

Witches Woods Tax District Annual Meeting- Bungay Fire Brigade May 17th, 2024 7:30 pm

Mike Moran, President calls the meeting to order at 7:34pm. The meeting was held in person.

President Moran called Shari McCarthy, Clerk to read the call of the meeting.

Shari reads that the Notice and Call was mailed to every property owner, sent in two email blasts to homeowners who have signed up, posted on our tax district website, mentioned in the Board's Monthly Minutes, posted on the signposts at the entrances to the lake roads, posted five trees in the lake district, listed in the Woodstock Villager newspaper as a Legal Ad, posted on the Tax District Facebook page, and also posted at the Woodstock Town Hall.

Mike Moran Introduces the Officers and Board Committee members, explains that Bill and Steve are out of town so neither will be in attendance tonight. He calls for the approval of minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting. He then calls for a motion to waive of reading the minutes and for a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. A Motion was Made, Seconded and Approved to Waive the Reading of the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes. The vote was unanimous. A Motion was Made, Seconded and Approved to approve the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes. The vote was unanimous.

Michael Moran- Annual Report of the President

Mike greeted the residents in attendance and began a summary of the year including discussions regarding:

- The roads and Lake water are good!
- Challenges: this year we scrambled for leaf removal and snow plowing but the Board dutifully mitigated the overages that were incurred due to snow plowing and insurance increases.
- Good neighbor information- outdoor burning of leaves and trash is illegal, please be considerate of your close neighbors. Campfire cooking is okay. Enjoy those hot dogs and marshmallows.
- Great news – 2nd Annual Summer Lake Party is scheduled for July 13th, sign up volunteer tonight. Resident Lisa Andrews speaks encouraging people to get in touch with her. She is getting a jump start on the invitations which will contain contact information as well as details for the boat parade. There is a proposed rain date but as in the past year, the party will go on rain or shine!

Presentation of reports of committee chairs

Mike calls on Ray Bonneau, 'Pot Hole Ray' –Roads and Right of Way

- Twenty-two storm drains have been cleaned.
- The culverts are done every 5 years, they were not due this year.
- Five speed bumps were installed, signage for the speed bumps was purchased and placed along the route.
- There was an emergency repair of Crooked Trail Extension. The road by 83 Crooked Trail flooded due to a blocked culvert. Large pieces of wood from a tree that had been cut down blocked the water pipe under the road. The road collapsed but thanks to help from Woodstock DPW and Pinecroft we have a quick fix that will last a few years. As a follow-up to this, we were granted permission from the Wyndham Land Trust to clear the lowland area at Crooked Trail Extension to prevent any further issue.

- Roads look good allowing us to push out the grading until the fall.
- We have a contract with Labby Lawn Care and will be able to reinstate leaf pickup for the fall if passed in the budget.
- Our 2324 snow removal contractor resigned leaving us to scramble for snow removal. We have since found a new contractor for the new year with an all-inclusive price.
- As always dirt roads have challenges but we are able to mitigate them and Save money.
- Questions from residents in attendance:
 - Glenn H, 88 Crooked Trail inquires about stakes being placed by the snow removal contractor in order to preserve resident property Ray answers that the new contractor has this included in his proposal and will be placing stakes prior to any plowing Glen H asks about the timing and dates for leaf pick up. Ray says the board will take this into consideration as we get closer.
 - Keith P, 38 Indian Spring ask a question regarding the rude grading and they specific concern for an incident that occurred in the spring. Ray addressed the question stating that they fix that was put in place has mitigated the problem and the cost increase for grading and reinstalling the proper crown on the road is prohibitive at this time but will be addressed in the fall. President Mike Moran addresses questions from Keith explaining that Capital money has been appropriated for a road evaluation before any work is done to determine what will actually improve the roads while being cost-effective.
 - Stephen D 44 Indian Spring ask a question regarding any plan to pave Indian Spring to the beach. President Mike Moran explains that paving the portion of crooked Trail extension which was done in the previous years was due to a drainage issue and Ice formation that became dangerous residents comment that while the paving is helpful for these concerns it has led to an increase in speeding there are no plans to pave any more sections of the roads in the district at this time.
 - Tom G has a question regarding the expenditure of money for a road study pointing out that this may be redundant as a study was previously done the board will take this into consideration.
 - Maggie H 16 Indian Spring takes a moment to thank Ray for all his hard work. the residents in attendance at the meeting openly applaud Ray's efforts.

Mike calls on Phyllis Bonneau – Communications

- Phyllis encourages residents to please sign in check that we have an email to contact you that is monitored please check and make sure that everything listed in the list is accurate.
- The website has been updated and the board meetings and minutes have been updated as well as contact information for board members.
- Phyllis welcomes feedback on the website and asks residents to please contact her with any suggestions.

Mike calls on Anna Barrasso – Building and Zoning Review

- Permits from July 2023 to present:are discussed at each board meeting and posted in the board minutes on the district website.

Mike calls on Dan Camusso- Lakes, Dams and Beaches

- This year we lost our contract for lawn care. We have secured a new contractor and this season maintenance will be handled by Labbe's Lawn Care. He will continue to maintain the same areas around the lake and on a similar schedule.

