



959 Paris Avenue Circle North, Minnesota 55082
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March 8, 2022

West Lakeland Town Hall

Call to Order:

The annual meeting of West Lakeland Township was called to order by Township Clerk Carrie Seifert on March 8, 2022 at 8:26 PM.

Election of the Moderator

Mr. Gary Horning nominated Mr. Steve Ebner as Moderator. The motion was seconded by Mr. Loren Kalal. No other nominations were put forward. Motion carried by voice vote.

Mr. Ebner reviewed the agenda and asked if any town resident had additions to the agenda. No additions were requested.

Reading of the Board of Audit

The board of audit was conducted on February 14, 2022. There was a random sampling of 15% of the receipts and disbursements. The selected transactions are posted for review. The selected transactions were found to be true and accurate. A motion to approve the board of audit was made by Mr. Gary Horning and seconded by Mr. Jason Gorman. The motion was carried by voice vote.

Senator Karin Housley, District 39

Senator Karin Housley was unable to attend.

Representative Shelly Christiansen, District 39B

Representative Christiansen was unable to attend and provided an open letter to the township residents in her absence.

Washington County Commissioner Gary Kriesel

Commissioner Gary Kriesel thanked the town board for the invitation to participate in the annual meeting. Washington County enjoys a strong collaborative relationship with West Lakeland. Commissioner Kriesel provided a summary of the road projects impacting West Lakeland.

Washington County Road Project at Highway 15 and 30th Street Intersection Improvement: This project includes a new traffic signal at Manning Avenue and 30th Street and improvements on 30th Street. Construction is planned for the summer of 2022.

The next project is County Road 65 Corridor Improvement which includes a reconstruction of County Road 65 from County Highway 14 to County Highway 10 to improve pavement, access and drainage. Construction is scheduled for 2023 and 2024.

The next project is CSAH 10, 10th Street, between Manning Avenue and Stagecoach Trail. This includes pavement resurfacing and is planned to be completed the summer of 2022. The project includes turn lanes at Neal Avenue and 10th.

The last project is 22nd Street from County Highway 21 to Trunk Highway 95. This township road has been identified as a candidate for jurisdictional transfer to Washington County. A study to determine the needed improvements and cost will begin in 2023.



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Washington County Sheriff Dan Starry

Sheriff Dan Starry thanked the residents of West Lakeland for their support over the past year. Sheriff Starry provided the annual report, summarizing the calls responded to by the Sheriff's office. There were 22 calls in West Lakeland last year. There were 447 traffic stops in West Lakeland. They are out, and will continue to be out to ensure safety. Residents are encouraged to call if assistance is needed. West Lakeland is pretty safe.

When asked about staffing levels, Sheriff Starry responded that there was a 12% vacancy rate. The hardship is in the corrections division. The next three to five years will be challenging as there are not as many candidates coming forward as senior staff retire.

When asked about the drug intervention programs. Sheriff Starry noted that methoxetamine, the drug of choice in Washington County and Minnesota, is still a concern. Opioids are also still a concern.

When asked about sex trafficking, Sheriff Starry noted Washington County has teamed up with the County Attorney and Public Health to support a human trafficking unit in the Sheriff's office.

Bayport Fire Department Chief Allen Eisinger

The Bayport Fire Department has been around since 1988 and currently has 23 members and over 315 combined years of service. Total call volume did drop with the pandemic, with 964 calls in 2021, but is on pace to return to previous levels. Bayport fire is the busiest all volunteer fire department in the State of Minnesota. Oak Park Heights is the busiest community being supported. West Lakeland had 163 calls in 2021. Budget is a concern so they are working with Township and Cities on items such as the cost of replacing needed equipment.

The question was raised if the staffing can be continued as a volunteer staff. The requirements are changing and will need to look at full time staff.

Supervisor Report, Supervisor Dave Schultz

Supervisor Schultz thanked the residents for attending and thanked the township staff for their support over the past year. His responsibilities include the roads and other transportation, such as the Lake Elmo Airport. He noted that MAC has completed the reroute of 30th Street and will continue with the paving of the new runway this year and complete the remaining portion of 30th Street the following year. He noted the township does have a database of the road inventory, including dates of repair and signage. Supervisor Schultz noted that the township contracts for services such as mowing, ditch maintenance and road maintenance. He expects that the contracted pricing may increase with the potential of fuel charges being assessed.

