.61
Receipts	40,568.20
Disbursements	<u>55,446.46</u>
Ending Balance	<u>\$108,325.35</u>

Fire District 2 (Sauk Rapids)

Beginning Balance	\$54,723.09
Receipts	65,224.09
Disbursements	<u>58,478.00</u>
Ending Balance	<u>\$61,469.18</u>

Debt Service Fund (Road Project 5th Ave)

Beginning Balance	\$75,521.19
Receipts	61,216.60
Disbursements	<u>57,152.50</u>
Ending Balance	<u>\$79,585.29</u>

Indebtedness Balance - December 31, 2022
\$295,000. Note: Bond Matures in 2027

12/31/2022

2022 Road Bond Indebtedness	\$3,395,000.00
Road & Bridge Savings Account	302,142.97
Townhall Savings Account	3,845.54
ARPA Funds	271,945.17

Salaries:

Supervisor Johnson	\$ 4,930.00
Supervisor Wollak	\$ 4,075.00
Supervisor Little	\$ 3,225.00
Clerk Sauer	\$ 22,125.00
Treasurer	\$ 13,062.50

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 31, 2022, and conducted a review of selected records for 2022. Both the Clerk's and Treasurer's books balanced. The Township is in excellent financial shape, and we have made strides to reduce costs and be more efficient with your tax dollars. Below is some of the miscellaneous receipts received in 2022.

BCA Fine Shares	\$2,647.03
Ag Market Value Credit	\$3,454.32
Gravel Tax	\$2,967.34

In 2023, the financials of Watab Township will be audited again due to being over the spending limit set by the state of Minnesota.

Proposed Levy 2024

Watab Township Levy for 2023 is \$835,000.

Below is the proposed 2024 levy that will be finalized at the Annual Meeting:

General/Revenue Fund	\$ 80,000.00
Road & Bridge Fund	370,000.00
Fire District 1 Fund	10,000.00
Fire District 2 Fund	55,000.00
Bond Fund (5 th Ave Project)	60,000.00
2021 Road Recon. Bond	\$260,000.00

Total Proposed Levy **\$835,000.00**

The Board is proposing a \$35,000 increase to the Road and Bridge budget. This equates to a 3.73% increase from the 2022 Levy. Ideally, a township as large as ours with over 40 miles of roads would have a budget of \$750,000 just for roads. With the road and bridge bond in place and the first payments now due, the Board has reallocated \$260,000 from the Road and Bridge fund to the bond payments. When the 5th Avenue Bond is paid off in 3 years the Board has determined that those levy amounts will be moved to road and bridge to keep increasing the value to the desired amount of \$750,000. Roads last year cost \$1,000,000 per mile. The Watab Board spent over \$1,200,000 in road construction between three roads including the special assessment road project in Lake Andrew Development.

The full budget and levy can be found on the Township website.

Fire Contracts

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 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 person utilizing either Sauk Rapids or the Rice Fire Department is responsible for the cost of their call.**

Fire District 1 (Rice Fire Dept). Each call from Fire District 1 is billed to the Township who in turn bills the individual who needed services. A big change is the reduction in the cost of cancelled calls. These charges have been reduced from \$350 to \$150. Cancelled calls happen; however, our fire department members still leave work to get outfitted and the trucks are moving so there still is a cost, even though they may not come to your home. Medical calls also were reduced from \$350 per hour to **\$150 per half hour**. Many medical calls are short-term calls and have a tendency to be lift assists. This is a great savings to our residents!

For Fire District 2 (Sauk Rapids). The new contract is \$49,000. All Sauk Rapids Fire Department calls (Fire District 2) will be billed by Watab Township to the individuals/businesses receiving services. Medical calls are billed direct from Mayo Ambulance. Cancelled calls and false alarms are billed at a rate of \$415.00 each to the township. These are not currently billed to the individuals.

While Watab Township does not bill cancelled calls/false alarms, there is still a cost to the Township. Please make sure to have your fire alarms serviced and good working order every year to reduce these calls.

If you have any questions on your billings, please contact the Township Clerk.

MS4 Annual Report

Julie Johnson

Proper composting or removal of leaves, grass, and yard debris is extremely important to our local waterways. Never rake debris, leaves, or grass into Little Rock Lake, the Harris Channel or the Mississippi River. As the materials break down into nutrients, they reduce oxygen and cause algae blooms which damage the water eco system. Compost them or take them up to the Rice Compost Site.

