



SYLVAN TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING

MARCH 14, 2023
7:00 PM

BOARD MEMBERS

Greg Booth: Chair, Weeds

Greg Bennett: Vice Chair, Co-Road & Driveway,
PC Liaison

Bob Johnson: Co-Road & Driveway, Fire Liaison,
CC Emergency Mgmt.

Arlene Schmit: Co-Road & Driveway,
Pillager Park Board

Keith Card: MAT – District 1 Board
CC Emergency Mgmt.

Clerk/Treasurer: Jenna Ruggles

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer: Colleen Putnam
and Lydia Marohn



Sylvan Township

12956 24th Avenue SW, Pillager, MN 56473

phone: (218) 746-3652 / fax: (218) 746-3612 / e-mail: clerk@sylvantwp.com

ANNUAL TOWN HALL MEETING

Agenda

March 14, 2023 7:00 PM

*Recorded for Transcription Purposes Only

(M/S/D/V) = Motion, Second, Discussion, Vote

- 7:00-7:05 **1. Call To Order** (by the Clerk)
 - 1.1. Pledge of Allegiance
- 7:05-7:10 **2. Elect Moderator** from the Community
 - 2.1. Introduction of Township Board Members
 - 2.2. Approve/Amend Agenda
- 7:10-7:30 **3. Public Input**
 - 3.1. Hengels
 - 3.2.
- 7:30-7:40 **4. Clerk/Treasurer's Report**
 - 4.1. Annual Mtg. Mins. 2022 – Move to approve/amend (M/S/D/V)
 - 4.2. Financial Audit Reports 2022 – on Table
 - 4.3. Board of Audit Report
- 7:40-8:00 **5. Town Status Reports for 2022** (provided, not required to be presented)
 - 5.1. Cass Co. Sheriff's Report: Sheriff Welk
 - 5.2. Pillager Fire Association: Report Chief Ringler/Supervisor Johnson questions
 - 5.3. Planning Commission & Sylvan Park: report only
 - 5.4. Pillager Park Board & Road/Bridge Report: Supervisor Schmit
- 8:00-8:15 **6. Items to Consider** (M/S/D/V for each)
 - 6.1. Cass Co. Museum & Historical Society (Last year \$150 donation for a 'Free Day' & \$250.00 – Membership)
 - 6.2. Cass County Ag Society (Fair Board) Lisa Fletcher (last year \$5,000.00)
 - 6.3. Lakes Area Dive Team (Letter – last year \$1,000.00)
- 8:15-8:30 **7. Set Tax Levies for 2024** (M/S/D/V)

7.1. General Fund:	Proposed: \$137,700	Vote: \$ _____
7.2. Road & Bridge Fund:	Proposed: \$500,000	Vote: \$ _____
7.3. Fire Fund:	Proposed: \$106,588	Vote: \$ _____
TOTAL Proposed Levy for 2023: \$744,288		Vote: \$ _____
- 8:30 **8. Set Annual Meeting for 2024** - Tuesday March 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm (M/S/D/V)
- 9. Other Business**
- 10. Adjournment** (M/S/D/V)

Annual Township Meeting Minutes **Tuesday March 08, 2022**

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Attendance: Clerk Ruggles called the 2022 Annual Township Meeting to order at 7:00pm. She welcomed the residents to the meeting and provided an overview on what was in their packets and what types of items they can authorize at this meeting and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The sign-in sheet is attached to the minutes and those in attendance included Dave Johnson, Bob Johnson, Greg Booth, Arlene Schmit, John Wulff, David Winkelman, Lisa Fletcher, Jennifer Paananen, Pat Cox, Brian Smith, Greg Ringler (Pillager Fire Chief), Terry Quick, Sandie Barnett, Keith Card, Les McClelland, Greg Bennett, Bryan Welk (Cass Co Sheriff's Office), Eric Alger (Cass Co Sheriff's Office), RuthAnn Ray, Gene Leibel, Lydia Marohn, and Maria Plattner (Family Safety Network).

Moderator: Mr. Dave Johnson moved to nominate Mr. John Wulff as Moderator for the Annual Meeting. As there were not any more nominations Ms. Arlene Schmit moved to cease nominations, seconded by Mr. Keith Card and the motion carried.

Mr. Keith Card moved to install Mr. John Wulff as the moderator for the 2022 Annual Township Meeting, seconded by Ms. Sandie Barnett and the motion carried.

Mr. John Wulff came forward to review the agenda.

Clerk/Treasurers Report:

- **2021 Annual Meeting Minutes** – Mr. David Winkelman moved to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Dave Johnson and the motion carried.
- **2021 Draft Annual Financials** were available for review.

