

**Solway Town Board Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2025**

**I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Solway Town Board meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Ronald Gajewski, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Also present were Supervisors Scott Welsh and Jeffrey Keppers, Clerk Tami McGregor, Treasurer Cindy Moe, and six concerned citizens.

**II. CITIZEN REQUESTS/CONCERNS & CONTRACTOR REPORTS**

- A. Benches – Refinishing (Goodwill) (See: “Park”)
- B. Aggregate Tax Audit – Status Update (See: “Old Business”)

**III. MINUTES – TOWN BOARD MEETING OF DECEMBER 10, 2024**

**MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the minutes from the town board meeting of December 10, 2024, as presented.**

**IV. TREASURER’S REPORT – DECEMBER 31, 2024 – TENTATIVE**

**MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to accept the monthly Tentative Treasurer’s Report dated December 31, 2024, as presented and to zero out accounts using \$76,601.09 from aggregate funds.**

**Checking: 20286-20333**

Beginning Balance	\$36,699.16	
Receipts	126,292.17	
Disbursements	<u>-22,507.62</u>	
Ending Balance	\$140,483.71	<b>\$140,483.71</b>

**Money Market**

Beginning Balance	\$91,463.52	
Interest/Deposits	74.62	
Withdrawals	<u>0.00</u>	
Ending Balance	\$91,538.14	<b><u>\$91,538.14</u></b>

**Total Accounts** **\$232,021.85**

**V. CORRESPONDENCE (Requiring Board Action/Discussion)**

- A. Menards-West Duluth & Hermantown – “Account Authorized User Update” forms have been received from Menards-West and Hermantown. **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously that Paul Dunaiski be added and Leon Forstrom be removed as authorized users on Solway’s West Duluth and Hermantown Menards accounts.**

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### VI. **OUTSTANDING BILLS** – Treasurer Moe reported additional bills for the Outstanding Bills List as follows:

- Paul Dunaiski - \$25.00 (December Expenses)
- SVFD - \$55,000.00 (2025 Fire Protection and Medical Services)
- Emergency Apparatus Maintenance - \$2,986.76 (Misc. repairs on Engine #1, Tanker #3 & Rescue #5)

**MOTION by Keppers, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to pay all bills as listed on the Outstanding Bills List, and any additional bills presented by the town treasurer, for a total of \$107,588.46.**

### VII. **ROAD**

- A. Roadside Mowing Tractor Maintenance – At the December meeting, the board approved up to \$3,000 for repair of the power steering and packing of the front wheel bearings on the roadside mowing tractor. Butch Lund reported at the January meeting that Greg Bottila will call him when he is ready to have the tractor brought to him to begin the work.
- B. Rodda Grading & Excavating Invoice – On January 13, 2025, an invoice made out to Sathers Construction was received on Rodda Grading stationery, dated January 8, 2025, in the amount of \$797.50 for 5.5 hours of grading on September 25, 2024.

Prior to the January meeting, Supervisor Gajewski discussed this invoice with Mr. Rodda and was informed that the invoice related to grading on Jeffrey Road between Hwy. #2 and Maple Grove Road, that was done at the request of Jim Sathers. Mr. Rodda also indicated that he had hand-delivered the invoice to Mr. Sathers. After discussion, it was determined that the board will take no action to pay this invoice.

### VIII. **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

- A. Department Report – Chief Brandon Porter reported that the department continues to be very busy, with multiple calls on some days, and that they continue to assist other short-staffed departments. Membership is currently 12-13 members. The department continues to seek new members, with a goal of about 20 firefighters. There have been five recent recruits, with one of those being a rehire.
- B. Insurance (Engine #1-2005 Pierce Enforcer) Equipment Coverage – The completion of a cost inventory for the MN Association of Townships Insurance Trust (MATIT) to support a requested additional \$100,000 in coverage for equipment carried on Engine #1 was submitted at the January meeting and will be forwarded to MATIT.

