

**TOWN OF OSCEOLA**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 20, 2021**

Meeting Minutes

The Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Osceola was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the public works garage at the Osceola Town Hall, Dresser, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Chairman Mike Wallis, Chairman-Elect Brandon Whittaker, Supervisor Warren Johnson, Supervisor Jo Everson, Supervisor Dale Lindh, and Supervisor Neil Gustafson.

Staff Attending were Public Works Tony Johnson, Town Treasurer Jan Carlson, and Town Clerk Scott Hildebrand.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Ed Everson, Cindy & Glyn Thorman, Jim & Donna Berg, JeAnne Rochford, Diana Anderson, Denise and Mark Skjerven, Tom & Gae Magnifici, Jeremy & Teresa Utke, Bev & Lloyd Kobs, Tim Loescher, Steve & Deb Heichl, Rick Nelson, Jon Cronnick, Merle and Diane Aarthur, Alice Moris, Kirk Carlson, Ben Wasmund, Rebekah Gustafson, Al Bader, R. Clark, Liz Rochford, Mike and Jeanette Rochford, Stacy Wright, Bernie Desmerais, Mark Ferrell, Brad Hoverman, Lisa and Josh Marincel, Robert Thompson, Susan and Daniel Burch, Tim Ball, Jane and Tom Bean, J. Adler, Chris Wahlstrom, Teri Wallis, Ryan Lee, Wesley Whocjyk, Jamie Tinney, Trish Carlson, Kim Kaiser, William and Mariane Schultz, S. Baer, Shay Rysdam, Danielle Pratt, Jennifer Steele, Amanda and Nick Tuneski, Pete Fehlen, Ricky Jaeger, Mary Flood and Steve Edling, Mike and Beth Coluizy, Chris Shermach, Barbara Delaney, Conall Gallagher, Connie Clark, Laurie Johnson, Jim Judkins, Anne Miller, Jim Brundege, Melissa Ward, Tasha Havranek, Eric Hallen, Bill Blair, Marsha and William Beyer, Bob Wright, Lee Mork, Ron Race, Marcia Dressel, Mary Weinberg, Micah Bruns, Joe Wembly, Zachary Settors, Liam and Sara Gallagher, Therese Durkin, Katie Cronick, Jon and Cheryl Cermin, Jim and Ellanie Langen, Kevin and Susan McNutt, and Katie Brunz.

**CHAIRMAN WALLIS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:32 P.M.**

Chairman Wallis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL: Chairman Wallis, Supervisor Johnson, Supervisor Everson, Supervisor Gustafson, Supervisor Lindh, Chairman-Elect Whittaker were all present.** Chairman Wallis introduced each member as well as the Staff in attendance.

**REGULAR REPORTS AND BUSINESS:**

1. Approve Minutes of the May 19, 2020 Annual Meeting. **Motion by Stacy Wright / Second by Bev Kobs to approve as written. Motion Carried.**
2. **Allied Emergency Services Report.** Mark Knutson, Chief of Allied Fire / Emergency Services was present to provide a yearly summary of runs. They had a total of 368 total runs, including 262 medical and 106 Fire/Rescue. Knutson provided a history of the 3 stations in operation and noted 61 personnel. The recent spaghetti supper in the Village of Dresser netted \$5,000, which will be used towards the purchase of ice-rescue suits. **Motion by Jim Judkins / Second by Stacy Wright to accept the Allied Emergency Services report. Motion Carried.**
3. **Animal Control Officer Report.** Darryl Hall was present to discuss the animal control report. He noted that due to increased education, calls have continued to drop. He currently covers 31 different jurisdictions. He hopes to offer a micro-chip clinic in Dresser in late May and noted that often animals promptly returned due to the chips. He may be contacted through the Polk County webpage, or on Facebook at "Dedicated Animal Control Services." **Motion by Bev Kobs / Second by Dan Burch to accept the Animal Control Officer report. Motion Carried.**

