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March
2023



Quarterly Newsletter of the Town of Silver Creek

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

Township Election March 14

Absentee Voting Materials Available Now

Come vote for one Supervisor and one Treasurer on Tuesday March 14th. The Election will be held in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road. Polls will be open from noon to 8 p.m. or vote absentee now. Call 218-834-5255 for more information.

Meet the Candidates

Two Candidates Running for Supervisor

We asked the Supervisor candidates to introduce themselves to you and below are their words. Our current Treasurer Jamie Pellman is up for re-election, running unopposed.

Colleen Wallin for Supervisor

Hello Silver Creek, my name is Colleen Wallin and my husband Ward and I have lived in our township for 33 years. We raised our 2 sons Ian and Ero here and we as a family love the outdoors. Thank you all for getting out to the Polls to vote!

Scott Krech for Supervisor

I am the owner and operator of Krech's Sawmill in Silver Creek. I've been a resident of Silver Creek for almost 20 years along with my wife Savannah. We have three children, Layla, Althea, Rebel; and a crazy yellow lab named Stella. When I'm not busy at the sawmill, you can find me landscaping my yard. I also enjoy visiting with my customers, neighbors, and friends. I care about Silver Creek very much. It's the place where I've raised my family. I feel like there is a strong sense of community here where neighbors look out for one another and genuinely care.

Come to the Annual Meeting

You are Invited – March 14th at 8:15 p.m.

Exercise your right to vote on the proposed levy, hear reports from the Supervisors, and learn about planned projects. The meeting will be held at 1924 Town Road in the Board Meeting Room. We look forward to seeing you there! The Annual Meeting is (by law) held on Township Day, the second Tuesday of March and is the people's meeting.

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.



A Tough Year for Mailboxes!
Learn how to avoid this –page 3 →
Photo by Paul Thompson

Proposed Levy Up 10%

Inflation and Taconite Reductions Drive Increase

The Town ended 2022 in a good position financially, but the inflation rate on supplies and the lower taconite expectations caused concern that fund balances may be significantly lower by this time next year. The cost of diesel has doubled and utilities and many supplies are up significantly. At the same time, with the Silver Bay mine closed all last year, and taconite tax uncertain, less “other income” is expected. For this reason, the Board felt that a levy increase to match the inflation will be needed. At the Budget/Levy Working Meeting, the Board spent four hours reviewing actual expenses and receipts and planning the 2024 budget and levy detailed below.

Proposed 2024 Budget & Levy

BUDGET	2024	2023
General	\$118,100	\$84,500
Road & Bridge	\$343,500	\$313,000
Road Enhancement	\$20,000	\$20,000
Building	\$39,250	\$38,750
Fire	\$45,000	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$10,500	\$10,500
General Debt Service	\$56,000	\$56,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$632,350	\$567,750
LEVY	2024	2023
General	\$44,000	\$30,000
Road & Bridge	\$275,000	\$249,000
Road Enhancement	\$20,000	\$20,000
Building	\$25,000	\$25,000
Fire	\$45,000	\$45,000
Cemetery	\$2,500	\$2,500
General Debt Service	\$28,500	\$28,500
TOTAL LEVY	\$440,000	\$400,000
Projected “Other” Income including Taconite and Gas Tax	\$95,300	\$95,450
TOWN TOTAL INCOME	\$535,300	\$495,450

Note: Projected “Other” income is an estimate based upon prior year’s receipts and the average received for that funding source.

Taconite Production Tax Outlook

Three Year Average used for Calculation

In 2022, the Town received \$70,438 in Taconite Production Tax, after having planned the budget with an expectation of \$77,500. For this year and next (2023-4), the Board used an estimate of \$55,000 when creating the budget. The historical average amount received when looking back to 2006 is \$64,516. The tax funds received are based upon a rolling three-year average to smooth out the ups and downs. However, that could also mean that a low point could follow after production increases based upon past years. It was recently reported that the Silver Bay Mine is expected to be back in production, so that is good news for Town finances.



Thank You Chris Jaeger

Legacy of Outgoing Supervisor

Supervisor Jaeger was a strong advocate for the road functions of the town and was instrumental in obtaining \$15,800 on the sale of the old Dodge. He brought a unique perspective based upon his farming background. But what we will miss most is his sense of humor and his ability to defuse tense discussions.

Castle Danger Wastewater Financial Information

4% Under-Budget for 2022

\$154,040 was spent last year in running the wastewater treatment system. That includes payroll and supplies, but also vendors and utilities. Actual expenses came in 4% under budget. This year a \$170,000 budget has been planned; up slightly from the year before based upon inflation and some anticipated repairs. The Replacement Fund balance was \$97,233 at the end of 2022. As a reminder, funds used to run the wastewater system come solely from users of the system.

Sewer Users are invited to the Annual Rate Hearing

Users of Castle Danger Wastewater are invited to the Rate Hearing to learn about the wastewater system and voice any concerns with rates. Moderate rate increases are under consideration based upon future maintenance issues and current inflation rates. See the next page for more details.

Sewer users are invited to the Annual Rate Hearing on April 11, 2022, at 6:30 PM in the Board Meeting Room at 1924 Town Road.

