

COTTON ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

March 17, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Clerk Sandi Nelson at approximately 8:53 p.m. in the Community Center, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 33 townspeople present. List on file with the clerk in the township office.

The clerk opened the floor for nominations for a moderator of the meeting. Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Terry Nelson to nominate Craig Kinsley as moderator. Craig Kinsley motioned, supported by Rod Lorentzson nominate Dennis Olsen as moderator. Are there any other nominations 3 x's. Janis Wendell motioned, supported by Debbie Leppala that the nominations be closed. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED. A verbal vote was taken: Craig Kinsley was elected to be moderator of the meeting. The moderator read the order of business for the annual meeting.

The clerk's 2008 annual town meeting minutes were read. Linda Tuhkanen motioned supported by George Nelson to accept the 2008 annual minutes as read. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

A copy of the 2008 Treasurer's Financial Report was distributed with the agenda. Balances in the funds as of 12/31/2008:

GENERAL FUND	\$	19,804.32
NON-LEVY REVENUE FUND		120,690.59
ROAD & BRIDGE FUND		9,534.70
CHRONICLE FUND		11,929.84
CEMETERY\OLD FUND		7,026.40
CEMETERY\NEW FUND		11,417.23
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND		2,349.93
PARKS & REC FUND		5,631.35
FIRE FUND		6,555.43
FIRE TRUCK FUND		19,483.26
CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND		8,849.39
CP SUBORDINATE SERVICE DISTRICT FUND		<u>(-50,246.74)</u>
BALANCE ON HAND:	\$	172,246.88

TOTAL RECEIPT	\$237,240.54
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$232,459.03

INVESTMENTS: CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITS	\$51,264.40
INVESTMENTS INTEREST:	<u>2,190.60</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENTS VALUE:	\$53,455.00

Included in the agenda packet are reports regarding the 2008 state and county funds received. Dennis Olsen motioned, supported by Linda Tuhkanen that the 2008 Treasurer's Financial Report be approved as presented. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED. Financial Report on file in the township office.

Review of 2008 activities. Community Center: Debbie Leppala reported on re-insulating the roof of the community center. Lakeview Cemetery: Terry Nelson reported there are plans to put a road in the new section and lifting sunken stones and fill-in low spots.

Chronicle: Sandi Nelson stated that included in the agenda packet are the last 3 years of receipts and disbursement so you can see how the Chronicle is doing. The Chronicle is bringing in more than it is paying out. In 2007 the Board of Supervisor transferred out \$5000 out of the Chronicle Fund to help the Road & Bridge Fund. In 2008 a new computer and scanner were purchased. Selling more and larger advertising has been helpful for the paper. Jean Magney

Fire Department: Constance Johnston reviewed the 2008 activities, training, equipment, runs financial statement and goals for 2009. The CVFD would like to thank the Town Board and the citizens of Cotton for their continuing support. There are 24 active members; of these 14 are first responders and emergency medical technicians (EMT's). The CVFD responded to 22 calls. CVFD members continue with training. CVFD participates in Fire Prevention Week at the Cotton school, provides EMS readiness at the Annual State Fiddle Contest and Festival, sponsors the annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner, and assists with the flooding of the Cotton skating rink. Goals for 2009 include: Application for a FEMA grant toward the purchase of updated communications equipment, and Personal Protective Equipment (turn-out gear). Looking for a new rescue rig to be purchase with the monies in the Fire Truck Depreciation Fund. Also in the Fire Department packet is the Response Breakdown the year-end financial report and the equipment list for 2008. The CVFD respectfully requests \$24,000 for the 2009 contract year. With the townships help the CVFD will continue to provide quality emergency services for Cotton (where all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average). Ann Kieffaber asked why the fire department needs \$24,000 when the expenses are under \$16,000 for 2008. Constance explained that if funds are not spent one year it is spent the next year. Funds are saved for future rolling stock, as stated they plan to purchase a rescue rig this year. One set of turn-out gear is \$1,600. A used rescue rig can run \$58,000 to \$60,000. The CVFD is hoping for a grant for communications equipment. Now that everything is going digital, the communication will be going low-band or narrow-band and most of the CVFD radios will have to be replaced.

Parks & Rec: Debbie Leppala reported that the Park is doing well. There are concerns on the cost of running the skating rink compared to what we receive in funding. The Park only receives \$1,500 dollars and we exceed that in expenses. Expenses include: wages for the rink attendants and groundkeeper who floods and snow-blows the rink, electric for heating, lights water pump. Repairs need to be done on the boards around the rink. The outdoors speakers have been stolen twice so there is no outdoor music. Would like to thank the CVFD and Norman Peterson for all the work they have done for the ice rink. It was stated that they kids would not be able to play hockey if they did not have boards around the rink. The town board has discussed putting the community development fund and the parks & rec fund be combined so the park would have \$3,000 from the levy. The town does not receive all the monies that it levies because some people do not pay their property taxes. Terry Nelson introduced the new groundskeeper Norm Peterson and told him he is doing a wonderful job.

