

TOWN OF OSCEOLA ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Tuesday, April 18, 2023 — 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

The 2023 Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Osceola was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at the Osceola Town Hall, Dresser, Wisconsin.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Chair Lindh called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

VERIFICATION OF MEETING POSTING: Clerk Skjerven confirmed that the notice was posted at the Town Hall, Dresser Post Office, the First National Community Bank, the Town Web site, and the Town Facebook site.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Lindh led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chair Lindh, Supervisors Cronick, Johnson, and Thompson

Staff attending were: Public Works Supervisor Todd Raddatz, Town Treasurer Jan Carlson, and Town Clerk Denise Skjerven.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Paul Mahler (Town's Attorney), Jim & Donna Berg, Al Bader, Merle & Dianne Aarthun, Ed Everson, Stacy Wright, Jeff Masek, Mark Skjerven, Kirk & Trish Carlson, Jim Brundage, Alissa Behl (St. Croix Valley EMS), Therese Durkin, Dan Burch, Melissa Ward, Bob Wright, Aaron Degerstrom, Jeremy Utke, Kim Kaiser, Melissa Germain, Jane & Tom Bean, Mark Ferrell, May Breitbach, Marianna Schultz, Natasha Havranek, Mike Wallis, and Darel Hall (Animal Control). Virtual Attendees: Nealy Corcoran (Osceola Sun).

Chair Lindh commented virtual meeting capability for the Annual Town Meeting will be provided as a courtesy for those that want to see/hear the meeting. But, only in-person electors will be able to participate.

REGULAR REPORTS AND BUSINESS

1. **Approve Minutes of the April 19, 2022 Annual Meeting**
Motion by Bob Wright/Mark Skjerven to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes. Motion carried.
2. **Chair's Report.** Chair Lindh provided a report, and highlighted:
 - a. A history of the Town's levied property taxes, which for many years was only increased annually at the rate of new construction and assessed valuation. The budget for 2019 increased by \$79,910.00 primarily for road improvements. There was a levy decrease (approved by Taxpayers) of \$41,864.00 for 2020, for 2021 the Mill Rate increased 54.6 to \$2.86. The levy increase of \$286,231 was primarily to support road improvements,

and for 2022, the Mill rate increased .3% to \$2.87. The levy increase of \$14,826 was based on the rate of new construction and assessed valuation. The largest levy expense area for 2022 was Public Works (60%), followed by General Government (18%), Public Safety (16%) Development & Planning (5%), and Health & Human Services (1%).

- b. The year-end cash balance was \$824,823: \$121,874 for Liabilities (payroll withholding, property taxes, and special charges collected for subsequent year); \$304,291 Assigned (Parks & Recreation: \$11,837; HVAC Upgrades to Town Hall: \$30,000 (ARPA fund); Broadband Internet Project: \$80,000 (ARPA fund); \$182,454: Public Works Projects (ARPA fund); \$398,658 Unassigned Reserve (\$15,070: Trap Rock Saving Account; \$100,718: Public Works Equipment; \$282,870: Banking Accounts); the Town has 34% of Unassigned Reserve which is in line with the Town's auditors' recommendation.
- c. Public Works Supervisor was Todd Raddatz. On March 27, 2022, Joseph Gaffney was hired as a full-time Public Works employee. The Town had one part-time employee: Ed Everson.
- d. Town road miles are 63.13:
 - 41.81 miles Seal Coated
 - 9.92 miles Hot Mix Asphalt surface
 - 8.5 miles Scrub Seal/Slurry
 - 2.9 miles Gravel
- e. 47.1% of the Town roads have a PASER rating of 6 (Good) or higher.
- f. Lindh went over the road work done during 2022.
- g. The Town maintains three properties for mowing: Town Hall, Dwight Lake , and Sand Lake. Lakefront Lawn and Dock Services was contracted to do the mowing services.
- h. The Town population was estimated to be 3,085 with 2,097 estimated to be of voting age.
- i. Chair Lindh covered monthly highlights (more detailed information can be found within the meeting packet materials):
 - i. January: The Town Board Members were Chair Dale Lindh, Supervisors Jon Cronick, Jo Everson, and Neil Gustafson.
 - ii. February: The Town purchased a 2004 Crafcoc spray patcher from the City of Hudson.
 - iii. March: The Town approved partnering with Lakeland Communication Group, LLC and will contribute 10% of the project cost to expand fiber network in the Town of Osceola, up to \$80,000 contingent upon Lakeland Communication Group, LLC being awarded the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant. Joseph Gaffney was hired as a full-time Public Works employee.
 - iv. April: Jon Cronick was reelected as Supervisor and Debbie Thompson was elected as Supervisor. Bernie Desmarais was appointed as Supervisor to fill Mike Wallis's open position which expired in April 2023.

