Witches Woods Tax District

Annual Meeting May 21, 2021

President Mike Moran called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

President Moran called on Sandy Pandolfi, Clerk, to read the Call of the Meeting. Sandy stated that the Notice and Call was mailed to every property owner, posted on the signposts at the entrances to the lake roads, posted on our tax district website, posted in the Woodstock Town Hall, mentioned in the Board's Monthly Minutes, listed in the Woodstock Villager newspaper as a Legal Ad and posted on the Tax District Facebook page.

Annual Report of the President:

- Mike welcomed everyone and introduced the Officers and Committee Chairs to the home owners. He also introduced our Attorney Kate Cerrone and thanked Shari McCarthy for her assistance in setting up the Zoom communications of the meeting.
- Mike asked for the Approval of the 2019 Tax District Annual Meeting Minutes which were made available at the meeting. Mike called for a waiver of reading the minutes. Due to Covid 19 and the State of Connecticut restrictions to in person meetings, no Annual Meeting was held in 2020 to approve the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes.
- Mike asked for Approval to Waive the Reading of the 2019 Minutes and to approve the 2019 Minutes.

A Motion was Made, Seconded and Approved to Waive the Reading of the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes. The vote was unanimous.

A Motion was Made, Seconded and Approved to approve the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes. The vote was unanimous.

Mike welcomed everyone and introduced the Officers and Committee Chairs to the home owners. He also introduced our Attorney Kate Cerrone and thanked Shari McCarthy for her assistance in setting up the Zoom communications of the meeting.

Mike explained that due to Covid 19 restrictions on group meetings, the Board had to accept interim appointments. We approved the 20-21 Budget and Capital Plan as presented by treasurer, Maggie Houlihan and as outlined by the Governor's Covid 19 statutes without the usual approval of the homeowners.

Mike reflected on the effects of Covid 19 and how especially fortunate we have been to ride out the pandemic here at Witches Woods Lake.

We also had some odd things to deal with: questions about out herbicide overdose in the cove, a fish kill caused by spawning stress, a blue green algae outbreak at the end of the summer, beavers and beaver damage. Lake waters were down due to a dry summer and then we had an abundance of rain that made it difficult to monitor the lake level. Water quality was good and we had a dam inspection.

Mike thanked the Board for their hard work and expressed how he appreciates how well the Board works together and gets along. He announced some upcoming changes to the Board. Tom and Sandy Pandolfi are moving out to state and Glen Humes is stepping down having served on the Board for 27 years and 18 as president.

Presentation of Reports of Committee Chairs:

Roads and Right of Way – Glen Humes Reported for Tom Pandolfi

Glen began his presentation by recognizing that our roads need work. There are several areas that require attention. First is the low spot on Crooked Trail. The pothole problem was the worse anyone can remember. Some pot holes were 12' deep and really required maneuvering around them. That is the part of the lake that sees the most traffic. There are 55 vehicles that go back and forth on that road on a daily basis. John Albrecht is bringing in some crushed rock as a temporary fix. John will be bringing in

some heavy equipment to rip up that section of the road, going down 8-12". It's about a 200 feet stretch of road that will be worked on. This will not be a permanent solution but will significantly improve the road conditions.

- There are some other spots that need attention. Indian Spring Road and Crooked Trail Extension we have some spots. John will be bringing in 60 yards of gravel to apply when he does his grading. John will be crowning the roads a little more to improve water runoff.
- In upcoming budget almost 50% will be used for roads. Our Five year Capital plan designates $55,000 for roads.

  There is a depression at the entrance of Indian Spring Rd that may have to be cut away and repaired. There are some culverts that are above road grade levels that will be addressed. We will look at some form of dust control for the roads.

