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Sept  
2022



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

# *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*

## *Silver Creek Cemetery*

Welcome to the *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*. If you have ideas or would like to contribute a story, please reach out to Alison Oftedahl, Clerk at [silvercreek@frontiernet.net](mailto:silvercreek@frontiernet.net) or 834-5255.



**Investing in new shade and color** - Two Silver Maples, four Red Maples and two Crabapple trees have been planted to replace those that died from Spruce Bud Worm. A new flagpole display featuring rocks and plantings is in progress.

## *August Primary Election*

### **211 Voters Turn Out Despite Detours**

The August 9<sup>th</sup> statewide Primary Election was held in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road. 211 voters showed up for in-person live voting. 107 ballots cast were for Democratic Party races and 102 ballots cast were for Republican races and 2 for other parties. The Election ran smoothly with no complaints other than some traffic holdups.

## *Reconvened Annual Meeting*

### **No Changes to 2023 Levy Approved in March**

On August 16, Supervisors reconvened the Annual Meeting for final consideration of the budget and levy passed by the attendees of the Annual Meeting in March. Despite high inflation, the Board voted to hold the 2023 levy to the \$400,000 approved in March and down \$10,000 from this current year's levy. What is a levy? It is the amount to be "raised" from Silver Creek property owners via property taxes.

# Citizen Election Workers

## Watchdog the Election

In the past few years, it has been easy for people to question and criticize the Election process, but not many are willing to be part of the solution. Your Silver Creek Election Judges take time out of their jobs and personal lives to ensure a free and fair process for all of us.

Judges must attend training every year even if they have been judging for decades. Our judges are residents of our Township – your friends, family, and neighbors. The group of judges include an equal number of Democrats and Republicans. This is required by law and ensures that one party cannot do something illegal. Election Judges not only assist each voter, but they are also the watchdogs for each party to assure the legitimacy of election results.

## Counting the Vote

Silver Creek Judges from both parties open all doors of the ballot box at the beginning of the day to ensure that it is empty. Again, judges from both parties start the counter and print the morning total, verifying it is zero. Packets of ballots are counted, and then each blank ballot is counted, inspected, and initialized by two judges.

Minnesota's vote scanning machines are not connected to the internet. They scan the ballot and read the location of the dots. They are programmed by the County and tested in a session that is open to anyone who wishes to observe it.

The paper ballots marked by voters are retained and can be manually re-counted should there be questions.

After the Election, the machine provides the number of votes for each candidate, but it is the Election Judges who ensure the total matches the number of signatures in the roster, and ballot receipts. Each and every ballot is accounted for and returned to the County.

On Election night, the public is allowed to come and watch the returns process after polls close at 8 p.m.

## Road Construction Challenged Some Voters

The Clerk's Office received several calls related to road construction on Election Day. Highway 61 was restricted to one lane that day, causing long lines. In addition, a few people didn't realize that Highway 3 was closed and ended up in Two Harbors needing to call for detour directions.

## New Omni Ballot Assistive Voting Machines

Lake County rolled out new assistive voting machines that can help voters with disabilities in a variety of ways such as making selection by Braille or touching the screen to fill in the ballot. The new machines weigh much less than the old AutoMark ones and are easier to set up at the polling place.

# Stewart River Project Update

## Federal and State Funding Not Promising This Year

The project to bring municipal wastewater treatment to the Stewart River area received disappointing news. The offices of both Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Tina Smith have informed Silver Creek that they removed the Stewart River Project from the list of projects eligible for congressionally directed spending. This means there is no chance this year of federal funding. And, as the Minnesota State Legislature did not pass a Bonding bill, there appears to be little to no chance of state funding this year either.

# Thank You, Election Judges

## Your Work Matters!

We could not hold in-person Elections without you, nor could we have such faith in our process. For the August 9<sup>th</sup> primary, **thank you to Phil Sogge, Michelle Backes-Fogelberg, John Bathke, Shele Hull, Deb Cooter, and Julia Jaeger!** Clerks Oftedahl and Anderson set up the Election and served as emergency backups.

