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Sept
2024



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

August Primary Election

Turnout Lower than 2 years Ago

149 out of 894 registered voters turned out on August 13th to vote in the State Primary. Voters who showed up were very appreciative, and, as usual, Silver Creek voters were all very pleasant. The Election results tape can be viewed on our website ttosc.org on the **Notices and News** tab.



Thank You Primary Election Judges

Julia Jaeger, Jan Brenaman, Deb Cooter and Phil Sogge
– we appreciate you!

Annual Meeting Reconvened

No Change to Approved Levy

The Board reconvened the Annual Meeting on August 20th. They did not see any need to modify the 2025 levy that was approved by voters at this March's Annual meeting. The 2025 levy totals \$456,000 and is a 3.6% increase over prior year.

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.



November General Election

Tuesday November 5th - Open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Your property taxes pay for your right to vote in person and enjoy a smooth and speedy voting experience. The Town Garage at 1924 Town Road will again be used to provide ample space to accommodate everyone.

To pre-register or to request Absentee materials

- Go online to the Secretary of State website www.sos.mn.gov and select Elections & Voting
- Or non-computer users, call Lake County at 218-834-8315 for assistance.

Unexpected Challenges

Staff Turnover in Silver Creek

The Town's policy of having two employees proved to be valuable when the Operations Manager resigned this July. The Board promoted Paul Thompson to Interim Operations Manager and hired an external company to manage the sewer (full sewer story next page). This is a very busy time of year for both roads and wastewater. Operations have continued with the smaller staff of 1 full timer and 1 part-time on-call operator. The Board is taking some time to determine the best staffing model for the future and is considering whether it makes sense to continue to have a combined responsibility for wastewater and roads (not to mention cemetery and facilities) in the same job position. Both roads and wastewater are positions requiring 24 hour on-call for emergencies. Time is being taken to evaluate the staff needs, now that the wastewater is outsourced. The budget and workload will determine the future organization plan. The Town will post and publish open position(s) after the Board develops a long-term staffing plan

Mark Your Calendar

You are welcome to attend the following Meetings:

- Sept 10 – Committee of the Whole at 6:30 p.m.
- Sept 17 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- Oct 8 – Committee of the Whole at 6:30 pm
- Oct 15 – Lake County Committee of the Whole Meeting held in Silver Creek at 6 p.m.
- Oct 22 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 pm
- Nov 12 – Committee of the Whole at 6:30 p.m.
- Nov 19 – Regular Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Election

Tues Nov 5 – General & Presidential Election --
Polls will be open from 7 am to 8 pm at 1924 Town Road.

Stewart River Project

Congressionally Directed Funding

Attempts to obtain federal dollars have not been successful thus far. Most recently the Town received email from Senator Klobuchar's Office stating that our project was removed from the Congressionally Directed Funding bill by the Senate Appropriations Committee after Klobuchar had submitted it for consideration. The application was handled by Bollig Engineering who will not charge the Town for that work unless funding is obtained.



A number of bear sightings have been reported this year . This photo was taken on the deck of Phil Sogge's house in Silver Creek along the shore. And, Clerk Oftedahl had 4 sightings near the Town Office in a one week time span.

Silver Creek Cemetery

Grave Opening by Arrowhead Cemetery Services

The Board has decided to use Arrowhead Cemetery Services to open and close graves. Currently the family is charged at the time for grave opening and closing. That will not change for the family, and they will pay the same rate, but payment will be to Arrowhead for this service. Pricing is reviewed annually. Note, this does not apply to plot sales (right of interment). Plot selection must still be made with the Town.

Why was this change made?

The main reason for the change is to save on staff time, especially weekend overtime. A second reason is that fact that the Town does not own a mini excavator. Arrowhead Cemetery Services is owned by Cavallin Funeral, and they currently provide this service to several other small cemeteries in the area. They are familiar with cemetery and burial regulations.

Burials this Summer

Our condolences to the family and friends of the following individuals buried in the cemetery this year: Philip Wright, Mavis Williams, Norman Williams, Raymond Welsh, and Irene Hall.

Electronic Cemetery Book

All names of those buried and names of reserved plots have been entered in a database. The electronic cemetery book will speed up the finding of names and provide a way to back up all records. And, this database is the first step to development of an electronic map of the cemetery.

Cemetery Caps Project Update

The project to place identification caps on each plot of 16 gravesites has completed a second quadrant of the Cemetery. The Clerk's office has been working on this project with Lake County's Sentence to Serve program being used for the labor of digging up hidden pipe markers. It has turned out that there have not been many laborers available. Once all caps are placed, the process of selling plots will be much quicker.



