

**WOODROW TOWNSHIP
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 14, 2024 6:30 P.M.**

- 1) Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Clerk Cathy Dietrich.
- 2) All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3) Nominations were sought from the floor for a moderator. Citizen Ann Espeland was nominated by Gordy Reher to serve as moderator. There were no other nominations. A show of hands from the floor indicated by a majority vote that Ann Espeland would serve as moderator.
- 4) M/S/P Tom Larson/Gordy Reher approved the Annual Meeting Agenda.
- 5) M/S/P Tom Larson/Laura Jones approved the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes. Meeting minutes were not read aloud.
- 6) Treasurer's Report; Treasurer report for 2023 Actuals from Schedule 1 Statement of Receipts, Disbursement and Balances. See Appendix A. The year-end balance of \$560,408.72 is balanced to the bank account and includes the Investment Balance of \$209,900.71 that will be used for future road projects.
- 7) ***Discussion of Budget and Levy:*** Treasurer Tim Mueller presented a brief Levy history for the township;

Since 2011 outside of small adjustments to the Annual Levy, which for the most part was immeasurable on your taxes, the township has not made any substantial increases. Projects and normal maintenance during this time frame were modest and allowed a goal of a two-year balance to be built as a buffer should it be necessary. This buffer is a recommendation from the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) to maintain a balance to allow the continuation of our expected services to our citizens in the Township.

Concentrated efforts to complete projects that have long been discussed started becoming a reality in recent years. COVID wreaked havoc on the world, and price increases impacted all of us. We continued to maintain the same budget through all of this; however, the recent completion of some large projects has reduced our fund balances. The reality of this is that it is time to adjust the cost of doing business and is essential to the Township to function properly.

With knowledge of the depletion of our gravel source, operation cost increases with normal maintenance and future projects yet to be determined, it is apparent we need to make an adjustment. We also need to look further into our future than we are used to and have more transparency in those plans.

The proposed increase will allow us to build back our buffer over time as well to help prepare for future larger projects yet to be determined.

8) Set 2025 Levy

RECEIPTS

M/S/P	Fund	2023 Actual (\$)	2023 Budget (\$)	2024 Budget (\$)	2025 Proposed Budget (\$)
Tom Larson/ Gordon Reher	General Fund	55,979	57,775	67,779	197,107
Tom Larson/ Gordon Reher	Road & Bridge	375,943	205,000	205,000	205,000
Tom Larson/ Mike Schmitt	Fire	115,653	90,000	95,000	110,000
	Totals	\$547,575	\$352,775	\$367,779	\$512,107

DISBURSEMENTS

Fund	2023 Actual (\$)	2023 Budget (\$)	2024 Budget (\$)	2025 Proposed Budget (\$)
General Fund	150,142	66,320	103,620	102,270
Road & Bridge	500,371	224,700	369,200	275,000
Fire	131,119	86,372	94,075	110,000
Totals	\$781,632	\$377,392	\$566,895	\$487,270

9) **Set Time/Place for 2025 Annual Meeting:** M/S/P Laura Jones/Colter Peterson to approve 2025 Annual meeting place/time at Woodrow Township Hall on Tuesday March 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

10) New website for the township was presented. The cost was increasing substantially and the board felt we could get more for less somewhere else. Also, the old website was difficult to maintain and inefficient for the Clerk to maintain. We are terminating the contract with Catalis and have moved to receive support from one of our citizens. Mike Schmitt has helped create this new website and is providing training to the Clerk to maintain it. The maintenance of the site has been set up with increased efficiency and some automation. For example, citizens will be able to request hall rental

on the website, the clerk will receive an email and be able to respond to the request. This eliminates the need for phone calls or sending hall rental forms.

11) Gordon Reher presented a township and road report. See Appendix B attached.

12) New Business from Floor:

a) Vote for creation of a Capital Reserve Fund account.

Supervisor Reher provided an explanation that for larger improvement and maintenance projects, i.e. roads, we need to manage everything properly by implementing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. The CIP provides clarity and shows where we need to have improvement, alternatives to various services, details on improvements, estimated timing, schedule, what we can and can't do because of debt, estimated costs of improvement, public resources, sources of funds, operating costs after improvement, basically everything needed to complete and fund a project.

