

Greetings!

Jesse Arndt, Chair

As we step into a new year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the challenges we've faced and the progress we've made in our Township. While we have much to be proud of, there are also some ongoing concerns that require our attention and cooperation as a community.

As you will read in the following articles, one of the biggest issues we continue to face is illegal ditch dumping. We must all work together to address this unsightly and costly problem.

We have also made significant progress in our road construction projects. Due to timely planning by the Board, we were able to procure a \$3.9 million bond in 2021 at a low rate of 1.9% interest and invested the unused portion while road construction was pending at a much higher rate of interest, earning in excess of \$75,000.

I am extremely optimistic about the future of our Township. We live in a beautiful area that provides us with the convenience of being close to city amenities as well as having some room in which to stretch out and enjoy a rural lifestyle. Your continued involvement and support make all the difference and together we can continue to keep our community safe, clean, and thriving while striving to make it even better. Thank you for your cooperation and, as always, the Board is here to listen to your concerns and ideas.

Watab Township Annual Meeting Notification

The Town of Watab will hold its Annual Election and Meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Election poll hours are from 12:00 pm 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 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

Treasurer's Report

Below are the 2024 year-end financial balances. 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	\$115,137.42
Receipts & Investments	\$633,280.44
Disbursements & Investments	- \$707,578.21
Ending Balance	\$40,839.65

Road/Bridge Fund:

Beginning Balance	\$517,014.07
Receipts	\$434,548.26
Sale of Investments Deposited	\$2,074,658.00
Transfer from Bond	\$1,820,520.13
Disbursements	\$2,559,212.92
Purchase of Investment	\$2,267,565.20
Ending Balance	\$190,687.86

Fire District 1 (Rice)

Beginning Balance	\$96,540.87
Receipts	15,951.83
Disbursements	<u>65,315.81</u>
Ending Balance	\$47,176.89

Fire District 2 (Sauk Rapids)

Beginning Balance	\$66,260.24
Receipts	64,504.70
Disbursements	<u>63,927.00</u>
Ending Balance	\$66,837.94

Debt Service Fund (Road Project 5th Ave)

Beginning Balance	\$78,788.30
Receipts	59,675.41
Disbursements	<u>59,670.84</u>
Ending Balance	\$78,792.87

ARPA Fund

Balance Year End	\$0.00
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Savings & Investments:

Falcon Bank Road & Bridge	\$67,130.27
Intrafi (Falcon Bank)	\$934,060.11
Ehlers Investments (Bond)	\$0.00
Town Hall Savings	\$19,294.88

INDEBTEDNESS

2013A Bond (5th Ave NE)	
December 31, 2024	\$135,000.00

2021 Road Bond	
December 31, 2024	\$3,010,000.00

2022A Bond: Lake Andrew Special Assessment	
December 31, 2024	\$880,000.00

Salaries:

Supervisor Arndt	\$ 2,781.25
Supervisor Johnson	\$ 3,280.00
Supervisor Wollak	\$ 3,368.75
Clerk Sauer	\$23,723.40
Treasurer Shearer	\$17,175.40

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 28, 2025, and conducted a full review of selected records for 2024. Both the Clerk's and Treasurer's books balanced. The Township has completed the use of the bond funds with the completion of this year's road projects. Going forward, it will be funds availability and cost projections that determine the timeline of the next road project. Below are some of the miscellaneous receipts received in 2024.

BCA Fine Shares	\$ 2,573.00
Ag Market Value Credit	\$ 524.00
Gravel Tax	\$ 3,379.45

In 2024, the board approved hiring the accounting firm Conway, Deuth, & Schmiesing to have a full audit of the 2023 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 2026

The Watab Township Levy for 2025 was \$865,000.

Below is the proposed 2026 levy that will be finalized at the Annual Meeting.

