

MINUTES OF THE DAKOTA TOWN BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The regular monthly meeting of the Dakota Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Roll call found all members present: Chairman Tony Peterson, Supervisor Jeremy Kubasta, and Supervisor Gary Grenier. Other town officials present were: Clerk Melanie Stake, Treasurer Teri Kubasta, and Assessor John P. Blader, Sr.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Grenier, seconded by J. Kubasta, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Peterson, to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2023, regular meeting. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Solar Farms: Glenn Anderson, resident of N1532 State Road 22, asked for an update on the issues he brought up at the August 14 meeting. Peterson said he contacted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources about the White River contamination and was told Alliant Energy was penalized, and the site was redrilled successfully. Peterson reiterated that the state—not the town or county—decided whether solar farms could come into an area. Having a referendum to gauge town residents' opinions about additional solar panels would not have any impact, since the town board has no control over their placement. Peterson recommended that a petition be circulated and submitted to Madison, where the actual decision-making on this topic takes place.

REPORTS

Treasurer: T. Kubasta distributed a hard copy of the August 2023 bank reconciliation, which is filed with these minutes. She updated bank routing information with agencies that pay the town by direct deposit.

Clerk: Stake said that the town had received its \$125,000 reimbursement from the state for the Dakota Avenue project. She responded to another public records request for election records. She worked on amendments to the 2023 budget and is preparing the 2024 budget. There have been several cemetery plot inquiries lately. She has not heard back from the town's attorney about vacating Shangri La Court, so Stake will follow up with her.

Assessor: Blader reported that the town will have to upgrade its assessment/property tax software next year due to the state's new reporting requirements. The annual fee will be \$800—nearly double what it is now. Stake will make sure the 2024 budget reflects the increase.

Fire District: No report.

Road Matters: Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier to authorize Hartwig's to fill potholes in October. Motion carried. Peterson will get in touch with Hartwig's. Grenier questioned whether the board needed to authorize/approve routine road maintenance. Stake said she would ask the Wisconsin Towns Association. J. Kubasta suggested that in future years the board should have an annual plan for road maintenance and approve everything at once. Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Peterson to replace the following faded road signs: Dakota Avenue, Czech Court, 16th Drive, 14th Avenue, and the "Dead End" sign at Witter Lake. Motion carried.

Zoning, Land Use and Development Matters: Blader said someone had moved some old cottages onto a property on Mielke Way Road. There is no fire number associated with them. Blader notified the Waushara County Zoning Office, but has not heard back. Grenier will follow up with Zoning.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Speed Limit Changes: J. Kubasta said that he and Stake had researched the procedures for lowering speed limits. Traffic engineering studies—or "speed studies"—have been required for at least the last 20 years. The statutes do not specify who does these studies. If the change in speed limit is within 10 mph, the results of the study only need to be filed at the town level.

Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier to have J. Kubasta do speed studies on the following roads before the end of the year: Chicago Road, Cottonville Avenue, Southgate Terrace and Shangrila Lane. Motion carried. Peterson said that speed limits on Cottonville Drive and 17th Drive could be changed back to 55 mph.

Town Hall Cleaning: T. Kubasta said that Neat Freak Cleaning asked to be removed from consideration for cleaning the town hall, due to insurance issues. However, the expectations she had outlined for Neat Freak could be provided to the current cleaning service. Moved by Peterson, seconded by Grenier that the written expectations be given to Lady With a Mop. Motion carried. Stake will pass along the guidelines.

Trees on Mielke Way Road: Earlier this year, the town hired a contractor to cut trees along roads. In the process, the contractor damaged two apple trees at W8446 Mielke Way Rd. The board had voted in July to purchase arborvitae as a substitute to the trees, but this would not be an equivalent replacement. Moved by Peterson to pay the landowner \$100 to restore the apple trees. The motion was seconded by Grenier. Motion carried. Stake was directed to write a document for the landowner to sign, accepting the payment for the trees.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Hall Rental Application: Moved by Grenier, seconded by J. Kubasta, to approve the following applications: Amanda Person, October 7 and 8; Elizabeth Meek/County Cupboard, October 15; and Charlene Hempler, November 18. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2023-07 Amending the Town of Dakota 2023 Budget: Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier, to approve. A roll call vote showed 3 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried. The budget amendment was necessary due to higher-than-average snowplowing and tree removal costs this year, several unbudgeted buildings/grounds projects, unanticipated computer software and Wifi upgrades, and other unexpected expenses. The changes had no effect on the tax levy.