So, decisions by the township are made to provide quality services at a reasonable price. And in the past, like Tim said, for the last 12 years, we've avoided increasing taxes by spending down reserves. We've been requesting grants from the county, and we've been good after expenses. With planning for projects, we evaluate short and long-term impacts. With CIP we'll be able to avoid unanticipated large expenditures. When we use a CIP, we will also be able to apply for federal infrastructure grants with a higher probability of receiving it.

The supervisors request that you, the citizens of the township, approve the creation of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and a Capital Reserve Fund. We want to implement the CIP in 2024 and begin funding in 2025. This is the framework, and currently no projects are being added to it and no dollars are put into the reserve fund. For example, it's like going to the bank and telling them I want a savings account. They have you fill out papers. Eventually you begin putting money into saving for a larger purchase. Once we have a project within the CIP, that is when we begin using the Capital Reserve Fund.

Once again, the capital improvement plan is a document. It's to plan to assist in coordinating things. It's not a budget. It doesn't bind the township to expenditures. Just because something's in there doesn't mean we have to do it. It does not authorize spending funds. The plan would include projects that wouldn't start for four to six years or more. The CIP lets us track and organize projects before they start, during the project, and everybody knows exactly what's going on. It doesn't change how expenditures are authorized. It's still the board and there's still an annual budget and everything is still required the way it is now. It's for physical infrastructure for maintenance and improvement of existing roads. And for something to go into the improvement plan, it must be a big enough dollar amount to justify it, otherwise, it just gets paid out of normal operating.

So, your authority for doing this is that state statute says at an annual town meeting, the electors have the power to authorize the creation of a capital reserve fund and designate its use for any lawful purpose.

Supervisor Reher asked the meeting moderator to call for a voice vote on the question, "Do you as the electors of Woodrow Township authorize the town board to create the Capital Reserve Fund?"

Voice vote concluded with majority of citizens responding 'Aye' and no one opposed.

- b) There are two township roads that are approximately two-tenths of a mile long for each one. One goes nowhere because the farmhouse that was on it was torn down 20 years ago. And the other one is essentially a private driveway going to two houses. And the township is paying to grade, gravel, and snow plow them. The town board, when authorized by a vote of the electors at the annual meeting, may vacate a town road in accordance with another statute, 164.07. Statute 164.07 states how and describes the steps.

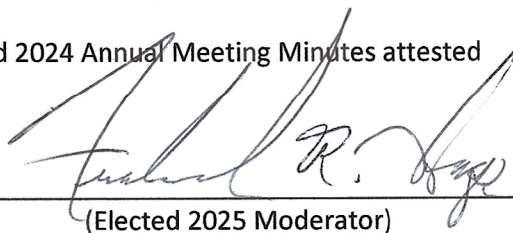
Supervisor Reher asked the meeting moderator to call for a voice vote on the question "Should the town board vacate Schmidt Road Northwest and Lost Lake Road Northwest?"

Voice vote concluded with majority of citizens responding 'Aye' and no one opposed.

Adjourn: MSP Tim Mueller/Scott Wold to adjourn meeting at 7:55 p.m.

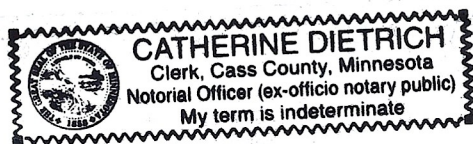
NOTE: For the meeting attendance sheet please contact Clerk Cathy Dietrich.

Approved 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes attested

BY:  DATE: 3-11-26
(Elected 2025 Moderator)

BY:  DATE: 3/11/2025
(Cathy Dietrich-Woodrow Township Clerk)

*Reviewed Date
at Annual Meeting



Appendix A

Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances (Schedule 1)

