

LeSauk Township Special Meeting
October 6, 2026

The LeSauk Township Special Meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Wagner at 6:00 p.m. at the LeSauk Town Hall.

PRESENT: Supervisors Paul Wagner, Jeff Westerlund and Brian Fasen, Township Attorney Troy Gilchrist, Clerk Marlyce Plante and 12 interested parties.

AGENDA APPROVAL: SUPV WAGNER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED, SECOND BY SUPV WESTERLUND, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

The special meeting was called to discuss the city of Sartell's Southwest Water Main Project planned for 2027. The project affects 37 parcel owners, 17 of the owners are LeSauk Township residents, those residents were invited to attend this meeting. At a previous township meeting, it was the consensus of the town board to invite township attorney, Troy Gilchrist to answer questions the residents may have regarding the deferred and special assessment process by cities as well as their questions they have on the orderly annexation agreement LeSauk Township has with the city of Sartell.

Glen Lauer, 33100 County Road 133, St. Joseph – Mr. Lauer owns approximately 92 acres abutting the proposed project. His estimated assessment for both parcels is \$488,000. He is a St. Wendel Township supervisor and has researched several aspects of this project. He was informed by the city of Sartell the water main is being planned due to uneven water pressure in the city. No parcels being assessed for this project are in need of water and will not benefit from this project. He also went through the 37 assessments and found there is a wide variety of assessments per acre. The amounts per acre varied from \$6500 per acre to \$277 per acre. He provided a copy of Minnesota Statute 429 – Local Improvements, Special Assessments and suggested copies be given to those who wanted to read the process of placing these assessments on properties. Mr. Lauer needed to leave to attend his own township meeting.

Gary & Linda Rehnke, 1643 6th St. So. – The Rehnke's own two parcels totaling 35 acres with an assessment of approximately \$188,000. The Rehnke's question why this is a shared expense, it is a city project and the township residents are not benefiting. Another concern is since the first meeting to discuss the assessments with Sartell has been held, is it too late to take any type of legal action? The Rehnke's also stated the payment process of the assessments – they were told the assessment would need to be paid in 20 years or when a parcel is annexed to the city along with a possible 3.5% charge on assessments that were not paid each year the assessment remained on the books.

Scott Bunkers, 2365 6th St. So. – Mr. Bunkers original assessment was \$7500. He received a call informing him it has been changed to \$62,900. He questioned the process of the assessments of the parcels and the appraisal company preparing the information.

Kyle Maus, 2416 6th St. So. – Mr. Maus's assessment is \$7500 since he owns just over an acre of property where the project will be placed. He wasn't concerned about the water main being placed in his front yard, but concerned they were told that within a 10 to 12 year period, the city would possibly be running curb, gutter & services in the same area. This again would entail another future deferred assessment.

Other residents attending had the same questions and concerns. Supv Wagner stated that is why they invited township attorney Troy Gilchrist. Atty Gilchrist is familiar with all aspects of special assessments and specializes in township law as it relates to Minnesota State Statutes. Supv Wagner also noted Atty Gilchrist has represented LeSauk Township for quite some time and is familiar with

the present orderly annexation agreement the township has with the city of Sartell.

Attorney Gilchrist discussed several items with the residents:

- State statutes to assess any adjacent parcel for services, special assessments etc. has been on the books for decades. What is the key, is whether the amount of the assessment benefits the parcel owner.
- There is a process, beginning with an improvement hearing that parcel owners are invited to. Projects such as this, use the road right-of-way, the city has appraisal's completed for affected property owners. When a city knows approximately how much the project will cost after the bidding process, an assessment hearing is held with all property owners being invited. This hearing is critical for each property owner to attend along with a legal representative should you choose to hire one.
- Challenge the assessments. Find someone to represent you, possibly as a group, which will then minimize the cost to everyone. There are, of course, no guarantees of any changes.
- Appraisals of your parcels may also be needed – do they match or are they close to the appraisal's done by the city.

Residents questioned the orderly annexation agreement the township has with the city of Sartell. Atty Gilchrist stated the agreement which was first done in 1992 with revisions in 2021, actually protects the township. Sartell can not annex township property and annexation is solely driven by the property owner. However, township properties that border other cities are not protected from those cities annexing their property.

Supv Fasen suggested the residents find 3-5 individuals that will represent the entire group. Those representatives can speak for the entire group when attending meetings, finding a legal representative etc. Kyle Maus stated he has been researching several possibilities for a legal representative. Copies of the appraisal report within the city of Sartell's power point were given to residents who wanted a copy along with the list of affected property owners, their addresses, property size and estimated assessment.

SUPV FASEN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN, SECOND BY SUPV WESTERLUND, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Marlyce L. Plante,
LeSauk Township Clerk