

West Lakeland Township

2019 Annual Town Meeting

March 12, 2019

8:00 p.m.

Oak-Land Middle School - Auditorium

Call to Order:

Township Clerk Carrie Seifert called the meeting to order at 8:09 PM, March 12, 2019.

Election of Moderator:

Clerk Seifert opened the floor for nominations for moderator. Mr. Gary Horning nominated Mr. John McPherson for the role. Mr. Tom Vierling seconded the nomination. Having no other nominations from the residents, Clerk Seifert called for motion. Mr. Phil Sanders moved to accept Mr. John McPherson as the moderator. Seconded by Mr. Dick Magler, the motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes:

Mr. Dick Mahler moved to accept the minutes of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Tom Vierling, the motion carried.

Board of Audit

Clerk Seifert presented the summary of the board of audit, February 11, 2019. Mr. Gary Horning moved to accept the minutes of the Board of Audit. Seconded by Mr. Del Miske, the motion carried.

Senator Karin Housley, District 39

Senator Housley was unable to attend.

Representative Shelly Christensen, District 39B

Representative Shelly Christensen was unable to attend.

Washington County Commissioner, Gary Kriesel

Commissioner Kriesel noted that Washington County completed the planning design of County Road 65, Oakgreen Avenue, improvement project. It was a well-attended open house. County parks staff produced a central greenway regional trail master plan. This will be submitted to the Met Council as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. A top priority project for Washington County is an interchange at Highway 36 and Manning Avenue. With the new St Croix River Crossing open, there has been a 20% increase in traffic, and projected to increase another 30%. The hospital is making a major relocation and redevelopment at that corner.

Mr. Frank Ticknor, Washington County Public Works, was also in attendance. He noted additional items currently in the plan. The County Rd 10 preservation project from Manning to County Road 21 is planned for 2021. That will include a turn lane at Neal Avenue. County Road 21 update project by the school near Baytown was completed this past year. The next phase south of that location, 194 to 34th Street is planned for 2024 construction. Manning Phase 3, which is between Oakland Jr. High and the intersection with Highway 5, is planned for 2023. More information on these projects will be on the County website.

Mr. Ticknor was asked about the intersection of Highway 36 and CSAH 17. Commissioner Kriesel noted the intersection of Hadley Avenue and highway 36 is underway now. These are expensive projects and are pending for resolution of state funding for these projects.

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Commissioner Kriesel was asked to explain their plans for future use of semi-autonomous vehicles in future road expansions. Washington County is working with MnDOT, and the County is not ready to address those items now and continue to research the technology.

Supervisor Ebner expressed his appreciation to the County staff for keeping residents informed of major road construction projects, listened to the concerns of residents, and incorporated these concerns into the design.

Washington County Sheriff Dan Starry

Sheriff Starry expressed thanks to the West Lakeland township for the partnership. One of the high priority items in this area include distracted driving and impaired driving. The sheriff's department continues to enforce and monitor for driver safety. A second-high priority is drug abuse, particularly opioid abuse, as well as methamphetamine use. Minnesota has become a distribution hub for drug trafficking, so have been working with state and federal partners to address that issue. Washington County continues to partner with Woodbury, Oakdale, and the County Attorney to address sex trafficking.

Mr. McPherson expressed his appreciation for the Washington County Sheriff's department, and their prompt service.

Bayport Fire Chief Allen Eisinger

Chief Allen Eisinger of Bayport Fire Department stated that they have 26 members at full roster. One of the anomalies in the state of Minnesota in that they have a full roster of volunteer fire fighters. This speaks highly of the community. The response territory, with ISO classifications. The department is working on bringing the fire rating down and how to best manage resources to provide maximum service. The past year had over 1,129 calls, most in Oak Park Heights. West Lakeland did see an increase in call activity year on year. The crisis response unit for mental health issues has also helped focus resources more appropriately. Bayport is the busiest volunteer fire department in the state. Tracking call volume helps to plan for future requirements.

The new station, as well as being better located, and the ability to get in and out of the station, has made this a huge asset for the area.

It was noted that residents can have two false alarms per year, with the third false alarm, the homeowner will be billed. The department is also signing a mutual agreement with the State of Minnesota to back charge for grass fires.

Supervisor Dave Schultz

Supervisor Schultz thanked the residents for attending and recognized the staff and the planning commission for the fine work over the past year. He is responsible for transportation, such as township roads and signs. The township is looking at 22nd street to see if it is a better fit under County jurisdiction. He is also involved in the Lake Elmo Airport Expansion. The capital improvement plan for the airport includes reconstruction on 30th Street should the runway expansion move forward. MAC has started action for a Joint Zoning Board to address the development in that area. It is uncertain how this will move forward.

