

LeSauk Township Regular Township Meeting – Sartell Community Center – Liberty Rm
April 23, 2024

The regular township meeting of the LeSauk Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman Dan Heim at 6:30 p.m. at the Sartell Community Center – Liberty Room.

PRESENT: Supervisors Dan Heim, Jeff Westerlund and Paul Wagner, Clerk Marlyce Plante, Treasurer Josh Bentley, Deputy Clerk Mary Barron-Traut and six interested parties.

SUPV HEIM MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA ADDING SHIRLEY, STEVE & TED THOMAS TO OPEN FORUM, SECOND BY SUPV WAGNER, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

OPEN FORUM:

Gordan Simanton & Jeff Bertsch – Solar Stone Partners – Mr. Simanton & Mr. Bertsch came before the town board to discuss the township's solar ordinance regulations. Mr. Simanton gave a brief history of the Solar Stone company which began in Minnesota in 2014. Throughout Minnesota they have 14 solar farm/garden projects. With regulations changing in Minnesota regarding megawatt-size solar farm/gardens, the company then moved into Illinois with 7 projects. Since regulations are changing in Minnesota again allowing for larger megawatt solar farms/gardens, their company is now looking for possible areas in Minnesota. They have been contacted by parcel owners, Deb & Kevin Traut who own a 70-acre parcel in the north end of the township. Deputy Clerk, Mary Barron-Traut, who was in attendance at the meeting and owns parcels in the township, also was contacted by the Solar Stone company.

LeSauk Township ordinance regulations only allow residential solar panels but no large megawatt solar farms or gardens. Mr. Simanton and Bertsch understand the townships position but would like the opportunity to make a presentation to the township board to cover areas of solar farms & gardens that may not have been covered before such as solar tax production, possible township revenue from a solar farm/garden, recycle of old panels etc.

The Town Board thanked them for coming to the meeting and will discuss whether they would like to have them return to a meeting to listen to a presentation regarding solar farms/gardens within the township.

Shirley, Steve & Ted Thomas, 32502 County Road 1 – Property Clean-Up – The Thomas's (Shirley & Steve) attended the past township meeting to discuss the continued accumulation of abandoned vehicles and property throughout the front & side yard. Ms. Thomas owns the property, but does not reside at the property. Her son, Ted Thomas, lives in the home.

Steve Thomas sent two pictures via email to the clerk which were forwarded to the town board members. The pictures showed some clean-up of the property. Supv Heim had taken pictures of the property over the weekend and the board compared the clean-up progress. The town board supervisors discussed with the Thomas's that the board is prepared to pursue this ongoing cleanup issue with the township attorney and handle the matter in the same manner as a similar township property unless the Thomas's can successfully cleanup the property and keep the property cleaned up to the township standards. The Thomas's will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting and the board will view the property during the annual road inspection and other unannounced times.

MINUTES:

SUPV HEIM MOTIONED TO APPROVE AS AMENDED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 9, 2024 REGULAR TOWNSHIP MEETING, SECOND BY SUPV WESTERLUND, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

SUPV WESTERLUND MOTIONED TO APPROVE AS AMENDED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 10, 2024 BOARD OF EQUALIZATION MEETING, SECOND BY SUPV WAGNER, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

ATTORNEY REPORT:

Orderly Annexation Agreement w/St. Cloud – Supv Heim had a zoom meeting with Atty Gilchrist to discuss the St. Cloud orderly annexation agreement Atty Gilchrist is drafting. Atty Gilchrist had questions on sections of the agreement, questioning how the township would like to have them stated. **Zander Summons** - Supv Heim was contacted by Atty Robert Alsop informing him the Zanders did not answer the summons and complaint within the time period allotted. Atty Alsop will now motion for a default judgment against the Zander's. He will keep Supv Heim informed of the progress.

Supv Heim reported he accessed the Tim Farris property with Mr. Farris's permission, and obtained video of the abandoned property the Zander's have placed in their back yard as well as on the Mr. Farris's property. Supv Heim stated the front yard does look better but they have moved the majority of the abandoned property to the back yard.