<u>Lake, Dam and Beach – John Barber</u>

- Dam Inspection

  We are required by state law to have our dam inspected every 5 years. In this year's evaluation, the overall condition of the dam was satisfactory and no significant deficiencies were recognized. Only minor maintenance is required and only minor flaws were noted. In preparation for the dam inspection, we pulled cattails from the spillway and cleared brush, particularly near the 4 exit pipes. This evaluation was quite different from the prior inspection in 2015, whereby the dam was rated in poor condition. The 2015 inspection required the installation of toe drains at the base of the dam, which was very costly. A summary of the dam inspection and the complete report are available on the lake's website.

- Valve Inspection

  We were able to get our lake valve evaluated at half price due to Bungee also having an evaluation. The structure surrounding the intake valve that is used to control the lake level is in good condition. The valve itself was evaluated by the Rodney Hunt Company on February 26, 2021. The

inspection did not reveal anything in need of repair or replacement. Complete information about the valve inspection is also on our website.

- E-Coli Testing

  We have Microbac Laboratories test for e-coli in July and August. The following are the most recent test results. The numbers are in Colony Forming Units (CFU).

Locations	7/17/2018 Result	8/27/2018 Result	7/15/2019 Result	8/19/2019 Result	7/14/2020 Result	8/11/2020 Results	Safe Limit
Beach #1 @ 171 Crooked Trail	21.3	4.1	2.0	9.7	18.5	3	235
Boat Launch on Crooked Trail Ext.	48.8	12.1	7.5	172.3	18.7	2	235
Spill Way Beach @ end of Crooked Trail	16.1	4.1	3.1	6.1	12.2	6.3	235

- Aquatic Weed Survey

  We had Solitude Lake Management do one of two Aquatic Weed Surveys in June. If needed, an Herbicide Treatment is usually done in late July. This year it was determined that an herbicide treatment was not needed. A second Aquatic Weed Survey is done usually done in August/September.

No issues were found in the late survey this year, which wasn't done until October due to boat issues with Solitude.

- Green Algae

  An algae bloom was reported in the lake on September 30. This was common on many local lakes. The issue was related to relatively hot, dry weather. It was particularly bad at the end of the cove. It was recommended not to treat the bloom. As the algae decomposed, it sank to the bottom of the lake and the toxins broke down over time. We will be obtaining kits for sampling cyanobacteria blooms. Not all cyanobacteria blooms are toxic, meaning above the safe contact threshold. The kits and testing are free; we just need to collect the samples. Solitude Lake will charge about $400 for each sample for similar testing. I will be using a Secchi Disk to periodically test water clarity.

- Fish Kill

  Last year we had a greater than normal amount of dead fish on the shores of the lake and there have been some reported this year. Similar to last year, the string of warm days and no rain may have decreased the dissolved oxygen level a bit, adding to the stress the fish are experiencing from spawning.

- Fire Hydrant

  In preparation for installing a fire hydrant at Huteng's Beach on Indian Spring Road, a crushed stone road was installed for fire engine access. This road has been covered with sand near the water. The hydrant can't be installed until the lake is drawn down in the fall.

- Lake Draw Down

  The plan is for the lake drawn down starting with the valve being opened, the last weekend in October. The lake stays initially lowered until there is a good frost or freeze. This accomplishes two things, weed kill, and allowing people to work on their waterfronts.

  Once significant frost has occurred, we try and keep the water level about two to three feet below the normal level for the rest of the winter. Last

year the valve was closed in mid-November to start raising the lake to the desired two to three feet below normal level. The lake is slowly brought up to full level once the threat of it freezing has past. This year the lake valve was closed for good on March 11th.

Overall, keeping the lake at a particular level is not an exact science. It involves trial and error on the valve setting. One major factor is how much Lake Bungee is emptying into Witches Woods.

Building and Zoning – Ray Bonneau

- Every month Ray reports to the Board any permits that are taken out at the town hall by homeowners.

  From July 2020 to the present 11 permits were issued.

