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Dec
2022



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

Finally...New Truck!

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 or 834-5255.



Election Results

Silver Creek Precinct

- 575 Votes cast at Town Garage
- 131 Votes cast Absentee
- 24 New Registrations at Town Garage

Silver Creek Results

Sum of live and absentee votes.

- US Representative: Jen Schultz over Pete Stauber by 39 votes.
- State Senator: Grant Hauschild over Andrea Zupancich by 75 votes.
- State Representative: Rob Ecklund over Roger Skraba by 98 votes.
- Governor: Tim Walz and Peggy Flanagan over Scott Jensen and Matt Birk by 96 votes.

Thank you to our Election Judges: Phil Sogge, Mary Londborg, Debbie Cooter, Shele Hull, John Bathke and Michelle Backes-Fogelberg.

New Truck Delivered

Belly Blade, Plow and Dump Box

The International tandem axle truck ordered in spring of 2021 arrived in October 2022. It will provide more efficiency and security in clearing roads. It has an underbody "belly" blade handy for scraping ice, whereas the old one does not, and the old truck is a 2007 model that occasionally needs repair. After the first plow run in the new truck, Operations Manager Reineccius described it as "fantastic" to drive.

Midterm Election Held in Garage

No Problems Despite Challenger sent by DFL

Major political parties can appoint one challenger who may remain in the polling place according to the Judge Guide. It explains that challengers are not "poll watchers", but that they can challenge a voter's eligibility based on personal knowledge. The Challenger sent to Silver Creek by the Democratic Party did not make any challenges to any voters. Unlike the 2020 Election where the COVID masks made it hard for people to recognize each other, this election was filled with the sound of neighbor and friend reunions.



Snow Plowing Policy

The Town now has two tandem axle plow trucks as well as a pickup equipped with a plow; however, staffing can sometimes be more challenging due to vacation or illnesses. An on-call backup employee is being added to try to ensure that two drivers are available for snow events and enable three drivers to work in case of a major disaster type snowfall.

Information below is taken from the approved *Silver Creek Snowplow Policy*.

WHEN do we plow?

The Town Operations and Facility Manager will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

snow accumulation of three inches or more,
drifting of snow that causes problems for travel,
icy conditions which seriously affect travel,
time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets
Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment and therefore the Township does not assure a completely bare road.

WHERE do we plow?

Only Township roads are plowed by Silver Creek. The Operations Manager at his discretion may alter the order in which roads are plowed but will generally plow in the order shown at the right.

NOTE: Lake County provides plowing for Beaver Dam and Marble Lake Roads.

One plow will remove snow from the following roads in generally the following order:

1. Alder Road
2. Trillium Road
3. Grimmer Road
4. Press Camp Road
5. Cedar Road
6. Burlington Road
7. Flood Bay Road
8. Aspen Road
9. Loop Road
10. Silver Creek Road
11. Cliff Point Road
12. Big Point Road
13. Valhalla Road

The other plow will remove snow from the following roads generally in the following order:

1. Town Road
2. West Castle Danger Road
3. Landfill Road
4. East Castle Danger Road
5. Clark Road
6. Dogwood Road
7. Balsam Road
8. East Alger Grade
9. Red Maple Lane
10. First 25 ft of 32A (a minimum maintenance road)

Wastewater Treatment Updates

Castle Danger Wastewater System

The system performed well this year especially considering that one of the lift stations ran without one of its pumps all summer. Our vendor repaired the pump but was waiting for pipe that wasn't delivered for months. It then arrived but couldn't be installed due to the vendor's crane being down. Efforts will be made to complete this repair before the heart of winter.

Finances

Trucked in septage revenue received year to date is \$16,000 compared to \$8,785 received last year. As of October 31st, the Sewer Operating Fund balance was \$80,350 and the Replacement Fund balance was \$89,835. Revenues come from user charges paid by customers of the sewer (not taxes).

Thank you to the estate of Wayne Golly for donating approximately \$4,000 in wastewater system parts and materials.

Stewart River Project

Mike Beard the lobbyist for Bollig Engineering, attended a Silver Creek meeting this fall. He said they will continue to work on securing funding and will not invoice the Township until the project is completely financed. They have been blocked by the failure of the State Legislature to pass a Bonding Bill. Supervisors pressed Beard on whether it might be time to stop pushing this project, given the number of years that bonding has been sought and not granted. However, Bollig said they still believe in the project and would like to keep pushing for it.

Road Report

Finishing Projects

What with mailbox installations, new driveway access permits, mowing, dust control, culvert replacement, stockpiling salt/sand, applying for permits for a new gravel pit, and removing blowdown trees weekly, the wide variety of tasks made for a busy fall.

Assisting Government Partners

This year the Township was able to assist with several local projects. Silver Creek provided dust control treatment on about a mile of road in Duluth Township as they were having trouble getting a vendor in a timely fashion. We also provided dust control to the roads at Gooseberry Falls State Park campground. Our expenses for these services were paid by Duluth Township and the DNR respectively. A Forest Road was in need of a culvert where it intersects with Alger Grade. Silver Creek was able to do the installation for Lake County Forestry, which paid for all costs and materials. Efforts are being made to collect in-kind services from the City of Two Harbors based upon a 2006 agreement for the maintenance done on Burlington Road by Silver Creek.