Road Report – Smooth Sailing

Minor Flood Damage to Town Roads in June

Roads maintained by the Township escaped the worst of the damage after the June flood event, but repairs were needed to Loop Road, Flood Bay Road and Red Maple Road. A sink hole also developed on Press Camp Road. It has been stabilized, but the culvert may need to be replaced. A culvert was replaced on Dogwood and Trillium was graded and had the crown re-established. The road grader performed well this summer with no break downs. The pull-behind road groomer discussed in the last newsletter was not purchased. The cost was higher than what the benefit to the Town appeared to be. Chloride applied to township roads for dust control was kept to a minimum this summer and timely rains helped. Only one load was purchased compared to three the year before, a savings of about \$10,000.

Thompson partnered with the City of Two Harbors when they needed to borrow Silver Creek's pumper truck. They provided some needed repair work and will be doing some other work in trade for use of the truck and for some of the chloride. Chloride was also applied to the Gooseberry Falls State Park campground with expenses paid by the DNR to the Town of Silver Creek.

Recalls on the Dodge and the International tandem axle truck have been addressed and they are repaired and ready to go. The skid steer is also back from repair and ready for use.

Castle Danger Wastewater News

Advanced Utility Services Contracted for Operations

A Duluth company owned by Eric Appelwick was contracted to operate the wastewater system after the town's licensed operator resigned. Appelwick's company was involved briefly last summer in training Reineccius, and already had some knowledge of the system. A quick decision was made based upon immediate need as well as the small number of comparable companies located close enough to do the on-site visits and repairs. A three-year agreement with Advanced Utility Services was signed to provide continuity to the system and to provide training time to license a new employee should the Board decide to go in that direction.

Will the Agreement be Affordable?

The system was sitting on a fund balance of about \$200,000 at the start of this agreement. Funds have been saved to address problems with the aging system. So yes, the agreement is affordable. Funds come from rates charged to users, septage dumping fees, and assessments charged to new connections.

Will Town Employees be Involved?

Some routine work, as well as occasional work requiring heavy equipment, will continue to be done by Town employees (and billed to the wastewater system). Doing so will reduce the cost of outsourcing.

Road Bumps

Challenges this Quarter

Equipment breakdowns along with timing of repairs have made it difficult to address large projects. Having the road crew at less than full staffing is also causing challenges. The Town's tractor has required repair and unfortunately the vendor is backed up due to harvest season. This has meant that mowing the roadsides is not happening at the current time. The plan is to get as much mowing as possible done when the tractor is fixed.

Ongoing work has been needed to address a beaver dam blocking a culvert and causing flooding over Alger Grade. The blockage has been removed several times but so far, the busy beaver has rebuilt every time.

Mailbox Ready for Winter?

Mailboxes must have regulation swing-arm posts. To purchase the swing arm or have the Town install it, call 218-834-5255.

Wastewater

New Connections

One new residential connection is fully completed. The second connection is laid-in but the home is still in construction and the Town is waiting on power to be pulled to the site in order to complete our testing.

The Town also has had an inquiry about a potential new RV Park located in the Castle Danger district in the commercial area. This plan is not finalized, nor has the application been received. But if it does move forward, it would represent a significant new account for the sewer system. Each new account adds to the overall financial stability.

New Number for sewer alarm or emergency: call 833-428-2073

Mobile Recycling

Potential Silver Creek Location

Tired of Driving your Recycling into Town? Lake County has received a grant for mobile recycling and tasked with increasing the amount of recycling in the County. Colleen Wallin from Lake County Solid Waste (and a Silver Creek Resident) will be proposing a plan to keep this mobile recycling center in Silver Creek to make it easier and faster for folks to dispose of recycling. Currently this is only a proposal, and it will be up to the Board of Supervisors to decide if there is a good place and process to ensure access while maintaining cleanliness. If you would like to see this happen, consider coming to the meeting at 6:30 pm on September 10th, (decision September 17th) or email your comments to Colleen Wallin at colleen.wallin@co.lake.mn.us.



Do we want Closer Recycling?

Lake County Mobile Recycling Trailer is picture above.

We Stand Corrected

Apologies In the last edition, we got it wrong on Memorial Day! The flag is lowered at dawn and then raised at noon. Mike Hoops, who informed us of this mistake, also reported that he has been doing flag duty for 6 to 7 years.

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

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TOWN OF SILVER CREEK