

## **UNAPPROVED Annual Meeting Minutes of Windemere Township - March 11, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM by Clerk/Treasurer, Paula Engstrom. There were 205 eligible voting residents of Windemere Township in attendance, 8 non-voting residents and approximately 30 participants on Zoom.

The clerk called for nominations for moderator. Cindy Woltjer nominated Scott Danelski as moderator of the 2025 Windemere Township Annual Meeting. No other nominations were made. A vote was taken. Scott Danelski was elected as the moderator by a majority vote.

### **AGENDA:**

Paula Engstrom stated items 13 - Fire District Update and 14 - Other Pertinent Township Business should be removed from the agenda per late updates. Motion was made by Phil White to approve agenda with #13 and #14 removed, seconded by Cindy Carlson. Vote taken. Motion Passed.

### **ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES:**

The Clerk read the 2024 Windemere Township Annual Meeting minutes. Motion was made by Cindy Carlson and seconded by Tim Flor to accept the 2024 Windemere Township Annual Meeting minutes as presented. A vote was taken. Motion passed.

### **JOINT TREASURER & CLERK'S REPORT:**

Clerk/Treasurer Paula Engstrom presented the 2024 joint Treasurer & Clerk's Report to the electorate. Motion was made by Cindy Carlson, seconded by Phil White to approve the 2024 Joint Treasurer & Clerk's Report as presented. A vote was taken. Motion passed.

### **BOARD REPORT:**

Supervisor Chairman Alan Overland provided an update on Board activities. Based on the current reserve, anticipated spend and future projects the board is recommending a levy increase to \$650,000. The average for 2012 – 2018 was \$730,000 and then the decrease to \$400,000 was done. In response to social media postings he offered the following comments. The Board is accused of overspending, Mr. Overland pointed out that within the last 3 years we had the massive snow storm, ice storm and early spring flooding which costs over \$400,000, the road going to Doc's was paved based on complaints and concerns from the owner, failed culverts and Sturgeon Island road were repaired in 2024 which were projects delayed from 2021. Road complaints are different depending who you talk to, there is no way to make everyone happy although they try to get the most critical work completed. Recent comments from the road manager regarding blocking numbers from a phone were strictly related to a personal phone, not the work phone. Anyone can call the designated road phone number and individuals are encouraged to do so. Lack of transparency and respect goes both ways, there are very few people who want the job that the supervisors do. Even when reducing pay the board has been criticized via social media or comments at the meetings. \$650,000 is a responsible levy, this community needs good roads, fire protection, better internet, new community center, etc. The Township needs to be properly funded for current expenses, future maintenance and unseen items such as snow, flooding, etc.

## **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Cindy Woltjer expressed frustration with the ongoing decision to rent office space in Moose Lake vs having mold remediation completed on the current town hall. The cost to remediate the mold has been identified as \$3,000-\$4,000 while the office rent and meeting location costs could be over \$7,000/yr or more. Without a coordinator she feels the office is not utilized. She suggested thinking about adapting the current Pole Barn building on the lot as an alternative while saving money to do a Town Hall later.

Phil White commented on past history with our levy. When the decision was made years ago to reduce by 47%, the treasurer identified the \$3M reserve would quickly be diminished and it has been. Everyone knew a higher levy would need to be addressed as the \$400,000 is our baseline amount (6 months of anticipated expenses) to keep in our account. Phil also discussed rising legal costs within zoning due to the changes required in the stipulated agreement between the Sand Lake resort, Windemere and the DNR. Phil mentioned the work starting within the Planning Commission to apply for funding assistance for a sewer system around Sturgeon Lake and others. The conversations this year are just preliminary and it could take 1-2 years for funding and longer before any move is made.

John Menke commented on the levy stating that in 2017 when it was reduced to its current state everyone knew it would be hard to come back with a higher amount. He currently supports the 0% increase until there is more transparency from the Board of Supervisors on current spending. At that point he will support a higher levy.

Lorrie Branham moved here years ago and was impressed with the quality of her dirt road. She feels the road is no longer being maintained at that quality and has felt disrespected by the Road Supervisor and Road Manager when raising concerns. She has high concerns about the ice in the winter and the safety of the road. She has attended and listened online to meetings and feels the board meetings are not respectful within the board and with the attendees. She acknowledges that the levy will need to be raised at some point but does not support it now.

Cindy Carlson commented on the current town hall. Although many people want to keep the building, she does not feel it is valid for our town business. It doesn't have plumbing, is too small for meetings and is not handicap accessible. Why can't the pole barn be adapted for the town hall? Why start from scratch instead of using some of the assets on the property? She feels everyone needs to move away from an all or nothing attitude and instead people should look at options.