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Supervisor Steve Ebner

Supervisor Ebner expressed his appreciation for the board members, planning commission and staff. Mr. Mark Votava was recognized for assuming the role as Chairman of the Planning Commission. Supervisor Ebner noted the changes to the township ordinances over the past year. Supervisor Ebner also discussed the review of water contamination in the township. Impacted homes will have a GAC filter installed. There are three committees to oversee the resolution and implementation of corrective actions. Chairman Kylo represents the township on one committee, and Supervisor Ebner on a second. When asked about size of the impacted area, Supervisor Ebner replied the plume is more widespread than first expected, and the best solution currently for removing the contaminants from well water is the active carbon filter.

Ms. Samec noted that the MPCA and Mn Dept of Health will be having open office hours at the Township offices on March 21, from 3 PM to 6 PM to address questions from residents.

Clerk Carrie Seifert

Clerk Seifert expressed her gratitude for the residents and representatives for attending the annual town meeting. Chairman Dan Kylo could not attend the meeting due to family commitments. Clerk Seifert presented his charts in his absence. The focus of the remarks was the basis for the proposed 2020 levy of \$826,795 and an increase of 29%. Clerk Seifert shared a chart which tracked the expenditures of the township. The largest expenditure has been the road and bridge account, which is 68% of the 2020 budget. A noticeable increase occurred with the road improvement programs. In the summer of 2019, the township will undertake a \$550,000 project to rebuild 4th and 6th Street, known as the 4th and 6th street loop. Approximately 2 miles of roadway will be reconstructed. This is in addition to the \$423,000 budgeted for standard repairs and maintenance. The township road inventory is aging and in some cases exceeding the expected life of these roads. To address this need, the proposal is to budget \$200,000 each year for capital improvements, dedicated to road projects.

The second chart shows the cash reserve, revenue and disbursements since 2000. The proposed levy increase in the 2020 levy is only the second significant increase in the past 9 years. Having the levy at this amount will allow the township to keep cash reserves at the level recommended by the Minnesota Association of Townships, thereby being able to manage unanticipated expenses.

The final chart shows a comparison of tax burden for West Lakeland and neighboring communities. West Lakeland continues to have the lowest tax burden, even with the proposed levy.

When asked if there were other areas of the budget that could be reduced to offset the cost for road construction, Clerk Seifert replied that had the township not levied for \$200,000 for future road projects, the operating costs would have stayed flat or declined by 1.4%.

A resident asked about the status of the land purchased by the Prairie Island Indian Community. The application for trust status has been submitted, but no action taken. At this point, the land is agricultural or single-family estate use. No other use has been formally proposed.

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Marsha Olson, Treasurer

Ms. Olson presented the treasurer's report, reflecting \$589,000 of receipts from property taxes, and \$157,000 of receipts from building permits. Expenditures for the year were \$1,043,000, reflecting \$341,000 in road and bridge expenses and \$128,000 for fire protection services.

Del Miske, Planning Commission

Mr. Del Miske presented the report for Mr. Mark Votava in his absence. In the past year, the planning commission completed reviews for several variance requests, reviews of revisions to the town ordinances, and drafted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is currently under review with the Met Council. Currently, the Planning Commission is looking at some revisions to the ordinances relating to right of way maintenance, short term rentals, and the keeping of small livestock, specifically chickens and bees.

Old Business

No old business was raised.

New Business

No new business was raised.

Election Results:

The polls closed at 8 PM. 77 votes were cast. Mr. Dan Kylo received 75 votes.

2020 Levy

The board brought forward a proposed levy of \$ should be 826,795. This would consist of \$231,795 for the general fund, \$395,000 for road and bridge and \$200,000 for capital improvement projects. Mr. Del Miske moved to approve the levy as presented. Seconded by Mr. Gary Horning, the motion carried.

2020 Annual Meeting

Mr. Chuck Newman moved to hold the 2020 annual meeting on Tuesday March 10, 2020, at 8 PM at Oak-land Middle School. Seconded by Mr. Allen Eisner, the motion carried.

Resident Concerns

It was noted that despite the water quality issues, West Lakeland is a good place to live, and thanks the board for their work. An additional thank you was extended for the snow plow service.

Adjourn

Having no further business, Mr. Gary Horning moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Allen Eisner, the motion carried. Mr. McPherson adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM

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Respectfully submitted,



John McPherson
Moderator



Elizabeth Vance
Recording Secretary