General/Revenue Fund	\$80,000.00
Road & Bridge Fund	450,000.00
Fire District 1 Fund	25,000.00
Fire District 2 Fund	50,000.00
Bond Fund (Road Project)	40,000.00
2021 Road Reconst. Bond	<u>260,000.00</u>
Total Proposed Levy	<u>\$910,000.00</u>

An overall increase of 5.20%.

Fire Calls: Why Do I Get a Bill?

Kathy Sauer

Watab Township contracts with both the Rice Fire Department and the Sauk Rapids Fire Department. The dividing line for response is 95th Avenue (Saldana Road); the Rice Fire Department covers emergency calls north of 95th Avenue and the Sauk Rapids Fire Department covers calls south of 95th Avenue.

In addition to the annual contract with both fire departments, the Township is billed for each call the fire department responds to. We then send an invoice to the individual who received the emergency services. Residents receive a 25% discount if they pay in a timely manner. If you receive an invoice, be sure to check with your insurance—many times these charges are covered.

You may wonder why you are being billed—since you pay taxes. By making this a user fee, we can keep taxes down.

Thank you to the fire fighters and first responders who selflessly serve us! We are so fortunate to be served by two excellent fire departments.

Dumping Issues

Jesse Arndt

The cleanliness of our Township is a direct reflection of who we are as a community. Every well-maintained street, park, and natural area speaks to our pride in our home. Unfortunately, our ditches are becoming dumping grounds for garbage. This not only harms the environment but also places an unnecessary financial burden on all of us.

When people dump in our ditches, it costs all of us to clean up. Trash items can disrupt drainage systems and create potential environmental issues that can be expensive to remedy. Retrieving trash from ditches also costs taxpayers; supervisors and contracted services are paid directly by tax dollars paid by Watab residents.

Please dispose of trash in an ethical manner. If you have items that are difficult to get rid of, such as electronics or tires, consider holding on to them until a community clean-up event or plan to take these items to a proper refuse facility.

If you notice someone illegally dumping waste in our ditches, please report it to the Township and/or the Benton County Sheriff's Office. Watab Township is committed to identifying those who are dumping and will seek maximum penalties for those who do.





