

Solway Town Board Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Solway Town Board Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Scott Welsh, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Also present were Supervisors Ron Gajewski, Clerk Tami McGregor, Treasurer Cindy Moe, Deputy Clerk Regena Merritt and three concerned citizens. Supervisor Clare Stromlund was not present at the meeting.

II. MINUTES:

MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the Town Board Meeting of November 15, 2022, as presented.

III. TREASURERS REPORT: NOVEMBER 30, 2022

MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski, and carried unanimously to accept the Treasurer’s report dated November 30, 2022.

Checking:19126-19179

Beginning Balance	\$381,606.18	
Receipts	733.48	
Disbursements	<u>-72,233.07</u>	
Ending Balance	\$310,106.59	\$310,106.59

Money Market

Beginning Balance	\$109,370.85	
Interest/Deposits	0.00	
Withdrawals	<u>0.00</u>	
Ending Balance	\$109,370.85	<u>\$109,370.85</u>

Total Accounts \$419,477.44

IV. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE:

- 11/01 MATIT – Workers’ Compensation Renewal and Payroll Audit Notice. Completed payroll report due 02/15/23. Premium payment due by 01/02/23.
- 11/19 Cloquet Interiors – Office and kitchen flooring proposals
- 11/30 MN Power – Notice of Availability for Meeting regarding HVDC Modernization Project.
- 12/02 MATIT – Policy Extension Notice extending bond, property, auto and liability coverage through June 2023 at no additional cost.
- 12/05 WLSSD – Notice of township and city official meeting for rural recycling sites on 12/14/22 at 3:00 p.m. at WLSSD.
- 12/08 MATIT – 2023 Workers’ Compensation Payroll Audit Update announcing transition from paper filing to electronic filing. Report due 02/15/23
- 12/13 MN Pollution Control Agency – Notice of Public Hearing on 02/16/23 at 2:00 p.m. RE: Proposed Amendments to Rules Governing Water Quality Standards.

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12/19 WLSSD – Notice of WLSSD Board meeting on 12/19/22 at 3:30 p.m. at WLSSD regarding public hearing for Twin Ports Trailer Trash solid waste management facility license.

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

- Forum Communications - \$48.32 (Pine Journal – Notice of Filing for Township Officer)
- Portable John - \$145.00 (12/12/22 Invoice)

MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh and carried unanimously to pay all bills as listed on the Outstanding Bills List, and additional bills presented by the Town Treasurer, for a total amount of \$34,698.29.

VI. CITIZEN REQUESTS AND CONCERNS: There were no citizen requests and concerns

VII. ROAD

A. Highway #2 Driveway Access Update – Since his initial presentation at the October meeting, Victor Lund, St. Louis County Traffic Engineer, submitted three additional concepts for consideration by the Township. These concepts were discussed at the November meeting, and Mr. Lund was invited back tonight for additional discussion. Although they would not force closure of the Hwy #2 driveway, it is MnDOT's desire that the entrance be closed.

Mr. Lund informed the Board that comments from the October meeting had been relayed to his planning team and MnDOT. Mr. Lund briefly reviewed the additional concepts that were submitted prior to the November meeting and then responded to questions and concerns.

An inquiry was made as to the feasibility of a roundabout at the intersection of Highway #2 and Munger Shaw Road, with a Hall driveway entrance accessing the roundabout. Based upon a cost-benefit analysis, Mr. Lund does not see a roundabout as a viable alternative.

There was a concern raised regarding sewer pipes running from the southwest corner of the Fire Hall out to the mound system and the potential of these pipes freezing if a driveway was installed south of the Fire Hall with traffic flowing over them. There is also a lot of underground electrical wiring in this area, along with it being a quick access parking area utilized by firefighters to access the southern man door of the Fire Hall.

The recycling shed is currently located at the lower (east) end of the parking lot. If the shed was moved to the upper (west) end of the lot, traffic flow would run through the entire parking lot, potentially creating an additional hazard.

The Township's preference is to make full use of the Hwy #2 entrance, with improvements of an extended left lane and additional lighting to make it safer. A

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compromise would be at least some use of the Hwy #2 entrance, with a right turn in/right turn out.

Supervisor Gajewski inquired as to whether enhanced crosswalk signs near the Fire Hall could be installed should the Hwy #2 entrance remain open. Mr. Lund will discuss this with the project team; however, he stated that St. Louis County's willingness to bear the cost for improvements is predicated upon closure of the Hwy #2 entrance. Should the entrance be modified to a right turn in/right turn out design, there may be substantiation for monetary assistance with the crosswalk improvements.

There was discussion regarding lighting options at the Hwy #2 entrance and this would be an additional cost to the Township. A wooden pole within MnDOT's right-of-way that is not a break-away light pole would be viewed as a hazard. Mr. Lund stated that the cost for a break-away pole owned by the Township at the end of the driveway would be between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Another option would be a lighting pole just beyond the right-of-way that would still shed light over the driveway.

