

**TOWN OF OSCEOLA
TOWN BOARD MEETING – BUDGET HEARING – TOWN MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020 BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

The Board of Supervisors of the Town of Osceola met for a series of meetings on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Osceola Town Garage, 516 East Avenue North, Dresser, Wisconsin.

CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER: Supervisor Mike Wallis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

VERIFICATION OF MEETING POSTING: Supervisor Wallis reported that the meeting(s) were posted on November 15, 2020 at the Town Hall, the Dresser Post Office, First National Community Bank and the Town website.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Wallis and Brandon Whittaker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Doug Schmidt

MOTION BY WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO APPOINT SUPERVISOR WALLIS AS THE CHAIR OF THE MEETINGS SINCE SCHMIDT WAS ABSENT. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ALSO PRESENT: Jo & Ed Everson, Tony Johnson, Jim & Donna Berg, Mark & Denise Skjerven, Tom & Gae Magnafici, Diana Anderson, Jon Cronick, Cole Berg, Bernie DesMarais, Glyn Thorman, Peter Wolf, Kate & Chris Schermach, Steve Heichel, Terilyn & Linnaea Wallis, James Rochford, Warren Johnson

BUDGET HEARING

Supervisor Wallis called the Budget Hearing for the Proposed 2021 budget to order at 6:30 p.m. The Board systematically reviewed each budget category.

Revenue Budgets. There were very little changes in the revenue accounts. Warren Johnson questioned what were the 2020 housing value and permit increases. The Board agreed to look into that information and respond at a later date.

Total proposed revenues were \$1,109,529.64.

Expense Budgets.

General Government budgets overall increase \$12,422.19, 8.2% from 2020 to 2021, with the following details:

Town Board. The Board salaries will decrease slightly due to the five-member board and applicable salaries set at the Annual Meeting.

Legal Fees. 2020 legal fees are significantly over-budget, however, 2021 fees should be more under control, with the exception of legal fees related to the sale of Town property once the sale is approved.

Clerk / Treasurer Expenses. The Board increased the hours for the Treasurer position from 12 hours/week to 16 hours/week. The current Treasurer has resigned. The Board may consider an external source to conduct financial work for the Town, but the duties of the Treasurer must first be determined prior to that discussion. Clerk Kyle Teig had also resigned his position, with the Board hiring Toni Harper to begin in that position December 1, 2020.*

Denise Skjerven questioned if former Clerk/Treasurer Lorraine Rugroden would continue training the Treasurer since she had resigned, and questioned who would train the new Treasurer and the new Clerk. Supervisor Whittaker stated that it is uncertain what role Rugroden would play in the future, but the plans are that her position would end at December month-end. The overall increase for the Clerk / Treasurer Budget expense accounts would be 27.5% in 2021.

Elections. There are fewer elections in 2021, so that budget was reduced accordingly. Whittaker reported that Jo Everson submitted a grant for +\$47,000 to reimburse the Town for additional expenses related to the covid-19 pandemic in 2020. It is uncertain if the Town had been awarded the grant at this time.

Audit Services increased 6.5% for 2021.

Assessment of Property would be a minimal 2.4% increase for 2021.

Building Expenses. These expenses increased minimally, with the exception of Water & Sewer Utilities and Telephone services. The expenses related to Website/Computers under the Clerk / Treasurer accounts increased since the phone services are not provided through the internet, which directly affects the budget for the Telephone services under building expenses. The total increase in Building Expenses for 2021 would be 8.7%.

Public Safety budgets increased 3.1% for 2021, this included Ambulance contracts and Fire Department contract, which is set on a per capita or property valuation basis.

Public Works. The expenses receiving the highest increases under this category are:

Highway Construction. Whittaker explained that the voters at the 2019 Town Meeting reduced the levy by \$75,000 from the 2018 budget, which affected the ability to complete many highway projects in 2020. Therefore, the Town would need to “catch up” on needed road improvements. Every piece of Town equipment is debt free at this time, so major expenses primarily come from road improvement costs.

Highway Construction. The proposed costs for 2021 are \$473,480.00, up 70.4% from 2020. With the over-budgeting costs in 2020, road improvement costs were scaled back despite what was actually budgeted.

