

Town of Vinland, Winnebago County
ANNUAL MEETING Minutes of APRIL 17, 2024

The annual meeting began at 7pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Twenty-four people were in attendance along with Chairman Don O'Connell, Supervisors Todd Devens and Stacy Frakes, Zoning Administrator Mike McNamee, Clerk/Treasurer Karen Brazee, and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Maggie Starr.

Chairman O'Connell began with asking the residence to establish a voting method to be used for the meeting and requested a motion be made.

Motion was made by C. Maertz to use "raising of hand" for method of voting/seconded by C. Farrey.

Building/Zoning report of 2023: O'Connell went over the totals for zoning and building permits issued over the past year (report is available in the meeting packet).

Town Board Report of Events: O'Connell noted the scrolling PPT presentation highlights some of the town events from 2023. He began by thanking the fire dept and 1st responders noting that some people in attendance may have needed their assistance having first-hand experience dealing with them. The town is grateful for their services. The new firetruck is nearing completion. The recycle plastic bags program continues to do well with thanks to Brazee for heading this initiative. The town has earned another bench. The town is open to suggestions on what to do with the benches.

May 6 was the town's cleanup day which is in conjunction with the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance CleanUp Day. Supervisor Frakes has been fundamental in coordinating this event for our town. Cowling Bay and Paynes Point collected 80 lb. of trash and Grundman Lane which was coordinated by Team Winnebagoland, collected 161 lb. of trash. This year's cleanup day is Saturday, May 4. Cleanup efforts throughout the town do go on all year long with people who take it upon themselves to cleanup roads and ditches. First and foremost the person who comes to mind is Supervisor Devens who provides a great service to the town by not only collecting large items that are dumped but also disposing of them saving the town money.

In Sept. of this year the town is having a 175th Anniversary Celebration. O'Connell asked Frakes, who is coordinating the event, to say a few words about the event. Frakes gave an overview of the event stating it will take place on Sept. 14 from 3-7pm at the townhall. The committee decided on a pot luck dinner. The next meeting is the 3rd Monday in May if anyone would like to join. O'Connell mentioned that the town is working with the WAHS to put together a book about the town's history. Frakes said they are having an issue getting info on homesteads/farms to meet with the historical society. WAHS is willing to write the story but the struggle is getting people to participate. In 2023 the town did a number of small road projects including crack filling and patching. The culverts on Breezewood Ln were replaced taking advantage of the county aid that was available which financed 50% of the project. In 2023 we budgeted \$217,000 but due to inflation there is a bit of overrun in that number but ARPA and Spirit funds have provided us with some funds in the reserve account. In 2024 the budget is \$320,000 towards roads including snow removal.

Recently the town passed a short-term vacation rental ordinance. The ordinance is for units that are rented out for more than 10 days/yr but less than 30 days at a time. Any unit that is rented for less than 10 days the ordinance doesn't apply (i.e.: EAA rental). Units that have been in operation/existed prior to the ordinances are grandfathered in; however, the town is asking those homeowners to fill out the permit and that they supply the town with the proper paperwork that shows they are operating according to the state statutes.

The town applied for and achieved an MS4 grant which is our storm water plan that is mandated by the EPA of the State of WI. The current permit is up this year in the process of applying for a renewal we start with the planning phase. We were granted a 50% match. McMahan & Associates will be assisting in this process. We will be updating our stormwater map by doing some modeling, infiltration studies, etc. This year we will create the plan that we will implement over the next 3-4 years and depending upon the results of the tests could extend longer than that. The 50% that the town is responsible for could be paid for by using ARPA or Spirit funds.

Another state mandated activity that we have to do is update our comprehensive plan that is required to be done in 2026. The town is kicking this off this year to be ready by 2026. There are 9 categories to be reviewed and we are looking for input from as many residents as we can to assist by attending listening sessions. The 9 categories include: Issues and opportunities in the town; housing; transportation; utilities; community facilities (which the town has a committee already); agriculture, natural and cultural resources; intergovernmental cooperation; economic development; and land use. We will also be looking for assistance from a consultant. The length of this project is 6 months-1 ½ years.

Bowmar the town's assessor is in the process of finishing reevaluations. They won't have the results ready in time for the BOR in May. Residents should be getting individual property results in the mail. Due to evaluations going up the town board is going to try to adjust the mill rate so that the net taxes don't change much; however, that remains to be seen.

The court decision on the auto salvage yard on Old Dixie is in favor of the town. The owner has until the end of Nov. to remove the junk cars. The owner did get a new attorney and they are trying to appeal the decision. We expect to move forward this fall.

The landfill on Cty Rd G is still inactive. The last revision of the contract was in 2004. Next renewal is 2029.

Acton Academy is building a school on Indian Pt Rd. As part of their CUP a traffic study was done. The study concluded that the school would increase the traffic flow on Indian Pt Rd but they did not feel that it would adversely impact traffic flow or safety. They did recommend that Acton Academy have separate right hand/left hand turns in their driveway.

The Winnebago Cty Highway Supervisor will be supplying us with road estimates. The board will come up with the road project plan for the summer.