Town Status Reports for 2021: Reports from the Pillager Area Fire Association, Sylvan's Planning Commission, Pillager Lake Park Board, Sylvan's Road Supervisors, and an article from Sylvan's Winter Newsletter were all provided in the Annual Meeting packets. Pillager Fire Chief Ringler gave a report and answered some questions for the residents as well as Cass County Chief Deputy Bryan Welk was here to provide a report from the Sheriff's Office and answer questions for the residents.

Items to Consider:

- **Sylvan Township Clean-Up Day** – Residents in attendance were not in favor of a Township Clean-Up Day.
- **Cass County Historical Society** – did not provide a membership request this year, but Mr. Dave Johnson moved to continue our membership with Cass County Historical Society at \$250.00, seconded by Mr. Keith Card and the motion carried.
- **Cass County Historical Society Museum** – provided a request for a 'Free Day' at the Museum. Mr. Greg Bennett moved to donate the \$150 for a 'Free Day' at the Historical Society Museum, seconded by Mr. Terry Quick and the motion carried.
- **Cass County Ag Society (Fair Board)** – Mr. Greg Booth moved to donate \$5,000.00 to the Cass County Ag Society for 2022, seconded by Mr. Keith Card and the motion carried.



Sylvan Township

12956 24th Avenue SW, Pillager, MN 56475 Phone: (218) 746-3652 Fax: (218) 746-3612
E-mail: clerk@sylvantwp.com Web-site: www.sylvantwp.com

- **Lakes Area Dive Team** – Mr. Greg Bennett **moved to donate \$1,200.00 to the Lakes Area Dive Team for 2022**, seconded by Ms. Sandie Barnett and the motion carried.
- **Family Safety Network** – Ms. Maria Plattner was here to provide a report from The Family Safety Network that Sylvan Township has a Contract for Service with each year. The Board of Supervisors will vote at their next meeting on those Contracts for Services, March 17th, 2022.

Tax Levies for 2023:

- **General Fund** – Mr. Dave Johnson **moved to approve \$135,000 for the General Fund Levy in 2023**, seconded by Mr. Keith Card and the motion carried.
- **Road & Bridge Fund** – Ms. Arlene Schmit **moved to approve \$500,000 for the Road & Bridge Fund Levy in 2023**, seconded by Mr. Terry Quick and the motion carried.
- **Fire Fund** – Ms. Sandie Barnett **moved to approve \$92,000 for the Fire Fund Levy in 2023**, seconded by Mr. Greg Booth and the motion carried with one objection.

The total for the 2023 Levies is set at \$727,000.00.

Set Annual Meeting for 2023: Mr. Keith Card **moved to set the Annual Meeting for 2023 on Tuesday, March 14th, 2023 at 7pm**, seconded by Ms. Arlene Schmit and the motion carried.

Other Township Business: Included a question regarding the MN Power Solar Project which Mr. Dave Johnson was able to provide some background on the project. Mr. Winkelman complimented our Road Maintenance Contractor on the well done plowing this winter and several others agreed.

Adjournment: Ms. Arlene Schmit **moved to adjourn**, seconded by Mr. Keith Card and the motion carried with the meeting adjourning at 8:15pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Jenna Ruggles, Clerk

Moderator – John Wulff

These minutes will be reviewed and approved on March 14, 2023, but for now they are available for review purposes only.

Date: 03.10.2023

Sylvan Township
Board of Audit Meeting
Year ending December 31, 2022

Township Supervisors have verified the clerk/treasurers books match and the audit has been completed.

Township Supervisors verify each claim and receipt at every meeting during the year so only a sampling of those documents were checked during this meeting.

Receipt Number	Verified by
Ryan Trout	<i>GB</i>
MN Hist. Soc.	<i>GB</i>

Disbursement/Check Number	Verified by
024993	<i>CS</i>
024977	<i>CS</i>

Bank statements and clerk/treasurers' balances were verified by the Supervisors with statements and reports. Investments were verified by the Supervisors with statements and reports.

Statement of Disbursements and Receipts and other budget reports were reviewed and the following levy recommendations to present to the residents at the Annual Meeting will be made:

Fund	Levy Amount
General	\$ 137,700
Road and Bridge	\$ 500,000
Fire Fund	\$ 106,588
Total Levy	\$ 744,288

2.7.

Pillager Area Fire Protection Association

Chiefs Report 2022

Pillager Area Fire and Rescue continues to serve the towns of Sylvan, Fairview, Rosing, Homebrook, half of May, the city of Pillager and fire and rescue for the City of East Gull Lake.

