



**WHITE BEAR  
TOWNSHIP**

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Board of Supervisors  
**ED M. PRUDHON, Chair**  
**STEVEN A. RUZEK**  
**SCOTT E. MCCUNE**

**MINUTES  
UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING  
AUGUST 10, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Cremons, DeLoach, DeMars, Groschen; Commissioner: McCune; Clerk: Christopherson; Public Works Director: Reed; Town Finance Officer: Kelly;

Absent: Bernstein and Fredericks, both with notice.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Additions/Deletions):** DeLoach moved to approve the agenda as amended, to include 9A) Mississippi Head Waters and Drought Plan that the Town was Issued. DeMars seconded. Ayes all.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2023:** DeMars made the motion to approval of the July 13, 2023 minutes, noting that the clean-up day saw 3 tons less, not 3 million tons less. DeLoach seconded. Ayes all.

**DISCUSSION AGENDA:** Staff has put together a detailed grade grid of year-over-year, month-over-month comparison of the data for member Bernstein and the Chair to look at. There was some discussion of the 2nd Quarter Sewer & Water Report and how the daily resident use went down. There was discussion of the daily averages and the differences between low and high users and areas within the Township.

DeLoach moved to receive the discussion agenda as presented as follows: A) Receive Monthly Service Report; B) Receive Republic Call Log; C) Receive Solid Waste Abatement Report; D) Receive 2nd Quarter Sewer & Water Report; E) Receive 2024 SAC Rate Letter. DeMars seconded. Ayes all.

**WESTON WOODS IRRIGATION REQUEST:** The Town Clerk recapped this item for the Utility Commission. Guests were present from Weston Woods to review this item. The Town Board Chair and the Town Clerk put together a memo for Weston Woods to respond to the memo.

**White Bear Township's  
Mission:**

To provide White Bear Township residents, businesses and visitors with reliable, equitable, high quality municipal services while serving as open, inclusive and responsible stewards of the public trust.



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Residents Frank Fitzpatrick and Roger Ocel, representatives of the Weston Woods Townhome Association addressed the Utility Commission. Frank introduced Roger as the Treasurer and noted that they looked at the irrigation billing for a while and wanted to address the changes that were made. He noted that in the past tier three had been agreed. Roger gave some backstory as to how most of the residents don't get out of the first tier. Then, in 2022 with the rate increases, the Townhome Association was pushed into the fourth tier, which increased their bill 87% over the third-tier level. The usage even went down, yet the cost went up \$14,000. There was some discussion of the difference of single-family irrigation and water usage/consumption. There was a question as to whether the Town could take the usage separate per resident and bill individually. The request is a reversion back to the third level billing or taking the usage and divide by 153 units and add it to the bills.

If individual calculations were done, they would need to be done manually, and there are 153 units in this Association and 6 associations total in the Township, so feasibly the Town would not want to do this option. All associations have separate irrigation meters and the associations are billed separately. There was a question as to if the association has a daily average per resident chart of data to look at. The residents gave the 4 account numbers to the Town Clerk for him to look up some records. There was some discussion of the other associations. The residents on the Townhome Association mentioned that if the townhome remains in tier 4, the Board will need to increase the Townhome units' dues. The Chair recommended recommending a moratorium and putting the Weston Woods Association back to where it was prior to the 2022 increases (i.e. tier 3), and then discuss in depth when all Commission members are present.

The Commission and residents present did some calculations. The Town Clerk mentioned that the Utility Commission is going to start looking at rates again this fall. The Town Board approved the irrigation rates in 2022, which means any changes will need to go through the Board. So it does make sense to wait until the 2023 rates discussion. The 2022 change was not made with townhome associations in mind, it was made for individual residences that use a lot of water, to get them to conserve water because of the higher rates. Weston Woods' irrigation system is set up per zone and it was noted that there are rain gauges on the irrigation systems. There will be additional discussion with this agenda item in with the 2023 utility rates.

There was some discussion of private wells, how residents get wells installed, the processes for well permitting process. There were some questions of the Town Finance Officer regarding utility billing. There was discussion of it being important to weigh the difference of 8,000 single family home owners within the Township and the several hundred townhome owners within the Township/153 Weston Woods townhome owners. The Town wants the townhome associations to water common spaces less, so not taking any action on this would in essence force the townhome association to either pay more for water or not water their common spaces.

DeMars moved to table this agenda item until next meeting. DeLoach seconded. There was some discussion, and it was noted staff will notify the resident of this decision, that

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the Finance Officer will pull some additional information for discussion, and that at next month's meeting there will need to be findings for whichever decision the Utility Commission makes. There was some discussion of whether other communities have had this issue pop up with townhome associations. Ayes all.

There was some discussion of what the Town Board will discuss. It was noted that the Town Board will stay true to the risk of the Lake Level Lawsuit.

**FUTURE JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT WITH NORTH OAKS -- UPDATE:** The Town Clerk updated the Utility Commission of this agenda item, and noted that this item ties into the last item the Commission discussed. The Town's position is that the Town would like to terminate the current JPA and sell water only at a rate of 125% (or more/a rate yet to be determined) to encourage water conservation, but also plainly state the risks associated with droughts and the Lake Level Lawsuit, and the upkeep responsibility of North Oaks alone. There was discussion of the Council and the relationship between the City of North Oaks and the Township. There is a working committee meeting that will discuss this JPA in August and then it will go to the Council. The Town Clerk will have a JPA draft ready at the September Utility Commission meeting for the Commission to look over and discuss.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT:** The information for the Public Works Department Activity for July 2023 was in the packet for the Commission to review. There was a question regarding the County's plan to repair **Otter Lake Road** in 2024. Dale described the settlement with the **PFA's from 3M**. There was discussion of lining and televising. He is going to bring some photos to next month's meeting for the Commission to look at. **South Shore Boulevard** is wrapping up. The ware course is going on in the next couple of weeks. The **Gilfillan Area** construction project is underway as well. There discussion of sod and dirt; staff will have the Town Engineer check out the sod along these street improvement projects.

**ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:** **Mississippi Head Waters and Drought Plan that the Town was Issued:** The Town Clerk reported on the DNR memo received last week. Staff is asked to take into consideration and suggestions of cutting back on water usage. There were no threats or mandates within the memo, simply asking the Town to communicate with residents about what they can do to cut back on water usage. Staff is communicating to residents on the website, *News & Views*, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and other social media sites.

Staff passed out pumping numbers.

Commissioner McCune updated the Commission that he is wrapping up his career with the Township within a year. He is moving out of state.

There were no added agenda items.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting date will be September 14, 2023.

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DeMars moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. DeLoach seconded. Ayes all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan R. Wede  
Recording Secretary