# Absentee Voting

## Improved Procedures

Absentee votes for general elections are processed by Lake County. Local citizen Election Judges from both parties have been added to the Lake County process to witness and watchdog the loading of ballots into counters. Julia Jaeger and John Bathke from our Township served in this role for the August Primary Election absentee voting period. Witness signatures are again required along with the voter signatures on absentee ballot envelopes. This is an old requirement that was waived two years ago due to COVID concerns.



# Vote in November

## Fall Midterm Election is November 8, 2022

Mark your calendar to vote November 8 at 1924 Town Road between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. View the sample ballot the week before the Election at [www.ttosc.org](http://www.ttosc.org) to learn about offices and candidates up for consideration.

# Road Report

## Controlling Costs as Inflation Soars

To manage the budget, two key decisions were made. The first decision was to delay the Town's gravel crushing purchase typically made every two years. Conservative usage of gravel made this possible and saved \$20,000 this year. The second decision was to limit the application of chloride to roads and rely more on nature's dust control. The liquid chloride that helps hold the gravel fines on the roads is costly. Last year \$16,000 was spent on four loads of chloride, whereas this summer only two loads were purchased, cutting costs in half.

## Road Grader

### Repair Underway

The grader developed a problem in late August that appears to be minor as of press time. However, if your township road is riding like a bumpy washboard, then the machine is likely still awaiting parts. We appreciate your patience!



## Tandem Axle Truck

### Delivering in September

The new tandem axle dump and plow truck ordered in April of 2021 has arrived in Minnesota and is currently having the dump box and other options installed. Supervisors made the down payment to lock in the low 2.76% interest rate when it arrived in July. That rate has almost doubled since then.

## Roadside Mowing

### 3 Blade 72" Brush Hog

After several years of problems with the Eterra brush cutter, a Brush Hog mower was purchased with American Rescue Plan funds. The new mower is front mounted instead of side; and is easier on the skid steer because it requires less power.

## Disposition of 2012 Dodge

### \$15,500 Collected

In the last newsletter we reported purchase of a new 2021 Dodge pickup and plow using American Rescue Plan Funds. The old Dodge was advertised for sale in the Northshore Journal for sealed bids. Perhaps due to the wear and tear on the truck, only one disappointingly low bid was received. The Board rejected it, determined to get at least blue-book value. Supervisor Jaeger located a truck wholesaler in the Cities who offered more than twice the amount of the sealed bid to complete the project.

## Town Gravel Pit

### Application in Progress

The Town has applied for a permit to remove sand and pit run from land owned by the Township that lies off the Alger Spur near the Gooseberry River. If approved this could reduce the costs of hauling materials from other pits farther from the garage and provide ready material in case of emergencies such as floods. Approval from Lake County has not yet been received. The next steps include submitting a Run-Off and Restoration Plan and appearing before the Lake County Planning and Zoning Board for public hearing.

## Castle Danger Wastewater News

### Fewer New Connections than Expected

One new residential connection has been made this summer. Three other expected residential connection projects were not ready for connection this summer due to construction being cancelled or delayed.

### Sludge Survey of Wastewater Treatment Ponds by Drone Boat

A sonar survey conducted by a drone boat was completed on the wastewater treatment ponds to measure the depth of sludge on the bottom. The level and content of sludge was measured to determine whether any management changes need to be made. While there is some sludge, the application of microbial treatment called "Superbugs" has been very effective in holding the levels down. This is good news, as no expensive dredging is needed at this point.

# Around Town



## Road Construction Update

Lake County's bridge repair on Highway 3 (shown left) is expected to be completed around Labor Day. And MN DOT will be shifting Highway 61 traffic onto the new Stewart River bridge around mid-September.

## Hall Rentals

The Historic Hall and Pavilion were rented for graduation parties, a memorial, a reunion, a wedding, a birthday party, and three months of weekly Yoga as well as the Ukulele Festival. Rental fees totaled \$2,350 this year to date. These funds offset the cost of utilities and maintenance for the buildings.

## Clerk's Corner

A "slightly used" new printer/copier was purchased for the Clerk's Office to replace the failing ten-year-old model whose toner costs were exorbitant. The new machine is especially useful in scanning double-sided documents.

## Town Aid Cut

Town Aid allocated to Silver Creek for 2023 is \$4,910 down from \$8,853 this year. This is due to reductions in the amount of agricultural land in the Township.

Thank you to Dutton Foster for editing this newsletter.

# SILVER CREEK SOURCE