

TOWN OF SILVER CREEK
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
AUGUST 8, 2023

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Silver Creek was held on Tuesday August 8, 2023 in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road, for the purpose of discussing all issues before the Board.

Present: Supervisors Greg Hull, Chuck Voss, and Scott Krech; Clerk Alison Oftedahl; Deputy Clerk Katie Anderson; and Town Operations Assistant Paul Thompson.

Absent: Wastewater Operator Hoops and Town Operations Manager Jody Reineccius.

Visitors Present: None.

Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Constituent Concerns

Ryan Sippers – Anderson reported that Ryan Sippers came to the office to request that the town finish the fence between his property and the Pavilion. Oftedahl was asked to write a letter inviting Sippers to come to a Board meeting to discuss his request.

Bea Fransene – Voss received a complaint from Fransene stating that the cemetery looked shabby. The drought was discussed and the fact that things looked better after mowing.

Road and Safety

Thompson reported that mowing is progressing well and almost done. They have been using both the new tractor and the skid steer mower also. Rain is needed for road grading and Alger Grade is very bad. He had Larsen stockpile gravel and sand at the garage. Thompson was called for jury duty and must report tomorrow morning. In the cemetery, he completed a casket burial on Monday. The site was filled with tree roots and a new site had to be selected at the last minute. He and Oftedahl worked together to select a nearby site and call the family for approval. Since the last meeting, he replaced a toilet in the Historic Hall and trimmed around the new door in the Pavilion.

New Mower – Thompson reported that he went over the machine and the hours meter is not working. He has sent in a sample of the oil for analysis. Hull reported that Nate Eide of Lake County Forestry wants to rent the tractor with mower later in the fall for mowing forest roads. The group discussed the rate that should be charged.

Safety – Trench Boxes and Gas Meter – Thompson said that they were told at training that OSHA is really watching excavation to make sure that a trench box is used. The excavation for the new sewer connections will be right on Highway 61 so they are concerned about being in violation. There are grant funds available, but the application requires a full OSHA inspection of operations. Supervisors suggested borrowing a trench box from the City of Two Harbors.

General Sewer Operations

Thompson reported that he is having issues with the water transfer between ponds. Weeds keep blocking the discharge pipe of the Control Structure and stopping the transfer. Yesterday he unblocked it twice, but it is taking a lot of time and attention.

New Installs – The Rostvold sewer connection was not started in spite of plans to do so. The Gerard property is not ready for connection.

Sewer Operator Outsource – Hoops' resignation effective August 25th was discussed. There may be a need for a contract with an external licensed operator for an interim period until Reineccius receives his license.

Repair of Lift Stations – Lift Station 1 has continued to have issues in spite of repairs. Thompson is waiting on Mike Nelson for the repaired pump installation and patch to the second pipe that failed.

Stewart River Wastewater Project

Voss reported that the Stewart River Project was dropped from the Congressionally Funded Spending Bills.

Correspondence

The following items were passed around for consideration:

- Letter of resignation from Wastewater Operator Mike Hoops effective August 25, 2023.

- New policy for Reineccius authorized by Chairman Hull allowing him flexible days and hours and changing his definition of overtime to work beyond 40 hours in one week rather than previously work beyond 10 in one day or work on an agreed day off.
- MN OSHA WSC Safety Grant Program requirements.
- Letter and documents from Lake County Auditor regarding the VOTER Account funds and requesting that Lake County be allowed to keep all the funds.
- From the Association of Townships, email of Broadband Office updates, and July Newsletter.
- Email from Intuit Quickbooks raising the monthly subscription \$10 to \$60 per month.
- Email from Attorney Scott Witty asking more questions about the Gordon Variance Issue.
- Email from MATIT providing notice of District 10 Meeting and Election.
- Emailed Letter of Credit for the Town's Bank Account.
- Email from Lake View Clinic saying that they cannot run any breath alcohol tests other than post-accident due to lack of staff.
- Affidavit of Posting notice of Supervisors attending District 10 Meeting together.
- From Lake County, 1 Interim Use Application, 4 notices of Hearings on Land Use issues and 2 notices of approval of Interim Use for Vacation Rental.

OLD BUSINESS

Insurance – The Board considered what “agreed value” amounts should be set for each of the Town’s buildings and considered pricing information from MATIT. After some disagreement and discussion, Krech was asked to get information on what it would cost if we had to replace the Cold Storage building. Thompson was asked to find out replacement cost on the cover of the salt/sand shed. A concern was raised that even if the old Hall was insured at the higher appraisal rate, insurance might not pay out that full amount, due to the poor condition of the building.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution for Agreement with Lake County on VOTER Funds Use – The Board considered documents showing that Lake County will receive less than \$5,000 and that if Silver Creek demanded their share, it would only be \$148.69. There was agreement that it makes sense to let Lake County keep those funds for management of the electronic ballot counters. A draft resolution was viewed and will be voted on next week.

Cemetery Pipe Caps – Oftedahl and Anderson requested funding for numbered pipe caps for the upper left of each cemetery block to make it much faster to sell plots, mark for monument, or open the correct grave. Currently if a new plot is chosen in the middle of an empty area; it is difficult to match the area being chosen to a number in the Cemetery book. After discussion, Hull requested a more specific plan with a price that they could vote upon.

Cemetery Policy for Empty Graves – The Board considered a revised version of Cemetery Rules and Regulations. Edits included adding the “Right of Interment” language, prohibiting empty graves, and limiting burial types to cremation and casket. Discussion of these issues were cut short due to the late hour.

PENDING BUSINESS

Cemetery Water Stations – The Board viewed a picture of the improvements to the water stations. Deputy Clerk Anderson had painted them, added new hooks and purchased new watering cans with decals. She reported that they aren’t quite done yet as there are caps for the top of the posts that are coming. Everyone liked the new look.

Newsletter – The Board viewed a very rough draft and the Clerk requested ideas to finish filling in the empty space. A more finished draft will be brought to next week’s meeting.

PERPETUAL BUSINESS

Gordon Variance – Hull reported that Lake County Attorney Russ Conrow has agreed to also take a look at this issue. Oftedahl was asked to forward materials to him.

Historic Town Hall – Krech expressed the desire to survey Town residents on their feelings about the old Town Hall. The group discussed pros and cons of surveys. It was suggested that an open house to collect information from the public might work best.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. upon motion Voss, second Hull. Carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Town Board will be held on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Oftedahl, Clerk