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March
2022



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

Welcome to the *SILVER CREEK SOURCE*. If you have ideas or would like to contribute a story, please reach out to Alison Oftedahl, Clerk at silvercreek@frontiernet.net or 834-5255.

Cemetery Regulation Changes

Free Plot for Silver Creek Veterans

Honorably discharged Veterans who are residents of Silver Creek are eligible to receive a free plot in the Silver Creek Cemetery. This applies to plot only, not burial. As noted by Lake County Veterans Service Officer Brad Anderson, a Veteran is someone who served in the Military. This benefit is not restricted to those serving in foreign wars.

Financial Hardship Appeal Process for Any Resident

Language was added to the regulations: "Families of deceased residents facing financial hardship may appeal to the Board of Supervisors for waiver of lot price". Speak to one of the Supervisors to make an appeal.

Annual Meeting March 8, 8:15 p.m.

You are Invited – Come Vote on the Proposed Levy

Exercise your right to vote on the proposed levy, hear reports from the Supervisors, and learn about planned road projects. The meeting will be held at 1924 Town Road. Because the law requires Election Judges, Supervisors, and Clerks to be on site for the Election and Board of Canvass, it was decided to hold the Annual Meeting live, and in-person. View the proposed levy numbers on the next page.

Township Election March 8

Voss and Oftedahl Run Unopposed

On the ballot this year is Board Chairman Chuck Voss, who is up for reelection for another three-year term, and Clerk Alison Oftedahl, up for reelection for a two-year term. Township Elections are held on Township Day, the second Tuesday of March by statute. The Election will be held in the Board Meeting room. Polls will be open noon to 8 p.m. at 1924 Town Road. Call 834-5255 for absentee ballot materials. **Thank you, Laura Kleive, Phil Sogge, Tim Turk and Katie Anderson, for agreeing to serve as Election Judges.**



Digging Out...

Winter Efforts lead to Spring Momentum

Thompson and Reineccius have plowed snow and dug us out over and over this winter, almost every week the snow fell on their day off! Likewise, in the office we have been digging out from under a sea of financial reports, documents to be shredded after the end of year audit, and To Do notes on post-its. Here's hoping the digging comes to an end soon.

Expectations for Taconite Tax

Revenue Down Last Year

The Taconite Production Tax has not decreased, but the production was down in 2020 and therefore payments in 2021 were down. A chart from the Minnesota Department of Revenue showed only 29.1 million tons in 2020 after 37.1 and 39 million tons the two years before that. Since 2006 Silver Creek has averaged \$78,000 per year from the production tax. This money helps keep the levy (and your property taxes) down. For the 2023 budget, the Supervisors took a cautious view and only wrote \$55,000 into the plan in case lower production continues.



Proposed Levy Lower by 2%

Conservative Budget Plan for 2023

Strong fund balances, fiscal responsibility, and Federal stimulus funds (American Rescue Plan Act) enabled the Board to feel comfortable proposing a lower 2023 levy than the one in effect for this year. In developing the Budget and Levy, the Board reviewed a spreadsheet that provides both detailed and long-term trends with data back to 2006. Last year the Town (not including Sewer) budgeted \$559,684 and then actually spent \$483,674.

BUDGET	2023	2022
General	\$84,500	\$73,000
Road & Bridge	\$313,000	\$314,500
Road	\$20,000	\$20,000
Enhancement		
Building	\$38,750	\$37,750
Fire	\$45,000	\$50,000
Cemetery	\$10,500	\$10,500
General Debt	\$56,000	\$56,000
Service		
TOTAL BUDGET	\$567,750	\$561,750
LEVY	2023	2022
General	\$30,000	\$42,500
Road & Bridge	\$249,000	\$246,500
Road	\$20,000	\$20,000
Enhancement		
Building	\$25,000	\$25,000
Fire	\$45,000	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$2,500	\$2,500
General Debt	\$28,500	\$28,500
Service		
TOTAL LEVY	\$400,000	\$410,000
Projected other	95,450	\$116,150
Income including Taconite and Gas Tax		
TOWN TOTAL	495,450	\$526,150

Note: Projected income is an estimate. A lower estimate of Taconite was used in the budget levy process.

Castle Danger Wastewater Finances in Good Shape

Funds used to run the sewer come from user fees. Rates have not yet been set for 2023.

American Rescue Plan Act

Road Infrastructure now an Allowable Use

Last year when Federal ARPA funds were distributed to local governments, the use was restricted to direct COVID response, or water or wastewater infrastructure. The allowable uses have been expanded to include road and bridge infrastructure or materials. The Town received approximately \$60,000 of which about \$23,000 has been spent on the Stewart River Project. Another \$60,000 will be received this year.

Hall Rental

Rates Remain Low

The Historic Hall, Pavilion and Board Meeting Room can be rented for the same low rates as last year. The Rental Agreement may be found online or obtained from the Clerk.

