

Solway Town Board Meeting Minutes

November 12, 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 Supervisors Scott Welsh and Jeffrey Keppers, Clerk Tami McGregor, Deputy Clerk Regena Merritt, Treasurer Cindy Moe, and seven concerned citizens.

II. CITIZEN REQUESTS/CONCERNS - None

III. MINUTES – TOWN BOARD MEETING OF OCTOBER 8, 2024

MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the minutes from the town board meeting of October 8, 2024, as presented.

IV. TREASURER’S REPORT – OCTOBER 31, 2024

MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the monthly Treasurer’s Report dated October 31, 2024, as presented.

Checking: 20193-20235

Beginning Balance	\$70,997.10	
Receipts	21,239.66	
Disbursements	<u>-21,166.00</u>	
Ending Balance	\$71,070.76	\$71,070.76

Money Market

Beginning Balance	\$91,311.97	
Interest/Deposits	151.55	
Withdrawals	<u>0.00</u>	
Ending Balance	\$91,463.52	<u>\$91,463.52</u>

Total Accounts **\$162,534.28**

V. CORRESPONDENCE (Requiring Board Action/Discussion)

- A. MAT Invite to 2024 Annual Conference (Discussed under “Old Business”)
- B. MN Association of Townships (MAT) – Invite to Township Day at the Capitol on 01/27 – According to an October 31, 2024, email from Megan Julin of SLC Association of Townships, MAT will be paying the registration fee for anyone attending the Township Day at the Capitol in St. Paul on Monday, January 27, 2025, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Transportation will likely be discussed at the December CAT meeting. Pre-registration closes on January 20, 2025. Supervisors Gajewski and Welsh, Treasurer Moe, Clerk McGregor and Deputy Clerk Merritt expressed interest in attending. **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously that those interested in attending the MN Association of Townships**

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Township Day at the Capitol on January 27, 2025, may do so at township expense.

- C. Victory Fund Bystander CPR/Mental Health Training Info – Discussed under “Fire”
- D. SLC Draft Cannabis Ordinance/Public Hearing – A copy of St. Louis County’s draft Cannabis Ordinance was received on November 8, 2024. The SLC Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance on November 26, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., at the St. Louis County Courthouse, Room 200, in Duluth. The proposed ordinance will take effect on January 1, 2025. Representation from Solway at the public hearing will depend on schedules.

If St. Louis County receives a request for registration of a cannabis or hemp business located in a township in which St. Louis County exercises planning and zoning authority, the township will be contacted to request consent to act on the request, as required by state statute.

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

- Sarah Mae’s Catering - \$1,863.06 (Solway Recognition Dinner - **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski, and carried unanimously to add a 15% gratuity in the amount of \$243.00 to the \$1,620.06 invoice from Sarah Mae’s Catering.**)

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 \$37,488.69.

VII. **ROAD**

- A. Roadside Mower Tractor Maintenance – Butch Lund reported he has changed oil on the roadside mower tractor. He would also like to pack the front wheel bearings and investigate the power-steering fluid leak. Mr. Lund will provide additional information regarding costs at the December meeting.
- B. Gravel Hauling – Supervisor Gajewski reported at the November meeting that gravel application has been completed on the south Hanson and Wargin Roads.
- C. Highway #2 Hall Driveway Entrance – Supervisor Gajewski reported that St. Louis County has installed an “All Traffic Must Turn Right Ahead” sign at the edge of the parking lot and a stop sign, with a right turn only arrow, at the edge of Highway #2.
- D. Jeffrey Road Grading/Dust Control – Supervisor Gajewski reported at the November meeting that Ulland Brothers has graded and applied calcium chloride to the Jeffrey Road.

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VIII. FIRE DEPARTMENT

- A. Department Report – Chief Brandon Porter reported their department elections have been held, and that there were no changes in leadership. The current membership is 13, and the department is seeking new members.
- 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 on equipment carried on Engine #1 is in process.
- 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 an October 11, 2024, email from Shelly Greniger with the DNR, funds will not be received until possibly the end of November. Once funds are awarded, the DNR will be sending out contracts.
- D. 2004 Chevy Silverado (Unit #7) Sale – Chief Porter reported that the 2004 Chevy Silverado (Unit #7) sold at auction for just under \$10,000. The check should be received soon, and proceeds will be used to outfit the 2017 Ford F550 (Unit #6).
- E. 2017 Ford F550 (Unit #6) – A 2017 Ford F550 was purchased on August 26, 2024, and will be equipped as funds become available. Equipment purchases for the new truck will be discussed at the January meeting.
- F. Fire Hall Exterior Lighting – Chief Porter reported that exterior lighting on the front of the hall has been completed, as well as repair of the LED backlighting on the sign on the south side of the building.

