

TOWN OF SILVER CREEK
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Silver Creek was held on Tuesday September 10th at 6:30 p.m in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road, for the purpose of discussing all issues before the Board.

Present: Supervisors Chuck Voss, Greg Hull and Scott Krech; Clerk Alison Oftedahl; and Town Operations and Facilities Manager Paul Thompson.

Absent: None

Visitors Present: Wastewater Operator Eric Appelwick and Mike Hoops, both from Advanced Utility Solutions, and from Lake County Solid Waste, Colleen Wallin.

Chairman Voss called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Constituent Concerns

Vickie Braman – Signs in Right of Way – Oftedahl reported Braman’s complaint phone call about political signs in the right of way of Town Rd. The Association of Townships attorney and the County Auditor were consulted and have said that the signs in question are legal.

Lake County Commissioner Rich Sve – Sewer Finance – Voss reported that Sve heard rumors that one of Silver Creek’s supervisors told constituents that the sewer is out of funds and being paid by the General fund. This is untrue and Voss provided documentation to Commissioner Sve showing that there is approximately \$200,000 on hand in the Sewer Enterprise funds.

Matt Turner of Canadian National Railroad – Voss received a call about a Forest Highway 11/ County 204. He informed Turner that we are not the authority for the road in question and referred him to Lake County.

Kleive Family – Red Maple Road Turnaround – Hull reported visiting with Mrs. Kleive in order to view damage caused by Town vehicles. Thompson then reported that both gravel and topsoil were hauled in for the repair which the family has agreed to do themselves.

Visitors

Colleen Wallin – Recycling Trailer – Wallin explained that Lake County Solid Waste is working on a project whose goal is to divert materials from the landfill, increase recycling, and provide positive physical and environmental changes. Grant funding has provided recycling trailers, chain link fence and a shelter. She requested permission for one of the recycling trailers to be permanently installed in Silver Creek near the Town buildings. She said it would be emptied every couple weeks by county personnel. Supervisors all liked the idea. A vote on the matter will be taken next week.

Road and Safety

Road Report – Thompson reported that West Castle Danger, Alger and Bunker Hill roads were graded. A culvert was replaced on Dogwood. Two culverts were replaced on West Castle Danger: one near the hiking trail parking lot and the other near fire number 2426. He rented a mini excavator for a month in order to complete the road projects. The rental price from Nightwine was lower than competitors and is located only a quarter mile from the Town garage. The new tandem axle truck is back from the shop – the recall repairs and the full DOT inspection have been completed. The skid steer is also back from repair. A different type of oil needs to be used in it. The beaver dam in the Alger Grade culvert is going to need additional efforts to dislodge the material in the middle of the pipe.

Tractor Repair – Thompson reported that Lulich is now saying they are still 30 days out on this repair.

Wastewater Operations

Operator’s Report – Appelwick’s 6 page report was viewed. He explained that his charts on influent and effluent always show this year against the prior year. He said that drip irrigation repairs are continuing and that the system is in manual mode until repairs are completed.

Grease Problems – Grease testing came back and needs to be analyzed. Voss and Appelwick plan to talk to the manager of the Rustic Inn Café again to make a plan. It was agreed that grease issues should be resolved prior to replacing pumps in Lift Station 1.

Generator Repair– After viewing repair quotes from Total Energy Systems, Thompson was directed to call Turbo Diesel to see if their price would be lower.

Lift Station Pump Replacement – Pricing from Nelson Electric for 3 different models of pumps was reviewed. Appelwick and Hoops explained that the higher price Flygt pumps are in Lift Station 2 – they have water cooling and have lasted a long time with no repairs at all, so the higher cost may be worth it. As written competitive quotes are required, the state contract will be checked. And, the system engineer Nate at Bollig will need to write a request for proposal with the needed technical specs so that competitive quotes can be obtained.

Septage Haulers – Pictures of trash and damage to treatment ponds being left by the septage haulers were viewed and are retained in the Operator’s report. The group discussed the cost of dredging and potential fines by the MPCA. It was suggested that the practice of accepting trucked in septage be ended. A decision on this action will be made at next week’s regular meeting.

Ben Oliver Project – Oliver’s plans for a 49 space RV park were discussed and a drawing of the property was viewed on screen. It was noted that assessments entitling him to 10% of the wastewater system have been paid and Hoops stated that this is equivalent to 5,800 gallons per day that could be generated by the RV park. The Clerk was directed to go ahead with the permission letter for his conditional use permit. Voss was asked to go to the Lake County Planning and Zoning hearing for this project because Hoops will be out of town.

Rostvold’s Installation – Thompson reported testing the new connection that was completed earlier this summer. Testing showed that the line is blocked, and it appears to be an issue near the main. Until that is excavated and repaired, manual pumping of their tank must be done.

Facilities

Hot Water Heater – Thompson has called Cavallin Heating and Plumbing to come in and install a new hot water heater in the garage because the old one is no longer working.

Stewart River Wastewater Project

Voss reported no change on this project.

Correspondence

The following items were passed around for consideration:

- Clerk’s letter to Lake County Auditor certifying the 2025 levy.
- Equipment Rental agreement with Nightwine’s Land Services for rental of mini-ex at a rate of \$1800 per month for road projects this month.
- Notice of receipt of the second half of this year’s Taconite Production tax in the amount of \$39,275. It was verified in the meeting that this year’s total is approximately \$75,000.
- Email responses from Attorney Steve Fenske and from County Auditor Linda Libal to Oftedahl’s questions about political signs in the right-of-way. Both stated that the signs are legal in an election year.
- Email from MAT regarding the resignation of MAT Board president.
- Email from UPS Store stating that the Town’s newsletter mailing has been delayed due to printer problems.
- Email from Jeremy Kershaw regarding the Heck of the North bike race.
- Email from Bruce Lemke regarding sewer in an old cabin they are refurbishing.
- Letter to wastewater customers with the new sewer emergency phone number magnet.
- 2 notices from Lake County Planning and Zoning of public hearings for variance requests.

OLD BUSINESS:

Historic Hall – Krech reported no change on this project.

Security Camera – Krech reported that the camera he planned to donate does not work at the garage.

NEW BUSINESS

Katie Anderson PTO – Anderson is out due to shattering her ankle in 3 places. Oftedahl noted that the Town does not have a short- or long-term disability program. She requested help for Anderson to get

through the 3-week layup. Krech stressed the importance of making a policy so that all employees and future situations could be addressed fairly. Options that were discussed included switching the position to salaried, granting extra PTO hours or allowing the PTO balance to go into the negative. A decision will be made in next week's regular meeting.

Final Election Judge Approval – The list of judges for the November General Election will be approved next week.

PENDING BUSINESS

Seasonal Storage Dates – After discussion of potentially ending storage after this year, the group selected October 12th as the date to place items into seasonal storage. Concerns include damage to the stage in the Pavilion and the potential need to use the space for the Town's own vehicles. The pricing was not discussed.

Heck of the North Race on Alger – This race is taking place on September 28th. Thompson will provide Event in Progress signs to the race organizer.

Other

Hull reported that Lake County will have a moratorium on cannabis retail sales while they work to get the ordinances right. He said that most attendees of the hearing were in favor of a moratorium. He also reported that the next hearing on the dispute regarding Clark Road will be on January 2nd of 2025.

Employment – the possibilities of hiring several part-timers or having retirees on call versus a full-time position were discussed. Thompson weighed in that he would like to hold off on any hiring at the moment due to the number of projects needing to be completed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m. upon motion Voss, second Krech. Carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Town Board will be held on Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Oftedahl, Clerk