The proposed road projects for next year are based on the 5-year capital improvement plan from 2019. The last significant project was the 4th and 6th street loop of 1.7 miles for just under \$480,000. The next area considered is 18th Street and Margo area, which is on pause because Valley Branch Watershed may have projects with the culverts. 24th Street and 22nd Street off of Manning at .85 miles are the next projects being considered at an estimated cost of \$630,000.



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A resident expressed appreciation with how quickly downed trees were removed from the roadways from a storm in September.

A resident asked if MAC will repave the area between Neal and 30th. MAC is using this as a haul route, and after construction of the runway is completed, there is an agreement to redo that section. The agreement at the start of the project is that MAC will pay for the base and repaving and the Townships are responsible for the fill.

A resident asked who is responsible for maintenance of the frontage roads on Interstate 94. The frontage roads are state roads, and the responsibility of MnDOT.

Supervisor Report, Supervisor Marian Appelt,

Supervisor Appelt also thanked the residents for coming out and thanked the staff for their support. She has been serving on the board since November 2019. Her main responsibility is liaison with the planning commission. West Lakeland is fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers to fill this role. Supervisor Appelt served as the Township representative on the technical support committee for the 3M PFAS settlement. She worked on the survey that was completed by township residents and initiated a number of special meetings regarding this issue. The final decision was that West Lakeland will retain the POETS systems, and the state will be responsible for testing and maintaining these systems moving forward. The other part of her responsibility is to work with Washington County Natural Resources to address noxious weeds in the township. The largest concerns are wild parsnips and Canada thistle. We have a map of the township, and color coded where these noxious weeds are found in the Township right of way. Mowing has started to show improvement in managing the Canada Thistle.

Asked if the Township was aware of a University out east that was contacting residents in West Lakeland about water testing. The Township is aware of the effort but has not received information from them recently.

Treasurer's Report, Ms. Marsha Olson

During 2021, the town recorded \$1,858,974 in receipts. Expenditures for 2021 totaled \$1,103,232. The ending balance for the township was \$2,055,310. Details are in the Treasurer's Summary for Fiscal Year ended December 31, 2021.

Planning Commission Report, Mr. Mark Votava

Mr. Votava, Chairman of the Planning Commission, introduced the members of the planning commission. The planning commission takes direction and assignments from the Town Board. Some of the activities of the planning commission include review of developments, advise in concept development plans, review home occupation permits, review conditional use permits, recommend changes, and propose revisions to the township ordinances and permits. Over the past year, a focus has been on business uses.

Chairman's Report, Chairman Dan Kylo



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Chairman Kylo welcomed the residents to the new Town Hall. He thanked the guests and the township staff. The board put together a responsible budget and levy proposal for 2023. He noted that many of the township roads are aging and need improvement. Most of the township roads were constructed in the 1980's and 1990's. In 2014, the board created a capital improvement fund to be able to support those projects moving forward. In 2019 the board purposely set aside \$200,000 in the levy to fund that capital improvement fund. For 2023, the proposal is to increase the amount set aside to \$300,000 to reflect increasing costs. There are other significant cost increases in the budget, such as recycling costs, fire services, and an annual audit which is now required due to the township's increasing size.

The board is proposing a 16% increase in the levy to \$1,188,488. To the taxpayer, compared to neighboring communities, the West Lakeland resident would still have a lower municipal property tax burden than in Baytown, Lake Elmo or Marine. The board is being prudent with the township's funds to keep the levy affordable.

Mr. Ron Nekse asked about the line item for the Covid Relief Fund. Chairman Kylo noted this was a federal grant for municipalities to replace lost revenue. Ms. Olson added that the amount received was based on the budget and population. Projects need to be dedicated by the end of 2024 and the money spent by the end of 2026. Some projects under consideration are improvements in the Town Hall for air circulation and ADA compliance.

Mr. Matt Schmitt asked about the size of our community compared to the neighboring communities. West Lakeland has 45 miles of road, and Baytown has 22 miles of road. He noted that our taxes are lower despite the size difference.

