

Town Board Meeting  
November 13, 2008

Roll Call: Jeff Cook, Wendy Meierhoff, Dan Tanner, Dave Mount  
Absent: Stephen Dahl

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Approve Minutes

- Board Meeting October 9, 2008 clarification: Under Treasurers report say the “current CD’s at North Shore Bank” instead of switching banks. The remainder of our funds will remain at The Lake Bank as normal.
  - Jeff Cook made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Dan Tanner seconded. Motion approved.
- BAT Minutes October 28, 2008
  - Wendy Meierhoff made a motion to approve the minutes, Jeff Cook seconded. Motion passed.

2. Concerns from the Audience

- Any concerns other than the ambulance issue?
- Dan Schutte recently hired by the North Shore Community School primarily to manage the LP grant introduced himself to the town board. It was recommended a Grant Meeting be set up in the near future to deal with questions and some base coordination issues. Stephen Dahl and Sue Lawson were nominated as town leads in coordinating grants as they become available.
- Susan Rose current director of the North Shore Community School introduced herself.

3. Approve Agenda

- a. Planning and Zoning: Jeff Cook – RSPT
- b. Planning and Zoning: Jeff Cook – SWPPP
- c. Recycling: Wendy Meierhoff – WLSSD recycling open house
- d. New Business: Wendy Meierhoff – Animal issue
- e. Dan Tanner made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, Wendy Meierhoff seconded. Motion passed.

4. Correspondence

- North Shore Sanitary District Board of Managers Document: John Bowen and Scott Smith wish to remain on the board for an additional year. Dave Mount made a motion to approve this resolution, Jeff Cook seconded. Motion passed. *Signed and will be returned.*
- MAT Insurance Policy Renewal Declaration Pages: *Leave for Stephen Dahl to review*
- MAT Rated Insurance break down: *Leave for Stephen to review*
- Powers Board meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December for McQuade Road Access.

5. Treasurers Report

Beginning Balance	\$771,099.96
Deposits	\$103,190.04
Expenses	\$103,305.61
Ending Balance	\$770,984.39

- Only one CD remains at Lake Bank.
- We have received a letter from The Lake Bank; our deposit guarantee bond will expire December 15<sup>th</sup>. Wendy Meierhoff will look into a replacement.
- Hold claim number 81102 to Agate Electric, the bill needs to be verified.

## 6. Tabled Agenda Items from Previous Month

7:30 p.m. Lake County Ambulance Special Taxing District Resolution: Dave Mount introduced Derrick Goutermont, Lake County Commissioner. Mr. Goutermont gave a summary of the ambulance issue from Lake County's perspective. Dave Mount asked the audience that time be given to the town board to ask questions of Mr. Goutermont, following the town boards question and answer period, residents will be given time for questions and answers.

Town Board: If you have a home valued at \$300,000.00 you would pay \$28.00 per year?

Lake County: Approximately yes.

Town Board: What other townships in St. Louis County are involved?

Lake County: Ault, Alden, Duluth, Fairbanks, Pequawyam. North Star is not part of this issue.

The service boundary is half mile west of Homestead Road and grows more westerly the further north you go. There is no change in the ambulance service being discussed at this time.

Town Board: What is your future levy? How do we have control?

Lake County: By State Statute we have to develop a Government's Board which would meet once a year; review the proposed budget which would then go to an operating board who would oversee the distribution of this budget.

Town Board: is this a permanent change to the structure? Can the governmence board dissolve this levy?

Lake County: it might take a majority vote but I'm sure they probably could. If there isn't a need for a few years it would be prudent to remove the levy. Twelve years ago, the ambulance service was profitable however the federal government has not upgraded their funding. Had the federal allowance grown at the same rate as billing has grown a problem would not exist.

Town Board: How many other townships have approved this and what would happen if we choose to not sign onto the Special Taxing District?

Lake County: No other townships in St. Louis County have signed; Cook County and every other area within Lake County has signed but in reality they are already paying the tax. In reality it is a new tax.

Town Board: Has the math been done to see what the tax value might be?

Lake County: Yes approximately \$6,500.00

Town Board: If you do not sign on what will happen?

Lake County: Nothing - the Ambulance service will not go away. But if the Special Taxing District resolution isn't signed you will likely see a current Lake County Commissioner or his predecessor visiting the townships making the same pitch year after year. As a business we need the runs to help the bottom line.

Dave Mount gave a brief history of the information we know, the only way the line can change is if an ambulance service requests the change. The Township has no power to say what we might prefer; we have no legal authority whatsoever. Town Residents seem to preference Gold Cross service this area.