Watab also completed their annual report to the MPCA and it was accepted as complete and on time.

One area of concern for the board is the continual problem of ditch dumping. Please keep an eye out for people committing these violations and call any Board supervisor or the sheriff to report. The sheriff can fine these people and make them pay for the cleanup. All of these dumps are illegal and harm the environment in addition to costing the Township dollars to clean up. Please dispose properly of any items you no longer need. Utilize the multiple clean up days available in the area or take items to the local haulers for disposal.

A second problem is used and abandoned vehicles. This includes storing vehicles that you “may” want to use again. Vehicles leak oil, gas, and hydraulic fluids that work their way into our waterways. Watab continuously sends letters to

residents to remove these vehicles, sell them, an/or recycle them. They are an eye sore to your neighbors and a hazard to our environment. All vehicles kept outdoors must have current tabs or be removed.

We all want clean waters and soils for ourselves and our children. There are proper disposal places for everything. Let’s work together to strive for a cleaner Township.

Road Reports 2022

Steve Wollak

Ditch mowing takes place twice a year. Chuck Ertl is hired for all township mowing. He complies with all DNR requirements.

Snow plowing has been contracted with Marson Contractors for the past two seasons. We have had much positive feedback from residents and are very happy with their work.

Building Construction 2022

Nancy Scott, Building Inspector

2022 Total Permits:	108
Total Single-Family Homes:	12
Total Manufactured Homes:	0
2022 Total Building Permit Valuation:	\$8,987,400.00

Road Construction 2022

Sucker Creek Road, Sharon Place, & Indian Road

In 2022 Watab Township reclaimed three roads. Sucker Creek Road was a natural choice as the bridge replacement was being planned by Benton County. With state bridge dollars accessed by Benton County the cost to the township for the new bridge was only \$20,000. A

significant savings! Watab put those saved dollars to use by reclaiming Sharon Place just off Sucker Creek Road at the same time. This road was in significant disrepair and the lowest rated road in the township. Indian Road was close by and the exit off the highway to the golf course was in dire need of repairs as well. Three aging roads made new again for a lot of residents.

Lake Andrew Development Road Completion

Kevin Kruger

Last summer we completed a street reconstruction project for the Lake Andrew Development. This project brought the roadways up to Township standards which allows the Township access to plow and maintain the roads in the development.

The project included replacing the bituminous pavement, spot curb and gutter, and storm sewer improvements. The project was completed by Minnesota Paving and Materials on time and on budget. The project looks great and as a success!

BEFORE



AFTER



Reserve the Town Hall

Kathy Sauer

The Town Hall continues to be a popular venue for residents and non-residents to hold their gatherings and celebrations. We have hosted all sorts of events: baby and bridal showers, family reunions, graduation and birthday parties, memorial services, family Christmas parties, and even a wedding!

Last year we took in \$2,800.00 in proceeds from rentals. These funds are deposited in a savings account dedicated for future expenses related to the maintenance and improvement of the buildings and grounds of the Hall.

Thanks to these funds and funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), we completed several large projects in 2022, including the installation of a new pressure tank and boiler. We also replaced carpeting, repainted the interior, upgraded our security system, and purchased fire-proof cabinets for our permanent files. In addition, we were able to clean up the landscaping around the exterior of the building.

Anyone interested in renting the Town Hall can contact us at 320-240-2270 or watabts@gmail.com for information and availability. Cost to residents is only \$75 and \$100 for non-residents. Application materials are available on the Watab website.

Watab/Langola Clean Up Day

September 19, 2022

Bill Little

The Watab/Langola Township Clean-up Day was once again a successful event with 143 township residents from Watab and Langola townships taking advantage of the opportunity to clean up their properties.

A big thank you to Little Rock Lake Association for being there to collect tires, appliances, electronics, etc. throughout the day. Residents paid \$644 in fees and donated \$80 to the Rice Area Food Shelf.

Contact Information

Watab Township Hall
660 75th Street NW
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
320-240-2270

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

Supervisors:
Julie Johnson johnson4watab@gmail.com
Steve Wollak swollakwatab@gmail.com

Watab Township Annual Meeting

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Vote 12 noon – 8pm

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

Watab Town Hall