Wendy Juhl was at the March 4<sup>th</sup> 10am public input planning commission meeting and the evening March 4<sup>th</sup> Special Board meeting where people were not able to speak. She feels that everyone should be able to speak at every meeting. She agrees with Cindy Carlson regarding other possibilities for a town hall structure. She also questioned why the residents are only able to bring branches/brush on a certain day to the recycling location vs having more options.

Tim Flor shared concerns with the attitude and way the monthly board meetings are run. He mentioned investigations of the board and does not feel there is transparency and the board is overspending even with treasurer advisement. He was on the new town hall committee and stated a new building would be about \$800,000-\$1M and we will have to plan for something but now is not the time. There isn't a short or long term plan at this time. Comments regarding Q3 spend and next steps were never completed, the committee is no longer meeting.

## **2026 WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP LEVY:**

Supervisor Alan Overland presented to the electorate the Windemere Township Board of Supervisors proposal to raise the 2026 township levy to \$650,000. Tim Flor made a motion for a 0% increase leaving the levy at \$400,000, seconded by Steve Folsted. After discussion from the electorate, a vote was taken. Motion passed at 7:49pm.

## **2025 ANNUAL MEETING:**

The 2026 Windemere Township Annual Meeting was discussed. Motion made by Dallas McGee, seconded by Deb Holeman to hold the 2026 Windemere Township Annual Meeting on Township Day, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, starting at 6:30 PM at Holy Angels Catholic Church at 60 Hartman Drive, Moose Lake, MN 55767. Vote taken. Motion passed.

## **MLWSSD REPORT:**

Paula Engstrom reported that the sewer district has a 67,000 gpd agreement with the City of Moose Lake for wastewater treatment which they consistently go over. With the expansion of the Sand Lake Resort as well as other new connections requested, the Board asked for additional capacity from the City of Moose Lake in the fall of 2023. That ask opened up conversations regarding the current agreement and the City of Moose Lake will not agree to any additional capacity without a new contract including new rates and charges. Sand Lake Resort negotiated with the City of Moose Lake for 1300 gpd exclusively for the resort, so they can start their project this fall. Unfortunately, the moratorium is still in effect for others wanting to connect. Homeowners looking for new connectivity can either be put on a waiting list or after a review the Board could provide authorization to put in a temporary on site system. When capacity becomes available the board will define a timeframe where temporary sites must be converted to sanitary sewer service. The District has been through 1 round of mediation and will be submitting a final offer. If rejected the next step will be arbitration. The longtime Superintendent Keith Newman who had been with the District since the start up retired last year. He was replaced by Brett Collier who is also the Public Works Superintendent for the City of Barnum.

## **ROAD REPORT:**

Road Supervisor Tony Bakhtiari gave the 2024 Windemere Township Road Report stating that over 35 projects were completed in 2024. 2,014 yards of gravel were spread on 23 roads totaling 21.73 miles. 32,956 gallons of calcium chloride were applied to 16.13 miles of township roads. Additionally, 300.25 hours of grading on over 240 miles of roads was completed, 13 culverts were installed and 6100 feet of ditch were cleaned. The second part of asphalt on Sturgeon Island Road was also completed. A full report will be posted on the Township website.

## **ZONING REPORT:**

Zoning Administrator, Scott Beckman stated there were 102 permits issued in 2024. Scott has been reviewing issues and some permits provided by the previous administrator and indicated that some were incorrectly approved based on our 2015 ordinance and will be revoked in the coming months. He is working with an attorney to ensure proper processes and rights are followed. Based on 2025 updates, permits will require approved septic prior to any movement, lots will also need a current survey. Scott feels there needs to be better communication within the community and the boards. The permit and zoning processes will be different going forward to ensure everything is correct. Question raised by Scott Danelski regarding non-conformation lots, Scott indicated that individuals can either remodel existing or come to the board for a variance.

## **OTHER PERTINENT TOWNSHIP BUSINESS:**

### **SET LEGAL PUBLICATIONS:**

Phil White made an amendment to his original agenda approval motion to add item 14, Other pertinent Township Business, back on the agenda for the purpose of setting the legal publication, seconded by Cindy Carlson. A motion was made by John Menke, seconded by Noah Cashman to keep the Moose Lake Star

Gazette as the legal newspaper for Windemere Township publications. Publications will also be placed in the Evergreen paper. Vote taken. Motion passed.

**ADJOURN:**

With no further Township business to discuss, a motion was made by Phil White, seconded by Cindy Carlson to adjourn the 2025 Windemere Township Annual Meeting at 8:03 PM. A vote was taken. Motion Passed.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED**

Windemere Township Clerk/Treasurer, Paula Engstrom

**MODERATOR:**

Scott Danelski