- v. May: 90th Avenue was closed south and east of the Osceola Rod and Gun Club due to a large culvert which rusted out, and the closure lasted into Fall.
 - vi. July: Lakeland Communications stated that they were approved to receive a Broadband Grant from the Wisconsin Public Service commission.
 - vii. October: The work on replacing the culvert over Horse Creek on 90th Ave was finally completed. Bernie Desmarais resigned as Town Supervisor and position as Board representative on the Plan Commission. Jo Everson resigned as Town Supervisor.
 - viii. November: The Board approved Option 3 from Polk County Land & Water Resources Department for replacing the Dwight Lake boat landing.
 - ix. December: The Town purchased a HTC 2000 Road Widener (a shouldering machine) and a 2022 22-foot Heavy Duty Tilt Equipment Trailer.
- j. In 2007, the Adopt-A-Road program was started in the Town of Osceola. Volunteers of ages eleven years or older choose an area of road at least one mile in length and provide clean-up two times annually, usually in the Spring and Fall. All supplies are provided by the Town. The Adopt-a-Road program is always encouraged for participation. Information was available for meeting attendees when they came in, and information to sign up is on the Town's website.

Motion by Mark Skjerven / Second by Trish Carlson to accept the Chairman's report. Motion carried.

2022 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Jan Carlson presented the financial report from the completed audit. Carlson shared the Assets (\$824,823) and Liability and Fund Balance (\$824,823) as of December 31, 2022, along with a summary of the Revenues and Expenditures for 2022. Also shared was the net change in fund balance, which started 2022 at \$582,653 and increased to \$702,949 at year-end 2022. The \$702,949 fund balance is comprised of Parks & Recreation (\$11,837), Broadband Internet Project (\$80,000), HVAC (\$30,000), Public Works Projects (\$182,454), and Unassigned (\$398,658), and bank balances as of December 31, 2022 totaled \$824,483. **Motion by Mark Skjerven / Second by Jim Berg to accept the 2022 annual financial report. Motion carried.**

PLAN COMMISSION REPORT

Plan Commission Chair Jeremy Utke reported Planning Commission Members were: Dan Tronrud, Jim Berg, Warren Johnson, Cindy Thorman, Kim Kaiser, Jon Cronick (Town Board member), and himself. Building permits issued for 2022 = 43. Primary work efforts have focused on getting the Town's Comprehensive Plan updated. The data in the Town's current Comprehensive Plan is from 2009. The Plan Commission is working from revisions that were made in 2020 to the Comprehensive Plan, and inclusion of 2020 Census data will be incorporated into updated information to better reflect the current state and status of the Town of Osceola. A formal request was made to the Town Board in January 2023 to recommend Stevens Engineering for providing updates on 3 key sections of the comprehensive plan (Section 2: Economic Development), (Section 3: Housing) and (Section 7: Issues and Opportunities). In March of 2023, the Town Board formally approved \$2,625 Stevens Engineering to update the afore noted sections. The remaining 7 sections will be reviewed and updated by the Planning Commission members with a goal to have the updated 2023 Comprehensive Plan ready for submission and approval by fall of 2023. **Motion by Merle Aarthun / Second by Donna Berg to accept the Plan Commission report. Motion carried.**

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER REPORT

Darel Hall presented a report. Darel is the Animal Humane Officer, Animal Control for the Town as well as for 30 other municipalities in Polk and St. Croix counties. Hall noted a slight increase in the number of complaint calls as compared to the prior year (but substantially decreased from when he started back in 2016), mostly from dogs at large (trespassing), four barking complaints and one domestic animal kill. One dog was taken to Arnell Memorial Humane Society in Amery. There was one cat complaint, and one rooster complaint. Hall reminded Town residents that roosters are not allowed. Hall tends to complaints as quickly as possible. Hall's contact information is noted on the Town's website. **Motion by Jim Berg / Second by Merle Aarthun to accept the animal control officer report. Motion carried.**

BUILDING PERMIT REPORT

Chair Lindh presented the report provided by Ben Campbell, the Town's Building Inspector. Reported during 2022 there were permits issued for new homes (10 from 24 in 2021), for accessory buildings/sheds (15 from 8 in 2021), for additions (3 from 5 in 2021), for deck/porches (7 from 5 in 2021), for other (13 from 14 in 2021). The total valuation decreased by approximately 58% (\$4,910,225 from \$8,450,664 in 2021). Reminder that permits are required for new homes, additions to homes or accessory buildings, decks, accessory buildings, and alterations to buildings. Re-roofing, residing, refinishing of interior surfaces and cabinetry are exempt from permit requirements. Land Use permits are required from Polk County Land Information Department for any project that changes the size of an existing structure. Campbell's contact information is noted on the Town's website. **Motion by Mike Wallis / Second by Dan Burch to accept the building permit report. Motion carried.**

