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Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

Welcome to the *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*. This newsletter is also available on ttosc.org. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter via email, send request to silvercreek@frontiernet.net.

New Beginnings

New Chairman for the Year – Greg Hull

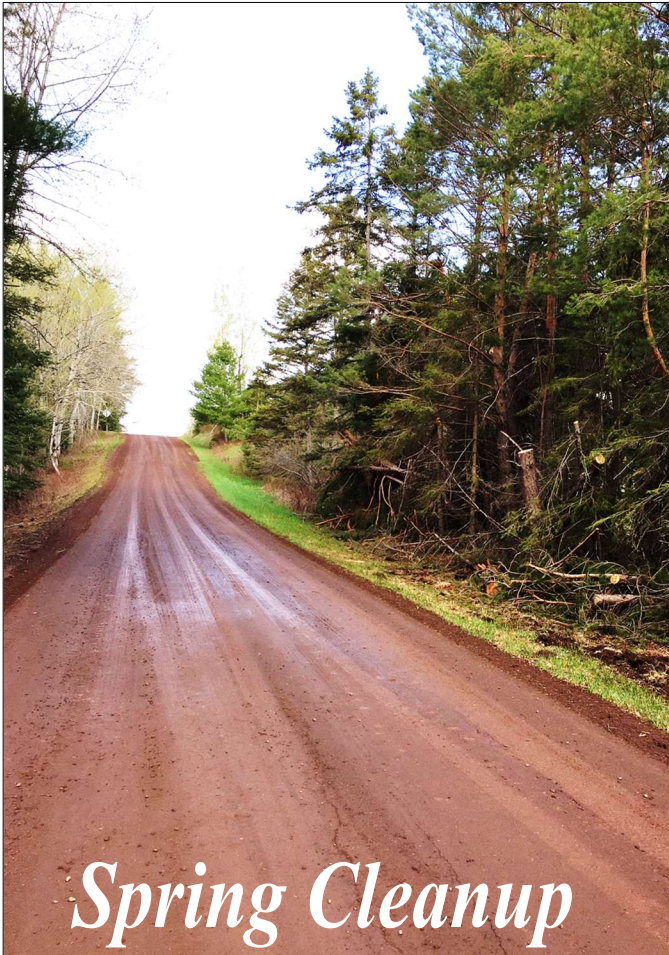
The Silver Creek Board agreed that rotation of the Chairmanship is a good thing. It ensures a trained successor is developed and can result in different projects being prioritized. The time availability of Supervisors is also a consideration. This year, the reins were passed from Chuck Voss to Greg Hull.

Newly Elected Supervisor – Scott Krech

Making the second sawmill operator to serve on the Board, Scott Krech won the March 14th Township Election and took office April 1st replacing Chris Jaeger. His areas of responsibility will be Facilities and Cemetery. He attended training in his first couple weeks and has been learning the ropes quickly. Krech said he wishes to thank everyone who voted for him for their support.

Potential New Town Attorney – Daniel Doda

The Town is in talks with Silver Creek resident Daniel Doda, who recently became a year-round resident of the Township. Doda has a wide variety of experience including contract law, construction law, real estate law, and property and probate law. He even has experience with road issues including a cartway. A cartway dispute has been one of the most contentious legal issues that Silver Creek faced in the past. Doda grew up a farm boy from Crookston, has two grown daughters, and he and his wife have had a cabin in the Castle Danger area for years.