BUILDING INSPECTOR REPORT:

Stephen Hobbs, 1392 Riverside Ave No. – Remodel Project - Supv Heim reported the Hobb's will only be doing interior remodeling, so no site plan approval is needed. The Hobb's also received certification of their septic system, so no annexation for services will be needed.

TREASURERS REPORT & CLAIM VOUCHER PAYMENTS:

Treasurer Bentley reported he has finalized reports of the State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) the township received which was approximately \$182,610.00. The money was spent on township road projects. He also informed the board that even though the final report has been filed and accepted, he will need to continue reporting until 2026. Treasurer Bentley stated the township received \$82.52 through an election grant which must be used on election materials. He researched voting booths and was able to purchase 4 voting booths at \$90 each. He also prepared the township report regarding how the election grant money was spent and will forward that to the correct party. The township will now have at least 10 booths to put up for the November Election.

He discussed the Presidential Nomination Primary costs that were submitted for reimbursement by the political parties on the ballot; Democratic, Republican and Marijuana Now Parties. He did receive information the meals and mileage for head judges were not reimbursable, but all other expenses have been submitted and are in review status.

Treasurer Bentley reviewed with the board various interest rates local banks are offering. The township currently has a CD that will come up for renewal on May 4, 2024 which he will probably rollover, then split between a couple of banks who offer the best interest rate for up to 10 months. He feels the township can lock up that money in a CD for that amount of time since the township has enough money in their regular account for expenses and will be receiving a real estate settlement in June.

Treasurer Bentley presented three claim vouchers for payment. SUPV HEIM MOTIONED TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF CLAIMS & VOUCHERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$599.21 (CHECK #14234 THRU 14236), SECOND BY SUPV WAGNER, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

SUPERVISORS REPORTS:

Jeff Westerlund –

Grading of 17th St. – Supv Westerlund contacted Lance of ASTECH Inc. requesting 17th Street North (Udermann area) to be graded. It was graded and crowned on April 18th and took approximately 2 hours. Supv Westerlund was also informed no fill was needed on the road.

District 5 Town Officers Meeting – Supv Westerlund attended the District #5 meeting for town officers in Freeport. He suggested all town board members attend since you are able to meet other town officers in the county and collaborate on issues similar to all townships.

Spring Short Course – Supv Westerlund reported on the topics discussed at the Spring Short Course held at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud. A highly discussed topic was the money the Minnesota Association of Townships had recently lost because of an email scam. He also attended a presentation by ASTECH Inc. regarding road repair which covered when and how to fix various road issues such as spider cracks with crack fill, small or shallow potholes by blow patching and larger potholes with cold patch.

Township Clean-Up Day - Supv Westerlund discussed the upcoming township clean-up day. He was contacted by the pastor of Faith Journey Church who would like to offer free coffee and donuts to residents coming to the clean-up. Supv Wagner brought a magnetic roller for Supv Westerlund to use on the parking lot after the completion of the clean-up day. Two 30-yard dumpsters are being delivered on Friday, April 26th by Opatz Roll-Off and Recycling. They will be picked up on Monday, April 29th.

Dan Heim –

Ted Thomas, 32502 County Road 1 – Property Clean-Up – Supv Heim was able to get in touch with Mr. Ted Thomas regarding the clean-up and the possible connection of this property to the Zander property in regards to abandoned property. The property Mr. Thomas resides at is owned by his mother, Shirley Thomas, so subsequently, any legal action would need to be taken in Shirley Thomas's name. The Thomas's were in attendance at tonight's meeting.

Tim Farris, 4508 30th St. – Zander Abandoned Property – Supv Heim contacted Mr. Farris regarding the neighboring parcel to the south which is owned by Gloria Zander. Supv Heim wanted to make Mr. Farris aware of the abandoned property that has been moved from the Zander property to the Farris property and the township is going through the legal process to have the abandoned junk and property removed. Mr. Farris does not live on this parcel which is bare land. He asked that Supv Heim keep him informed of the status of the situation.

Wayne w/ASTECH Inc. – Sweeping of Township Platted Areas – Supv Heim was contacted by Wayne with ASTECH regarding the sweeping of the township platted areas – the sweeping proposal was approved by the town board and the sweeping was completed on April 17th.

