

**LYNDEN TOWNSHIP
STEARNS COUNTY, STATE OF MINNESOTA
ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024**

Township Clerk Jenny Schmidt called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance. Tom Plaggerman made a motion to elect Anne Ackerman to moderate the annual meeting, seconded by Jean Schermer, all in favor, motion passed.

8:17: Andy Anderson made a motion to waive the reading of the 2023 March annual meeting minutes, seconded by Todd Voigt, all in favor, motion passed.

8:18: Scott O’Konek made a motion to approve the minutes from the 2023 annual meeting, seconded by Dennis Niemi, all in favor, motion passed.

8:19: The 2023 treasurer’s report was available for review. Treasurer Jean Schermer presented the Board of Audit report and highlights of the treasurer’s report. The annual audit was convened on January 24th and the Clerk’s and Treasurer’s books and Lake Central Bank statements balanced with no discrepancies. 2023 revenue was \$754,109.65 and expenditures were \$943,253.26. At the close of 2023, the checking account balance was \$545,056.74, of which \$105,271.47 is ARPA Funds (American Rescue Plan Act). David L. Johnson questioned the net financial impact of the compensation increases that were approved on March 27, 2023. Schermer indicates approximately \$14,000. The factors for the wage increase decision were that the current compensation level was less than minimum wage, was less than surrounding townships, and there had not been a change for 5+ years.

8:27: Bob Asmus made a motion to waive the reading of all checks written and received in 2023, seconded by Jean Schermer, all in favor, motion passed.

8:28: Annandale Fire: Kris Townsend, Fire Chief represented the Annandale Fire Department. The Department has 25 members. They responded to 269 total calls in 2023, 17 of which were in Lynden Township. Average response time in Lynden Twp is 9 minutes, 13 seconds. Future equipment needs were discussed at the Fire Commission meeting. A 5 year replacement schedule was implemented which includes a rate increase each year to replace a 1997 truck and 1990 tanker. The levy request for 2025 is \$14,196. (+6% increase from 2024) for 169 units.

8:39: Clearwater Fire: No representative was in attendance on behalf of the Clearwater Fire Department. Discussions in the Fire Commission meetings reflect a levy request for 2025 of \$98,240 (+3% increase from 2024). On behalf of the township, David L. Johnson thanked both departments for their service.

8:39: Clearwater Public Library 2024 Annual Support: Clerk Schmidt confirmed the township has not received a formal request for donation. David L. Johnson suggests they seem to be operating on entitlement or expectation. Rhoda Senkler made a motion to authorize the Lynden Township Board to donate \$2,000 to the Clearwater Branch of the Great River Regional Library, and amended her motion to include the language as permitted by MN Statutes §§ 134.12 & 365.10, allowing payments to the library for the benefits library services provide

locally in that it is a convenience to township residents, serves a public purpose and is in the township's best interest to authorize this donation, and to make the payment from the ARPA Funds, seconded by Susie O'Konek, all in favor, motion passed.

8:44: Road Report 2023: Supervisor Dennis Niemi reported. In 2023 we purchased Class 1 gravel, graveling the south 1/3 of the Township. All roads were bladed and packed. We chip coated 200th Str E, 21st Ave, 202nd Str and Edison Cir, which should extend the life of those roads by 10 years. All of our asphalt roads have now been chip coated within the last 6 years. Ditch mowing and brushing was completed, as well as applying magnesium chloride to all of our gravel roads in varying widths and concentrations to preserve gravel. We contracted with the Engineering Firm of Hakanson Anderson. They have prepared a 5 year road plan and we are working to incorporate that into our budget and maintenance schedule. With the help of Stearns Co Engineer Jodi Teich, we applied for a LRIP Grant for the rebuild of 200th Str E. The estimated cost of that project is \$823,840, with engineering costs of \$147,600 plus \$61,500 in contingency costs. The township will find out if they receive this grant in April, 2024. Anticipated work in 2024 includes graveling the center 1/3 of the township, mowing, brushing and possible asphalt road projects as recommended by Hakanson. David L. Johnson questioned the State Park Road Account (SPRA) Grant that he applied for in 2022, which requested 100% funding to upgrade Eaglewood Rd up to the lake access, that had an estimated cost of \$570,000. Clerk Schmidt did not receive any notification that we were the recipient of that grant and also confirmed the grant was not applied for in 2023. Ackerman suggests the township consider finding a grant writer.

