

**MINUTES OF THE DAKOTA TOWN BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 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 Peterson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Peterson, to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023, regular meeting. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Cemetery Plot Fees: Mark Dahlke, resident of W8160 County Road YY, asked questions about the current cemetery plot fee structure, including how to prove residency for a free plot. Peterson said reconsideration of the resolution governing this topic could be addressed on a future agenda.

REPORTS

Treasurer: T. Kubasta distributed a hard copy of the September 2023 bank reconciliation, which is filed with these minutes. Next month she will need a \$708 check for stamps for tax bills.

Clerk: Stake said that the mesh Wi-Fi system the board authorized last month was installed. The board is invited to the Chamber of Commerce banquet on October 26, and to a Waushara County Animal Shelter event on October 27. The town's attorney advised that Shangri La Court could be partially vacated, but the board would need to get a survey and ensure no landlocked properties were created. Stake prepared a proposed 2024 budget for the board.

Assessor: Blader provided information from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) about 2023 Wisconsin Act 12, which will exempt personal property beginning in 2024. Buildings on leased land are still assessable, and those to whom this applies must contact the county tax lister by yearend 2023. Blader will attend a DOR seminar on October 16.

Fire District: Grenier reported that the district met on September 18. They have been awarded several grants, including a matching Department of Natural Resources grant. On October 14, there will be an open house at the fire station.

Road Matters: J. Kubasta presented a proposed standard operating procedure for filling potholes and sunken culverts. There was discussion on whether potholes needed to be filled two or three times per year. After consulting with town residents in attendance, J. Kubasta moved to accept the procedure as written, which included pothole filling three times per year, if needed. Grenier seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Peterson reported that there were a couple areas where driveways do not meet the road sufficiently. This is causing road damage. It was the consensus of the board that Peterson contact Hartwig's and have them shoulder two feet back to the edge of the road in these spots.

The south side of Dakota Avenue has washouts. Landon from American Asphalt will investigate the issue, since his company repaved the road this summer.

Peterson said that the safety sign purchase authorized at last month's board meeting will be more than anticipated. Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier, to authorize purchase of two signs, not to exceed \$600. Motion carried.

Peterson said that he and Highway Commissioner Brian Freimark filled out Local Road Improvement Program paperwork for a \$27,000 grant for a portion of Czech Court.

Zoning, Land Use and Development Matters: Peterson had Stake read into the record two violation letters from Waushara County Zoning. The letter to Scott Abbrederis was regarding failure to obtain a land use permit, as well as improper filling and grading along Pickerel Lake. The letter to Patricia Konopasek Living Trust involved a damaged septic tank.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Shangri La Court: J. Kubasta was directed to meet with surveyor Trent Nelson about where the road should be vacated. Resolution No. 2023-06, regarding the town's intent to vacate, was tabled at the August 2023 board meeting, and Stake was directed to include reconsideration of this resolution on November's regular board meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Hall Rental Applications: Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier, to approve the following applications: Sequoya Boyd, December 2; and Britney Steuck, December 9. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2023-08 Re: Town Official Spending Limits: Peterson reported that he was unable to authorize the Waushara County Highway Department to perform even small projects for the town, since Resolution No. 2014-1 limits highway expenditures without board approval to \$500. Peterson requested that town officials' spending limits be increased, since prices have increased in the last nine years. J. Kubasta said that he would rather implement road maintenance procedures than amend the resolution. Therefore, the board took no action on the matter.

Procedures for Routine Road Maintenance: The board discussed ideas for this policy. Routine road maintenance would be defined as any road work that takes place either annually or biannually. Some suggestions were: keeping stop signs in stock; determining who can call the county highway department or other contractor when a large tree falls into the road; handling storms with widespread damage requiring several cleanup crews; and performing road work safely. Peterson said that J. Kubasta was authorized to call the highway department or other contractor if he needed help with tree falls.