In 2022 we responded to 343 calls which is up 20 calls from 2021.

Current officers

Chief: Greg Ringler

Assistant Chief: Thomas Cremers

Captain: Jason Eastman

Captain: Trent Hawkinson

Lieutenant: Jay Personius

Fire Run Breakdown

Structure Fires	6	Vehicle Fires	3
Wildland Fires	15	Alarms	5
Mutual Aid	1	Medicals	253
Vehicle Accident	33	Rescues	2
Hazardous Conditions	16	Good intent	5
Other	4		

We continue to be fortunate enough to gain new members as we have had firefighters retire or resign. We do however have room for more and will interview and accept applications for new members. Applications are taken any time, but we do the hiring process twice a year, once in May and once in October.

As always it is easy for me to speak about our firefighters and what a great job they do. With the increase in number of runs it is getting to be a lot to meet the requirements of run percentage and training hours for the department. It is not taken lightly that they are willing to give of their time to do so. I am proud to have each one as a member of this department. Pillager Fire Fighters had a combined 1,034 hours of training and a combined 2,356 run responses in 2022.

We are currently in the process of replacing one of our trucks. This process has changed recently not only the large increase of cost but also how long it takes until we receive the new apparatus. The estimate is somewhere between 485 days and 768 days.

I would like to also once again thank our communities for the tremendous support through our calendar program. The donations are amazing and much appreciated. You have donated enough to fund the replacement of our SCBA and some of the cost of the new truck. A few had sent in asking what SCBA is. These units are what we wear when going into toxic environments such as a structure fires. These units consist of a tank, regulator, and mask and gives us fresh air to breath. It stands for "*Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus*" which is similar to "scuba" gear which is "*Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus*."

One thing that I have noticed lately is the lack of or obscured fire numbers (blue number). Look and make sure you have a fire number, and it is visible from the roadway. If you do not have one, contact your township and request one.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or for an application.

Sincerely

Chief Greg Ringler
218-746-4577

Update of Activities for the Planning Commission since the 2022 Annual Meeting
Dave Johnson, PC Chair

The Planning Commission (PC) has been involved in a few variances that are managed by Cass County. As we've mentioned before all residential permits and any variances that are required are the responsibility of the County. They do however give us the opportunity to join them on the site visits and to submit an opinion regarding the variance. This year we offered opinions on 5 variances which was down from the previous year. Most variances involve set back from waterfronts. Cass County also shares the list of building permits with the Township on a monthly basis. In 2022 Cass County issued 39 permits for new homes and another 20 permits for storage buildings or garages in Sylvan Township.

This past year we have had more activity in the permitting of commercial projects. Hot Rod Ridge car restoration and the Minnesota Power solar field were initiated in 2021 but completed in 2022. In process or recently completed are permits for Sunflower Childcare, a daycare currently being built on 33rd Ave, an office/storage facility in the Sylvan Commercial Park, Cut Right Lawn Care, and Pro Detailing.

Sylvan Township has been contacted often by citizens regarding outside storage of "stuff" that can be considered unsightly by the neighborhood. These problems are managed by Cass County unless they are operating a business, in which case the issue will come back to Sylvan Township for resolution. In either case these situations can be very frustrating because the process can be very time consuming.

Short Term Rentals (STR) are another issue that come before the Township. Sylvan Township does have an ordinance regulating these rentals and it can be seen at the Sylvan Township website (SYLVANTWP.COM). Sylvan Township has (1) permitted STR, with two more in the permitting process, and one that decided to drop their request due to the limitations presented by the ordinance.

The PC is reviewing our Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to lay out direction for future planning, permitting, zoning, transportation design, etc. Our work to date has been to simplify the plan, making it more readable and less redundant than the current plan which was originally written in 2004 and updated in 2014. With Board of Supervisor (BOS) direction we will look at each section of the plan to make recommendations for changes. If the BOS chooses to move forward we will be going back to the public for input. This input will be especially important regarding what citizens want the Township to look like in 2030 and 2040.

Update for Sylvan Park
Dave Johnson, PC Chair

The Park Committee met on the 17th of January to set new priorities for the coming year. The Park Committee is made up of individuals that have a desire to be involved in the further development of Sylvan Park. If you are interested in volunteering as an advisor or a worker, be sure to call Sylvan Township and add your name to the list.

For 2023 some of the priorities will be adding more trees, more wildflowers and grasses in the pit area. This year we will be paying more attention to the cleanup and enhancement of the entrance to the park. This work will include a bit of landscaping at the entrance, a new sign on Lower Sylvan Road, moving the gate to a location near the parking lot which will allow more room for pedestrian and handicap accessibility.