Roads: Terry Nelson reported that the roads are in good shape and the town board is hoping it can make a deal with the contractor that gets the contract for the work on Hwy 52 and if they need gravel they could bring equipment into the town gravel pit for crushing extra gravel for the township. Ken Meinke discussed the work that has been done on S. Strand Lake road. Brushing and ditching was done along the road where St. Louis Cty. Land Dept gave the township an easement and this will need to be maintained now. Ken stated he was against the plan at the beginning because he liked the trees hanging over the road and it looked so nice with snow on

the trees etc. but after he has seen it all done it is pretty nice. Gratitude to Tracy Excavating for doing the work as inexpensively as they did and he feels they did a fantastic job. Dave Stark had a question regarding the area by Evergreen Lane, it was indicated by Terry Nelson that she knew what the problem was and is it on the docket? Initially it was planned to have another culvert put there. Terry Nelson said the contractor was sent out and he stated a culvert was not needed. Stark said the culvert that is there is so deep that it frozen right away and does not thaw and does not drain the way it needs to drain. The professional said he has done what he can do; maybe he should look at it again. Stark said go there now, water is over the road.

Setting of the town levy.

General Fund: On the St. Louis Cty. Levy form, general fund includes the township general, fire, Chronicle, cemetery, community development, parks & rec, and capital project funds. The current levy is \$84,892. Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Will Deyo that the General Fund levy stay the same at \$84,892. Discussion. Jean Magney stated that the question is whether or not, since the Chronicle is in such great health, it could possibly be self supporting and the money be removed from the overall levy. It was stated that the Chronicle needs a new printer, which is a special post script laser printer and that the fund pays for the web site and copier repairs and contract. Sandi Nelson stated that even if the levy stays the same for the Chronicle the town board of supervisors have the right to take money out of a fund that is doing well and transfer it to a fund that needs it. The Chronicle is doing well on advertising sales but with the economy the way it is that could change quickly. The town may receive less in levy money because people have trouble paying their taxes. After much discussion, the motion is the General Fund stays the same at \$84,892. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Fire Fund: Rod Lorentzson motioned, supported by Terry Nelson to approve the \$24,000 Cotton Volunteer Fire Department 2009 contract year. Discussion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED. The current levy is \$30,667. Dennis Olsen motioned, supported by Terry Nelson that the fire fund levy stay the same at \$30,667. Discussion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Road Fund: The current levy is \$43,695. Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Linda Tuhkanen that the road fund stay the same at \$43,695. Discussion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Total Cotton township levy for 2009 is \$159,254.

Contributions made by the Town throughout the year include: Meadowlands Ambulance Service, St. Louis County Rescue Squad, Arrowhead Transit, Cotton School Alcohol and Drug Free Graduation Party, Cotton Baseball Club, Cotton School Positive Options for Youth. Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Sally Meinke to authorize the Town Board to contract for health, social and recreational services from nonprofit organizations up to \$10,000. Discussion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

The following were duly elected March 17, 2009:

Supervisor – three year term	Jamie Bowden
Supervisor – two year term	Kenneth N. Meinke
Treasurer – two year term	Debbie Leppala

Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Janis Wendell to hold the 2010 annual meeting the second Tuesday in March at 8:30 p.m. (March 9, 2010). All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Will Deyo stated that he has found out town business is pretty involved, run by the state legislature with new laws every year. We have two people on the board that are key people, knowledgeable, reliable, hard working and I do not know what we would do without them. The clerk and treasurer positions are up for election every two years. I propose that these positions no longer be elected positions but appointed positions. If people here agree with this it would go on a ballot in March 2010. Will Deyo motioned, supported by Terry Nelson that the clerk and treasurer positions be appointed and be put on the ballot in 2010. Discussion. Dave Stark stated the general public is having less and less to say on what goes on in all levels of government. Why would we want to give-up our right as citizens to elect these two positions and turn that right over to three people, the town supervisors? Norm Peterson asked who would be in the position for evaluating what these two people are doing in these positions. The citizens wait two years if they vote someone in and they are doing a bad job. We vote the supervisors into office and put our faith in the supervisors to run this township and I feel they should have the right to appoint or dismiss the clerk and treasurer, who is actually working for them. Jean Magney stated experience is valuable and the citizens have recognized that because they have returned Sandi back to office for 20 years and Debbie for 8 years. The proposal does disenfranchise the voters. When appointed applicants do not have to live in the townships and their performance reviews would be done. Jeff Bowden stated he believes in the wisdom of the voters as to who are clerk and treasurer. Connie Lippitt asked what the advantage of this is. Deyo stated to keep experience people. Jeff Bowden asked if anyone has looked into the cost for the town. Ann Kieffaber stated that if you don't have someone qualified in your township, being appointed allows you to go outside your township and being appointed allows the ability to fire for incompetence. Once the township has gone to having the clerk and treasurer appointed it must retain the appointed status for a minimum of 3 years before you can vote again to change back to elected positions. Discussed moving township election to November and then the terms would be 4 years. Could the cost be looked into? Dave Stark called for the question. There is a motion on the floor that the clerk and treasurer positions be appointed and be put on the ballot in 2010. A hand vote was taken. Yea 4. Nye 21. MOTION FAILED.

Dave Stark motioned, supported by John Olstad that the property that was purchased for the SSD be sold back to the sellers. Discussion. Debbie Leppala state the she feels this is an investment, the town does not pay taxes on the property and it could be used for future growth. More discussion. A hand count was taken. Yea 7. Nye 13. MOTION FAILED.

As there was no further business, Debbie Leppala motioned, supported by Dennis Olsen that the meeting be adjourned at 10:20 p.m. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Clerk