Glyn Thorman pointed out that the 2018 Highway Construction costs were 20% higher than the previous year, as was the 2019 costs. The proposed 2020 Highway Construction costs were proposed to also be an increase of +20%, except that the Town electors voted down that proposal. Now in the 2021 budget, the proposed increase remains at the 20% increase + \$80,000, which is above and beyond the “catch up” needs. He stated he was not in favor of this significant of an increase.

Warren Johnson suggested that the lack of oversight by the Town left the improvements to 68th Avenue in 2019 much to be desired. It is now falling apart and has a large sinkhole. The Town did not necessarily get the value it paid for in that project. Ed Everson agreed with Johnson’s statement, and questioned why the Town does not do business with Scott Construction when it performs quality work for other municipalities. He also blamed the lack of oversight by the Town as the reason why it does not give other companies the same opportunity to bid projects as it does the select few they currently use. Glyn Thorman stated that he had told that the Town of Osceola was “not interested” in having Polk County Highway Department perform any work for the Town, and questioned if that statement was indeed true.

Whittaker explained that the 2020 budget includes additional funding for part-time Public Works employee wages, so that there would be improved supervision of road projects by the Public Works Supervisor Tony Johnson.

Also discussed was the possibility of the Board initiating joint power agreements with the neighboring Towns/Villages for cost-sharing ventures, such as sharing of equipment and man-hours. Ed Everson voiced his opposition of this practice, with Bernie DesMarais in agreement, suggesting that there are others not present who would disagree with this practice as well.

Capital Highway Equipment. Whittaker and Wallis explained that the Town needs to begin budgeting for the cost of equipment replacement because these costs would be significant in the future. Wallis indicated that he had attempted this in past budgets, which had not been supported by the electors. Any funding added over the years was only due to monies available at year-end from accounts that were under-budget and that money was rolled over into the fund. Jo Everson suggested that a separate savings account be established for that money, rather than just have it “assigned” by the auditors, and remaining in the available monies throughout the year. That way the Board would have that information at anytime it wanted it.

Total increases in the Public Works budget would be 217.04%, at \$90,117.91.

Local Cemetery Funding was briefly discussed with Whittaker explaining that he would like to see the process of disbursing monies from this account to be changed to more of a grant process from what it is currently.

Total proposed expenditures were \$1,109,529.64.

Jo Everson encouraged the Board to look at increasing potential revenue sources, such as dog licensing, burning permit fees, building permit fees.

There was discussion regarding the turnover in office staff. It was suggested by several members of the public that the Board should hire someone to train new staff rather than have former employees provide that training. Once that employee gave its notice of termination, the transition to the new employee should be clear-cut and immediate.

Bernie DesMarais expressed his appreciation to Wallis and Whittaker for their detail in presenting the proposed 2021 budget. The lack of support from the electors in for the 2020 budget resulted in an achievement of its goal; that being the Board’s accountability in its spending.

Denise Skjerven questioned the reported fund balances of \$103,743.00. Would these monies be in addition to the differences of revenues expected at December 31st less the expenses expected at December 31st. Jo Everson explained that the Town’s cash balances as reported in the budget summary report are only estimated cash balances, that the budget reports do not necessary reflect the actual cash balances. The recommended cash reserves by the State should be three months of expenses, that being approximately \$125,000.

Wallis requested any other public comments. He indicated at this time that written testimony had been received by Bob Wright, and offered that info to the public at this time, of which no one requested a copy. The following is a summary of his testimony:

Dear Tom Board Supervisors,

I’m unable to attend and recognize that this testimony does not count as a vote:

- I believe the levy is too high, but understand our only other choices are last year’s levy or last year’s plus the annual increase or decrease in property values. The latter two do not provide the Town with adequate resources and will only set us farther back, especially with roadwork. Given these options, I am reluctantly in favor of the proposed 2021 levy. We can adjust it accordingly for 2022.*
- The Town levy is only 12-13% of the overall property tax bill and that increase for a property worth \$150,000 would be only \$151 dollars over last year.*
- I support the proposed increase for Highway Construction.*
- I support increase in Website/Computer needs.*
- I do not support increase in legal fees, and hope the recent overages are behind us.*

- *I request Supervisor Whittaker reimburse the Town for [legal] costs incurred from the recent defamation lawsuit.*

