

**Solway Town Board Meeting Minutes  
May 14, 2024**

**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 Supervisor Jeffrey Keppers, Clerk Tami McGregor, Treasurer Cindy Moe, Deputy Clerk Regena Merritt, and four concerned citizens. Supervisor Scott Welsh was not present at the meeting.

**II. MINUTES – TOWN BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 9, 2024**

**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the minutes from the town board meeting of April 9, 2024, as presented.**

**III. TREASURER’S REPORT – APRIL 30, 2024**

**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the monthly Treasurer’s Report dated April 30, 2024, as presented.**

**Checking: 19922-19954**

Beginning Balance	\$77,208.56	
Receipts	4,514.01	
Disbursements	<u>-28,022.98</u>	
Ending Balance	\$53,699.59	<b>\$53,699.59</b>

**Money Market**

Beginning Balance	\$110,810.40	
Interest/Deposits	183.91	
Withdrawals	<u>0.00</u>	
Ending Balance	\$110,994.31	<b><u>\$110,994.31</u></b>

**Total Accounts** **\$164,693.90**

**IV. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE (By date received)**

- 04/10 Ken Maki, Legacy Custom Coatings – 2024 Calcium Chloride application cost estimate: \$1.57 per gallon, sprayed (Discussed under “Road”)
- 04/10 Tim Aldrich, Audio Systems – Final invoice with 2 panoramic security cameras (Discussed under “Hall”)
- 04/10 Teghan Grulkowski, Frontier Energy – Fire hall and parking lot lighting eligible for MN Power rebates; MN Power working directly with Chief Porter RE: fire hall

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- 04/11 James Lindquist - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form received; no payment due (Not in packet)
- 04/11 Lorilee Blais, WLSSD – Will visit recycling site next week to replace full battery box and bring out new lock
- 04/11 MATIT Insurance – Endorsement RE: addition of 2010 Polaris 800 UTV (Not in packet)
- 04/11 Richard Flesvig, Red-D-Electric – Order confirmation RE: parking lot light fixtures
- 04/11 Northland Constructors - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form received; no payment due (Not in packet)
- 04/11 Jim Sathers - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form and payment received (Not in packet)
- 04/13 United Township Officers of MN – Concerns RE: elimination of MAT Legislative & Research Committee and suggestion to rebuild
- 04/16 Coons Aggregate - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form and payment received (Not in packet)
- 04/16 One North, LLC (Mn Aggregate) - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form received; no payment due (Not in packet)
- 04/16 MN DNR – Reg flag warning issued in NE MN for extreme fire risk, inc. SLC
- 04/17 MN Dept. of Revenue – Notice of 2024 in-person employment tax seminars
- 04/17 Victor Lund, SLC Public Works – SLC to stake clear zone and ROW limits for Hwy. #2 driveway entrance lighting by 05/03
- 04/17 SLFRF (ARPA) – U.S. Dept. of Treasury to host workshops on 4/24 & 4/25 RE: program annual reporting; notice also forwarded by MN Association of Townships on 04/18 (Attended by Treasurer Moe & Clerk McGregor)
- 04/17 Christopher Benson, Northern Door – Quotes RE: hall front door hardware/access control system (Discussed under “Hall”)
- 04/19 MN PERA – Notice of “Understanding ERIS” Webinar on 04/25 (Attended by Treasurer Moe)
- 04/20 United Township Officers of MN – Info RE: MAT (MN Association of Townships) and MATIT (MN Association of Townships Insurance Trust) relationship
- 04/23 United Township Officers of MN – Update RE: MAT bylaw amendment procedures and excerpts from U.S. District Court Judge warning MAT board to follow bylaws. (Email also forwarded from SLCAT on 04/29)
- 04/23 SLC Elections – Notice of mandatory 2024 Election Administration Training on 06/14 at Duluth GSC
- 04/23 Cathy Rouleau, SLCAT – SLC Public Works 5-Year Construction Plan maps and webpage link (Maps not in packet)
- 04/24 SLCAT (St. Louis County Association of Townships) – Invite to SLCAT officers to attend 2024 Annual Meeting and Election on 05/22 at 6:00PM
- 04/24 COMO Oil & Propane – Propane Locked Price Commercial Sales Agreement for 05/01/24 to 04/30/26 - \$1.329 per gallon, plus applicable

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fees. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept Como's locked price of \$1.329 per gallon, for 4800 gallons, for the period of 05/01/24 to 04/30/26.**

