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March  
2024



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

# SILVER CREEK SOURCE

## Mountain Biking Proposal

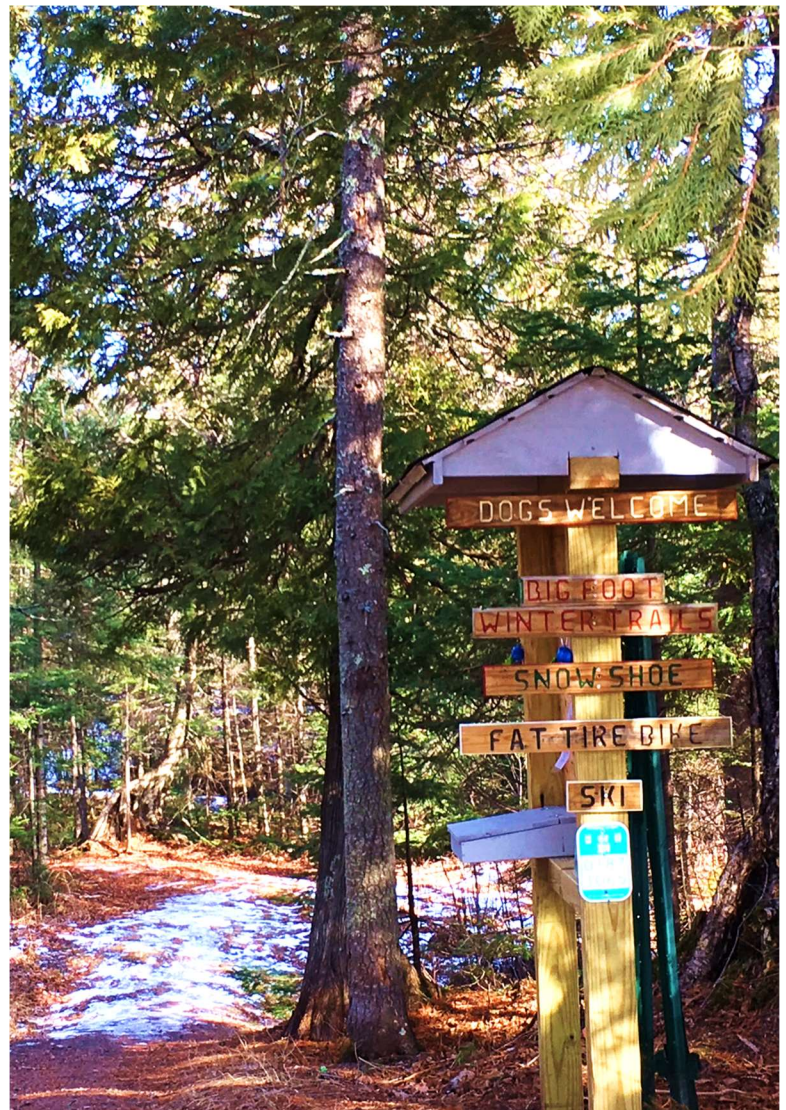
### Potential Big Foot Trail Expansion

The Two Harbors Area Recreational Trails Alliance has approached Silver Creek about creating a professionally designed mountain biking trail along the Big Foot trail route. The Big Foot is currently a winter-only trail that allows snowshoeing, walking and fat biking. Dan Cruikshank attended a Silver Creek Board meeting representing the Club and asking for support for the project. He envisions a flow trail with rollers and berms that would provide a more beginner-friendly area than found at the Split Rock trails. The forest would be preserved, and boardwalks built over wetlands. The trail would cross city, county and Township property and so multiple entities will need to collaborate to bring this dream to a reality. Funding would be provided by grants and the Trails Alliance Club will lead the effort.

### Where is the Big Foot Trail?

The entry point for the current Big Foot trail is located behind the Fairground Administration buildings and is pictured at the right.

Welcome to the *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*. This newsletter is also available on [ttosc.org](http://ttosc.org). If you would prefer to receive the newsletter via email, send request to [silvercreek@frontiernet.net](mailto:silvercreek@frontiernet.net).



Big Foot Trail entrance shown here. It crosses city land prior to crossing Silver Creek Township property.