Rick Burski – Burski Excavating – Overweight Permit – Mr. Burski contacted Supv Heim regarding the use of 30th Avenue while excavating material for the construction of the Udermann home on 17th Street North. Supv Heim informed him that if they planned to use 30th Avenue, they must come before the town board to request a temporary overweight permit.

John Udermann – 17th Street Ditch Filling – Supv Heim informed Mr. Udermann – The Town Board

did not approve the filling of the ditch area of 17th Street North where is new driveway approach will be made. The ditch area he would like to fill is within the town road right-of-way and the Town Board stated that it was not in the best interest to have the area filled in due to possible drainage issues. He also reminded Mr. Udermann the township engineer has recommended a concrete culvert.

Kari Theisen-Haakonsen – Waters Church Remodel & Addition - Ms. Theisen-Haakonsen forwarded an email from Tri-County Abstract Commercial who have requested a zoning letter. Questions include what type of zoning the Waters Church property is, setbacks, parking, permitted uses etc. Clerk Plante will review the email and respond.

Orderly Annexation Agreement - Tax Property Reimbursement – Supv Heim emailed the City of Sartell official's questioning the tax property reimbursement portion of the orderly annexation agreement that was approved in August of 2021. Within the agreement is a tax property reimbursement table which states the percentage of property tax that is to be reimbursed to the township for property annexed to the city of Sartell. Supv Heim has a list of properties that have been annexed since the approval date. He did receive a response from Anna Gruber who will review and get back to him.

Jodi Teich Meeting – Area Transportation Plan (ATP) Grant – Supv Heim met with Jodi Teich, via zoom, to discuss the ATP Grant which she applied for that, if received, could offset further costs for reconstruction of 30th Avenue. She stated the 30th Avenue Road project is still in the running for this grant money which could be up to \$650,000.

Paul Wagner –

Township Short Course - Supv Wagner attended the township short course held in St. Cloud at the Holiday Inn. He reported on the change in by-laws for the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) which have not been reviewed for 8 years. All town officers were asked to vote on the changes at the various short courses that were held throughout Minnesota. Steven Fenske, MAT Attorney, gave different examples of possible situations and how to handle them at township meetings. Town board members must set rules & legalities of handling the township meeting.

Glen Lauer, Brockway Township Supervisor – Mr. Lauer contacted Supv Wagner questioning the future annexation of LeSauk Township. Supv Wagner informed him there were some encompassed areas of the township that may be annexed to the city of Sartell in August 2024. These properties were outlined in the August 2021 Orderly Annexation Agreement with Sartell, but those are the only properties that will be annexed.

MATIT (Minnesota Association of Township Insurance Trust) Information – Supv Wagner stated information was given to township officers in attendance at the short course, regarding the insurance scam MATIT was a part of in August of 2022. It was a misdirection of payment via electronic communications with Alliant, MAT's insurance vendor. The missing premium amount is roughly \$835,000. The employee who made the payment(s) did resign, but has since been reinstated since MAT officials did not accept her resignation. The money, as of yet, has not been recovered.

Clerk Report –

Request to Change Township Minutes – Clerk Plante was contacted by a township resident who requested to have her name removed from the minutes of March 14, 2024 and to remain anonymous. SUPV HEIM MOTIONED TO HAVE CLERK PLANTE REMOVE THE RESIDENT'S NAME IN THE MARCH 14, 2024 MINUTES, CHANGING IT TO ANONYMOUS, SECOND BY SUPV WESTERLUND, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Burski Excavating – Clerk Plante received a call from Rick Burski regarding an overweight permit for 30th Avenue – she asked him to attend the meeting to request one.

Schindler Overweight Permit – Clerk Plante reissued the overweight permit for Ray & Karen Schindler who reside on 30th Avenue and use 30th for farm activities. The board has previously approved renewal each year of the Schindler permit without them having to attend a meeting.

Annual Weed Inspector Meeting – Clerk Plante attended the annual local week inspector meeting. Bob Dunning, County Weed Inspector, provided a report of several township properties that he is aware have Canada & plume less thistles. He would also like to tour the entire township at some point. She reported the county assessors presented a report prior to the weed portion of the increased valuation of the different properties in Stearns County. A list of certified herbicide applicators was also included in the information Mr. Dunning provided to townships.