The side yard lights also need to be replaced, and Chief Porter will be working on those.

- G. Insurance Coverage – Chief Porter is completing an insurance analysis comparing the individual policies of the fire department and the township to be sure that adequate coverage is in place and to eliminate any double coverage.
- H. AED/CPR/First Aid Training – The township received information in follow-up to a presentation at a Duluth Area Township (DAT) meeting regarding Victory Fund Bystander CPR/Mental Health Training that is expected to be available to townships after the first of the year. Chief Porter was asked about his department's ability to provide training for the community should it be considered, and he suggested coordinating the Bystander Training with involvement of the fire department.

Clerk McGregor will forward the information already received from Ms. Holliday-Welsh to Chief Porter, as well as any future additional information.

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- I. Aluminum Can Trailer – Chief Porter was informed that the aluminum can trailer needs to be moved and kept in front of the barricades during the winter months, and he will see that this is taken care of.

IX. RECYCLING

- A. Dumpster Padlocks – According to a November 12, 2024, email from Lori Blais with WLSSD, she has one lock available for the recycling dumpsters and will be dropping it off soon.
- B. Recycling Attendant Vacation Relief – There was discussion regarding vacation coverage when Horst and Illona Blumerich are both gone. John McGregor indicated a willingness to provide relief coverage. Supervisor Gajewski suggested that Mr. McGregor assist Mr. Blumerich two to three weeks in advance of filling in to familiarize himself with the job duties.

X. HALL

- A. Video Conferencing & Audio-Visual System – Supervisor Gajewski reported that the downstairs television has been connected to the upstairs antenna.

Mr. Aldrich will be providing best camera options for on-line meetings; however, there was no update at the November meeting.

- B. Lighting Conversion to LED – Butch Lund provided options and pricing information for the entire hall LED lighting conversion. The cost for lighting tubes through Great Lakes Electrical Equipment Company in Superior for the project is \$1,148.00. Mr. Lund can begin work on this project soon, with the assistance of Paul Dunaiski.

MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of lighting tubes for the hall LED lighting conversion project from Great Lakes Electrical Equipment, in the amount of \$1,148.00. Mr. Lund will purchase and be reimbursed for any other miscellaneous supplies that may be needed, such as connectors and wire.

There was discussion regarding light brightness, and it was decided that the same type of lights will be installed in all areas, with brightness one step down from the daylight or bright white lighting options.

- C. Ricoh Printer – The new Ricoh IMC300F-RS Color Laser Multifunction printer is scheduled to be installed on Thursday, November 14, 2024.
- D. American Flag Replacement – A new American flag was recently purchased and raised today.

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XI. PARK

- A. Safety Inspection Report – Supervisor Gajewski reported there were no safety hazards included in the November 8, 2024, report.
- B. Field Maintenance Report – Horst Blumerich reported that the first round of lime pellets and fertilizer have been applied to the soccer fields, and the second application will be made next spring.

All portable equipment has been removed from the fields.

- C. Benches-Refinishing – At the October meeting True North Goodwill's reps, Ian Vincent and Jared Nelson, attended the meeting, submitted an estimate, and provided stain sample options for refinishing the park benches. There are twelve benches, with two of them in need of some repair. The submitted estimate includes labor, material and transport of the benches to and from Goodwill's warehouse where the work will be completed.

MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to approve True North Goodwill's November 12, 2024, estimate in the amount of \$2,500.00 for repair and staining of twelve park benches.

Benches will be picked up two to three at a time and it is estimated that depending on the weather, this will be a two-to-three-week process. Goodwill will submit a contract based upon the estimate and Clerk McGregor requested that a Certificate of Liability be submitted.