## Election & Annual Mtg – Mar 12<sup>th</sup>

### Come to Vote - Stay for the Annual Meeting

**Notice is hereby given** that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Township Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. Polling Place hours will be 12 noon to 8 p.m., for the following:

- One (1) Supervisor.....3-year term
- One (1) Clerk..... 2-year term

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:15 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road. The Board of Canvass will meet on March 12, 2024, following the Annual Meeting and counting of the ballots (approximately 8:45 p.m.) to certify the official election results.

- **View the proposed levy on page 2.**
- **View the Township ballot on page 4.**



# Recap of Last Year

## Increased Expenses offset by Taconite Tax

Last year's annual expenditures were 5% over budget. This was offset by receipts coming in 9% above plan. Inflation and the extreme winter of 2023 were drivers on the cost side.

## Proposed 3.6% Levy Increase

### Come to the Annual Meeting to Vote on the Levy

The proposed budget and levy included below were developed at the Budget and Levy Working Meeting in February. Every effort was made to hold down the levy while still paying for services and supplies. The plan relies upon a draw-down of the Fire Fund and an expectation of Taconite Production taxes remaining near current levels.

<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
General	\$112,200	\$118,100
Road & Bridge	\$358,500	\$343,500
Road Enhancement	\$20,000	\$20,000
Building	\$39,100	\$39,250
Fire	\$45,000	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$10,500	\$10,500
General Debt Service	\$56,000	\$56,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$641,300</b>	<b>\$632,350</b>
<u>LEVY</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
General	\$50,000	\$44,000
Road & Bridge	\$290,000	\$275,000
Road Enhancement	\$20,000	\$20,000
Building	\$25,000	\$25,000
Fire	\$30,000	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$11,000	\$2,500
General Debt Service	\$30,000	\$28,500
<b>TOTAL LEVY</b>	<b>\$456,000</b>	<b>\$440,000</b>
<b>Projected "Other" Income</b> including Taconite and Gas Tax	<b>\$134,000</b>	<b>\$95,300</b>
<b>TOWN TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$590,000</b>	<b>\$535,300</b>

# Safeguarding Your Town Funds

## Cyber Security Insurance

After learning of an organization who lost \$800,000 to a phishing scam, and attending training on cyber security issues, Town Supervisors decided to institute some new safeguards. A cybercrime insurance policy has been purchased that helps cover costs in the event that the Town website were to be hijacked or other cybercrime experienced. The Town also worked with the Bank to ensure that all available security measures are in place. At the bank's suggestion, the Town has instituted two programs that safeguard against check fraud and/or illegal wire transfer of Town funds. An electronic file is sent to the bank each time town checks are issued. This prevents stolen or forged checks from being cleared by the bank. The ACH filter allows electronic debits only to a pre-authorized list of vendors. Currently the Town uses electronic payment only to government entities including Minnesota Revenue, the IRS and the Public Employees Retirement Association.



Silver Creek Skating Rink covered with water on February 8, 2024

# Skating Hopes Wash Away

## Multiple Challenges to Ice

After extra efforts made last fall to widen and level the Silver Creek Skating Rink, multiple challenges thwarted these efforts. First, the Town pumper truck experienced an engine problem after the summer's work spraying chloride. The truck was down most of December and so the rink could not be flooded. After truck repair, the rink was flooded and did freeze up. However, the very next week record high temperatures and a week-long February thaw melted the ice sheet, as pictured above. As of press time the season appears to be over.

# CDSSD Wastewater Finances

## Sewer Enterprise ends with \$202,395 in the Bank

Sewer funds are being saved for future dredging of treatment ponds and other infrastructure replacements. Supervisor Voss has focused on good planning to avoid any large assessments to users of the system down the road.

Operations came in only 1% over budget after adjusting for the cost and payments received for connection of two new houses.

<u>PLANNED BUDGET</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Wastewater Enterprise	138,000	124,000
Wastewater Replacement	46,000	53,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$184,000</b>	<b>177,000</b>

# Modest Increase in Rates

## Sewer Rate Hearing April 9 – Board Meeting Room

Commercial accounts will receive notification of their usage and corresponding rates. Residential users have not had a rate increase since 2018. However, due to higher costs, the Board is considering an increase of \$4 to \$5 per month for them. Questions or concerns about rates can be called, mailed in, or brought to the Rate Hearing.