- 04/24 Shelton Excavating - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form and payment received (Not in packet)
- 04/25 MAT (MN Association of Townships) – Bylaw proposed changes voting results
- 04/25 Forum Communications-Duluth News Tribune – Affidavit of Publication-Important Information RE: Assessment and Classification of Property (RE: 5/9 LBAE Mtg.)
- 04/26 Forum Communications-Pine Journal – Affidavit of Publication-Important Information RE: Assessment and Classification of Property (RE: 5/9 LBAE Mtg.)
- 04/26 Envirotech – Calcium chloride pricing (Discussed under “Road”)
- 04/27 DeCaigny Excavating - 2024 first quarter Aggregate Material Tax Reporting Form received; no payment due (Not in packet)
- 04/30 Northern Door & Hardware – Revised quote #24-0522 RE: Replacement of panic bar and key cylinder on hall front entrance door. (Discussed under “Hall”)
- 04/30 Proctor Journal/Hermantown Star – Affidavits of Publication-Important Information RE: Assessment and Classification of Property (RE: 5/9 LBAE Mtg.)
- 04/30 MN Association of Townships (MAT) – 2024 MAT Membership Survey
- 05/01 Sarah Turek, MATIT – Value of 2010 Polaris Crew Cab UTV adjusted to \$9,000.
- 05/01 MN Power – Rate Increase Notice to Counties and Municipalities; public hearing dates listed
- 05/01 Rodney Harvard, Envirotech – Calcium chloride application formula and account set-up link
- 05/06 Bradley Gustafson, SLC Community Development – 2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) income and rent limits
- 05/07 MAT – Legislative Update and Advocacy Alert RE: funding for transportation and firefighter grants
- 05/07 Teghan Grulkowski, Frontier Energy – Estimate of \$350 MN Power rebate on parking lot lighting once project is completed
- 05/08 Teghan Grulkowski, Frontier Energy – If applicable, MN Power rebates for mini-splits and air exchange system will be processed with parking lot lighting rebate
- 05/08 Gerhard von Rabenau, SLC Elections - Notice of Omniballot and printer due for update; drop off at SLC Elections by 05/24
- 05/09 United States Bankruptcy Court – Notice of (I) Entry of Confirmation Order, (II) Occurrence of Effective Date, and (III) The Administrative Expense Claims Bar Date RE: Local Government Opioid Claims

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- 05/09 Sarah Turek, MATIT – SVFD 2013 Recovery Trailer deleted from Property Detail listing; will look into whether premium was charged since 06/12/23 deletion
- 05/09 Sarah Turek, MATIT – Will receive \$203 credit on 2013 SVFD Recovery Trailer; premium charged in error on 2024 renewal although unit was deleted 06/12/23
- 05/09 Kim Sarvi, City of Rice Lake – Notice of Duluth Area Townships (DAT) meeting on 05/16/24 at 6:30 PM at Rice Lake City Hall
- 05/10 Brian Boder, SLC Public Works – 2024 Calcium Chloride Dust Control Bid (Discussed under “Road”)
- 05/10 MN Association of Townships – Registration info RE: MAT Town Law Review on 05/31 in Otsego, MN. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously that board members wishing to attend the MAT Town Law Review on 05/31/24 may do so at township expense.**
- 05/10 Mike Braun, MN Power – Estimates for Hwy #2 driveway entrance lighting (Discussed under “Road”)
- 05/13 Mark Munger – Introductory letter RE: campaign for MN House Seat 3B
- 05/13 Cathy Rouleau, SLCAT – Notice of SLC Association of Townships dinner, annual meeting and election on 05/22 in Cotton
- 05/13 PHS Chem Free Grad Party Committee – Thank you for township’s donation to 2024 PHS Chem Free Grad Party

**V. OUTSTANDING BILLS** - Treasurer Moe reported that there were no additional bills.

**MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Keppers, 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 \$17,345.24.**

**VI. CITIZEN REQUESTS AND CONCERNS** – None

**VII. ROAD**

- A. Parking Lot Lighting – Update to LED – At the April meeting, the proposal from Red-D-Electric in the amount of \$2,361.48 was approved to replace the six existing metal halide parking lot light fixtures with LED fixtures.

At the May meeting, Supervisor Gajewski reported that he spoke to Rick Flesvig just before the meeting and he will not be able to get to this project for at least a couple more weeks. Mr. Flesvig will coordinate with Supervisor Keppers for the use of his lift during the project.

- B. Highway #2 Hall Driveway Access Lighting System – Supervisor Gajewski and Clerk McGregor met with Mike Braun of MN Power on April 23, 2024, to discuss options relating to the Highway #2 driveway access lighting

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system, and St. Louis County Public Works has staked the clear zone and right-of-way limits.