Smoothing Things Over

Assistant Operations Manager Paul Thompson continued to work his magic with the road grader this fall. Thompson also did a major clean-up of the garage for the Election and has been working overtime trapping mice! The Clerks and Election Judges wish to thank him for his efforts!

Financial Position of Road Fund

As of October 31st, the Road and Bridge Fund balance was \$155,937 in spite of the high fuel costs. The second half of this year's levy will arrive in mid-December. Careful use of supplies and materials has helped keep up with inflation.



Disaster Preparation

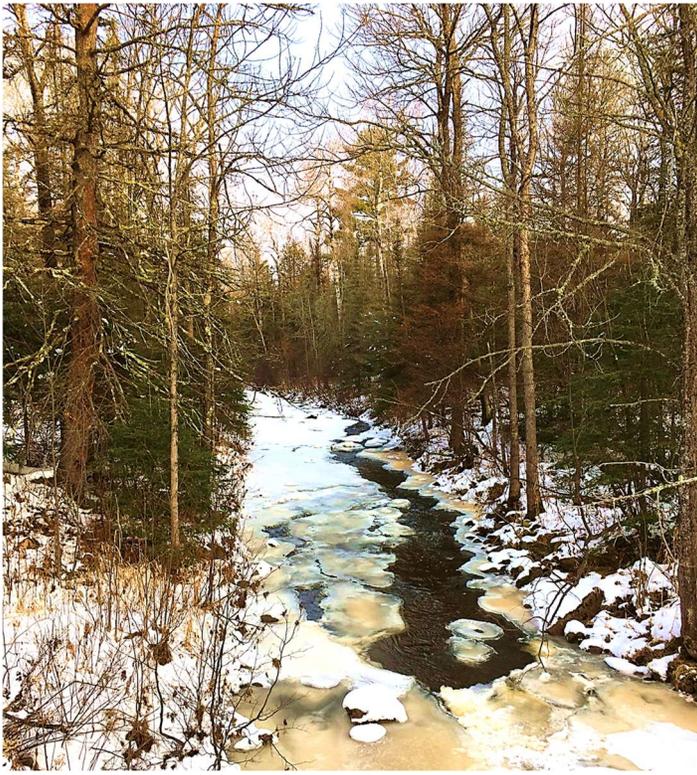
Vehicles, Staff, and Technology

In a small organization, it can be challenging to prepare for the unknown – we could face anything from weather to supply chain issues to pandemic. The new truck is an effort to ensure that plowing can still take place even if the old truck is down waiting for repair. On the personnel side, the Town is hiring an On-Call Backup for both plowing and sewer repairs. Allen Anderson's assistance in prior years was greatly appreciated, but he is ready to retire. The Clerk's office now has an actively involved Deputy Clerk ready to step in should the Clerk be struck down with Covid. On the communications side, in addition to cell phones, the Armer Radios have been tested and all batteries replaced. While not frequently used, these radios are critical when cell signal is out. Thank you to Silver Bay Fire Department for donating the batteries. The remote monitoring system for the sewer that was installed last year has already proven its worth in alerting when generators went out. An app that allows for collection of photos, GPS location and damage description has been installed on cell phones thanks to Lake County GIS and Emergency Management staff. It will allow Silver Creek to swiftly and accurately document damage to roads and bridges in the event of a flood. This information is required by FEMA for reimbursement of damages.

Town Gravel Pit

Interim Use Permit to Excavate Sand

The Township property off Alger Spur next to the County gravel pit has long been discussed as a possible source of sand or pit run. However, for years nothing has been done. Operations Manager Reineccius dug test holes and determined that there is good sand that could be used on Silver Creek roads in winter. He is also interested in accessing the black dirt in the overburden pile. This pile was material taken over 20 years ago as a hazardous cleanup from around the shop at that time. He and Deputy Clerk Anderson worked their way through pages of application, a meeting with Lake County Environmental Officials and a Zoning Hearing to bring this project to life. They were successful, and Silver Creek has been granted permission to excavate one acre for a period of five years. Of the 80-acre site, only 1 acre is planned for excavation. The site has a wetland area that will grow as a result of excavation and will ensure no harm to the environment. MPCA permits are required, and Deputy Clerk Anderson is currently working on completion of necessary applications.



Thanksgiving Day Photo of Encampment River

Township Election Info

Offices to be Elected

On March 14, 2023, at the Township Election, Silver Creek residents will vote for one Treasurer and one Board of Supervisor position.

Who is up for Re-Election?

Treasurer Jamie Pellman and Supervisor Chris Jaeger are both up for re-election in March 2023.

How to get Your Name on the Ballot

If you are interested in running for Treasurer or Supervisor, stop by the Town Office at 1924 Town Road during the official filing period: January 3rd through January 17th, 2023 and bring \$2 cash or check for the filing fee.

Clerk's Corner – Correction to September Newsletter

In the September edition, due to a typo, we incorrectly printed that there were the same number of Democrat and Republican votes cast in-person at the August Primary Election. Our apologies!

The correct numbers for the Primary were: 211 voters cast ballots at Silver Creek. 107 ballots cast were for Democratic Party races; 102 ballots cast were for Republican races; and 2 for other parties.

Thank you to Dutton Foster for editing this newsletter.

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

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