

Deerwood Township
Deerwood Township Annual Meeting
Deerwood Town Hall Building
March 12, 2024

Carol Pundt, Clerk, called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Carol Pundt.

Present: David Gray, Jim Walth, Amy Donovan, Josh Thompson, Carol Pundt, Fred Tessmer, James Rude, Dick Hicks

A motion was made by Josh Thompson and seconded by James Walth to nominate Amy Donovan as moderator of the meeting. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to approve the agenda. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Carol Pundt, clerk, read the March 13, 2023, annual meeting minutes to those in attendance. A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to approve the annual meeting minutes. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Amy Donovan, treasurer, summarized the Township financial report. A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to approve the report as presented by Amy Donovan. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Road & Bridge Report: A written road report, which was prepared by Steve Reilly, was included in the agenda packet for review. A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to approve the 2023 road report as presented by Steve Reilly. All voted in favor of the motion. Steve Reilly is always available to answer questions or concerns at 218-820-7211 or Deerwood township3@gmail.com.

A motion was made by Josh Thompson and seconded by James Walth to approve the 2025 Levy for \$635,000.00, with the General Fund at \$70,000, Fire Fund at \$30,000, Town Hall Fund at \$25,000, the Road and Bridge Fund at \$400,000 and the Road and Bridge Bond Repayment Fund at \$110,000. Motion passes with 5 yes votes and 2 no votes.

Fred Tessmer asked the board members in attendance if the General Fund increase included wage increases for the employees. The answer to Fred's question was wage increases were not given out to employees of Deerwood Township this year. Hourly wages were increased for election judges. Fred Tessmer suggested increases were important every year so as not to always have catchup periods. Fred Tessmer said he could not agree with the levy this year. Last year the levy was increased 17%. This year the levy increase was 9%. This is a 26% increase over 2 years. He felt it was too much of an overall increase. He could not in good conscience vote on this levy because he felt the 2025 levy should be held at the 2024 rate. Amy Donovan said she had to agree with Fred Tessmer. James Walth responded to Fred Tessmer's concerns by explaining several years ago the Township looked at chip sealing all the Township paved roads over a 5-year span. This project will almost be completed at the end of 2024. Over the last year chip sealing the paved roads in the Township cost has gone up from \$20,000 per mile to \$35,000 per mile. To maintain the roads and keep them in good repair the Township needs to continue to complete the project. The price of fuel costs has also gone up. David Gray also explained the Bond and Repayment Funds takes up a good portion of the levy which was due to putting off maintaining the roads. The Township is trying to keep up with inflation costs. For years there was never a cushion in the levy to maintain the roads which led to Nelson Drive being under water. The project to fix Nelson Drive and Placid Drive led to the Township borrowing monies through a Bond to be paid over 15 years. It would be nice for the Township not to borrow monies, but to have cash on hand for the next major road improvement. The Board also had to remove \$137,000 from the road budget Steve Reilly presented to the Board for this year delaying the project to 2025. 99% of the existence of this Township is maintaining the roads. Presently the Township maintained roads in the are in the best shape in years. The Township cannot bet behind on maintaining roads. Josh Thompson told those in attendance the Township did not increase the levy for 4 years. In 2020 the levy was \$495,000 at today's inflation that same amount of

money would be equal to \$593,000. The levy proposed in 2025 is not too far off the rate of inflation. If the Township cuts back on the levy, the Township will be behind in funding 1 year. How does the Township catch up? Fred Tessmer explained to the Board inflation hits all of us. How much will the levy be increased in the coming years. There were also questions regarding how much Crow Wing County will increase their levy over the coming years. The Town Board is trying to levy close to the annual expenditures and at the same time leave a little cushion for unexpected future expenditures.

A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to designate Deerwood Bank as the Township financial depository with Unity Bank included as needed by the Board. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Crosby Courier was designated as the official Township publication with the Brainerd Dispatch to be used for emergency situations at the Township's January 8, 2024, Reorganization meeting. The official posting locations are the Deerwood Town Hall, Deerwood Post Office and Deerwood TruValu. Please check the township website for the Township Calendar of events/meetings at www.deerwoodtownship.org.

The day, month and time of the regular Township Board meetings are the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. unless it is a national holiday at which time the meeting will be held on the following Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made by David Gray and seconded by Josh Thompson to hold the 2025 annual meeting at the Deerwood Town Hall starting at 6:30p.m. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

A motion was made by Josh Thompson and seconded by Fred Tessmer to adjourn the meeting at 7:04pm. All voted in favor of the motion.

Clerk

Moderator