The trails will need attention this year. We hope to do some thinning of the dogwood which is part of our forest management plan. The thinning will be part of an effort to improve the views from the trails at the overlooks to Sylvan Lake. Benches at these overlooks as well as a bench at the overlook above the pit area long Sylvan Ridge Trail will be part of this effort. There will be a need to reseed some areas of the trails due to storm damage.

As I have said before “we are in year 4 of a 10-year effort to polish this geographic hunk of coal into the gem that will be enjoyed by everyone in the area.”

If you like to snowshoe this is your time. The trails are waiting for you. Bob Johnson has plowed part of the entrance road large enough that two cars will be able to park off Lower Sylvan Road. The trails are seldom used in the winter, and you can enjoy the solitude and the views with little interruption.

If you visit the Sylvan Township website, you will see a complete list of the ideas discussed at our meeting and the priorities of that list.

Park Report

The Pillager Lake Park Board has 4 government entities. Each entity appoints a representative to the Park Board. City of Pillager - Wade Mortenson, Townships of May – Bianca Wyffels, Fairview – Walt Richmond and Sylvan – Arlene Schmit.

We have been very lucky the last few years and have had some good park hosts and hope they will return next year.

We need to do some improvements to our play equipment and add some Class 5 to the road. Otherwise, our park is in pretty good shape. If you have any ideas or would like to be a park host please contact Arlene Schmit at 218-251-1048.

Road Report

Sylvan Township had another busy year in 2022 for road projects. Completed road projects included paving Zebroski Acres Lane and 134th Avenue. We were also able to complete an overlay on Hardy Lake Road. Projects that have been identified by the Sylvan Township Road Committee for consideration in 2023 include possibly overlaying Little Pine Road, Golf Course Circle, Ace Drive, and Crow Wing Circle. A final decision has not been determined as of yet, however, the board is hoping to be able to approve at least one of these roads this year.

As always, the board asks that all residents keep the road right-of-way clear of all obstructions (such as trees, plants, and posts) all year long. It is also the responsibility of each resident to clear snow from in front of or around their mailbox. Garbage cans should never be left in the street. Please keep all containers in your driveway to allow the plows to completely remove snow. Residents are also reminded that it is unlawful under **Minnesota Statute 160.271**, to plow snow from driveways onto or across County or Township roads.

We appreciate feedback from our residents as to what we can do better to create safe roads.

Clerk

From: Cass County Museum <casscountymuseum@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 11:17 AM
To: Byron; Poplar; Loon Lake; Leech Lake; Ansel; Pine River; McKinley; Hiram; Kego; Lima; Shingobee; Blind Lake; Trelipe; Inguandona; Ponto Lake; Boy Lake; Meadow Brook; Slater; Wabedo; May; Remer; Powers; Homebrook; Maple; Woodrow; Smoky Hollow; Pine Lake; Pike Bay; Fairview; Beulah; Torrey; Clerk; Bungo; Wilson; Rogers; Crooked Lake; Thunder Lake; Deerfield; Wilkinson; Becker; Birch Lake; Walden; Bull Moose; Otter Tail Peninsula; Moose Lake; Turtle Lake
Subject: 2023 Cass County Museum Donation Request

Feb 13, 2023

Dear Cass County Townships and friends of the Cass County Museum and Pioneer School,

We have new sponsorship openings for the 2023 summer season “Free Wednesday and Free Friday” programs. Sponsored days at the Cass County Museum allow free admission for Cass County area residents and summer visitors from all over the world. Each Free Day, a large sandwich board is displayed on Minnesota Avenue. The sponsor has a visible display at the museum entrance desk, and staff reminds visitors your township is paying their admission!

For \$150.00 any City, business, association, corporation, township or individual may sponsor a Free Day. Admission will be free to the public all day. The list of Free Day sponsors will be furnished to area newspapers for publication such as the “On Deck” section of the Walker Pilot, and the Chamber of Commerce Weekly events list.

Those townships who support us in 2023 in any amount above (and including) \$150 as a donation will automatically get a free day sponsorship with no additional charge!

We hope you will consider becoming a sponsor! Our museum is your gem and we are eager to share it with as many people as possible.

Free Day sponsorship will provide your township visibility, showcasing your support of a community service oriented non-profit museum.

At the end of each summer season, we post a half page ad in the Walker Pilot thanking our sponsors publicly. In 2022, Seventy one sponsors stepped up to participate in the Free Day Program, allowing 1650+ admissions!

If your budget allows less than \$150 your donation to the museum of any amount that is in your yearly budget is appreciated, as well as donations that have come in much higher than the \$150 in past seasons.