Mr. Mark Votava asked what distinguishes West Lakeland from the other communities. Chairman Kylo noted that the township structure does provide for a lot of internal work. The planning commission does a lot of volunteer work which other communities have hired consultants to complete. The board does their own administrative work rather than relying on paid administrative staff. We also have very good contractors at very affordable rates.

Ms. Kari Aamot raised a question on why there is a difference between the budgeted and actual amounts in the miscellaneous category for 2021. Ms. Olson responded that the difference in this category was for the township engineer to attend the 3M PFAS water management meetings, which were later reimbursed by the MPCA.

Ms. Aamot raised a question about the difference in budgeted and actual building permits for 2021. Chairman Kylo responded that this is triggered by the pace of new construction in the township and is a pass through of funds to pay for the building inspector, pay for state and other funds. The building permit charges cannot be a form of revenue. The township can only recoup costs.

Ms. Carol Peterson asked about the larger increases over the past three years, which appear to be outpacing inflation. Chairman Kylo responded that the increases were due to the recognition of the need to repair and replace roads. For years, no accommodation was done for those approaching large expenditures.



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Old Business

Mr. Ebner asked for old business from the residents. No old business was raised by the residents.

New Business – Election Results

The results represent the votes cast at the polling place, and the absentee ballots compiled by Washington County. The results have not yet been certified. The votes recorded reflect 368 votes for Nathan Aamot and 436 votes for Daniel Kylo.

Proposed 2023 Tax Levy

The board proposed a 2023 tax levy of \$1,188, 448, with \$391,448 for the General Fund, \$497,000 for the Road and Bridge Fund, and \$300,000 for the Capital Improvement Fund.

Ms. Tamara Morrissey noted the board does a lot of administrative work and the town is involved in more and more large issues. She would like to add \$19,000 to the general fund to support providing administrative and clerical assistance to the town board members and the clerk. Ms. Winchell, township attorney, noted that the town can approve the additional funds, but cannot specifically allocate funds for a specific purpose. Ms. Morrissey moved to adjust the recommended levy to \$1,207,448 with \$410,448 to the general fund, \$497,000 for the road and bridge fund and \$300,000 for the capital improvement fund. The motion was seconded by Ms. Joan Newman. The motion was opened for discussion.

Chairman Kylo noted this was the first he has heard of this request. The board has continued to assume the workload. It was not considered as part of the budget consideration behind the board's recommended levy. The additional funds, if provided, could support projects such as transferring township records to a digital format. It was noted that only May and West Lakeland Township have a 3-member board. The other townships in Washington County have 5 member boards.

Mr. Jim Frank stated his opinion that the staff and board put a lot of work into determining the levy and has faith in the work done. It was noted that the supervisors are at the same salary as 11 years ago.

Mr. Ebner called for a vote on the motion to approve a levy of \$1,207,448 with \$410,448 to the general fund, \$497,000 for the road and bridge fund and \$300,000 for the capital improvement fund. The motion was defeated by a show of hands.

Mr. Dave Mergens moved to approve the proposed levy of \$1,188, 448, with \$391,448 for the General Fund, \$497,000 for the Road and Bridge Fund, and \$300,000 for the Capital Improvement Fund. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Marshon.

Ms. Kari Aamot asked why the levy should be approved now, when the deadline for the levy is not needed until August. Chairman Kylo noted that in the past years, the budgeted amounts behind the

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levy request each year have been reasonably accurate, and if there is a significant reason to adjust the budget, that can be brought before the town at a later date.

The motion to levy \$1,188,448, with \$391,448 for the General Fund, \$497,000 for the Road and Bridge Fund, and \$300,000 for the Capital Improvement Fund for 2023 was approved by a show of hands.

Set the Annual Meeting for 2023

Mr. Gary Horning moved to set the next town meeting for March 14, 2023 at 8:30 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brad Cornell. The motion carried by voice vote.

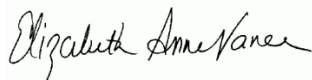
Additional Business

Ms. Tamara Morrissey presented an opportunity for residents to sign a card, welcoming the Prairie Island Indian Community. This was a welcome from residents, not the Town Board, if anyone should care to sign.

Adjourn

Having no further business, Mr. Gary Horning moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dan Kylo. The motion carried by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Ebner at 10:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Elizabeth A. Vance
Recording Secretary



Steve Ebner
Moderator



Carrie Seifert
Clerk