9:00: Scott O'Konek, Lynden Township Supervisor presented township updates which included:

- The Land Acquisition for a 6 acre parcel on the corner of 208th Str and CR 44 is complete.
- Midco installation of fiber optic lines throughout the township.
- A 5 Year Road Improvement Plan was completed, which we are working to incorporate.
- There were 125 building permits issued in 2023, most of which were reshingling, including 7 new single-family structures with a preliminary valuation increase of \$8,770,800 for all permits.
- We hold contracts with Allspec, Nancy Scott as Chief Building Official, Hakanson and Anderson Engineering, Schendzielos for summer road maintenance, Schabel for snow plowing, Republic Services for recycling, Couri and Ruppe as our Attorney, Patriot News for official publications, and Lake Central Bank for depository of funds.
- ARPA Funding received to date is \$226,869 with a balance of \$90,690.83. Funds must be disbursed by 2025, and be committed by contract by 2024. ARPA funding covered Town Hall improvements of: foundation repair, central air, furnace, installation of LED lighting, additional cameras, improving the sound system, and internet upgrades. Funds were also used to purchase signs needing replacement throughout the township.

9:05: Tom Plaggerman, Town Board Chair reviewed the components of the three (3) 2025 levy proposals. The levy currently consists of four (4) funds. Two (2) proposed options suggest five (5) funds.

Plaggerman presented the proposed levy as follows:

2025	PROPOSED LEVY	PROPOSED LEVY	PROPOSED LEVY
Road and Bridge	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000
General Government	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$115,000
Annandale Fire	\$14,196	\$14,196	\$14,196
Clearwater Fire	\$98,240	\$98,240	\$98,240
Tarring Fund	\$0	\$324,000	\$389,000
TOTAL	\$677,436	\$1,001,436	\$1,066,436
Increase %	2.9%	52.1%	62%

9:34 Jaime Schultz made a motion to approve a total levy of \$900,000 which includes the \$677,436 general levy request, allocating anything over and above the \$677,436 general allocations to the Tarring Fund, seconded by Rhoda Senkler, majority in favor, 2 opposed, motion passed.

2025	LEVY
Road and Bridge	\$450,000
General Government	\$115,000
Annandale Fire	\$14,196
Clearwater Fire	\$98,240
Tarring Fund	\$222,564
TOTAL	\$900,000

David L. Johnson questions the state fuel tax being charged by Schendzielos and Schabel. The township is exempt and he believes we are being overcharged. Bill Schmidt indicates this exemption is typically applied when you own your own equipment and purchase your fuel. We may lose our private contractors if we pursue this.

David L. Johnson again questions the net financial impact of the compensation increases that were approved on March 27, 2023. Supervisors are empowered to set compensation but Johnson believes state law (no statute provided) prohibits Supervisors setting their own compensation. Ackerman stated she believes the Supervisors have the authority to set pay rates for the township board. She suggests this question be asked at the MAT Short Courses. She also noted that a rough calculation of the \$14,000 increase equates to an average of \$7 for each of the 2000 residents and believes it is money well spent to encourage participation in local government.

9:38: Dedication Plaques and Thank yous were presented to David L. Johnson for 18 years and to Dennis Niemi for 14 years of service to the township.

9:40 Election results were announced as follows:

Number of voters: 38 signatures on the polling place roster, 0 absentee. 38 total ballots cast.

Write In Candidate: Jaime Schultz (Supervisor)

Votes Received: 7

Candidate: Jenny Schmidt (Clerk)

Votes Received: 35

The Board of Canvass will meet on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, to review the summary statement and canvass the votes. Jaime Schultz won the three year Supervisor Term. Jenny Schmidt won the two year Clerk term.

9:46 The Annual Meeting for 2025 will be held Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 8:15 pm. at the Lynden Town Hall.

9:47 Rhoda Senkler made a motion to adjourn the annual meeting, seconded by Scott O’Konek, all in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Schmidt, Clerk

Anne Ackerman, Moderator