Fund	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Sale of Investments	Transfers In	Disbursements	Purchase of Investments	Transfers Out	Ending Balance	Investment Balance	Total Balance
General Fund	187,054.23	55,979.43	0.00	0.00	90,142.46	0.00	60,000.00	92,891.20	0.00	92,891.20
Road and Bridge	245,728.72	375,942.59	0.00	0.00	460,371.10	0.00	40,000.00	121,300.21	0.00	121,300.21
ARRA Fund	69,831.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	69,831.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fire	151,783.51	115,652.51	0.00	0.00	131,119.42	0.00	0.00	136,316.60	0.00	136,316.60
Gas Tax	0.00	27,323.32	0.00	0.00	27,323.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Investment Fund CD	0.00	481.89	1,085.86	100,000.00	1,085.86	100,481.89	0.00	0.00	209,900.71	209,900.71
Total :	654,397.81	575,379.74	1,085.86	100,000.00	779,873.51	100,481.89	100,000.00	350,508.01	209,900.71	560,408.72

Appendix B

This is a two part road report, the first with numbers, as required by statute; the second part is more informational. There is some duplication.

First is per Minnesota Statute 164.03 EXPENDITURES FOR ROADS.

Subd. 4.Report. The town board shall render to the annual town meeting a written report containing:

(1) the amount of road taxes levied in 2023: **\$168,273.90** and the amount collected during the preceding year and all money paid into the road and bridge fund from all other sources: **\$375,942.59** which included interest on investments and **\$122,848.38** as reimbursement from Cass County for the project on 17th Ave.

We budgeted *receipts of \$205,000 from all sources* and *actual disbursements were \$500,371.10.*

That total outgoing of **\$500,371.10** included normal maintenance and snowplowing **\$207,210.61**, rebuilding of Webb Forest Court **\$107,786.20**, and the balance of the 17th Ave. project, **\$93,903.13**. This included interfund transfers and spending funds in CDs reserved for paving.

(2) a statement of the improvements needed on roads, cartways, and bridges for the ensuing year, with an estimate of their probable expense; *planned improvements are for Timber Drive, Buxton Road, and Interlachen / Evergreen Drive. We continue with surveys: ROW, wetland delineation, and topographic for culverts, ditching, and drainage projects plus prevention of washboard roads and road washouts.*

We will continue with evaluations by Geotechnical Engineers to identify problem soil areas and their solutions. Other problems and projects will be identified in the annual road inspection.

The surveys are about \$6,000 each; each road needs all three for a total of \$54,000; three are completed, others are in process.

(3) a statement of all expenses and damages occasioned by establishing, altering, or vacating roads and of all sums expended for machinery, implements, tools, stone, gravel, and other material during the year, with an estimate of the amount required for ensuing year; and

we incurred no expenses for establishing or altering roads; vacating roads in 2023 was done through the court system with no expense to Woodrow;

sums expended for implements and tools is very small since our road work is contracted out.

Re sums expended for stone, gravel, and other material during the year: Woodrow continues to be on a two year program of crushing stone and making gravel from its gravel pit. In October 2021 we contracted with Sanders Construction of Randall, MN to have ***12,000 cubic yards of gravel*** made from the pit for ***\$52,608***, about ***\$4.38 per yard***. We have used almost the entire amount and are in the process of making another contract. We know that the gravel pit is playing out and that soil borings made around the pit by Braun Intertec do not show that it can be profitably expanded. I understand that the price for delivered gravel was about ***\$35*** per yard last summer.

(4) a statement of the improvements made on roads, cartways, and bridges during the preceding year, with a statement of expenditures therefor.

The expenditures were reviewed in paragraph 1 above. Improvements made in 2023 are as follow in the informational report:

Informational Road Report for 2024 Woodrow Township Annual Meeting

Woodrow has more than 37 miles of Town Roads. Presently, only 14th Ave NW and Webb Forest Court are paved Town Roads, 2.1 miles; the remainder are gravel, somewhat more than 35 miles. There are many more miles of gravel roads in Woodrow that are not Town Roads and are not maintained by the Township.

Road gravel for the road surface is being maintained following a regular schedule; actual road condition is viewed by the supervisors in the annual spring road inspection. That inspection is to determine if additional gravel or grading is required and will identify damage and other needed items. Identified items become projects for the future, likely the summer season.

Over the last several years, we have completed the projects for which funds had been allocated. Now and of course, we have more people moving to be up north

full time. Expectations continue to increase and we have requests for new projects, some of which we will discuss later this evening.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Board has been complimented on being responsive to calls and emails from residents for road problems. We want to thank our Contractors, especially Lott Excavating and Sonmor Consulting, for making those responses happen timely.