Lake County: Once again it comes down to cost. Gold Cross can do it cheaper most of their runs are short runs. The answer is easy when you are sitting up and in full health, 2 or 3 minutes more response time can be the difference between life and death. The only way you are going to insure good service is to put the money behind it and so thank goodness we don't have a lot of runs which unfortunately is bad for business but good for the people. Lake County Ambulance service has the

authority to request change but if the township we wish to not be involved then we would certainly work to make those changes if we can.

Resident: Are we taxed by St. Louis County for Ambulance service? Yes, there is a mileage payment from St. Louis County throughout St. Louis County to help offset costs.

Resident: I had to have the first responders to my houses, I think the service we have is top notch. If I am understanding this right, the only people who will be taxed will be the houses within that lane. I am not against \$15.00 but it seems to be unending, there is never an end it just goes on forever. Has anyone contacted Gold Cross to move their line the additional 5 miles?

Town Supervisor Dave Mount: I contacted Gold Cross and basically there are bound by this boundary agreement they do not want to be seen as poaching business. They are in the business of servicing people who need servicing. They do not want to be involved in a boundary dispute. There should be an agreement able to be reached between the ambulance crews.

Lake County: There is the EMS Regulatory board who draws the line.

Resident: has anyone approached these people?

Town Supervisor Dave Mount: I have talked to everyone involved, unless there is a complaint about poor service or an issue the boundaries do not change. The EMS Regulatory board is only interested in people receiving medical assistance. Gold Cross is geared to service whatever area they have been assigned.

Resident: The only argument I can see is; instead of \$850.00 per call charge me \$950.00. I would rather pay it and know it is there.

Resident: Two Harbors ambulance service is a BLS (Basic Life Support) service, Gold Cross service is an ALS (Advance Life Support) service. With my family's heart history Gold Cross would be able to do more for me than a BLS service. Lake County Ambulance should petition the EMS Regulatory board to see if they would make the change.

Resident: What other ways of raising the revenue have you looked at? In Lake County there is certainly a lot of development along the shore who are only transient, have you looked at a tax to assist.

Lake County: We are only able to tax this way. We are not able to do a rooming tax. They (ambulance service) have fundraisers every year, there are a lot of very generous people out there. The VFW is very generous; grant availabilities; training is paid for through grants.

Resident: If I live on that side (*indicating West side of road*) of the Homestead Road I won't have to pay the tax.

The town board has been discussing alternative ways of funding this issue. The escalation of funding is a problem; is there anyway the township could pay a single amount? The township can only tax the entire township; we would then shift the inequity to the entire township instead of the service district.

Resident: A lot of comment has been made about response time; do you do anything different than the first responders?

Lake County: Some injections; some certain levels of drugs.

Resident: Please explain the difference between Advance and Basic. There is no ambulance service out there which will beat a first responder. I wouldn't have a problem paying extra if it was Advance.

Resident: have you looked into building into an Advance Ambulance service?

Lake County: No up until now it is a funding issue. In the very near future we will be required to become an ALS service.

Resident: If you are already paying then it would be nice to get the full ALS service.

Resident: is your service in network service?

Alden Supervisor: What difference would this make to a person uninsured or underinsured? Would this make a difference?

Lake County: I would hope we could collect as much as possible.

Alden Supervisor: This doesn't address that issue.

Lake County: Your insurance company decides what is paid not the ambulance service, this is about raising the prices to recover money the insurance does not pay. The people who cannot afford to pay are the ones who cannot afford to negotiate the rates.

Resident: you said when you were doing this tax district, if we are 6% of the cost are we only going to be charged 6% - it goes by evaluation in the service area.

Town Supervisor: is there a difference in taxation between Duluth Township and Lake County?

Lake County: there may have been some of that some years ago but not as much today.

Town Supervisor: Would you be willing to send a letter to the EMSRB to see if a change in ambulance service would create a time response issue? Some members request the township be as a whole not divided by an ambulance boundary; at least look at our options. People want the higher grade service; let's reevaluate some of the lines. A lot of the community has asked us to look into Gold Cross.

Town Supervisor: If the question is response time then let us look at that. There are levels of accreditation.

Resident: if you have a very small piece of an area and look at that, we are not talking a great deal of response time to go an additional two or three miles. I believe your suggestion has merit. I do believe we should have the option to look at the line.

Lake County: Duluth Township is unique as it is right on the boarder.

Town Supervisor: could we co-write a letter? We are willing to work with you to iron out this issue.

Town Supervisor: What is the decision time line?

Lake County: We should have an answer by early spring.

Town Supervisor: Is the taxing district a go no go?

Lake County: yes everyone has to initially sign up for the district. There has to be something on file from every township, district and city before we can create the district.