Mr. Lund acknowledged there are significant challenges to two of the previously submitted concepts (#1 & #2) due to firefighter parking, electrical and septic system issues. Mr. Lund asked if the Township would be agreeable to a compromise of a right turn in/right turn out design to maintain some use of the Hwy #2 entrance, and Supervisors Welsh and Gajewski agreed.

Mr. Lund will relay concerns and suggestions to the project team and email conclusions to Clerk McGregor.

Although Fire Chief Porter was not in attendance during the discussion with Mr. Lund, he was updated upon his arrival, and agreed that a right turn in/right turn out compromise for the Hwy #2 entrance would be an acceptable option.

- B. Grading – Supervisor Gajewski reported that Bob Rodda did a good job on the grading this past season. Mr. Rodda's approach is different, and costs have been higher and are over budget. Grading was not done as often as in the past; however, there was no ditching necessary due to shoulder improvements. Fuel costs have also been a factor in higher costs. Mr. Rodda believes that the roads and shoulders are now in good condition which should result in decreased costs next year.

VIII. FIRE DEPARTMENT

- A. Department Report – The department is maintaining 17 members, with one new member application pending. There have been 131 calls for service to date in 2022. The Fire Department is prepared for the impending blizzard forecast to begin this evening. The new Nomex hoods have arrived and will be placed in service, and new gloves will be fitted in the next couple of weeks. There is no new update regarding the DNR grant contract to be used for wild land fire gear. Firefighter II training, including automotive extraction, is scheduled for this weekend.

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- B. Building Signage Update – Graphic Image Update – Chief Porter reported that there is nothing new to report on proofs and that he has not heard from Todd Signs. He is not actively pursuing this matter as it is unlikely that anything will happen until Spring.
- C. Road Right-of-Way Soil Contamination Update – Supervisor Gajewski will keep Chief Porter informed regarding the County’s timeline to remove contaminated soil, but it is likely that this will not occur until next Spring.
- D. Rental/Service Contracts – Chief Porter paid \$1.00 to the Township for the 2023 Fire Hall lease.

The 2023 Agreement for Fire Protection and First Response Medical Care was discussed. Due to a significant increase in fuel costs, and based upon a standard inflation rate of 8%, Chief Porter requested an increase from \$50,000 to \$54,000 for providing fire protection and first response medical care to the Township. Although the contract is not effective until January 1, 2023, and \$50,000 was agreed to at the time of the budget meeting, the Board will increase this amount based upon the increased fuel costs. The Board agreed with the \$54,000 amount for the firefighters to consider. Chief Porter indicated that the \$1,000 and \$3,000 amounts within the 2023 Addendum to Agreement for Fire Protection continue to be workable for repair expenditures and purchases.

Chief Porter will review and discuss the 2023 agreements with his department prior to the January meeting where the Board will consider final approval.

- E. Skating Rink Flooding – Chief Porter inquired about rink flooding and the Board indicated they would like this done. The Fire Department will begin flooding as weather permits.
- F. Snow Removal at Coons Pit – Chief Porter reported that Keith Anderson will be providing snow removal services to access the hydrant at Coons Pit.

IX. RECYCLING

- A. WLSSD Meeting – A virtual meeting hosted by WLSSD was attended by Clerk McGregor and Deputy Clerk Merritt on 12/14/22 regarding Solway’s WLSSD grant. Our annual report will be due at the end of February, and WLSSD is hoping to send out forms by the end of December or first part of January. WLSSD reminded attendees that late fees and interest do not qualify for payment under their grants. WLSSD is planning to schedule a meeting for attendants in January or February.

X. HALL

- A. Office & Upstairs Kitchen Flooring Update – The November 19, 2022, proposals submitted by Cloquet Interiors for the removal of existing flooring and install of Luxury Vinyl Plank Flooring for the office and kitchen were reviewed, along with color samples. **MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski and carried unanimously to accept proposals from Cloquet Interiors, one for the office and steps in the amount of \$3,322, and the second for the upstairs kitchen in the amount of \$2,410.**

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- B. Video Conferencing Equipment – At the November meeting, it was decided that we explore the purchase of video conferencing equipment for installation on the north wall of the Hall. There were no updates at the December meeting.
- C. Security Camera Repair Update – Repairs by Red-D-Electric are pending Rick Flesvig's contact with the manufacturer. There were no updates at December meeting.
- D. AED Unit – Town Hall – On Site AED stickers have been ordered. Once the stickers are received, they will be placed in the windows of the entrances on the south and east sides of the Hall.
- E. Exterior Siding – Loose Piece on NW Corner of Hall – Supervisor Gajewski reported that the corner molding on the northwest corner of the Hall is loose and dropping down. Leon Forstrom will take care of this repair.