Spring Cleanup

Blow-Down Trees

Winds blew down many of the trees killed by the Spruce Budworm and splintered many other healthy trees. It appears that most of us will spend summer clearing deadfall from trails and roadways. The results of the December blizzard on Town Road are pictured above. Deadfall in the road or the right-of-way is normally cleared by the road authority. Depending upon whether you live on a state highway, a county road, or a township road your road authority is either MNDOT, Lake County or Silver Creek Township. Trees blocking the road are handled as soon as possible but additional clean up may be later in the year. This provides time for landowners as they do have a right to the firewood if they want it. Meanwhile, for clean-up of trees by the property owner, brush or tree limbs may be taken to the Lake County landfill. While it has not been needed often, the law does also allow for Townships to remove healthy standing trees along roads if they interfere with the maintenance or the safety of the road. Written notice must be provided to owners first. **For road hazards or tree questions, call 834-5255.**



Gravel Pit Progress

Uncovering Valuable Material

This winter Town Operations Manager Jody Reineccius burnt off weeds and brush to access good sand at the pit. This sand can be used for new sewer installations and next winter's roads. In addition, he is working with a composted overburden pile of recycled material. This material will be tested by Lake County, and if it passes, will be used in areas where black dirt is needed for reseeding.

Five Hour Road Tour

Taking Account of Snow Damage

Supervisors accompanied employees Paul Thompson and Jody Reineccius on a drive to inspect every township road checking for damage and planning summer projects. They identified a number of culvert replacements needed and viewed a significant amount of gravel pushed into ditches during spring plowing. Many roads will need to have additional gravel added. After the Road Tour, everyone enjoyed Thompson's cooking skills along with salads made by Reineccius, and Clerks Anderson and Oftedahl.

105 inches of Snow Plowed

Diesel Costs Really Add Up

A jaw dropping \$21,446 was spent on diesel fuel for plow trucks and the grader this winter. Compare this to \$15,040 the year before in the same period. On a more positive note, the Road Enhancement fund has not had to be tapped in a few years and provides a cushion in case the budget falls short.

New Trucks Appreciated

Making Short Work of Plowing

Both the new tandem axle truck and the new Dodge were used extensively this winter. The new tandem axle made short work of plowing during the weekly snowstorms. Quite a few miles were racked up on the new Dodge in the process of checking roads for down trees. Thank you to residents who called in with appreciation for the plowing. And thank you as well for patience with damaged mailboxes.

Approved Levy

Twenty-four residents attended Silver Creek's Annual Meeting and voted to approve the levy below for next year. The levy is the amount that will be collected from your property taxes.

<u>LEVY</u>	<u>2024</u>
General	\$44,000
Road & Bridge	\$275,000
Road Enhancement	\$20,000
Building	\$25,000
Fire	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$2,500
General Debt Service	\$28,500
TOTAL LEVY	\$440,000
Projected "Other" Income	\$95,300
including Taconite and Gas Tax	
TOWN TOTAL INCOME	\$535,300

Fire Service

Costs Down Slightly this Year

Fire response in Silver Creek Township comes from either the Two Harbors or the Silver Bay Fire Department depending upon which is closest to the fire. Those cities bill Silver Creek for the service. This year's cost based upon last year's fires totaled \$45,548 compared \$49,196 paid last year. This decrease is very welcome.

Chloride Plans

Dust Control Application Limited

Chloride applied to dirt roads for dust control is expensive. Town Operations Manager Reineccius says that the application of chloride will be limited this year to control costs and to minimize negative environmental impacts. He is aware that the salt never leaves the environment. However, residents on township road should call if road dust gets excessive at their house this summer as a spot spraying approach can alleviate those issues. Call the Office with concerns at 218-220-0003.



Silver Creek Cemetery

Sprucing Up for Memorial Day

Thompson and Reineccius removed many down tree branches from the Cemetery this spring. As of press time the dry spring has been hard on the new trees planted last year, but they appear to be surviving.

Cemetery Questions Answered

Who can purchase a plot? Only property-owners of Silver Creek Township can purchase plots. However, they can purchase for immediate family who live outside the Township. The only exception is a non-resident purchasing for a deceased resident.

What should I do if I believe my family already has plots reserved? Contact the Clerk's Office with the names of parents or grandparents who may have reserved plots.

Veteran Benefits? Veterans are eligible for a free plot; however, that does not include grave opening and closing. For additional benefits, such as the veteran's monument, contact your Lake County Veteran Affairs Office for more information.

