

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

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

**RE:** Update to the Board thru September 2024

**Date:** October 1, 2024

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### **General**

Working on Levy Expense Worksheet and trying to project 2025 needs. Concerned a bit about the national economic downturn, and continued foreseeable inflation that is being predicted by economists. Hard to predict expense needs given current environment of economic uncertainty.

Services from vendors and dealers continue to rise, plus material costs due to freight increases. I am thinking thru each line item very carefully to come up with a proper budget and thus a proper levy.

### **Projects**

Completely refurbished Poplar Grove Rd or East 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue much to the resident's delight 2/10ths of mile. Holes filled, widened shoulders, and resurfaced.

51<sup>st</sup> Avenue Culvert and ditch work entire block is finished

Beaver dams have been cleared and kept up to date to ensure water flow

Signing project is completed, all new signs have been placed on SMT Roads to replace rusted signs, faded signs, and "shot-up," signs.

### **Personnel**

Salaries will be up significantly in 2025 due to wage increases needed to offset wage stagnation of past 3-5 years; and, our need in 2025 to try and marginally keep somewhat pace with the CPI (Consumer Price Index). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, \$33 per hour is what is required in real terms in 2024 to match what \$18 was worth in buying power, just 4 short years ago. I have not increased, accordingly, but I have increased wages slightly, based on promotions/merit (performance).

We need reliable employees and that comes with ensuring that we pay for quality workers, pay for performance and pay for trustworthy/reliable employees.

Additionally, I am predicting that hours could be up substantially versus prior years where we had very little snow and thus very little flooding; increased hours combined with increase in wages leads me to anticipate growth in this particular expense category. We have added a new full-time employee to help with snow removal, primarily. Currently, we only have Chris Best and Jim Nichols to do this work during the winter season. We needed one more guy who could help out in the event of prolonged snow storms (2-3 days), sickness, or planned vacations.

### **Equipment**

2024 we revamped our old broken-down equipment (with a newer "used," excavator and "used" skid steer), and have purchased a "new" pick-up truck for snow plowing, running roads, retrieving supplies, and making residential visits. We now have reliable equipment in SMT R&B. Both the F350 and F450 dump-trucks (salt trucks), also have been overhauled (maintenance-wise). I am budgeting in capital expense category for one of the two to be replaced if we were indeed to have a catastrophic failure.