XI. PARK

- A. Todd Signs Electronic Insert Update –The electronic insert was ordered on October 24, 2022 and should be arriving soon. Brackets will be designed for the installation. The electronic sign will be programmed using a computer and Clerk McGregor will participate in training. There was discussion regarding modification to the policy for sign content with electronic programming, and this will be discussed further once the sign has been received and training is complete.
- B. Safety Inspection Report Update – The November 7, 2022, Inspection Report contained no major issues. There was a broken bolt on the sand digger and a few other minor issues. Per Supervisor Gajewski, everything is in good shape.
- C. Tennis/Volleyball Nets – At the November meeting, a motion was made and carried to purchase new tennis and volleyball nets. There was no update on this matter at the December meeting. Before selections are made, Leon Forstrom will take measurements and see what is available.
- D. Sand Digger Equipment – Needs Repair – Leon Forstrom will repair the sand digger unit once it is accessible.

XII. CEMETERY – Nothing new to report.

XIII. COMMITTEES

- A. Special Events - Winter Fun Day – A Special Events Committee planning meeting will be scheduled for the middle of February regarding Winter Fun Day, which is scheduled for Sunday March 5, 2023, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Scheduling of the meeting will be carried over to the January meeting.

XIV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Minnesota Power HVDC Terminal Modernization Informational Meeting – An informational meeting to address concerns and answer questions regarding the proposed HVDC Terminal Modernization Project will be hosted by MN Power at the Solway Town Hall on January 11, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Notice of the meeting will be sent to all Solway residents by MN Power.

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- B. Aggregate Tax – Auditing – Clerk McGregor checked with the St. Louis County Land Department and the MN Land and Minerals Department in Virginia (Dept. of Revenue). St. Louis County was unable to provide any information, and the Minnesota Department of Revenue only collects statistical data relating to aggregate tax collection. Solway is the only township in Minnesota collecting aggregate tax; therefore, it was suggested that we contact other Minnesota Counties who are actively collecting aggregate tax. Clerk McGregor spoke with Bob Hiivala, the Wright County Auditor who is attempting to spearhead an effort in aggregate auditing. Effective January 1, 2023, Mr. Hiivala intends to send out “Hauler/Operator Audit Questionnaires” to pits within Wright County to determine which pits may be audited. The questionnaire provides pit operators with prior year reporting information and asks questions designed to provide support for reported numbers. Clerk McGregor will check back with Mr. Hiivala after first quarter 2023 for an update. Mr. Hiivala provided Solway with a copy of the “Hauler/Operator Audit Questionnaire” that he intends to send out.
- C. St. Louis County Opioid Remediation Subcommittee – At the November 15, 2022, meeting, there was an inquiry as to whether Opioid Settlement funds could be utilized by fire departments to equip their fire units with Narcan and provide training for staff. After contacting St. Louis County, Clerk McGregor was informed that Narcan funds can be used to purchase Narcan under “Harm reduction - Strategies that include, but are not limited to, syringe exchanges, overdose prevention, peer recovery support and services, with a dedicated focus on individuals with an OUS and any co-occurring SUD/MH (substance use disorder/mental health) conditions.” She was also informed that initial funding will be awarded to a limited number of organizations to allow for a targeted and impactful response. This information was forwarded to Fire Chief Brandon Porter on the same day that RFPs were due to be submitted.

XV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution Designating Annual Polling Place – **MOTION by Gajewski, seconded by Welsh and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution #2022-6-Resolution Designating Annual Polling Place as follows:**

Resolution #2022-6
Solway Township
of St. Louis County, Minnesota

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING ANNUAL POLLING PLACE

WHEREAS, it is important that citizens exercise their right to vote at their local polling place;

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. §204B.16 requires the town board to designate its local polling place for elections annually;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of Solway Township, St. Louis County, Minnesota does hereby designate Solway Town Hall at 4029 Munger Shaw Road, Cloquet, Minnesota in St. Louis County as its polling place in 2023.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the township notify residents of this designation by following the requirements of Minn. Stat. §205.16.

Adopted this 13th day of December, 2022

A copy of the resolution will be sent to the St. Louis County Auditor's Office.

- B. Noxious Weed Report - Butch Lund inquired about the availability of grant monies for areas with weed problems. The Township's responsibility is only for roadsides and Township lands. Any issues are reported to the St. Louis County Agricultural Office for any potential further action. Mr. Lund appreciated the reference materials that were brought back from the Minnesota Association of Townships Annual Conference and felt they were beneficial. He is interested in training opportunities and those will be passed along to him by Clerk McGregor when they are received.
- C. Deputy Clerk Appointment – Regena Merritt was appointed Deputy Clerk by Clerk Tami McGregor on December 13, 2022.
- D. Notary Public Services – Notary public services are now available during regular business hours at the Town Hall.

XVI. SIGN CHECKS/ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Welsh, seconded by Gajewski and carried unanimously to adjourn tonight's meeting with the signing of checks. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.