ALLIED EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT

Chair Lindh presented the yearly summary. For 2022, there were a total of 380 runs (107 fire/rescue/moto vehicle accidents, and 273 medical runs), a decrease from 403 in 2021. Allied serves 135 square miles, which includes the Town of Osceola, the Town of Garfield, the Village of Dresser, and most of the Town of Alden. In 2018, there was a name change from Dresser, Osceola, Garfield Fire Association to Allied Emergency Services, and there are three fire stations located in the Village of Dresser, in the Town of Garfield (Wanderoos), and in the Town of Alden. There are currently 64 responding personnel in total, made up of fire and first responders. Each year Allied Emergency has community fundraisers, e.g. a spaghetti dinner in April and a Mother's Day breakfast in May. With the help from community fundraisers, Allied has been able to purchase cold water rescue suits, battery operated Milwaukee rescue tools, and a Lucas 3 automated chest compression unit.

Motion by Mike Wallis / Second by Melissa Ward to accept the Allied Emergency Services report. Motion carried.

OSCEOLA AREA AMBULANCE REPORT

Chair Lindh presented highlights from the annual report provided by Osceola Area Ambulance Service (Robyn Foster): Osceola Area Ambulance Service began providing services in 1974, when Osceola Area Ambulance Service purchased their first ambulance at a cost of \$20,000.00. The communities they served helped by raising money through donations for the ambulance and their equipment. Osceola Area Ambulance Services provides care to the residents of the Village of Osceola (100%), Town of Farmington (100%), Town of Osceola (67%), Village of Dresser (50%), Town of Alden (30%), and a small portion of the Town of Garfield. The Osceola Ambulance service is owned and operated by the taxpayers of the communities that they serve. Their service charges a \$14.00 per person assessment

and each community pays an annual amount based on the population it serves. The rest of the income comes from insurance and private payments for each emergency medical care transport through 911 dispatch. There were 112 runs in the Town of Osceola with a total of 476 runs for 2022. **Motion by Dan Burch / Second by Mike Wallis to accept the Osceola Area Ambulance report. Motion carried.**

ST. CROIX VALLEY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES REPORT

Alissa Behl, Operations Supervisor from St. Croix Valley EMS, was present to provide highlights from the provided report. St. Croix Valley Emergency Medical Services(EMS) has two ambulances, based in Milltown and St. Croix Falls, and they service where Osceola Area Ambulance stops their services, covering portions of Taylors Falls(MN), St. Croix Falls (City and Town), parts of the Village of Dresser, Town of Osceola, north past Milltown and east of Balsam Lake. Calling the Polk County Communications Center (non-emergency line) can help residents to learn which ambulance service they fall under. They are full-time critical care levels, with a paramedic and an EMT on every ambulance run. Their run volume for the Town of Osceola was 35, out of a total run volume for Wisconsin of 2,830 calls, which was increased from 30 runs the year prior. The majority of calls are for ‘treat and transport’, and average run times are 1:04 (enroute) and 10:36 (to scene). The top two dispatch requests were for falls and for a sick person. They were able to add a dedicated Supervisor position (critical care/paramedic level) and added a new quick-response vehicle. They have various community outreach efforts: charitable missions, backpack program, good neighbor project, high school scholarships, and many more. Customer satisfaction scores for 911 transports average 4.80 (out of a rating of 5). **Motion by Ed Everson / Second by Melissa Ward to accept the St. Croix Valley Emergency Medical Services report. Motion carried.**

UPDATE ON 2022 ANNUAL MEETING DIRECTIVES/MOTIONS

Chair Lindh covered updates from the 2022 Annual meeting:

- **Location for Annual Town, Board, Plan Commission, and/or Committee Meetings**
All meetings will be held within the Town Hall. The use/availability of virtual meetings via Teams will help. The Board will continue to evaluate anticipation of meeting attendance.
Bob Wright asked clarification from the Chair in regard to Teams meeting attendees not being able to vote. In situations where attendance is large and voting is expected to occur, he would hope the Board will plan to have a facility large enough to accommodate the voters.
- **Recommendation to Polk County to Deny Conditional Use Permit Sought for Blue Rock Mining Operation.** Chair Lindh pointed out that Polk County did not directly ask the Town board for its opinion on this topic. There were discussions held that the Town was standing by the previous Board’s decision, and thus did not have direct correspondence with Polk County on this topic. Bob Wright asked the question of whether the Town Board has relayed to Polk County that the Town was standing by the previous Board’s decision/recommendation on the Kraemer mine? Lindh responded that no, the Board has not relayed in 2022 any such communications to the County. Wright pointed out, in the list of requirements, Polk County Environmental Services requested of the applicant to obtain feedback from the Town.