## Clear the Way

### Leveraging the Mild Winter

Not often can we report that road right-of-way brushing continued all winter -- but this year, we can! Pictured above is Operator Louie Larsen working along the Alger Grade roadside. West Castle Danger and several other Township Roads have been dramatically trimmed back. Keeping the brush in check provides safe sightlines for driveways, prevents trees from growing and falling into roadways, and provides space for snow in plowing season. Also, unusual this year, plow trucks have been out only once and instead there has been road grading each month through the winter.

## New Sweeper

### Ready to Go

The town obtained a new sweeper on trade-in (no cash expended) for use in clearing bridge decks, road approaches and pavement areas around the Town buildings as well as possibly the skating rink. Keeping bridge decks free of gravel is a requirement that was previously difficult to meet.

## Maintaining our Bridges

### Report Received on Town Road Bridge

The Town received notification from Lake County Highway Engineer Jason DiPiazza that there are concerns with Town Road Bridge that must be addressed. A recommendation was made to monitor the east abutment pile cap that has experienced some rotation out of position. In addition, it was further recommended that an engineering firm be engaged to do a load rating on the bridge. A load rating has not been done since 2013. They also recommend that riprap be added along the abutments. The Town has the riprap ready but must get it placed into the bridge abutment area. To view all bridge reports online, go to <https://reports.dot.state.mn.us/bridgereports>.



## Taxable Property Value

### Local Board of Appeal & Equalization - May 7

To challenge the value set on your property, step one is to call the Lake County Assessor to ask questions. It is best to allow the Assessor to visit and see the property in person. If you are not satisfied after the first step, you may appeal to the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) at 1924 Town Road, on May 7, at 1 p.m. to have your concerns heard. If you remain unsatisfied after being heard at the LBAE, there is a County Hearing in June. IMPORTANT: you cannot appeal to the County without following the process and appearing at the local Silver Creek Hearing first.

## Castle Danger Wastewater News

### All Systems "Flow"

Lift Station 1 has been running well after repairs. Operator Reineccius has been working with Minnesota Rural Water on pump calibration tests. Operations Assistant Paul Thompson rebuilt 13 grinder pumps so that the Town is ready for any residential pump failures that might occur.

## Stewart River Project

Supervisor Voss has asked Bollig Engineering to apply for an EPA program announced by the Biden-Harris Administration that is part of the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative. The program is being expanded and will provide funding to 150 additional communities.

**Town Election Ballot  
Town of Silver Creek  
March 12, 2024**

**Instructions to Voters:**  
Please carefully fill in the oval(s) next to your choice

**Town Offices**

**Town Supervisor**  
Vote for One

**Gregory A. Hull**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Write-in, if any

**Town Clerk**  
Vote for One

**Alison Oftedahl**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Write-in, if any

## *On the Township Ballot*

**Vote on March 12 between the Hours of Noon and 8 p.m.**

Chairman Greg Hull is up for re-election for one of three Supervisor positions; and Clerk Alison Oftedahl is up for re-election on a two-year term. Both are running unopposed, but you may write-in a different candidate if you wish.

## *2 Elections -1 Week - 7 Judges!!*

**March 5 Primary and March 12 Township Election**

Clerks, Election Judges and voters will be putting in some extra time to attend to two elections in one week. Sample ballots for the Presidential Primary Election can be viewed on our website at [ttosc.org](http://ttosc.org).

## *Thank You Election Judges*

**Your Service is Appreciated**

The following individuals are working one or several of this year's Elections. Judges provide a watchdog role to ensure that each party is represented, that all laws are followed, and procedures done carefully. They provide oversight and just like a Jury in a court case, they represent the people. Thank you to the following individuals who make Democracy work! **Thank you to Debbie Cooter, Michelle Backes-Fogelberg, Sara Preston, Jan Brenamon, Mary Londborg, Phile Sogge, Tim Turk, Laura Kleive, John Bathke and Katie Anderson.** We could not hold Elections without you!

**If you are interested in becoming an Election Judge, contact the Office for more information.**

# *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*

TOWN OF SILVER CREEK  
1924 TOWN RD  
TWO HARBORS, MN 55616