Webb Forest Court

Webb Forest Court, a paved Town Road, was completely rebuilt in 2023 to State standards. We were able to achieve considerable savings by combining that project with the work being done by Anderson Brothers on County 5.

Storm Water

One of the most important things about gravel roads is drainage. Problems can be avoided by preventing water from puddling on the roadway and by preventing washouts from water washing over the road, by making changes to grade, ditching, and culverts, and by adding short runs of paving. We will discuss some of this too, later this evening.

In addition to the two engineered storm water projects completed in 2022, we have completed the 17th Avenue project (except for striping and installing reflector signs) where the Boy River leaves Big Deep lake. That project also involved ditching, culverts, and paving; the paving was completed in fall of 2023. The County contributed substantially to the replacement of the two 42 inch culverts with two 90 inch culverts, their installation, and riprap. *or paving for 600 ft.*

Numerous other culverts have been replaced, sometimes by larger diameter pipes, and a series of ditches was reconstructed on 3rd Ave. NW. We also coordinated with the DNR and installed a culvert under a town road between lakes for water level equalization.

Turnarounds

Ultimately the Board would like there to be a turnaround on every dead-end Town Road for fire and emergency vehicles, as well as for turnaround of snowplow trucks or graders. In the last year, Woodrow added two new turnarounds; one more is in the design phase. What has to be done for each of

these is to have easements from the property owners allowing the Township to use the land. In every case, we need to have everyone win.

Removing Choke Points

Road maintenance also includes snow plowing and increasing embankment setback to remove choke points resulting from piled-up snow and the reconstruction of ditches after the work for control of runoff and washouts. The largest of current projects of this type are on Timber Drive and Buxton Road. Work like this on the edge of the road generally requires coordination with Crow Wing Power and TDS to move buried cables and power poles.

Gravel Pit

As has been discussed in several recent meetings, Woodrow is one of the few townships to have its own gravel pit. We have been fortunate to have benefitted from that wonderful resource for more than 40 years. Unfortunately, it is nearing the end of its life. We have been able to hold Woodrow taxes down for a long time by using our own gravel. Soil borings have been done in the Township property around the gravel pit and did not find the hoped-for gravel. The Board now has to plan how to deal with loss of gravel from the pit, since buying gravel and having it delivered will be frightfully expensive. One such idea being explored is locating and purchasing another gravel pit. Also being explored is reducing gravel use by paving.

Long Term Plans

The Board is looking at needed reconstruction of Town Roads, many of which began as wagon or cart trails in the 1930s. Gravel use on such roads is higher because applied gravel does not remain in place as long as desired with the increased and faster traffic. Reconstruction projects will require large amounts of gravel for new base and for shaping; the roads typically do not have adequate base or drainage. The gravel is needed whether the road becomes an engineered gravel road or if it is paved. Neither the periodic application of gravel nor the application of chloride is required if the road is paved. Chloride cost is also increasing greatly, up 30% in the last year with the same forecast for 2024. These are some of the things that the Board weighs in making its decisions.

The Board has engaged Sonmor Consulting to assist with long term plans and the Feasibility Studies required by State statute. The Board has made Resolutions to begin these plans and to make a Capital Improvement Plan for their funding. This is needed because these projects will be larger than things the Township has done to date.

Preliminary survey work is being done; there are three types of surveys needed to even begin planning these projects. They are *topographic*, to determine where the water will go when it runs off the road; *wetland delineation*, to avoid troubles by working in wetland areas when we're not supposed to; and to *mark the road Right of Way*. These surveys are in varying degrees of completion for Buxton, Interlachen/Evergreen, and Timber. These roads were selected as they have the greatest number of addresses, greatest traffic, and greatest gravel use.

Dave Tanner, previous Supervisor and Chair who retired in February, said that we must "look into the future at what's best for the roads and for the taxpayers who will need to pay for their hopes and desires. There is no free ride, so what we're looking for is an understanding of facts, realities and costs" ... the best compromise.

Your Board is doing its best to look into the future.

We want you to know what your Board is doing, what needs to be done, where your tax money has gone, and where it will be going.

Thank you.

Gordon Reher
Woodrow Township Road Liaison