Communications – Phyllis Bonneau

- Phyllis does the publications and disseminates information to homeowners through a variety of resources. Not everyone has provided us with their e-mails and Phyllis asked people to please sign up. She also had quite a few US Postal notifications bounce back as a bad address. Please let us know about any change of addresses.
- The second page on our website is the source for announcements. If you are looking for information and current, check out that page. Please note the tabs on the website that will direct you to additional information. Phyllis welcomes suggestions and feedback.

Safety, Rules and Regulations – Bill Breslau

- Bill reported that the Board is losing several members and we have a full slate to present so all of our positions will be filled.
- Bill invited homeowners to get involved in some of the projects that are completed mainly by Board members and to volunteer to help on some committees. “Many hands make light work”.
- Bill explained the tax assessment that was proposed by the Town of Woodstock on properties owned by the Lake District. Mike Moran made a

detailed and persuasive presentation to the Town of Woodstock Tax Review Board that ended up with our Tax District incurring no additional taxes. Excellent Work by those who assisted in this endeavor: Mike Moran, Bill Breslau, Rande and Fred Chmura and Maggie Houlihan.

- Bill reminded that safety on the lake is foremost. If anyone sees something that needs to be addressed, please let him know.
- Bill will be working on the speed bumps that are scheduled to be installed this year.
- His committee plans to address signage at some point but has nothing yet to present to the homeowners.
- Bill told the homeowners that we are governed not only by State laws and the Town of Woodstock laws but our own municipal laws which are posted on our website. It's a good idea to read through them and if you have renters to make sure they are familiar with our Rules and Regulations as they are obliged to follow them.

Treasurer's Report – Maggie Houlihan

I am pleased to report the Financial Condition of the Witches Woods Tax District continues to be excellent. The finances for the prior fiscal year that closed on June 30, 2020 had a surplus balance of $7,379.48 that was transferred into the Unassigned Assets Fund.

The tax collection rate for this fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) is currently at 98.89% with three delinquent property accounts with a total of $4,052.66 in delinquent taxes and interest outstanding for prior years. This current year's budget is projected to have a surplus of approximately $2,256.06. The proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) has a 0.07 reduction to the current mill rate of 3.17.

The total amount in the Unassigned Assets Fund (Reserves) is $66,323.62 with $32,324.37 in a Money Market account and $33,999.25 in a 3-month Certificate of Deposit. In March 2021, our 13-month CD matured with an interest rate 1.49%; this CD was opened with $23,606.19 and earned $383.38 in interest for a total value of $23,989.57. These funds were

transferred to a new 3-month CD with an interest rate of 0.35% with an additional $10,000 in Reserve funds. The certificate of deposit was opened on April 2, 2021 with $33,989.57 ($23,989.57 + $10,000) and has earned $9.68 in interest for a total value of $33,999.25. The current CD interest rates are low and we are hoping this shorter term will allow us to roll these funds into a CD with a higher interest rate in three months.

The district was notified in July 2020 by the Town of Woodstock Assessor, Emily Carlone, our tax-exempt status on 5 properties would be removed and the parcels would be added to the grand list. The properties under review are the roads (2 parcels, one of which includes Kovaciny beach and the earthen dam), the lake (2 parcels) and a parcel below the dam. However, the board assembled an excellent team of Rande and Fred Chmura, Bill Breslau, and Mike Moran to research the issue and formulate a winning strategy to maintain our tax-exempt status. The preliminary impact to our budget would have been a combined assessment of about 91,080 at the current mill rate of 24.5 and could have been an additional $2,231 in property taxes – a significant savings! A big thank you to everyone for a great effort!

I have also responded to two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests from SmartProcure for our purchase records and provided input to the US Census Bureau for the 2020 Annual Survey of Local Government Finances(focused on debt and capital expenditures in the previous fiscal year 2019-20) and the 2021 Government Units Survey (focused on the primary function of WWTD).

I hope everyone has a great summer at our beautiful Witches Woods Lake!