New Vacation Rental Ordinance

Number of Short-Term (Vacation) Rentals Limited to 3%

The moratorium on new short-term rental has expired and new regulations allowing only 3% of housing units located in residential zones to be used as short-term rentals are in effect. What do these numbers mean? According to Planning and Zoning Director Christine McCarthy, there are currently 22 short term rentals in the Township, made up of 5 in commercial zones, and 17 in residential zones. The new cap is 31 permits in Silver Creek residential zones. Only 14 more short-term rental permits can be issued before the cap is reached. If you are considering doing a rental of this type, don't wait to apply. An important note is that this restriction does not apply to long term rentals of those living in our Township full time. It also does not apply to commercially zoned areas.

Cell Tower on Alger Grade

No Lease with County

Construction has not begun on the new cell tower that was permitted for AT&T. According to Commissioner Sve, no lease agreement for the tower has yet been negotiated with Lake County.

Castle Danger Wastewater

Sewer Rates – Minimal Changes

Rates in the system are calculated based upon the budget and proportional user share. For metered commercial users, that means that their rate is impacted by budget increase and by their metered usage. This year a combination of good planning and prudent spending has helped to keep the system affordable. Only commercial accounts whose usage went up experienced a rate hike. Residential rates did not change.

New Repair Partner

After struggling to obtain parts and services for the lift stations from our old vendor last year, Operators Hoops and Reineccius are pleased to have located a new vendor for these services. Mike Nelson of Nelson Electrics is also doing work for Silver Bay and Beaver Bay wastewater systems, brings a new crane truck, is able to respond quickly, and charges reasonable rates. Having a dependable repair vendor provides some peace of mind for operators of small systems such as ours.

One New Connection Planned

The Town has an application in for a new house that should be connected to the sewer this summer.

Stewart River Project

Will State Partners Come Through?

As of press time, a last-minute Bonding Bill has just been passed. The Stewart River Wastewater Treatment project was not included in the bill but \$230,000 was allocated to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority for utility projects according to Mike Beard at Bollig Engineering.

LBAE Meeting Held

9 In-person Appeals Heard

Silver Creek's Local Board of Appeal and Equalization was held on Tuesday May 9. At the meeting, the Assessor's Office reported that on average, property values in Silver Creek rose by 65% across 3 years! Our portion of Minnesota continues to be in extremely high demand. The Board spent four hours listening to nine in-person appeals and considering two appeals by letter. The majority of appeals were cabin owners who do not live full time in the Township. Here are a few things to keep in mind about the appeals process.

First, by statute the Board is not allowed to change the value on properties in which the owner has refused to let the Assessors enter for a complete inspection. Second, like tax court, the burden of proof is on the property owner to prove that the assessed value is not correct. Third, the assessed value is based upon real sales of like properties, not on other factors such as prior year values, original purchase price, or future economic trends. Finally, the Board can only change a value based upon factual information.

Thank you to Dutton Foster for editing this Newsletter.

Classes or Workshops?

Consider Silver Creek Facilities

The Minnesota Logger Education Program rented the Historic Hall and the Board Meeting Room on May 11 for a Log Safe OSHA and CPR First Aid class. In the Board Room they used the overhead monitor and in the Historic Hall they brought their own screen and laptop. The Pavilion will again be used for weekly YOGA classes June through September. The rental agreement for the Hall may be found on the website or stop by the Office.

Electronic Newsletter

Out of Town Relatives?

We have received thanks from those who appreciate a paper newsletter. Paper copies are mailed only to year-round residents based upon property tax "homestead" lists. Providing paper helps those who are not computer literate and fulfills publishing requirements for important events. However, some individuals have requested the newsletter be emailed, especially those living outside the Township. And there has been suggestion to go all electronic. Paper will continue for now, but an email copy is available. Anyone wanting to receive newsletters can subscribe for free via our website www.ttosc.org. Go to either the Newsletter tab or the Contact Us tab and fill in the "Subscribe to our Newsletter" area.

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