- Microbac tested the lake water for E coli twice last year on 7/20 and 8/17 at the four usual spots that include Beach the spillway and boat launch each time the results were extremely low far below the limit of 235 colonies per 100 ml Microbac will continue with testing of the lake water following the same time frames this year.
- We are in a new 3-year contract with Solitude Lake Management. They will be continuing to monitor the lake with surveys of the lake in June, July and August. Residents have been doing their part to keep heavy plant growth to a minimum so we did not have an herbicide treatment performed last year. This is a friendly reminder that lawn fertilizers promote algae and heavy plant growth so please refrain from using such products near the lake. This will continue to help us avoid costly herbicide treatments.
- The water drawdown is always scheduled for the last Sunday in October. Eric Werstler has been helping with the valve operation. Initially the lake level stays down until there is a significant frost or freeze, helping to kill off any unwanted weeds or vegetation and allowing people to work on their waterfronts or docks. The water level is then brought back up slowly after the threat of a freeze has passed which usually happens mid-March. This year on March 9th, 2024 the Bungee Fire dive team came to the water valve on Crooked Trail to clear some small debris that was preventing the water valve from completely closing, causing a small leak. Once the valve was cleared we decided to keep the water valve closed and then the lake level returned to normal rather quickly due to excessive rainfall.
- In other news again thank you to Eric Werstler who built a new kayak rack for the Indian Spring Beach.
- Due to a new Connecticut Law, in the event of any treatment to the lake, residents must be contacted directly from the company conducting the treatment. This contact can be via email or US Postal Service. Board members are encouraging you to please share your email so that you can be contacted directly regarding any future treatments, saving the Tax District the cost incurred to mail such notices via snail mail. Thank you.
- Questions from residents in attendance:
 - Glenn H 88 Crooked Trail offers to move and fix the kayak rack on the Crooked Trail Beach as well as the runoff at Crooked Trail Beach. He expects to complete the work in July
 - President Mike Moran promotes Glenn's dock crew and thanks him for his efforts
 - Glenn H also reminds residents about kayak rack safety and moving the kayaks off the beach/racks in the winter.
 - Mike K 79 Crooked Trail puts forward a question regarding septic system pumping and rules on this lake and the board takes this question under advisement.

Mike Moran reading for Bill Breslau - Safety, Rules, and Regulations

- Mike reads from Bill's email in his absence:
- Pending safety regarding dogs and failure to follow reasonable rules or show consideration for neighbors. Please keep dogs leashed and clean up after your pet.
- Reminder to boat owners of the power boat rules regarding boat size, engine horse power and times for cruising/towing riders.
- Reminder to the swimmers to wear a high visibility float
- Insurance rates for all common interest communities are increasing dramatically. It has much to do with claims and liability stemming from failure to keep the community safe. Many insurance companies will no longer offer insurance to communities like ours. Thanks to Jim Hutton for advising us in this matter and securing what appears to be almost a last resort option for insurance, an increase of 43% over last year.

- Questions from residents following Bill's report:
 - Glenn H, 88 Crooked Trail has a request for a single buoy for a no-wake zone at the cove.
 - A second request from Glenn regarding a tree at the entrance from 171 onto Indian Spring/Crooked Trail. Upon exiting this area the tree, previously struck by lightning is a sight line issue.
 - Additionally another tree of concern on Crooked Trail just passed the Hannigan's.
 - Vice President John Barber agrees to look into these trees. John has relentlessly pursued Eversource to take down problem trees in the past.
 - In an update, John Barber reports the light on 171 was recently replaced, approximately 10 days ago. In the meantime the district has been charged for the light and is currently seeking a refund for the months we were charged with no light being present.

Annual Report of the Treasurer- Steven Leibowitz

Treasurer's Report read by President Mike Moran in Steve's absence

- I am pleased to report that this year the Financial Condition of the Witches Woods Tax District is again excellent. The finances of the prior year that closed June 30, 2023 had a surplus balance of \$27,185.47. The surplus money was transferred into the Unassigned Assets Fund.
- Only \$1,084.64 in taxes remain outstanding for a to date collection rate of 98.60%. There are no delinquent taxes and interest outstanding from prior years.
- Altogether with an excellent tax collection rate and no road grading in this fiscal year, this year's current budget is projected to have a surplus of \$23, 418.15.