ANY OTHER TOWN BUSINESS AUTHORIZED BY STATE STATUTES

Chair Lindh opened the floor for public comment and/or motions/directives as may be authorized by State Statute.

1. Mark Skjerven brought up that in May of 2020 there was an approved motion to change the Board salaries to be set at \$3,500.00 per 5-person Board member, for a total expense of \$17,500.00—a savings of \$4,500 from the previous Chair position salary of \$10,000.00, and \$6,000.00 for each of the two Supervisors. In Skjerven's view, the Chair position is asked to put in more hours and have more responsibilities than Board Supervisors to support the Town's needs, including the running of every Town Board and Town meeting. The increase to the Chair's salary would bring the total Board salaries to \$20,000.00, which is still a savings to the Town of \$2,000.00 from the 2020 Town Board salary budget amount.
Motion by Mark Skjerven / Second by Kim Kaiser to increase the Chair position salary to \$6,000.00 a year, for a combined total Board salary budget of \$20,000.00. 29 Ayes; 0 Nays; 2 Abstains. Motion carried.

NOTE: Per WI Statute 60.32(4) Compensation of elective town offices: Compensation shall be established prior to the latest date and time for filing nomination papers for the office. After that date and time, no change may be made in the compensation of the office that applies to the current term of office. Therefore, the change in Chair position salary will not take effect until April 2025, which is the start of the next 2-year term of the Chair position.

2. Al Bader stated his view that the Town should consider continuing to pay the gopher bounty to keep the gopher population down within the Town. **Motion by Al Bader / Second by Jim Berg to continue to pay for the pocket gopher bounty at \$4.00 a tail. 32 Ayes; 0 Nays; 1 Abstain. Motion carried.**
3. Jim Brundage proposed a motion that the Town keep, comply, and administer the Chapter 14 Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction and Permit Regulation Ordinance as Amended in April 2015. **Motion by Jim Brundage / Second Bob Wright that the Town of Osceola keep, comply, and administer the Chapter 14 Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction and Permit Regulation Ordinance as Amended in April 2015. 25 Ayes; 0 Nays; 8 Abstains; Motion carried.**
4. Denise Skjerven proposed a motion to allow elected Town officials to receive pay for work as a Town employee on an as-needed basis. Pay for time worked would be determined by the Town Board, most likely comparable to other Public Works employees. Discussions took place amongst attendees to further explain the rationale for the motion. **Motion by Denise Skjerven / Second Melissa Ward to allow Town elected officials to receive pay for work as a Town employee, e.g. assist with snow plowing. 24 Ayes; 0 Nays; 9 Abstains; Motion carried.**

Stacy Wright brought up her topic from last year's Annual Town Meeting regarding Town employees who were working more hours than those getting paid. Has this situation been rectified? Or, is it still occurring? Chair Lindh indicated the Clerk's hours are being accounted for and paid, and Treasurer Carlson indicated she is working more hours than being accounted for via her time slips. Lindh expressed it is the Board's intention to pay for all hours worked. Tom Bean asked what needs to change in order for Carlson to get paid for hours worked, and he expressed that full completion of time slips needs to occur.

Bob Wright gave an interpreted summarization of the Polk County Court Judge Tolan's April 10th, 2023 decision on Blue Rock LLC vs. Polk County Environmental Services Committee. Basically, he noted that Blue Rock LLC applied in January 2022 for a conditional use permit with Polk County, and Polk County recommended a denial of the conditional use permit or to request additional information be provided by Blue Rock LLC. Additional information was requested of Blue Rock LLC (the applicant). The applicant

sued the Environmental Services Committee indicating the Committee was biased, and the request for information was deemed to be expensive and unreasonable. The Court dismissed Blue Rock LLC's lawsuit because they have not yet exhausted all of their administrative remedies with Polk County. Wright read portions of the full write up provided to the Chair by Wright.

Chair Lindh reminded attendees there is one open position on the Board. Interested people should contact any one of the Town Board members. The intention would be to appoint the new Board member at the May regular Town Board meeting.

SET DATE FOR 2024 MEETING

April 16, 2024

MOTION BY JIM BRUNDAGE / MIKE WALLIS TO ADJOURN THE 2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING.

MOTION CARRIED. The Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

To be approved: April 16, 2024

Approved:

Denise Skjerven, Town Clerk