Sartell Fire Department Annual Report for 2023 – Clerk Plante forwarded a report she received from Sartell Fire Chief Peter Kedrowski who was unable to attend the township annual meeting. There were 22 incidents in the township during 2023, but incidents in the Sartell-LeSauk Township area decreased in 2023. He also reported the fire department is looking at purchasing a water tanker truck in 2024 and a new engine in 2026.

Stearns County Emergency Management Department Information Update – Clerk Plante was contacted by Erin Hughes requesting contact information for the township should an emergency in the area occur such as storm damage etc.

Returned Certified Thomas Letter – The post office returned the certified letter sent to Ted Thomas after it had been attempted three times. Unfortunately, this should have been shown to Ted Thomas when he was in attendance at the beginning of the meeting.

Stormwater Seminar – Clerk Plante received information regarding a seminar being conducted by WSB Engineering regarding MS4 permits, storm water control, regulations for watershed's etc. The township MS4 permit is handled by Wayne Cymbulak of CMWEA.

OLD BUSINESS:

Town Hall – Clerk Plante received a call from Dennis Molitor questioning whether the township may be interested in sharing a possible building site with the Sartell Historical Society should they locate a suitable site.

Zander Property Clean-Up – Discussed under the attorney report.

Sullivan Yard Clean-Up – Review during the road inspection meeting.

Website Redesign – Clerk Plante stated she has not researched yet.

Park Fund – No action as this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Change of Meeting Time – SUPV WESTERLUND MOTIONED TO CHANGE THE TOWNSHIP MEETING START TIME TO 6:00 P.M. FROM MAY 14TH THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2024 DUE TO THE COMMUNITY CENTER HOUR CHANGES, SECOND BY SUPV WAGNER, MOTION CARRIED 3-0. This will subsequently change the start of the Joint Planning Board meeting time. Clerk Plante will notify Ann Doyscher-Domes and Kari Haakonson of the time changes. She will also make a meeting schedule through December to be sent to Ann so she can get them on the schedule at the community center.

Township Clean-Up Day – Clerk Plante noted that everything should be set – the swing sign was brought out to the church, township resident list, gloves, vests etc. are ready to be picked up in the storage unit for Supv Westerlund.

Solar Energy Presentation Request – Supv Westerlund requested this be placed under old business in order for the board to decide whether to have Solar Stone come back and make a presentation to the entire board.

Ehlen Cats – Clerk Plante received a call from Charles Ehlen regarding the feral cats he has at his house. Complaints have been received from neighbors the cats have again multiplied and are becoming a nuisance in the neighborhood. Mr. Ehlen stated he will be trapping the cats and again move them to bare land properties he owns.

ROAD REPORT:

April Road Report – Supv Westerlund provided his road report to the town board. He noted the apron at 40th Street & Pinecone Road should be filled, which he will do. He reviewed with the board the areas in the township that have small shallow potholes, mainly BonHomie Valley Addition, Pleasant Dale & Countryside Acre Addition. He suggested considering blow patching these areas. Other areas that have larger potholes, he has estimated the amount of cold patch bags we will need. He viewed properties in the township the board has been attempting to have cleaned up, but the two main ones, Thomas & Zander, have very little change in condition. The 30th Avenue bridge fixes as outlined by Stearns County will be looked at as a full board during the annual road inspection.

322nd St. Overlay Project – Supv Heim reported that a meeting will be planned with Scott Volkers, St. Wendel Township, Luke Langer, City of St. Cloud and himself, to discuss the overlay project on 322nd Street. City of Sartell asked not to be included since they do not have any portion of 322nd in their jurisdiction.

Annual Road Inspection Meeting – SUPV HEIM MOTIONED TO SET THE ANNUAL ROAD INSPECTION MEETING FOR TUESDAY, MAY 7TH, BEGINNING AT 4:00 P.M., SECOND BY SUPV WESTERLUND, MOTION CARRIED 3-0. Town board members will meet at Supv Heim's home.

There being no further business, SUPV WESTERLUND MOTIONED TO ADJOURN, SECOND BY SUPV WAGNER, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Marlyce L. Plante
LeSauk Township Clerk