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- C. DNR Wildland Matching Grant – The department has been approved for a 2025 DNR Wildland \$10,000 matching grant which, once received, will be used to outfit the 2017 Ford F550 (Unit #6). Per a December 30, 2024, email from Shelly Greniger with the DNR, funds still have not been received from the USFS. Ms. Greniger also indicated that the grant period will be extended to provide adequate time for purchases.
- D. 2004 Chevy Silverado (Unit #7) Sale – At the January meeting, Chief Porter submitted paperwork documenting the sale of Unit #7 on October 22, 2024, at the State and Municipal Truck Auction in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, in the amount of \$8,485.00. As was previously discussed, these funds will be utilized for equipment for the 2017 Ford F550 (Unit #6).
- E. 2017 Ford F550 (Unit #6) – A 2017 Ford F550 was purchased in August 2024 and will be equipped as funds become available. Clerk McGregor reported that the title for Unit #6 was transferred and has been received.

At the January meeting, Chief Porter submitted a proposal for the wildland skid for Unit #6 in the amount of \$20,345, and freight in the amount of approximately \$1,500. There was no quote for lights, radio, brush guard, decals, battery cut-off switch, etc.; however, those costs are estimated at \$14,000. Chief Porter indicated the department will pay for the flatbed with money received from Unit #7.

There was discussion regarding a potential bid from Stainless and Repair, and Chief Porter will contact them for pricing information; however, indicated that he went with a manufacturer specializing in wildland skids. Chief Porter is requesting \$20,000 at this time, with the remaining equipment being purchased piecemeal.

**MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously to approve up to \$22,000 for the wildland skid for Unit #6 (2017 Ford F550).** Chief Porter will continue to keep the township informed regarding purchase information on the additional items.

- F. Fire Hall Exterior Lighting – Light bulbs for the side yard lights have been purchased and will be replaced as schedules allow. There was nothing new to report at the January meeting.
- G. Insurance Coverage – As his schedule allows, Chief Porter is conducting an insurance analysis comparing the individual policies of the fire department and the township to ensure adequate coverage is in place and to eliminate any double coverage. Chief Porter reported at the January meeting that he is hoping to complete this project in the next couple of months.
- H. Fire Truck Titles (Units #2 & #5) – The township currently does not have titles for Units #2 (2011 International) and #5 (2015 F550 Super Duty). Clerk McGregor reported that according to the Minnesota and Wisconsin DMVs, titles have never been issued for these trucks. According to the DMV, it is common practice that fire trucks are bought and sold without titles; however,

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title applications can be made if MSO (Manufacturer's State of Origin) cards can be obtained from the dealerships where the units were purchased.

According to Chief Porter, it is possible that MSO cards may be obtained from Stainless and Repair on both trucks and he will investigate this.

- I. Parked Car at Fire Hall – There was discussion regarding a vehicle that has been parked at the fire hall since mid-October, and due to snow removal, needs to be moved. Chief Porter indicated that he has requested the owner to move the car by the end of next week.

IX. **RECYCLING** – There was nothing to report at the January meeting.

X. **HALL**

- A. Video Conferencing & Audio-Visual System – According to Tim Aldrich on the day of the January meeting, the camera is scheduled to come in today for video conferencing, and he is hoping to complete installation of the system prior to the February meeting.

Although Mr. Aldrich had made some adjustments to the table microphones on the board table prior to the January meeting, there did not seem to be any improvement and this information will be relayed to Mr. Aldrich.

- B. Lighting Conversion to LED – Butch Lund reported that he and Paul Dunaiski have completed the lighting conversion project.

Mr. Lund submitted three photos of diffuser panel options and pricing information for the board's review and a selection was made. **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of diffuser units, at a cost of \$14.19 each, to replace all downstairs hall units.**

- C. Highchair Replacement – Treasurer Moe reported at the January meeting that wooden highchairs are \$44.99 plus shipping. Plastic chairs start at \$120.69, plus shipping, and the style that converts to accommodate an infant carrier is \$220.54, plus shipping. **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski, and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of one brown plastic highchair that converts to accommodate an infant carrier in the amount of \$220.54, plus shipping.**

- D. Chair Cleaning – There are a number of the upholstered hall chairs that need cleaning. Representatives from Goodwill had planned to attend the January meeting to present a proposal; however, due to illness, were unable to attend and a quote was not received.