2024-2025 Local Road Improvement Program Ideas: It was the consensus of the board to pursue a state Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) grant to pulverize and repave Czech Court from State Road 22 to 15th Lane. This is the only road remaining on the town's current two-year capital improvement plan. If the grant is not received, the town will instead do chip sealing in needed areas. Peterson will talk to County Highway Commissioner Brian Freimark to see if crackfilling projects are eligible for the part of the LRIP program that a county committee weighs in on.

Siding Former Town Hall: Trimline gave Peterson an estimate of \$1,648 for steel siding the old town hall. This is for materials only—not labor—and does not include windows or eave work. J. Kubasta thought, for budgetary purposes, a good estimate for labor would be another \$1,648. It was the consensus of the board that the project be put out for bid in February 2024, with the work to be completed in spring or summer 2024.

Czech Court Bridge Maintenance: Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier, to authorize the Waushara County Highway Department to do some maintenance around the Czech Court bridge, as suggested in the 2023 bridge inspection report. Motion carried. Stake will relay this to Commissioner Freimark.

Tree Trimming Request: There was a request for tree trimming on N. Witters Road. The board agreed that trees are growing into the road. It was the consensus of the board that this be put on Hartwig's winter project list, to complete when there is no snowplowing to be done.

Town Hall WiFi: There have been problems with the WiFi door lock for years. The lock was replaced, but battery drain continues to be an issue. This is likely due to a weak WiFi connection. Moved by Peterson, seconded by Grenier, to approve upgrading the town hall's WiFi to a mesh router system as suggested by Waushara PC. Motion carried. The cost will be less than \$500 for the system and labor.

South Cemetery Mapping: The map of the South Cemetery is outdated/incomplete, which causes uncertainty when it comes to burials and selling plots. Moved by Peterson, seconded by Grenier to appoint three citizens—Holly Dahlke, Judi McCall and Dawn Peterson—to update the map of the South Cemetery on behalf of the town. Motion carried. Peterson will work with the group, and he will report to the board on its progress. T. Kubasta suggested that Peterson check with the town's insurance company to verify that the group is covered while carrying out its work.

Road Work Safety: Moved by Grenier, seconded by J. Kubasta to authorize Peterson to purchase two "Road Work Ahead" fold-up signs for \$140 each. Motion carried. The signs can be put up for safety purposes when town officials are doing any road work.

Approval of Bills for Payment: Motion by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier, to approve the monthly bills as presented and filed with these minutes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Assessment Software, Cemetery Fire Numbers: Mark Dahlke, resident of W8160 County Road YY, questioned why one assessment software program was not sufficient for all the towns that Blader assessed. Blader said each town required its own software license. Dahlke also requested that all town cemeteries be assigned a fire number, so people could find the properties more easily. Grenier will follow up with Waushara County Zoning, which assigns fire numbers.

Town Hall Rental Refunds: Judi McCall of N1745 15th Ave. asked how the town determined if hall rental security deposits were refunded. Stake said that they were refunded unless something egregious was left undone. For example, security deposits have been retained if someone leaves their garbage at the hall. McCall commented on the tape left on walls and ceilings. It was her opinion that deposits not be returned in these cases, and that someone inspected the hall thoroughly after each event. Peterson said this could be discussed in the future.

NEXT MEETING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The town's next regular board meeting will be held at the town hall on Monday, October 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Grenier moved to adjourn, seconded by J. Kubasta. The meeting was thus adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

These minutes are a draft, subject to approval or amendment at subsequent meetings of the town board. Any amendments made will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting at which the changes are proposed, and afterward these minutes will be reposted with the changes.



/s/ Melanie R. Stake, Town Clerk