Seasonal Storage

Nine Campers and Boats Stored in Pavilion

The Town received \$1876 for storage of boats and campers. This revenue, along with hall rental fees, offsets the expense of maintaining the buildings.

New Cell Tower

County Land on E Alger Grade to have 325 ft Tower

Lake County has approved a new cell tower to be built on Lake County property that lies along E Alger Grade south of Clark Road. The Planning Commission stated that there are important benefits to health and safety because emergency communications are improved. However nearby residents were frustrated by the lack of consideration for other sites farther from residences according to Greg Hull, who attended the Hearing. The Town of Silver Creek has sent a letter to the County on behalf of residents to request that other county land sites be considered instead.

Stewart River Project Update

New Preliminary Engineering Report Completed

Bollig Engineering completed an updated engineering report for the project. The new preliminary plan pipes waste down to the expanded Two Harbors Treatment Plant. View the 192-page report on Town of Silver Creek's website at ttosc.org.



Believe it or not, this is the first weekend of December!

Thank you to Bob Skogen, Richard Wasilewski, Mike and Sherri Kelly, Burl Johnson, Eric and Kayla Elefson, and Brad Nagel and the Red Wing Environmental Center team for allowing the ride to cross their private property.

Road Report

New Plow and Dump Truck

The new tandem axle truck ordered last spring is expected soon. The Town is in the process of working out a financing plan with Mid-State Truck Services with payments over seven years.

Financial Position of Road and Bridge Fund

The Road and Bridge fund showed a balance of \$159,556 as of 12/31/2021 up from the same time last year. Careful management, a dry summer with no flooding, and luck in avoiding any major vehicle repairs enabled the team to stay under budget.

Replacement of Dodge Truck

A plan to spend ARPA funds on a replacement of the 2012 Dodge Truck is in the works. The old Dodge has been plagued with many issues and the instrument panel is like a Christmas tree display of error lights.

Goodbye and Thank-you to Allen Anderson

On-call Operator Allen Anderson provided snow plowing and hauling support for the Town. We want to thank him for his service and wish him a happy retirement.

Castle Danger Wastewater News

Wastewater Enterprise in Solid Financial Position

As the Castle Danger System approaches 25 years of age, funds are being set aside for possible infrastructure failures in the future. Funds collected from the user fees are divided with 25% going into a replacement fund. This fund showed a balance of \$96,944 at the end of 2021. This is good news for all users of the system.

Rate Changes to be discussed at the Annual Rate Hearing on April 12, 2022, at 6:30 PM

Users of the Castle Danger System are invited to the Rate Hearing to learn the state of the system and observe the process used to set rates. As of now, a residential rate increase is not anticipated.

Potential of Six New Connections

Three residents have notified the Town that they will be building houses this summer and will connect to the sewer. In addition, the three connections begun last year are now waiting for new houses to be completed. The amount of septage from private septic systems hauled into the treatment ponds has doubled in the past few years.



The Town Board Meeting Room was rented for Global Fat Bike Day. Chili and other munchies were enjoyed after a ride around the neighborhood.

Your Property Tax

Several Factors impact the Amount Due

The class and valuation of your property, the value of others' property, and the amount of the County and Township levies are used to calculate your bill. Think of the levy as a pie. Market Value of your property and its classification as well as that of others impacts the size of your slice of pie. If you do not understand your tax invoice, the first call should be to the Lake County Assessor at 218-834-8310. Sometimes these questions lead to the discovery of mistakes, and you may have your issues solved with a phone call. If that is not the case, you have the right to appeal.

Your Right to Appeal

LBAE Hearing on May 3 at 1 p.m. 1924 Town Rd.

You have the right to appeal the valuation of your property used to calculate your property taxes. Step one is to call the Lake County Assessor to check for mistakes. Step two is to appear at the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) in Silver Creek on May 3, at 1 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road.



Open and Ready to Serve

How may we help you?

It may not look as if anyone is here, but if the *Open* sign appears in the window, we are ready to serve you. Some of the items that we could help with include sewer payments, mailbox supports, new driveway permits, culvert issues in the right-of-way, cemetery plots, burial, hall rental, obtaining salt/sand, putting your issue on the agenda, or finding out the right of way of a Town road.

Did you know?

Road Costs are a Challenge at the Local Level

There are 1780 Townships supporting 35,000 miles of roads -- 39% of all roads in the state! However, Townships received far less than 39% of transportation dollars (gas tax). Silver Creek received \$17,624 in gas tax last year but had to spend just over \$200,000 on road maintenance factoring in vehicles, payroll, gravel, salt/sand, diesel, repairs etc. Residents pick up the lion's share of the maintenance costs. The Minnesota Association of Townships is pushing at the legislature for a better dedicated source of funding than the Gas Tax but so far has not been successful.

Thank you to Dutton Foster for editing this newsletter.

There may be a pile of snow ...
The parking lot may look empty ...
but if this sign appears in the window, then we are
OPEN and ready to serve you.

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

TOWN OF SILVER CREEK
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