Town Supervisor: This is an information request, we are asking Lake County to contact the EMSRB and tell them we wish to know how best to provide service to the township regarding response time.

Lake County: you wish the information to come in first?

Clifton Fire Chief: you keep referring to this response time; it is the level of service which is the concern. Personally I don't care if the service comes from Lake County or Duluth but I want the highest level of service available.

Town Supervisor: Dave Mount will ask how they weigh their decision.

Town Supervisor: no one wants to pay taxes for a lower level of service, that is our primary concern.

*Discussion of this issue concluded for this meeting. Many thanks to Lake County Commissioner, Mr. Derrick Goutermont for his time on this matter.*

## 7. Department Reports

- Police Reports
  - Chiefs Report: No report this meeting.
- Fire Report
  - Chiefs Report: Chief went to Forstner to inspect the truck, it was to be a pre build meeting but upon arrival we found the truck was half done.
  - Alden burned down a sauna on Sunday.
- Road and Bridge
  - Supervisor Report: Everything is done unless there is an emergency.
- Community Center:
  - insulation is completed
  - the kitchen stove needs to be replaced. The stove is hardwired into the ground but it has a short and is shocking people. There are no major costs at this time.
  - Possibly a bit more asbestos abatement.
  - Septic still not working great – can't get rid of the odor.
- Legal
  - Firearm restrictions along the shore.
  - Nelson have paid their double fee.
  - Meyer Cartway – Meyers amended their petition. They need to have everything posted and notified at least 10 days before the hearing.
  - Worden appeal pending.
- Planning and Zoning:
  - Odyssey Development Sue has called 4 people to act as a facilitator, two are too busy and Bob Bruce said he isn't the person for the job. We have also talked to Al Katz. Everyone is satisfied with Al. We are planning on one day from 5 to 7 hours including a trip to Stoney Point. Bob Ryan has another proposal he wants us to look at; once we do that we will come back for more discussion. The purpose of this meeting is not to agree on a proposal. Bob wants to see if this is something in the ballpark of what the Planning Commission could pass. The Board agreed to split the cost of the facilitator with Odyssey, Bob Ryan has also offered to provide lunch. The cost would be \$100.00 per hour each for Bob Ryan and the Township. Wendy Meirhoff made a motion that we do not exceed \$800.00 for a facilitator, Dan Tanner seconded. Dave Mount made a friendly amendment requesting he be allowed to write a letter indicating that to Mr. Katz. Motion passed.
  - Bieraugal Board of Adjustment will happen December 1, 2008.
  - Worden is appealing the decision on the second rental property.
  - A letter has been sent requesting an addition to the 60 days for the Wordens discussion on the conditions of their first appeal.
  - Master site plan, parts of it is done; they will have it to you by the 20<sup>th</sup>. You should be thinking about how much the board would be interested in committing if we need

matches. We also need some budget figures. A coastal grant should be part of the last phase of what we are going to do. One suggestion is to co-chair the expenses with the Community School.

- Short term rental moratorium: Moving forward getting the study done, we are planning an open house sometime in February or March.
- Zoning Ordinance update: looking at 60 day rule changes and fee structure.
- Budget: We are over in Advertising and Legal.
- Office Hours: John is recommending he no longer have office hours in the town hall, there is some question as to whether his office hours are even effective.
- We wish to look at a way to put documents on a web site to have open access to files eliminating e-mailing to find files.
- Building Addition Team
  - Supervisor Report
- Town Hall
  - Copier: Wendy wishes to spend a bit more time evaluating options.
  - Piano: request to move the piano to another corner and have it retuned.
- Recycling
  - Shed Keeper Report: it is almost winter and the shed hasn't been moved yet. Wendy Meierhoff will contact Stephen Dahl to see who he has hired so we can move this project along.
  - Cans have been stolen again.
  - December 8<sup>th</sup>, WLSSD open house.
- Cemetery
  - Supervisor Report: all is quiet.

#### 8. Old Business

- Lake County Ambulance: completed
- Animal placement: The Lake County Humane Society might possibly work if Wendy Meierhoff attended their meeting. Cost? Spaces open? Would it be worth pursuing? Dave Mount recommended we pursue the issue.

#### 9. New Business

- RSPT: For planning and zoning stormwater certified contractors are recommended.
- SWPPP: required by MPCA. A meeting date to be set; Dave Mount, Sue Lawson and Dan Tanner will go over the storm water plan primarily to discuss the township obligation with the Planning Commission and the Town Board. Date: 6:00 p.m. November 20, 2008

#### 10. Pay Bills - Paid

11. Motion to adjourn 10:05 p.m. Dan Tanner made a motion to adjourn, Jeff Cook seconded. Motion passed.