There are two options, one underground, boring under the Munger Shaw Road, and the second overhead, which would require an additional pole and guy wires.

Per Mike Braun on May 10, 2024, the cost for an underground installation application for a leased streetlight would be about \$9,935, and the cost for an overhead application about \$5,313. In addition to installation costs, there would be monthly power and fixture lease charges.

Following completion of the right turn in/right turn out Highway #2 hall driveway, it is expected that traffic utilizing this driveway will be greatly reduced. The new island will have reflectors marking the entrance for eastbound incoming traffic, and lighting to leave the parking lot would be unnecessary. There was also discussion regarding the negative curb appeal of an overhead lighting application. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously that the township does not proceed with lighting the Highway #2 hall driveway.**

- C. Roadside Mower Tractor Seat – At the May meeting, Butch Lund reported that he picked up a mower tractor seat, but upon installing it, discovered there were no bolts. Mr. Lund will complete the installation once he has the bolts.
- D. 2024 Road Inspection (Roads, Parking Lots & Recreational Court), and Sign Inventory –The 2024 Road Inspection was conducted on April 26, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Present for the inspection were Supervisors Gajewski, Welsh and Keppers, Clerk McGregor and Bob Rodda.

The road inspection project priority list was reviewed and discussed at the May meeting. The total gravel needed for all roads during the inspection was estimated at 2,840 yards.

An entrance culvert at 6364 Jerry Road (west) needs to be replaced at an approximate cost of \$5,000. An assessment will also be made regarding the potential replacement of an entrance culvert on the Lindrose Road.

There is some ditching needed on the Hanson Road at an estimated cost of \$1,750, and removed fill could be used for improvements to the Cedarway cul de sac.

There is a need for the removal of rocks on Jeffrey Road (south) between the tracks and Highway #2; at 3930 Sandberg Road near the Maple Grove

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Road, and on the hill above Highway #2 and the Mattson Road. Protruding rocks are hard on the grading equipment, resulting in costly repairs.

**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to approve the installation of two entrance culverts (6364 Jerry Road and Lindrose Road), and ditching on the east side of the Hanson Road, with material hauled to the Cedarway cul de sac, at an estimated total cost of \$10,000.**

Rock removal will be discussed at the June meeting, and determinations regarding gravel application will be made based upon conditions and as the budget allows.

As part of the road inspection, signs were also inspected and are in good condition.

- E. Maple Grove Road Construction Between Highways #33 & #2 – St. Louis County Public Works hosted a public informational meeting on May 2, 2024, at the town hall regarding the proposed 2025-26 construction on Maple Grove Road between Trunk Highway #33 and Trunk Highway #2.

Supervisor Gajewski reported at the May meeting that Steve Krasaway, Project Engineer, presented at the meeting and indicated the county's goal is to design the road to be a 40 mile per hour road with 11-foot driving lanes and 3-foot shoulders. The project will also include cutting down some of the hills and applying a 4-inch thickness of some type of ground blacktop.

There are currently about 400 cars per day traveling this portion of the Maple Grove Road. Improvements will first be made between Highway #33 and #2, and then from Highway #2 to Midway Road. Culvert prep work will begin in 2024, with paving in 2025-26.

- F. Calcium Chloride Proposals – Proposals received from Envirotech Services, Legacy Custom Coatings, and St. Louis County were reviewed and discussed at the May meeting. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to approve the proposal from Legacy Custom Coatings up to an amount of \$1.57 per gallon, applied.** Supervisor Gajewski will contact Ken Maki with Legacy Custom Coatings to see if they are willing to reduce their cost per gallon.

### VIII. FIRE DEPARTMENT

- A. Department Report – Chief Brandon Porter was unable to attend the May meeting but provided updates prior to the meeting via phone. He reported that firefighter membership remains at 15.
- B. Building Signage Backlighting – Chief Porter reported that the LED lights were attached to the sign on the south side of the fire hall on May 11, 2024.

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- C. Insurance (Engine #1-2005 Pierce Enforcer) Equipment Coverage – The MN Association of Townships Insurance Trust (MATIT) requested an equipment cost inventory in October 2023 to support a requested additional \$100,000 in coverage due to the equipment Engine #1 carries. Completion of a cost inventory is currently on hold pending a determination regarding other potential insurance options.
- D. Fire Vehicle Back-up Camera Systems (Unit #5 & Engine #1) – Chief Porter reported that the back-up cameras have been installed in Rescue Unit #5 (2015 Ford F550) and Engine #1 (2005 Pierce Enforcer).
- E. Engine #1 (2005 Pierce Enforcer) – Chief Porter reported that the exhaust manifold bolt on Engine #1 has been repaired.
- F. DNR Wildland Matching Grant – At the April meeting, Chief Porter reported that in conjunction with their 2025 budget, the department has applied for a 2025 DNR Wildland matching grant.