Bob Wright

BUDGET HEARING ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO ADJOURN THE BUDGET HEARING OF THE TOWN OF OSCEOLA HELD THIS DECEMBER 2, 2020. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER: Supervisor Mike Wallis called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Wallis and Brandon Whittaker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Doug Schmidt

ALSO PRESENT: Jo & Ed Everson, Tony Johnson, Jim & Donna Berg, Mark & Denise Skjerven, Tom & Gae Magnafici, James Rochford, Diana Anderson, Jon Cronick, Cole Berg, Bernie DesMarais, Glyn Thorman, Peter Wolf, Kate & Chris Schermach, Steve Heichel, Terilyn & Linnaea Wallis, Warren Johnson. 24 electorates were present.

VERIFICATION OF MEETING POSTING: Supervisor Wallis reported that the meeting(s) were posted on November 15, 2020 at the Town Hall, the Dresser Post Office, First National Community Bank and the Town website.

RESOLUTION 20-06 FOR ELECTORS TO EXCEED THE 202 LEVY LIMIT

MOTION BY BERNIE DESMARAIS/MARK SKJERVEN TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-06, ENDORSING A RESOLUTION WHICH PROPOSES THAT THE TOWN LEVY EXCEED THE LEVY LIMIT BY 54.20% OVER THE 2020 LEVY LIMIT, WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE TOWN LEVY BY \$282,087, PURSUANT TO SECTION 66.0602 OF WISCONSI STATUTES. MOTION CARRIED WITH 21 YEAH VOTES, 1 NAY VOTE, AND 1 ABSTAIN VOTE. (see attached)

RESOLUTION 20-07 FOR ELECTORS TO ADOPT 2020 LEVY LIMIT

MOTION BY JIM BERG/MIKE WALLIS TO ADOPT RESOLUTI 20-07 TO ADOPT THE 2020 TOWN TAX LEVY OF \$520,455 TO BE PAID IN 2021 PURSUANT TO WISCONSIN STATUTE 60.10(1)(A) MOTION CARRIED WITH 21 YEA VOTES, 1 NAY VOTE, AND 1 ABSTAIN VOTE. (see attached)

TOWN MEETING ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY BRANDON WHITTAKER/WARRAN JOHMNSON TO ADJOURN THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF THE TOWN OF OSCEOLA HELD THIS DECEMBER 02, 2020. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

TOWN BOARD MEETING

CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER: Supervisor Mike Wallis called the meeting to order at 8:09 p.m.

VERIFICATION OF MEETING POSTING: Supervisor Wallis reported that the meeting(s) were posted on November 15, 2020 at the Town Hall, the Dresser Post Office, First National Community Bank and the Town website.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Wallis and Brandon Whittaker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Doug Schmidt

MOTION BY WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO APPOINT SUPERVISOR WALLIS AS THE CHAIR OF THE MEETINGS SINCE SCHMIDT WAS ABSENT. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ALSO PRESENT: Jo & Ed Everson, Tony Johnson, Jim & Donna Berg, Mark & Denise Skjerven, Tom & Gae Magnafici, Diana Anderson, Jon Cronick, Cole Berg, Bernie DesMarais, Glyn Thorman, Peter Wolf, Kate & Chris Schermach, Steve Heichel, Terilyn & Linnaea Wallis, James Rochford, Warren Johnson. 24 electorates were present.

AGENDA: MOTION WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Warren Johnson stated that he appreciated the professionalism by the members of the Board that were present that presented the proposed 2021 budget. The meetings were much improved over last year, and hope that this attitude continues moving forward. Many of those present were in agreement with Johnson's statements.

Johnson also stated that the Town should be ashamed that it has not provided the necessary equipment to make meetings available for the hearing impaired. Disabled Veteran Tom Magnafici has requested this equipment many times over the past year, and that request has been disregarded by the Board. Whittaker stated he would be sure to place it on the agenda at the next Board Meeting.

RESOLUTION 20-08 A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2021 BUDGET

MOTION BY WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-08 ADOPTING THE 2021 BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. (see attached)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY WHITTAKER/WALLIS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF OSCEOLA HELD THIS DECEMBER 2, 2020. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Jo Everson, Temporary Secretary

APPROVED: _____

- Toni Harper resigned her position as Clerk just days following her start date.