

**To:** Gregorio M. Aguilar, Supervisor  
Andrea Anderson, Trustee  
Lisa Griffin, Trustee  
Brian Forsberg, Trustee  
Howard Gripp, Trustee  
Nick Vyncke, Clerk

**From:** Mark T. Lundahl, Road Commissioner

**RE:** Year End Report 2021 (June 1<sup>st</sup> – Present)

**Date:** December 7, 2021

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**General:**

The roads in South Moline Township are in very good condition overall, other than a few minor potholes that we generally fill based on taxpayer complaints and/or those that are spotted by one of the employees. Shoulders look good, surfaces look good, ditches are flowing, and free of trash; and, we are prepared with supplies and equipment to take on winter.

I've come to realize, that the township is truly lucky to have the dedicated employees on road and bridge that we have. They all have very unique skills and different interests/passions that really come together quite nicely for the department and township overall. They truly assist us in running a very efficient operation. I appreciate their responsiveness to requests I send to them, and their self-reliance and can-do attitude. They can truly do about anything, from clearing beaver dams and replacing culverts to fixing machinery.

This past 6 months has been a steep learning curve as I've had to understand State, County, City, and Township jurisdiction where road and bridge is concerned. I get requests that run the spectrum of jurisdiction over environmental health concerns to child safety in high traffic areas where motorists are not obeying speed limits.

Moreover, I've learned that you have to use good judgement on whether or not to hire a sub-contractor or utilize township employees when it comes to certain projects. I do believe my personal experience in landscaping & excavation work has helped me to use good judgement where culvert/ditch/waterflow concerns have developed. And, I've encouraged our department's employees to work with residents on joint solutions to problems and to encourage homeowners who want to beautify their frontage even if we have easement rights to that frontage.

**Personnel:**

A few raises were given in the summer to bring certain employees to a commensurate level with their peers. The employees are self-starters, and do not require daily guidance, however on all where expenditures are of a concern we communicate frequently via a group text message to exercise good checks and balances (i.e. taxpayer complaints and/or inquiries about culvert replacements/repairs, driveway improvements, waterflow improvements, and encroachment of wooded areas on taxpayer's land). All public inquiries are dealt with swiftly, effectively, efficiently. I follow up with each taxpayer concern personally, and ensure satisfaction. The employees fulfill daily essential job functions doing what is required, and I do trust their judgement on where and how they are spending their time. All of them, really, have excellent past and present career experience in their respective trades and they therefore tend to take deep care in what they are doing and how the township is perceived by the taxpayers.

### **Equipment and Building:**

Most of the equipment is in modestly descent working order, but that is not to say that we *don't and won't* have challenges either this winter or in the coming 12-18 months. At a meeting in August with the staff, I took soundings to understand what challenges we might have. We've identified approximately \$35,000-\$50,000 in equipment maintenance or replacement; plus, building repairs, that will be required in 2021. Specifically, we have tractors and trucks that leak either oil or lubricants required to function properly; and, the issue becomes one of obsolescence due to the age of the machinery (parts). We have some repairs that are required to the building as well; a) roof repairs, b) gutter repairs, c) possible window repairs – mostly, caused by water infiltration.

### **Tax Levy:**

I read the November 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting minutes whereby it was noted in the Supervisor's report; ***"The board is expecting the road commissioners tax levy. At this time, it has not been presented."*** Upon reading those minutes, I sent an email to Greg's attention, on November 17<sup>th</sup>, requesting a meeting to discuss the budget together with him and Mary Beth Loos. I had assumed that I still had time to submit a tax levy to the board by December 7<sup>th</sup>, our last meeting of the year. I had every intention of asking for a 4.9% tax levy increase. In that letter, I had suggested a meeting prior to Thanksgiving (see attached email), however, I think due to illness, if memory serves correctly, I did not get a response from Greg; perhaps I simply missed a response from him? In all fairness to Greg, he and I had discussed a general timeline in person, in his office, in either late/October or early November. In my busy life, admittedly, I lost track of the timeline that we had discussed and thus reached out in both written email and called the office for a proactive discussion.

I was able to reach Mary Beth Loos, Administrative Assistant, in Greg's absence, again, I believe he was home with sickness. Mary Beth informed me on that call that because I had not submitted a tax levy increase that the budget from last year was submitted to the county. I told her that it was; *"my understanding that I had until the last meeting of the year to submit my tax levy."* She responded by saying that; *"in order for a tax levy increase it must be approved by the board and sit in the public domain/forum for 20 days, and that because our last meeting was on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, that there would not be adequate time to submit it to the county by the 28<sup>th</sup>."* She further went on to say; *"If you were to pass it on the 7<sup>th</sup>, then that would mean that on the 27<sup>th</sup> before 5pm (20 days later) that Nick Vyncke would have to run it down to submit it to the county, so that it hit the required submission date of the 28<sup>th</sup>."* "Therefore," she said; "there is not enough time." I believe I've recalled what she said to me to be highly accurate. *In other words, she was letting me know that I had missed the window for approval by the board and that time did not permit us to increase the levy.*

I had no reason to doubt what she was telling me to be accurate, until I ran into Tracy Best, and we were discussing it, and he said; *"Mark, you do not need 20 days if the tax levy is less than or equal to 4.9%, and therefore, you are still within your right, if need be, to request of the board their support for a 4.9% tax levy."* If the tax levy is equal to, or higher than 5%, or 105% of budget, it is subject to the *"truth in taxation law,"* requiring a special hearing. He said; *"I believe this is what Mary Beth was referring to, but she probably doesn't wasn't aware that you don't need 20 days if it's 4.9%, or less."*

It is with this in mind, that I'd truly like to submit a 4.9% tax levy, unless the board feels that we can move monies from the township's general fund to roads in (2022) to cover any *unexpected operating expenses or capital expenses* that would be deemed as absolutely necessary to run road and bridge properly. If however, the board sees fit to approve the increase, I'd prefer to work with Greg and Mary Beth to get this submitted prior to the 28<sup>th</sup> to ensure we have adequate surplus to maintain and replace equipment, and update our building, plus respond to any unforeseen catastrophic events.

**Budget:**

It is going to be a commitment of mine to the board and ultimately the taxpayers, to look into each chart of account (budget line item) within my budget, on a continual basis, and really challenge whether or not each account is needed and at what level it needs to be supported/funded. In theory, it is always a great practice to challenge a budget's legitimacy and either identify areas whereby we can reduce expense or operate more efficiently. One example, hypothetically, could be modernizing equipment and eliminating labor expense.

**Website Improvement/Suggestion:**

The following "Dept/Reports" button does not appear to be working, or there is no content? I would like to suggest that a monthly report PDF (1-pager) could be uploaded to this area, and the Supervisor if so desired. Meeting minutes do not capture, nor are they intended to, the personal side of what we are trying to accomplish as a "township."



Departments	Expenditure Reports	Levy Reports
<a href="#">Supervisor's office</a>	<a href="#">2019-2020</a>	<a href="#">2020</a>
<a href="#">Assessor's Office</a>	<a href="#">2018-2019</a>	<a href="#">2019</a>
<a href="#">Road and Bridge</a>	<a href="#">2017-2018</a>	<a href="#">2018</a>
	<a href="#">2016-2017</a>	<a href="#">2017</a>
	<a href="#">2015-2016</a>	<a href="#">2016</a>
	<a href="#">2014-2015</a>	<a href="#">2015</a>
	<a href="#">2013-2014</a>	<a href="#">2014</a>
	<a href="#">2012-2013</a>	<a href="#">2013</a>
		<a href="#">2012</a>

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