Prior to the May meeting, Chief Porter indicated they should hear back regarding the grant application by the middle of June. If approved, the department intends to use grant funds to outfit surplus government equipment.

- G. DNR Government Surplus Trucks – Prior to the May meeting, Chief Porter reported that the DNR may have some used government surplus trucks for approximately \$8,000, that are comparable to a Ford F350 with a crew cab. Chief Porter would like to sell Unit #7 (2004 Chevy Silverado) and utilize those funds, as well as funds from the DNR Wildland grant, to replace Unit #7 with a DNR truck. They would also need to spend about \$2,000 on a paint job. This matter will be discussed further at the June meeting.
- H. Smokey Bear Sign – Supervisor Gajewski reported that the Smokey Bear fire danger sign needs to be re-stained and the channels holding the severity rating inserts need to be replaced. Clerk McGregor will pass this information along to Chief Porter.
- I. Recycling Trailer – The aluminum can donation trailer needs to be emptied and Clerk McGregor will inform Chief Porter.

**IX. RECYCLING** – Horst Blumerich reported that Lori from WLSSD picked up the full battery box and indicated she will bring out two new locks, all keyed the same. The lock on the fourth recycling dumpster is currently keyed differently than the others, and once replaced, the current lock will be saved to use on the hall dumpster.

### **X. HALL**

- A. Video Conferencing & Audio Visual System – On April 26, 2024, Rick Flesvig corrected the electrical issue related to the lower-level television turning on and off with the light switch.
- B. Boiler Replacement – At the January meeting, there was approval for an oil replacement boiler and circulation zone pumps. At the May meeting,

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Supervisor Gajewski reported the boiler is currently in the Cities and will arrive sometime next week, at which time installation will be scheduled.

- C. Exterior-Caulk/Foam Along Bottom Row of Siding – At the May meeting, it was reported that maintenance staff has the material to repair the gaps along the bottom row of the hall siding, and this will be taken care of as schedules and weather permit.
- D. Front Entry Doors - Locking Mechanism – Pricing for various options regarding replacement of the hardware and a potential key card entry system were received from Northern Door and reviewed at the May meeting. After discussion, it was determined that due to the cost, a key card entry system would not be practical.

**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to approve Northern Door’s April 20, 2024, quote in the amount of \$2,400 to install a new heavy duty panic bar and key cylinder on the front entrance door.** Existing holes will be covered during installation of the new panic bar.

- E. Security Cameras – At the March meeting, a proposal from Audio Systems in the amount of \$2,615 was approved for upgraded security cameras, with an additional approval of \$500 at the April meeting to revise two of the cameras to include panoramic views. Equipment has arrived and weather permitting, Tim Aldrich is planning to begin installation work next week.
- F. Hall Interior Lighting Conversion to LED – At the May meeting, there was discussion regarding the conversion of interior existing lighting to LED. There was a recommendation that the ballasts in the fixtures also be removed at the time of the conversion as there are apparently benefits when that is done.

This project may be able to be done in-house, and if so, it will likely be scheduled for this winter, when staff has more time. At the June meeting, Chief Porter will be asked where the LED lights for the fire hall were obtained.

### **XI. PARK**

- A. Safety Inspection Report – Supervisor Gajewski reported that there were no safety hazards included in the May 6, 2024, report. Rick Flesvig replaced the burnt-out light bulb in the yard light on the northwest corner of the hall on April 26, 2024.
- B. Field Maintenance Report – At the June meeting, Horst Blumerich reported that all spring field work has been completed. Soil samples have been submitted for analysis and those results will be reviewed once they are received to determine appropriate field treatment for next spring. Based upon the soil test results, Mr. Blumerich will also obtain cost estimates for consideration.

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- C. Benches - Refinishing – Leon Forstrom indicated that bench refinishing may be done in July, once grass mowing slows down.
- D. Sign – Sale of Old Message Center – **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to advertise the old message center lawn sign for \$500.** Leon Forstrom will advertise the sign on Marketplace.
- E. Portable John – Return of Seasonal Units – The unit for the Maple Grove Road soccer field was delivered on May 8, 2024. Clerk McGregor reported that the second hall unit should be delivered this Friday.