Presentation of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025;

Call on Steve for Presentation of Proposed Budget

- Handouts available to residents

WITCHES WOODS TAX DISTRICT FY 2024 - 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET			
	Budgeted 2023-2024	PROJECTED 2023-2024	PROPOSED 2024-2025
INCOME			
Interest	0.00	212.90	0.00
Other		187.90	
Taxes	77,300.00	77,826.51	88,865.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$77,300.00	\$78,226.31	\$88,865.00
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Software Services	1,302.50	1,395.88	1,449.00
Miscellaneous	75.00	155.00	200.00
Office Supplies	319.30	45.00	320.00
Printer	15.00	300.00	400.00
Property Taxes	996.00	1,067.86	1,145.00
Street Lighting	150.00	49.61	150.00
Over/Under Payment	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tax Collector	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
Web Site	1000.00	901.89	1000.00
Subtotal	\$6,300.80	\$6,456.24	\$7,094.00
LEGAL EXPENSES			
Attorney Fees	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Insurance	9,500.00	11,812.68	12,640.00
Legal Notices	400.00	540.00	600.00
Recording Fees	50.00	0.00	50.00
Refunds	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subtotal	\$12,050.00	\$14,152.68	\$15,290.00
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE			
Lake, Beach & Dam Maintenance	14,378.50	8,097.43	15,640.00
Road Maintenance	31,220.70	9,244.95	38,400.00
Salvage	500.00	1.00	500.00
Storm Flooding	13,750.00	16,858.84	19,941.00
Subtotal	\$59,849.20	\$34,201.24	\$64,481.00
LIABILITIES			
Loan Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subtotal	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Transfer to Capital Improvement Fund	50.00	50.00	50.00
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$77,300.00	\$54,810.16	\$88,865.00
Transfer from reserves	50.00	50.00	50.00
Net Operating Fund Balance	\$0.00	\$23,418.15	\$0.00
SUMMARY OF OPERATING BUDGET			
	BUDGET	PROJECTED	PROPOSED
TOTAL EXPENSES	(77,300.00)	(54,810.16)	(88,865.00)
INCOME	77,300.00	78,226.31	88,865.00
TRANSFER - UNASSIGNED ASSETS FUND	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net	-	23,418.15	0.00
NET GRAND LIST	\$31,579,700	MILL RATE: 2.81	

Mike calls for a motion to adopt the annual budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 for said District, there is a motion by Glenn H and a second By Linda M 20 Indian Spring followed by no discussion from the floor, the budget passes unanimously.

Mike calls for a motion to adopt mill rate of 2.81 based on the proposed budget for said District , there is a motion by Linda M and a second by Glenn H followed by no discussion from the floor, the motion passes unanimously.

Mike calls for a motion to set tax due dates for said District as July 1, 2024 and January 1, 2025 unless the bill is less than \$100.00 in which such case the entire amount is due July 1, 2024. There is a motion by Glenn H and a second by Linda M followed by no discussion from the floor, the motion passes unanimously.

In Steve's absence, Mike presents the Five Year Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2024-2029 for said District. Open Discussion:

- Glenn H suggests that in anticipation of an inspection of the dam by the engineer in July of 2025, the District considers putting money aside in the Capitol plan for earth/dam repair that may be recommended by the engineer.
- The Board will take this suggestion under consideration.

Motion to adopt the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2022-2027 for said District, made by Mike H 35 Indian Spring Rd, seconded by Glenn H, is approved unanimously.

Motion made by Mike K to approve capital spending for fiscal year 2024-2025 for said District as amended in discussion made, authorizing \$10,000 seconded by Rob A, 83 Crooked Trail Extension is approved unanimously.

**Election of Officers and the members of the Board of Directors for 2024-2025;
Call on Attorney Kate Cerrone to conduct the election of Officers and Board Members,
representing Bill Breslau, Chair of the Nominating Committee**

- According to Bylaw Article IV, the officers consist of President, Vice-President, Clerk (Secretary) and Treasurer. They are elected at the annual meeting for a term of one (1) year by a majority vote.
- This year's slate of Officers brought forth by the Nominating Committee are:
 - President: Mike Moran
 - Vice President: John Barber
 - Clerk/Secretary: Shari McCarthy
 - Treasurer: Steve Leibowitz
- Are there any other nominations from the floor? Hearing none, do I have a motion to close the nominations?
- Nominations closed, Mike K and Mike H
- Call for a Vote. All in favor.
- Motion carries. The aye's have it and the slate of officers has been approved.

Attorney Cerrone to conduct the nomination and election of the Directors

- According to Bylaw Article VI, The Board of Directors consists of the officers and five property owners within the District. Election of Board members occurs at each annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Board members serve three-year terms with one-third of the Directors (2 Directors) elected at each annual meeting.
- This year's slate of Directors brought forth by the Nominating Committee are:

- Director – Bill Bresleau- Safety
- Director – Anna Barrasso- Building and Zoning
- Are there any other nominations from the floor? Hearing none, do I have a motion to close the nominations?
- Nominations closed, Mike K, Mike H
- Call for a Vote
- Motion carries. The aye's have it and the slate of officers has been approved.

Mike asks if there are any other issues or business that anyone may wish to bring to this meeting.

- Residents mentioned in a large log floating in the water on the Crooked Trail side of the lake Glen H agrees to tackle it on Sunday then see will help.
- Further discussion regarding tree in the sight line when exiting on to Route 171 the ownership is discussed the board will continue to take this under advisement
- Rob A thanks the board for being fiscally responsible residence in attendance respond with Applause
- A brief discussion regarding beaver trapping. The season ends on March 13th but residents are encouraged to report any sightings so that the board can follow up if necessary.

No further discussion, call for Motion to Adjourn the Meeting.

A Motion was Made by Glenn H, Seconded by Linda M and Approved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned 8:41pm