Paul Dunaiski indicated that the maintenance staff is willing to clean the chairs in-house, and after discussion, it was determined that priority for this project will be given to township staff. **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously that chair cleaning will be done by**

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**in-house maintenance staff.** Supervisor Gajewski will so inform Goodwill and maintenance staff expects to have the project completed by the end of February.

### XI. PARK

- A. Safety Inspection Report – Supervisor Gajewski reported there were no safety hazards included on the January 9, 2025, report.
- B. Benches - Refinishing – Two additional benches were picked up by Goodwill on January 8, 2025. One completed bench had been dropped off prior to the meeting for viewing and everyone was very satisfied with the quality of the work.
- C. Soccer Nets – Paul Dunaiski obtained dimensions for the large town hall soccer field nets needing replacement and a request was submitted to Proctor Futbol to see whether they would be able to provide replacements. Per a January 5, 2025, email from Proctor Futbol, they are willing to provide nets and will drop them off prior to the start of the spring soccer season.

**XII. CEMETERY** – There was nothing to report at the January meeting.

**XIII. COMMITTEES** – There was nothing to report at the January meeting.

### XIV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Aggregate Tax Audits – Amanda Nelson reported at the January meeting that 2018 audits for Sathers, Northland and One North have been completed and that no additional aggregate tax was due.

At the January meeting, Ms. Nelson submitted a timeline for 2019 audits, along with copies of her January 3, 2025, correspondence to the pits requesting records and notifying them of submission deadlines. Ms. Nelson also indicated that she has been experiencing some difficulty in obtaining 2019 pit records and will continue to keep the town board informed regarding compliance with her requests. She intends to complete 2019 and 2020 audits by the end of 2025.

- B. MN Association of Townships (MAT) Annual Conference - The MAT Annual Conference was held on December 13 and 14, 2024, and the entire Solway Board attended. Educational sessions were provided on a variety of topics, including presentations relating to cannabis, solar power, clerk duties, and an update from the State Auditor's Office regarding the township's accounting system. There were also vendors who provided information on a variety of products and services available to townships.

Input was given to Solway's district representative that the information included in this year's conference could likely have been covered in a one-day event.

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- C. Air Conditioner (Old Office Unit) – The old office air conditioner has been for sale at the recycling center during its regular hours, with no offers made. Supervisor Keppers inquired regarding purchase of the unit for \$10.00. **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski, and carried that the old office window air conditioning unit be sold to Jeff Keppers for \$10.00. Keppers abstained from the vote due to conflict of interest.**
- D. MN Association of Townships (MAT) Township Day at the Capitol on 01/27 – Supervisors Gajewski, Welsh and Keppers, Treasurer Moe and Clerk McGregor will be attending Township Day at the Capitol on January 27, 2025, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in St. Paul. Free bus transportation will be provided by the St. Louis County Association of Townships with pick-up at the Solway Town Hall at 7:15 a.m.
- E. HipCamps – Clerk McGregor reported at the January meeting that no additional information has been received from St. Louis County Planning & Zoning regarding the incomplete variance application previously submitted for the Solway Township property relating to the pending compliance issue.
- F. Cannabis – There has been no additional information or inquiries regarding interest in the township as a cannabis site.
- G. Citizen of the Year Nominations – The nomination period for the Citizen of the Year award is open until February 1<sup>st</sup>. Nominations will be reviewed by the board and a selection made at the February meeting.

**XV. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Budget Meeting – **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously that the Public Budget Meeting is set for Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.**
- B. Township Election Judge Appointments - Four election judges and one alternate, are needed for the Township Election on March 11, 2025.

**SOLWAY TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION #2025-1  
Appointing Election Judges/Head Judge for Township Election**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.21, Subd. 2, requires the Town Board, as the governing body of the town, to appoint Election Judges for the Township Election scheduled to be held Tuesday, March 11, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the election judges must meet the qualifications set out in Minnesota Statutes 204B.19 including eligibility to vote; and

**WHEREAS**, the minimum number of required election judges for the March 11, 2025, Township Election pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.22 has been determined to be four for the Town of Solway.