Building Construction 2024

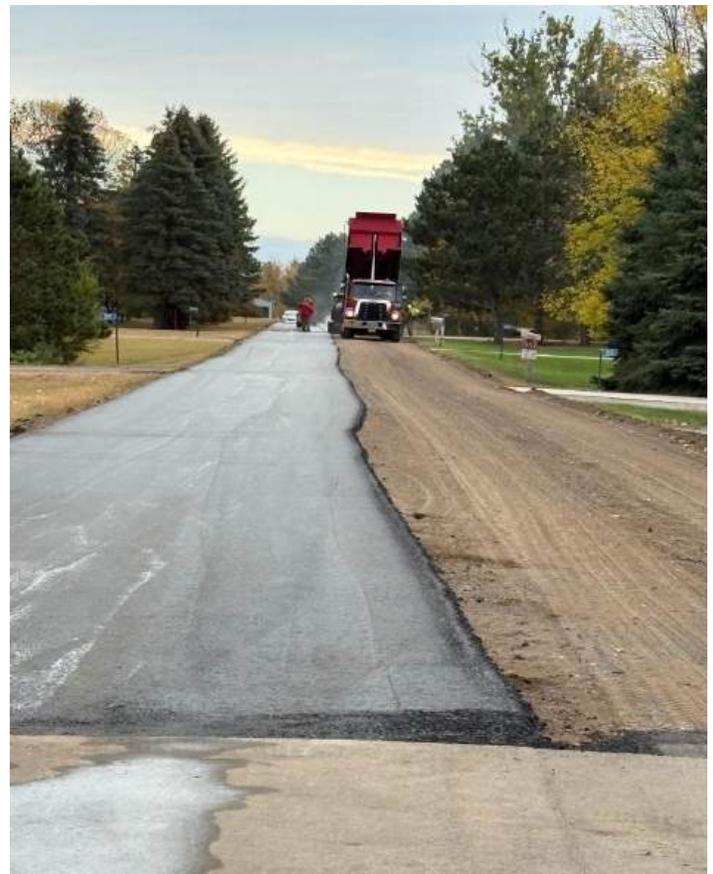
Nancy Scott, Building Inspector

2024 Total Permits:	78
Total Single-Family Homes:	8
Total Manufactured Homes:	0

2024 Total Building Permit Valuation: \$5,341,000.00

Road Construction 2024

This year we were able to complete three major road construction projects: Lakewood Shores, Shoestring Loop, and Ferry Point.



Future Road Construction Projects

Jesse Arndt

In 2021, the Township procured a \$3.9 million bond allowing us to complete much-needed road improvements. However, we have now exhausted those funds, meaning that any future road work will have to be funded directly from the Township budget. This will certainly slow down the pace of projects as we will need to prioritize repairs based on available funding. We appreciate your patience as we plan for future projects.

Reserve the Town Hall

Kathy Sauer

Did you know that you can rent the Town Hall for your events? The cost for Township residents is only \$75 per day; non-residents is \$100 per day.

Forms and other information about fees and damage deposits are on the Township website. If you have further questions, please contact the Clerk at watabts@gmail.com or 320-240-2270.

MS4 Annual Report

Julie Johnson

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.

If you are building in Watab Township and live in one of the three developments: Oak Hill, Lake Andrew, or Pirates Cove, or are building along any of the three waterways in the Township: Mississippi River, Harris Channel, or Little Rock Lake, you will need a Construction Stormwater Permit (or MS4 permit).

Also, if your project is over 1 acre in size, you will need a Township permit and a state permit available at this website:

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

2024 Statistics from MS4 Permits:

There were 3 construction projects completed in Watab Twp this year for MS4 Inspections.

Lakewood Shores and Ferry Point Place were reconstructed. Shoestring Loop and 95th were reconstructed. Benton County Park added more trails and built a picnic shelter at Bend in the River Park.

The last 2 projects need to achieve final stabilization requirements in Spring 2025.

No reports of illicit discharge.

Recap of MPCA Audit:

A routine audit was performed in April 2024 by MPCA of the township MS4 requirements. A few minor issues were addressed, and corrective actions were completed by Watab Township. There were no fines levied, and no further action taken by the MPCA.

Watab/Langola Clean Up Day

October 5, 2024

Jesse Arndt

On Saturday, October 5, 2024, Watab Township hosted its annual Clean-up Day from 7:00 am to 11:00 am, providing residents with an opportunity to dispose of unwanted household items. The event was designed to assist residents in decluttering their properties and preventing junk from accumulating in roads ditches and green spaces.

During the event, three dump trucks and a 40-yard recycling container were filled with items no longer in use. Most items were accepted free of charge, while others required a small fee for disposal. The event was open to residents of Watab and Langola Township as well as those from the City of Rice.

Benton County provided a Score Grant to cover a part of the expenses. The success of Clean-up Day was made possible through the support of West Central Sanitation and Opatz Rolloffs. A special thank you to the volunteers from Little Rock Lake Association and Langola Township who provided a financial contribution.

Thank You Steve!

A great big thanks to Steve Wollak as he finishes his second term on the Township Board. Steve is retiring from public service. He has been a great help in many ways to the board throughout his 6 years as an elected official. The Board wishes him the very best!

Email & 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.

For more information about Watab Township's events and services, residents are encouraged to visit the official website at www.watabtownship.com

Like us on Facebook.

Watab Township Annual Meeting

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 8:15 pm

Vote 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Watab Township Contact Information

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

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

Supervisors:

Julie Johnson johnson4watab@gmail.com
Jesse Arndt jarndtwatab@gmail.com
Steve Wollak swollakwatab@gmail.com
Pending Election – New Supervisor