4. **St. Croix Valley Emergency Medical Services Report.** Ben Wasman was present to provide the report and indicated they received 2500 calls April – April, with 36 calls in the Town of Osceola. Last year, they entered into a new contract and reduced their per capita subsidy from \$10 to \$5. He did indicate that overall their costs are higher, as they have 82 employees, which are full-time staff. **Motion by Jane Bean / Second by Jim Berg to accept the St. Croix Valley Emergency Medical Services report. Motion Carried.**
5. **Chairman's Report.** Chairman Wallis provided a report, which indicated that the Mill Rate decreased 10% to 1.85 last year. The decrease was due to a decrease in the levy of \$41,864.00. Most of the levy does go to Public Works. Other items of specific interest listed were:
  - a. In February 2020, Public Works Director Paul Baker resigned. He was replaced by Tony Johnson in March, 2020.
  - b. A John Deere Tractor was purchased.
  - c. Town Road Miles are 63.13.
  - d. The Town Population was estimated to be 2,941, with 2,119 estimated to be of voting age.
  - e. The Town hired several clerks and treasurers.
  - f. Amanda Nissen served as the Town's Tax Collector.
  - g. Several IT improvements were made in the form of email, phone system and security for computers.
  - h. The Town was involved in two lawsuits, one which was settled and one which is scheduled for 2022.
  - i. CoVid affected the Town, but the Board was able to continue operations by following CDC guidelines.
  - j. The adopt-a-road program was also discussed.

**Motion by Ryan Lee / Second by Pete Fehlen to accept the Chairman's report. Motion Carried.**

6. **Annual Financial Report.** Treasurer Jan Carlson presented the financial report and explained the final audit has not been received. There was much discussion about why the final numbers have not been received. **Motion by Stacy Wright / Second by Denise Skjerven not to accept the Annual Financial Report at this time.** After discussion, Denise Skjerven retracted her second.

It was clarified that the goal is to create stability in the future in the Clerk and Treasurer position. Regardless of the audit turnout, the 2021 budget will not change.

**Motion to Call by Jamie Tinney.**

**Hand count reflected 39 people in favor of not accepting the Annual Financial Report, 43 nays. Motion Failed.**

**Motion by Ryan Lee / Second by Mark Skjerven to approve the Annual Financial Report as written, but to request an audit be conducted next year prior to the annual meeting. Motion Carried. 3 opposed.**

7. **Building Permit Report.** Ben Campbell was not present but submitted a summary report. **Motion by Ed Everson / Second by Dan Burch to accept the Building Permit report. Motion Carried.**
8. **Osceola Area Ambulance Report.** Chairman-Elect Brandon Whittaker gave the ambulance report for Robin Foster. There were 84 runs in 2020, with an increase expected in 2021. They have no full-time staff but provide pagers and pay on-call status. **Motion by Denise Skjerven / Second by Bev Kobs to accept the Osceola Area Ambulance report. Motion Carried.**

9. **Plan Commission Update.** It was reported that Planning Commission did not meet monthly due to CoVid, and the Commission was dissolved in 2021. They took no action on the Comprehensive Plan updates in 2020.

Several members of the public were upset to learn the Commission had been dissolved. It was explained that the Town still has planning and zoning ordinances, but all decisions now go through the Board, as well as the County. The intent was always to reform the Planning Commission following the election, by allowing transparency where citizens could apply for positions on the commission, to be approved by the Board. It was further clarified that projects cannot “sneak through,” because the County will still refer any decision or recommendation back to the Town Board.

**Motion by Terry Wallis / Second by Mark Ferrel for a hand count showing who thought the Planning Commission should not have been dissolved.**

After more discussion, the hand count revealed that 43 residents felt the Planning Commission should not have been dissolved. 39 residents noted Nay.

10. **Set Gopher Bounty. Motion by Al Bader / Second by Bernie DesMarais to set the Gopher Bounty at \$4.00. Motion Carried.**

#### **UPDATE ON 2020 ANNUAL MEETING DIRECTIVES / MOTIONS:**

Chairman Wallis quickly covered updates from the 2020 Annual meeting.