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Town Board of Solway Township, St. Louis County, Minnesota, that:

1. Leon Forstrom, Amy Johnson, Regena Merrit, and Bonnie Siiro be appointed as election judges, and Scott Welsh as an alternate election judge, for the March 11, 2025, Township Election; and
2. Regena Merritt be appointed as head judge.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Solway hereby authorizes any election judge to be compensated as required by Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.31, in an amount set by the Town Board at \$17.00 per hour for election judges, and \$17.00 per hour for the head election judge, which is not less than the prevailing Minnesota minimum wage, plus mileage. The clerk may make election judge appointments to fill vacancies should they occur.

Supervisor Gajewski moved the adoption of the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and it was declared adopted on the 14th day of January 2025 upon the following votes:

Yeas: Supervisors Gajewski, Welsh and Keppers – 3

Nays: None - 0

Abstain: None - 0

Absent: None - 0

- C. Absentee Ballot Board Appointments – An Absentee Ballot Board is needed for the Township Election on March 11, 2025.

### **SOLWAY TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION 2025-2 Appointing Absentee Ballot Board for March Township Election**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes Section 203B.121, Subd.1 requires the town board, as the governing body of the town, to appoint a ballot board to process all absentee ballots returned to the town clerk for the town election scheduled to be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the ballot board must consist of election judges trained in the handling of absentee ballots, or staff trained as election judges; and

**WHEREAS**, even though only two members are required to meet whenever an absentee ballot needs to be processed, the ballot board must consist of at least the same number of members as the minimum number of required election judges for the town election, which pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.22 has been determined to be four for the March 11, 2025, election for the Town of Solway; and

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**WHEREAS**, the Town Board for the Town of Solway has appointed its election judges for the March 11, 2025, election as required by Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.21;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Town Board for the Town of Solway hereby appoints the following election judges to serve as the ballot board required to perform all duties required in the processing of absentee ballots required under Minnesota Statutes Section 203B.121 and all other applicable statutes and rules:

Leon Forstrom  
Tami McGregor  
Regena Merritt  
Bonnie Siiro

Supervisor Gajewski moved the adoption of the Resolution, seconded by Supervisor Welsh, and it was declared adopted on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025, upon the following votes:

Yeas: Supervisors Gajewski, Welsh & Keppers – 3

Nays: None – 0

Abstain: None - 0

Absent: None - 0

- D. Annual Meeting Public Packet Fund Reports – The board was given copies of the 2024 public packet and Fund Reports for review. Once additions are made, the reports should be submitted to the clerk for inclusion in the 2025 public packets.
- E. Employee Wages – The last wage increases for staff were made on November 21, 2021. After discussion, it was determined that this matter will be discussed at the budget meeting on February 25, 2025; however, any increases will be retroactive to the first of the year.
- F. Country Music Show Donation (Resolution) – On December 23, 2024, a donation was received from the Country Music Show.

### **SOLWAY TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION 2025-3 Accepting Donation from Country Music Show**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Solway is authorized to accept and maintain donations of real and personal property pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section § 465.03 for the benefit of its citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, The Country Music Show has offered to contribute a donation of \$150.00; and,

**WHEREAS**, there are no terms or conditions for the donation; and,

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**WHEREAS**, all such donations have been contributed to the Town of Solway for the benefit of its citizens, as allowed by law; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of Solway Township finds that it is appropriate to accept the donation offered.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Town Board of Solway Township, St. Louis County, Minnesota that:

The donation described above is accepted and shall be used as allowed by law.

Supervisor Gajewski moved the adoption of the Resolution, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and it was declared adopted on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025, upon the following votes:

Yeas: Supervisors Gajewski, Welsh & Keppers - 3

Nays: None - 0

Absent: None - 0

- G. Leon Forstrom (Retirement Reception) – Discussion will be held off on this matter until it is determined that Mr. Forstrom will not continue to work in maintenance.

### **XVI. SIGN CHECKS/ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to adjourn tonight's meeting with the signing of checks. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.