

TOWN OF SILVER CREEK
ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024

The Annual Meeting of the Town of Silver Creek was held in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road, Two Harbors, Minnesota, on the 12th day of March 2024.

Present:

Chuck Voss	Greg Hull	Scott Krech	Alison Oftedahl
Jody Reineccius	Jamie Pellman	Katie Anderson	Rich Sve
Shele Hull	Phil Sogge	Debbie Cooter	Jan Branaman
Betty Veness	Rich Truscott	Val Johnson	Larry Johnson
Jon Fogelberg	Bruce Hanson	Carla Ballantine	Joe Thorne
Phil Nightwine	Stacy Nightwine	Roger Staples	Dave Henjum
Bruce Tower	Savannah Krech	Sara Preston	Don Anselment
Kevin Oftedahl	Jessica Peterson		

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. by Clerk Alison Oftedahl, who led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Rich Sve agreed to preside as Moderator after nomination by Shele Hull and unanimous Yea vote. Moderator Sve read the agenda.

Last year's Annual Meeting minutes were provided to all attendees. Motion Greg Hull, second Chuck Voss to approve the minutes with one amendment: add Jamie Pellman to the list of attendees. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Jamie Pellman presented her report showing an end of year bank balance of \$744,928.38. The report was accepted as presented upon motion Chuck Voss, second Scott Krech. Carried unanimously.

The next Annual Meeting was set for Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 8:15 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road upon motion by Alison Oftedahl, second Val Johnson. Carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

Chairman's Annual Report

Chairman Greg Hull reported that the Town added Louie Larsen to the staff as a part-time on-call equipment operator in anticipation of plowing and to provide another set of hands for road projects. He said that Operations Manager Jody Reineccius would report on roads.

Stewart River Project Report

Supervisor Chuck Voss reported that Bollig Engineering is seeking state bonding funds for the Stewart River Project and also applying for a Federal EPA program announced by the Biden-Harris administration to bring wastewater services to underserved rural communities. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith are sponsoring the funding request. Voss then responded to the following questions raised by attendees:

- Who will benefit from this project? We all benefit when Lake Superior is cleaner. Residents who are part of the Stewart River Project area would no longer have to deal with leaking septic systems.
- Who will pay for the system? Grant funding is being sought to build the system, along with user assessments. Day-to-day operations would be paid by user fees.
- Will full funding be obtained up front? If federal funding is received it would cover the full cost of the project up front. The state bonding request would be divided into phases over a period of years.
- Did the Senate or House Bonding Committees come up and take a look at this project on their tour? No they did not.

Castle Danger Wastewater Report

Supervisor Chuck Voss reported that the Castle Danger system is being managed well and has resulted in a positive fund balance of \$202,395 for future maintenance and updates. A modest \$4 increase in rates for residential users is being proposed after no rate increase since 2018. The district also has the possibility of additional residential connections. Voss reminded everyone that no part of the Township Levy goes toward the Castle Danger Wastewater budget. The utility runs as an "Enterprise" which means that the funding is kept separately and paid for by users of the sewer. Voss then responded to the following questions about the Castle Danger Wastewater System:

- Was the system paid for by non-users? It was paid for primarily by bonding and by assessments on users. In the past, there was a very small portion of general Town levy (\$5,000) used for the sewer. This amount was always approved in each year's Annual Meeting.
- Why doesn't the Town sell the sewer? Most utilities are run by governments. Selling is not likely to benefit the users of the system if a buyer could even be found.

Report on Facilities and Cemetery

Supervisor Scott Krech noted that this is the last year of collecting levy funds into the Building Fund for the future of the Historic Hall. The Board will have to decide what to do with those funds. He said he is a huge advocate for not tearing down the Historic Hall. He said that the buildings were rented for a funeral, and a wedding, and also used for seasonal storage and yoga. He reported that some beautification projects are underway in the cemetery.

Report on Town Operations

Operations Manager Jody Reineccius said that the new mowers and tractor purchased this year were used for mowing and brushing. A new broom was received in trade and will be used to clean road approaches. A road project to correct embankment slough on West Castle Danger Road was completed and a new culvert was put across East Alger Grade that required the road to be closed for a day. He discussed the need to use less chloride to save on the budget. He reported that he passed his sewer test and so Mike Hoops is finally fully retired. There are two new sewer connections that are almost complete. He reported that dead trees were removed from the Cemetery and some new ones were planted. He thanked Sharon Kleive for her assistance in watering the new trees. He thanked Oftedahl and Anderson for their office support and the Board for providing necessary equipment. Val Johnson asked whether the Town could please put chloride down the middle of Alger Grade the entire way so that cars following trucks can see through the dust.

BUDGET & LEVY

Chairman Hull reviewed last year’s finances stating that everything was incrementally more expensive than the year before. A handout with 2023 planned and actual expenditures showed that spending was 5% over budget, while receipts were 9% more than plan due to Taconite Production Tax. When asked about any unforeseen expenses, Hull identified the used tractor. He then introduced the 2025 levy explaining the Town’s goal to keep six months of operating expenses on hand. The proposed levy is 3.6% higher than last year’s. Motion Jon Fogelberg, second Rich Truscott to accept as presented the 2025 budget and levy included below. Motion carried upon unanimous Yea vote.

<u>Budget:</u>	<u>2025 Proposed</u>
General	<u>\$112,200</u>
Road & Bridge	<u>\$358,500</u>
Road Enhancement	<u>\$20,000</u>
Buildings	<u>\$39,100</u>
Fire	<u>\$45,000</u>
Cemetery	<u>\$10,500</u>
General Debt Service	<u>\$56,000</u>
TOWN TOTAL	<u>\$641,300</u>

<u>Levy:</u>	<u>2025</u>
General	<u>\$50,000</u>
Road & Bridge	<u>\$290,000</u>
Road Enhancement	<u>\$20,000</u>
Building	<u>\$25,000</u>
Fire	<u>\$30,000</u>
Cemetery	<u>\$11,000</u>
General Debt Service	<u>\$30,000</u>
TOWN TOTAL LEVY	<u>\$456,000</u>

Other anticipated Income	<u>\$134,000</u>
TOWN TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$590,000</u>

OLD BUSINESS:

AT&T Cell Tower -- Hull reported that because no land agreement was signed, AT&T’s Conditional Use Permit expired. They would have to start over if they still wish to build the tower.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pickle Ball – Sara Preston presented an idea for installing a pickle ball court in the Historic Hall. Some concerns were raised including the height of the hall, how to mark the floor, how to protect windows and how to honor rentals for events like weddings. Attendees expressed interest in playing Pickle Ball in the winter. After discussion, motion Preston, second Peterson to have the Town Board research the feasibility and practicality of the idea and to move ahead if it can be done. Motion carried unanimously.

Maji Ya Chai – Dave Henjum brought up the proposed development on the Clark Road. Rich Sve confirmed the application for a conditional use permit for a land sanctuary and retreat including new buildings, gardens and trails. He informed the group of the date and time of the public hearing.

Head Election Judge Phil Sogge presented the preliminary uncanvassed Election results. He called it a high turnout and said that that each of the four judges had counted the 125 ballots separately. He reported Greg Hull received 66 votes and write-in candidate Phil Nightwine received 59 votes. For Clerk, Alison Oftedahl received 99 votes, Katie Anderson received 15 votes and Phil Nightwine received 2 votes with 116 ballots for Clerk office.

There being no further business, the meeting was recessed at 9:53 p.m. upon motion Truscott, second Henjum and unanimous Yea vote. Meeting to be reconvened on August 20, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room at 1924 Town Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Oftedahl, Clerk

Moderator Rich Sve