Tim Andersen
CCHS Museum Director



2 December

PO Box 428
Pine River, MN 56474
Thecasscountyfairmn.org

Dear Cass County Fair Friend,

Even though spring isn't here yet, the fair starts planning for coming year. We begin planning for the Games, Events, Youth Activities ... After having two great years of fair. We are hoping 2023 is even better.

For 2023 we are looking forward to being able to put such events as Baja races, ATV and UTV Fun Run, Cornhole, horse shows, livestock show, various children's activities. We also are doing capital improvements such as updating buildings and electric.

How do we do this? We do have some funds available from grants, and doing dinners at the Backus Legion. However, we are also looking for your assistance. We are a 501 C5 and are hoping you can help by making a donation to assist in ensuring our County Fair continues to be fun filled weekend for entire community.

We would like to thank you for your considered donation and look forward to seeing you at the fair!

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brenda Adkins'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Cass County Agriculture Association



Good afternoon

This email is a recap for Sylvan Township's annual meeting in regard to the Cass County Ag. Society Aka Pillager Fair.

The 2022 fair was held and attendance was steady at most events , horseshow entrees had increased. We did notice a decrease in the number of exhibits entered in the exhibit building. Hoping that reminding the schools and area organizations and churches as well as community members that school age projects are not charged an entry fee and there are several options of categories to choose from. Reminders will be popping up on social media in addition to local school. Let's try to fill it up this year!

Christmas party was held and attendance was down. Every child that attended did leave with photos from w/Santa and a gift bag/prize/stocking. Good, beverages and games provided.
* Discovered that the date and time of event was not published in school newsletter which may have affected attendance 😞

We outfitted over 50 kids through our local Coats for Kids outreach.

The center and grounds are utilized by both public and private parties at a reasonable rate . Events have included food pantry pick-up, blood drives, booster club fundraisers, lions bingo and other events , reunions and memorial services.

We have had People security install cameras and have had to forward video of questionable activity to local law enforcement for follow-up. People are more aware that this can occur and suspicious activity has been noticeably reduced.

We are a participant of barn quilts of MN trail with the Horsin' Around quilt on the barn and will be receiving a 2nd quilt to be installed later this spring on the community center. These were donated by local artists.

Currently working towards the installation of a pickle ball court on the grounds that would be utilized by the community in summer into fall and ongoing discussion on boards for winter ice rink.

There have been some discussions of holding senior/community dinners or social time. This was brought up by some community members and the fairgrounds is a suggested site.

Our fair is the smallest county fair in the state and we do a lot with our small town fairgrounds. This is possible through the donations and the literal blood, sweat , and tears of the volunteers whom we greatly appreciate.

County fairs matter for many reasons: contribution to revenue of local businesses, build relationships across generations and socioeconomic lines and ability to share and learn "new" things while possibly being entertained and fed well in the process. Just to name a few of the benefits.

We respectfully request a donation towards our fair be considered by Sylvan Township.

Thank you.

Jennifer Paananen VP
CCAS



Lakes Area Dive Team PO Box 908 Walker, MN 56484

March 8, 2023

Annual Request for Financial Support:

Members of our county townships, I thank you for your continued support of the Lakes Area Dive Team. We once again come to you to request financial support towards our team. Lakes Area Dive Team is a non-profit volunteer public safety dive team providing dive rescue and recovery services to Beltrami, Cass, and Hubbard Counties. As a reminder we are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and we're insured under the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust insurance program.

We have several new members that are in a probationary status. As these folks transition from probationary to full time members we will need to outfit these members with equipment. This equipment includes Dry Suits, Full Face Masks and various tools and clothing used to accomplish our mission. Your donation helps us cover some of these costs obtaining this equipment.

Last year with the help of our township partners we were able to obtain and ROV (underwater drone). As we wrote you last year this tool will help improve the effort and safety or completing out dive missions. We've obtained and ROV and completed out education in the use of it in September of last year.

If you would like, we would be glad to send a representative to your township meetings to discuss the activities of the Dive Team more fully and include some of our equipment for you to see where your support goes.

In 2022 the Dive Team assisted identifying Aquatic Invasive Species in area lakes. Aquatic Invasive Species will once again be a special focus for 2023. We train regularly to maintain proficiency and safe operation. Training this year will again be in lakes where a need exists to identify AIS. This is another one of the many ways we serve our counties.

Financial support to defray any of the above costs will be greatly appreciated. We are proud to serve our counties with a highly professional level of public safety dive services. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (507) 254-5486.

Sincerely,
Joe Druga Secretary
Lakes Area Dive Team