- D. Soccer Field Pennants – Clerk McGregor reported that following her contact with the Proctor Futbol Club, they indicated they are willing to provide three sets of replacement pennant flags and will put them out on the soccer fields next spring.
- E. Soccer Nets – Leon Forstrom reported there are a couple of nets (1 set) on the larger field at the town hall that are in poor condition. Once dimensions have been obtained, the township will check with Proctor Futbol to see if they are able to provide replacement nets.

XII. CEMETERY

- A. Interments – Clerk McGregor reported that there has been one interment since the last meeting, Cheryl Cooke, on November 3, 2024.
- B. Cemetery Rules and Regulations Revisions – A draft copy of suggested changes to the Cemetery Rules and Regulations were reviewed at the November meeting. **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously to accept the Solway Township Cemetery Rules and Regulations as prepared and presented at the November 12, 2024, meeting, and that they be presented at the Annual Meeting.** The adopted regulations will also be posted on the township website and designated posting sites by Clerk McGregor.

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XIII. COMMITTEES

- A. Halloween Carnival – The Halloween Carnival was held on October 25, 2024, and was well attended. There was a net profit of approximately \$600 that will be used for upcoming special events.

XIV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Aggregate Tax Audits – Amanda Nelson reported at the November meeting that 2017 audits have been completed for the Sathers and Northland pits. Records have been collected from most of the other pits and Ms. Nelson expects to have 2017 audits completed prior to the December meeting and will give a presentation of her results at that time.
- B. Recognition Dinner – The Recognition Dinner honoring firefighters, retired firefighters, Flamettes, and township employees, was held on November 7, 2024, and was enjoyed and appreciated by all.

At the November meeting, Horst Blumerich thanked board members for their hard work throughout the year. The maintenance staff was also thanked by the board for their hard work and efforts in keeping our facilities and grounds in excellent condition.

- C. Willow River Boot Camp – October 10th – Butch Lund reported that the Willow River Boot Camp workday on October 10, 2024, went very well. Trimming and cleanup were completed around fencing, trails, the mound system, horseshoe pit, and playground areas. Mr. Lund was thanked for his part in organizing and overseeing this project.
- D. MN Association of Townships (MAT) Annual Conference – The MAT Annual Conference will be held on December 13 and 14, 2024, in St. Cloud. Registrations were completed on October 23, 2024, for the entire board. There will be no bus transportation provided this year; therefore, carpooling arrangements will be made.
- E. Couri & Ruppe Township Legal Seminar – Supervisors Gajewski and Welsh, Clerk McGregor, and Deputy Clerk Merritt attended the legal seminar on October 12, 2024, in Cotton. A variety of topics relating to townships were covered, including information on roads, records retention and employment. The Couri & Ruppe law firm provided this training free of charge.

XV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. General Election – Clerk McGregor reported there were 1206 ballots cast at the November 5, 2024, General Election. There were 1,423 registered voters, with an additional 124 registrants on election day. There were approximately 130 absentee/early voters.
- B. Employee Sick & Safe Time – Accumulation and Usage – Treasurer Moe reported that when an employee retires or terminates their employment, the

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township is not required to pay out their unused balance of sick and safe time; however, it may voluntarily choose to do so.

Employees accumulate one hour of earned sick and safe time leave for every 30 hours worked, with an annual maximum accumulation of 45 hours. The employee must be allowed to carry over up to 80 unused hours from year to year.

MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously that unused earned employee sick and safe time will not be paid to an employee upon termination or retirement.

- C. Maintenance Staffing - **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously that effective January 1, 2025, Paul Dunaiski will become the Maintenance Supervisor, and Leon Forstrom will continue to work as a Maintenance Worker.**
- D. Air Conditioner (Old Office Unit) – After discussion regarding the old office window air conditioner, it was determined that it will be set out at the recycling center during regular recycling hours with a “\$15.00 or Best Offer” sign. If the unit does not sell, it will be disposed of at the WLSSD facility.
- E. Munger School Cafeteria Table – Horst Blumerich inquired whether he could take the Munger School cafeteria table that has been stored since 1998 in the maintenance garage, and more recently, in the recycling center, for use by visitors at his farm. **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Keppers, and carried unanimously that Horst Blumerich be allowed to take the Munger School cafeteria table from the recycling shed for use by visitors at his farm.**

XVI. SIGN CHECKS/ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Keppers, seconded by Gajewski, and carried unanimously to adjourn tonight’s meeting with the signing of checks. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.