### XII. CEMETERY

- A. Memorial Day Observance – The Memorial Day Observance at the Solway Cemetery will be held on May 27, 2024, at noon, with the Proctor Legion providing military honors, and Pastor Stafford Thompson from Hope Lutheran Church also participating. At the May meeting, Supervisor Gajewski reported that the Scouts may also attend the observance to lead attendees in the pledge of allegiance. Maintenance staff has been working hard to prepare the grounds.
- B. Chokecherry Tree Replacement – At the April meeting there had been approval to spend up to \$200 for a replacement tree. At the June meeting, Supervisor Gajewski reported that Grussendorf Nursery is recommending a maple tree. The cost for a #10 container, 8-foot maple is \$250, plus \$175 to plant. The cost for a #25 container, 10 to 12-foot maple is \$450, plus \$250 to plant. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to approve up to \$425 for the replacement of the chokecherry tree with a maple.**
- C. Burial/Administrative Fee - Leon Forstrom mentioned raising the burial fee for cremations. Solway currently charges \$50. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to table the discussion of burial fees until the June meeting.**

**XIII. COMMITTEES** – The “Monday Bunch” donated \$126 to the Special Events Committee from the proceeds of their recent Craft/Rummage Sale, and that donation was much appreciated.

### XIV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Insurance Review – The township’s insurance is currently being provided by the Minnesota Association of Townships Insurance Trust (MATIT). The township is currently exploring alternative insurance options.

On May 14, 2024, Bill Owens of Young and Associates reported via telephone that an insurance estimate has been delayed due to the initial underwriter not working out. Further options will be explored, and Mr. Owens is hoping to have an estimate for the June meeting.

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- B. Aggregate Tax Audits - Amanda Nelson has been in the process of conducting aggregate audits covering the past six years as allowed by Minnesota Statutes.

At the May meeting, Ms. Nelson reported that she sent out letters to the pits instructing them to prepare their 2018 records for review. She is currently working with three pits, but due to a recent change in her regular work schedule, will be able to devote Mondays entirely to the audits, moving them along more quickly.

As she nears the completion of 2018 audits, Ms. Nelson intends to send notices two weeks in advance of audits for subsequent years, allowing the pits time to prepare their records.

- C. Clare Stromlund – Retirement/Recognition Reception – A reception honoring Clare Stromlund was held on May 11, 2024, and was well attended. A plaque was presented to Mr. Stromlund in recognition of his thirty-six years of service to the community.

### XV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Hipcamps – In follow-up to a telephone inquiry, St. Louis County was contacted to see whether there are any existing regulations regarding Hipcamps within the township. Hipcamps are similar to Airbnbs, but are used for tent camping, cabins, RVs, etc. The township has been informed that at least one Hipcamp exists in the township.

According to Ada Tse, St. Louis County Planning and Zoning, Hipcamps are not allowed within an area that is zoned residential. Ms. Tse indicated that the first step for this to be investigated would be the submission of a Complaint Form which she sent via email on May 8, 2024.

Solway will seek input from other area townships regarding their knowledge or experiences with Hipcamps at upcoming area township meetings.  
**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to submit the complaint form to St. Louis County Planning and Zoning following input from other area townships.**

- B. Minnesota Power Rebates – On April 10, 2024, Clerk McGregor communicated with Teghan Grulkowski regarding potential MN Power rebates.

According to Ms. Grulkowski on May 7, 2024, a MN Power rebate will be available for the parking lot lighting once the work is complete, and she estimates that will be about \$350.

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On May 7, 2024, Clerk McGregor also inquired regarding rebates on the mini-splits and air exchange system that were installed during the summer of 2022, and was informed by Ms. Grulkowski that she will explore rebate opportunities, and if they qualify, they will be processed with the lighting rebate.

On May 14, 2024, Ms. Grulkowski indicated that any rebate on the upstairs hall window replacement windows would be contingent upon the number of hours per year that the mini-splits are heating the space, in addition to more detailed information from the window contractor. After discussion, it was determined that a rebate regarding the replacement windows will not be pursued.

- C. MN Legislative Update – Representative Natalie Zeleznikar called on May 14, 2024, requesting use of the town hall one hour before the next board meeting to present a legislative update and Q & A for residents now that the session has ended. **MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to allow Representative Natalie Zeleznikar to present a legislative update and Q & A, at the town hall prior to the June 11<sup>th</sup> board meeting.** Other Solway legislators may also request use of the hall for legislative updates.

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

**MOTION by Supervisor Gajewski, seconded by Supervisor Keppers, and carried unanimously to adjourn tonight's meeting with the signing of checks. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.**