1. **Planning Commission.** Was already discussed.
2. **Dwight Lake Property.** A Resolution is needed to proceed, but the Board has looked into this request.
3. **Variance / Ordinance Process Public Notifications.** No Board Action.
4. **Town Clerk Duties.** No action by the Board. Most duties are set by Statute.
5. **Stower Trail.** The Board submitted two letters of support.
6. **CAFO Ordinance.** No Board Action.
7. **Auditing Firm and Legal Firm Updates.** The Board used the same auditing firm, but did appoint a new legal firm / attorney, as the prior attorney retired.
8. **2020 Absentee Ballot Update.** No Action.
9. **Code of Ethics Policy.** Ethics Committee was dissolved by the Board.
10. **Review of Town Fees.** No Board Action.
11. **Historical Society Invitation to Categorize Town Historical Records.** No Board Action.

#### **ANY OTHER TOWN BUSINESS AUTHORIZED BY STATE STATUTES:**

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

1. Mark Skjerven opined the Ethics Committee had been formed by the prior Board Chairman without the other Supervisor’s knowledge and thought the application process should have been open for application.
2. Ed Everson provided a list of “Junk Properties,” and opined that Public Works should help in reporting these properties, so that the Supervisors can address the problem.

3. **Motion by Bob Wright / Second by Trish Carlson for all contracts for IT services be reviewed to breaches of confidential information and terminated immediately if they are found.** Passed unanimously by those in attendance.
4. **Motion by Denise Skjerven / Second by Ed Everson to require Inspector Ben Campbell to provide an accurate account of his inspections, which reflects that he actually went to the site and met with a contractor or resident and signed the inspection.** It was discussed that several people in the past have been charged for inspection services, but that Ben never actually went to the property. Passed unanimously by those in attendance.
5. **Motion by Melissa Ward / Second by Al Bader that the Town provide a full and detailed explanation of how and why the April 6, 2021 certified election results were off by almost 40% and what steps will be taken to ensure it doesn't happen again, posting this report on the Town's website.** Cindy Thorman was present to discuss how the error was noticed, and that the County, the Wisconsin Election Commission and their attorney were contacted to discuss how to proceed. They recommended a recount, but the end result was that the error was unintentional and the outcome did not change. Passed unanimously by those in attendance.
6. **Motion by Bob Wright / Second by Kim Kaiser that the Clerk and Treasurer positions be re-combined into a single full-time position with commensurate pay and benefits at the earliest convenience.** It was discussed the prior clerk was here for twelve (12) years, but that there has been a revolving door since the position was split.  
  
Bernie Desmarais pointed out there were two separate conversations going on. One was whether there should be two people, and the other was whether there should be two positions. He recommended having a Senior Clerk, and a Deputy Clerk / Treasurer.  
  
**Motion by John Cermin / Second by Alice Morrison to table the motion.** A hand count showed 48 in favor of tabling the motion / 29 Nay.
7. **Motion by Teri Wallis / Second by Bill Schultz to require a 2021 financial audit prior to the April 2022 Annual Meeting, regardless of whether the Town was required to have one.** Passed unanimously by those in attendance.
8. **Motion by Denise Sjkerven / Second by Bernie Desmarais for the Board to commit to having virtual meetings (Zoom or other source).** Passed unanimously by those in attendance.
9. **Motion by Trish Carlson. Second by Tasha Havranek that any binding decisions made by the Town of Osceola, regarding new mining proposals in the Town of Osceola, including the location of the previously proposed Kraemer Mine, must have a Special Town Meeting called with the electors making the binding decision.** It was discussed that these areas are already heavily regulated by the County, State and DNR. A hand count showed 46 in favor and 28 Nay.

**CLOSING REMARKS.** Brandon Whittaker thanked Jo Everson for the work on a grant, which helped fund the new voting machines.

**MOTION BY MARK SJKVERN / SECOND BY JIM JUDKINS TO ADJOURN ANNUL TOWN BOARD MEETING.** MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

MINUTES Respectfully Submitted: Scott Hildebrand, Town Clerk

Approved: 4/19/2022

*Denise Skjerven*  
Clerk