Solar Farm Road Damage: The board discussed town road damage due to solar farm installation. The main roads that incurred damage are 15th Drive and Cottonville Lane. Heavy trucks may still be operating in the area to construct the substation, so more damages may yet occur. Stake was directed to contact Alliant Energy to see what that company is intending to do to address road damage, and when.

Reinstalling Signs Along State Road 21: Moved by Peterson, seconded by J. Kubasta, to have the Waushara County Highway Department reinstall signs that were taken down along State Road 21 due to highway construction, as well as move the 14th and Czech signs from the north side of the road to the south side, by the stop sign. Motion carried.

Trees in Right-of-Way: There are three dead trees just east of 17th on the north side of Cottonville. Adams-Columbia power lines are close by. Moved by Peterson, seconded by J. Kubasta, to add cutting down the trees to the winter project list for Hartwig's. Motion carried.

Town Hall Parking Lot Snowplowing: Peterson would like to advertise for this work, which has historically been done by CJ's Lawn and Landscaping. J. Kubasta thought it was too late in the season to bid it out. Peterson directed Stake to put together an ad for the paper, based on ads other towns have published, to include salt/sand capabilities. Stake was also asked to include a requirement that proof of insurance be submitted with the bid.

Ditch Cleanup: When trees fall in/near the road throughout the year, sometimes board members simply push them off the road, and later, CJ's cuts up and disposes of the trees. While doing this, CJ's also picked up other items and debris left in ditches. Peterson said he would take care of this activity this fall, including the branches on 14th and debris on Cypress Avenue.

Assessment Re-evaluation in 2024: Blader explained that municipalities' assessments must be within 10 percent of market value at least once in a four-year period. Despite doing a reassessment in 2021, the town fell out of compliance in 2022, due to an unprecedented 20 to 25 percent jump in state equalized values. Blader expects that equalized values will increase yet another 9 percent. Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Grenier to do a re-evaluation in 2024 to put the town back in compliance. Motion carried.

Proposed 2024 Budget: Stake provided a report that showed 2022 actual figures, January through September 2023 actual figures, and estimated yearend 2023 figures, as well as 2024 projections. Both revenues and expenses will be down more than \$300,000 in 2024, since there are no major road projects planned in comparison to 2023. The allowable 2024 tax levy increase is a little more than 1 percent—\$2,270.

North Cemetery Markers: Moved by J. Kubasta, seconded by Peterson, to purchase cemetery markers for the North Cemetery in an amount not to exceed \$500. Motion carried. These markers will identify row numbers in the cemetery.

Wisconsin Towns Association Dues: Peterson reported that he attended a meeting of the Wisconsin Towns Association's (WTA) local chapter. At that meeting, it was alleged that Dakota had not been paying WTA dues. Stake said this must be the optional Town Advocacy Council dues, which the previous town board had told her not to pay. The next time the town receives this bill, the board will consider whether to participate in this part of the WTA.

Approval of Bills for Payment: Motion by Grenier, seconded by J. Kubasta, to approve the monthly bills as presented and filed with these minutes, with the addition of \$105 to Tony Peterson for chipper rental reimbursement. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Speed Limits: Jeff Buchholz of N2445 Oakdale Ct. commented on the 45 mph signs posted on Cottonville. Peterson explained that the lower speed limit was temporary, while State Road 21 construction was underway.

Plat Book Inaccuracies: Dahlke noted that a road was mislabeled in the county plat book. He was asked to contact the county tax lister's office to report that error.

NEXT MEETING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

J. Kubasta made a motion that procedures for setting the agenda be put on November's regular board meeting agenda. Grenier seconded the motion, and it was carried. Peterson objected to the motion, since he did not call for it.

The town's next regular board meeting will be held at the town hall on Monday, November 13, 2023, immediately following the 2024 budget public hearing and special meeting of the town electors, which begins at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Peterson moved to adjourn, seconded by J. Kubasta. The meeting was thus adjourned at 8:40 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