Cell Tower Update

County Land on E Alger Grade to have 345 ft Tower

As reported a year ago, this Tower is still being planned. Public notice in the Northshore Journal February 10 edition stated that the Tower is being built by Tillman Infrastructure and that it will actually be 345 feet instead of 325 as we previously reported in this newsletter. The notice states that the public can access www.fcc.gov/asr/applications to view their proposal. Lake County is the zoning authority for this tower (not Silver Creek).



Major Storm Kicks off the Season

32 Inches of Snow & 2-Day Power Outage

Both tandem axle trucks were in full use during our first big storm. It was difficult for Reineccius and Thompson even to reach the Town Garage as County highways were not plowed that early in the morning. Luckily the crew arrived while power was still on and the garage door could be electronically raised. A group of trees along Town Road near the Encampment River bridge had been blown down and took the power out for the entire road. That was the beginning of a long day that involved battling the slimy wet snow and getting stuck. The road crew was grateful to have the two large trucks and we were all very grateful to have them clearing our roads. Initial plowing was completed the first day, but that night it was tough to get the garage doors closed with the power still out. Clean up of roads continued for another full day. The Town Office was closed for a couple of days with no phone service. Town Road was one of the last areas in Silver Creek to have power restored two days later.

Gravel Pit Update

Garbage has been cleared at the gravel pit site and Reineccius was in the process of conducting soil testing with Lake County when snow hit. Deputy Clerk Anderson submitted an MPCA storm water runoff plan. Supervisor Hull is working with Lake County to request a waiver of the reclamation bond requirement.

Mailboxes and Winter

MN Law requires a Swing-Away Swivel Post

Because the snow is deep here in Minnesota, and because snow must be plowed close to the mailbox so that mail can be delivered, state law requires that a swing-away mailbox post be used. If the post supporting your mailbox is not swing-away, you could be liable for any accident. If you do not have the correct post and you live on a township road, please contact our office to arrange for purchase and installation in the spring. If you live on a County Highway, contact Lake County Highway Department to arrange for one. Finally, if you live on Highway 61, you can contact MNDOT about your mailbox. To view the full Silver Creek mailbox policy, go to www.ttosc.org, click Services...Roads...Mailbox Policy.

MN Statute 169.072 UNAUTHORIZED MAILBOX INSTALLATION. Subdivision 1. Public hazard.

A mailbox installation or support on a public highway that does not meet the breakaway and location standards contained in rules adopted under subdivision 2 is declared to be a public nuisance, a road hazard, and a danger to the health and safety of the traveling public.

Castle Danger

Wastewater News

Upcoming Maintenance Planned

Lift Station 1 has some ongoing problems that are waiting for warmer weather. A repaired pump was installed late in the season due to vendor and supply issues. The pump is working but has some electrical problem causing repeated false alarms in the monitoring system. There is also a pipe with a temporary patch that needs to be fully replaced.

The Castle Danger Wastewater system has a few larger maintenance projects in its future. Two pumps in the Number One Lift Station will need to be replaced according to Wastewater Operator Mike Hoops. In addition, Pond Number One will likely eventually require dredging to remove sludge and sediment. Monies in the Wastewater Enterprise Replacement Fund are reserved for these larger system repairs. Twenty-five percent of every user-fee is deposited into this fund to cover larger issues that can arise over time.

Stewart River Project

Plan to Divide Project into Smaller Phases

Bollig Engineering will attempt to divide the wastewater project into several smaller phases that could be built one at a time, to lower the funding request and hopefully convince the Legislature to pay for the project. Last year the State did not approve a Bonding bill, and the federally directed spending was not awarded either. The current Stewart River Project plan is based upon piping waste down to Two Harbor's treatment plant. So the first phase would be the one closest to Two Harbors. At a meeting in Silver Creek, Bollig representative Mike Beard said they would like to continue pushing for the project and will not invoice the Town until funding is obtained. If you have questions or suggestions on this project, contact Chairman Chuck Voss.

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization – May 9th

How To Appeal Your Property Valuation

If you question the value set on your property, step one is to call the Lake County Assessor to check for mistakes. It is best to allow the assessor to visit and see the property in person. Then, if you are not satisfied after meeting with the assessor, you can come to the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) in Silver Creek on May 9, to have your concerns heard. If you remain unsatisfied after 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 meeting first.

Snow Plowing Reminder

Minnesota Statute 160.2715 (a) (1) prohibits the plowing, blowing, shoveling, or otherwise placing of snow on public roads. This includes the ditch and right of way area along roads. If you leave piles across the road or in the middle of the road that result in an accident, you will be liable for damages.

Historic Hall & Pavilion

Same Low Rates – Reserve for Your Event Today

Hall rental will remain the same low price as last year. Call soon to reserve the choice weekends such as Heritage Days.

Absentee Voting - Now

If you will not be here on March 14th

By the time this newsletter reaches you, there may be limited time, so please call the Office at 218-834-5255 to arrange to pick up absentee ballot materials. If you have absentee materials at home, your completed ballot with signature envelopes must be received by March 13th.

All in a Day's Work

Clerk's Corner – Vole Control

The January Regular Board Meeting featured a large vole running under the tables and around the room. Chairman Voss did the honors of herding him out and dispatching him. The next day the Clerks were plagued by a vole running out of the closet and back into a hole in the wall multiple times before

Thank you to Dutton Foster for editing this Newsletter.

SILVER CREEK SOURCE

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