Fire Department and First Responder Reports: Chief Andersen reflected that in 2023 the FD responded to 64 fire calls and 1st resp 56. The FD has 33 members. Most of the officer positions stayed the same. One lieutenant stepped down into a fireman's position while one moved up. The 2023 raffle was a great success. The dept was able to award 3 scholarships to 3 applicants this year. The dept will be getting new radios via the cty. Other towns in the area will be receiving radios as well. Some of the cty Spirit funds went to the City of Neenah FD. They used it to update the training facility which results in us being able to use that facility for our own training. It is open to all volunteer FD in Winnebago Cty. The 1st responders are at 22 with some overlapping as FD as well. Something to note is that 2 of the new 1st responders are women totally 3. There are situations that

it is very valuable to have a female presence at a call. There will be a CPR class held this winter. It is open to town residence for anyone who is interested. Look for info on the town web for details when a date is decided. We are hopeful to get the truck this year. The last update was that it is out for paint, most of the plumbing is done, and the welding is done. We are just waiting to get the body back. Andersen thanked all of the fire dept, 1st responders, the board for their support, and the office staff for assisting when needed. G. Marks asked if the FD/1st resp are spread out in the town. The answer is yes. We have a few more on the east end of town. Devens added there are a majority of farmers on FD/1st resp making them available during the day while other depts. have members who are at jobs during the day. Anderson said we have one of the highest response times and turnouts across the cty and maybe beyond that. The cty does track timing and Anderson sees the results. Devens personally thanked J. Cowling for all of the members he has brought to the dept. O'Connell added that there are communities that are struggling to find and keep fire fighters and 1st responders and that it is a testament to the leadership of Andersen and 1st Responder Chief Jason Schmoker. They are able to recruit and retain their members.

Approval of Annual Mtg minutes of 2023: Motion to approve made by G Marks/seconded by J. Dobberstein. Motion carried. Unanimous Aye's

Financial Report of 2023: Brazee stated that the full audit was done by Kerber Rose. Their report indicates that out of total revenues showing less than the expenditures but keep in mind that the capital outlay of \$223,751 was for the full cost of the chassis although we didn't pay for full cost because we making payments to the bank from tax proceeds. There is positive fund balance at the end of the year but that is reflective of the ARPA funding and Spirit funds that still need to be allocated. The loan for the body of the truck doesn't go into effect until the truck is delivered. Motion to approve the financial report made by C. Maertz/seconded by C. Farrey. Motion carried. Unanimous Aye's.

Public Input:

C. Farrey wanted to clarify his motion he made in 2022 at the Annual Mtg in regards to the increase in the C/T salary from \$30k to \$35k. He believes he was a year too early last year and that this year he needs to make the motion to increase the C/T salary for the next term. Devens stated he thinks it should be higher due to amount of work that is done in the office and that the C/T is in the office on days off and after hours. He added that she could find work elsewhere and get paid more. He would like to amend Farrey's motion to \$40k. J. Dobberstein questioned how many hours the C/T works, if its fulltime or part time. Brazee noted that she and Starr are in the office 21 hours each. Brazee answered that she is working on average 35 hrs/week. The position has evolved over the years to become more reporting, government reporting due to funding, managing the building and zoning (previously the ZA/BI would handle everything). Any increase is appreciated. R. Batley asked if there has been a comparison to other towns the same size and what the salary is. Brazee said the difficult part is that towns our size don't have combined positions. O'Connell stated that it is imperative to have someone who is doing a good job and we want to retain that person. Frakes is concerned that if someone runs against Brazee next April and wins that then they will be getting that pay but might not be qualified. Frakes would like to see this position go appointed. C. Maertz said at last year's meeting it was discussed to make the raise based on completing schooling, length of tenure, etc. Brazee said

that WTA said that is not a possibility when the position is elected and neither is going to an hourly pay rate. R. Batley agrees with the salary increase and agrees that the position should be appointed by the town board. The board can interview and make sure the person is qualified and then a salary can be discussed. He noted that it is not a position that someone can just walk into without some experience. Devens stated don't fix something that's not broke. There is no need for a change as the office is running well. This was voted down twice before. O'Connell retorted that the electors have the final say because they can hold the board accountable for hiring competent people to work in the office. C. Farrey added that the higher the salary the more attractive the job is making people wanting to seek office. P. Kuehnl said by going appointed the board can hold the office accountable with setting goals and expectations if having to start with someone new. Devens said the last time someone made the point of why rely on 3 people to do the hiring. O'Connell said the board works with the office far more closely than the residents. J. Dobberstein added the board would be more aware if someone wasn't doing their job than a resident. R. Batley said in the past it was voted down at the electors' meeting.

Devens made a motion to increase the clerk/treasurer salary to \$40,000/seconded by M. McNamee. Motion carried. Unanimous ayes.

S. Frakes made a motion to put a referendum on the November ballot for the clerk/treasurer position to go from elected to appointed/seconded by R. Batley. Motion carried. Showing of hand vote=29 ayes; 1 nay.

C. Farrey asked if there are plans to consider adding on to the firebarn once the FT loan is paid off. He really thinks that there is a need for an addition. O'Connell stated that is a possibility and that the committee is working on it. He asked the chair of that committee to give an update. C. Maertz, the maintenance committee chairs, updated the crowd that they meet once a month at 6pm on the first Tues. of the month. They are seeking bids to see what it would look like to build vs remodel. There is feedback from the fire dept as well as the office to see what is needed. C. Maertz said once they have some bids they will make a presentation of options. O'Connell stated that this will also work well with updating the comp plan. R. Batley asked about moving the antique truck outside for display. C. Maertz said that there has been some discussion on that as well. Even with moving the antique out of the fire barn it is still very tight. J. Dobberstein asked what happened with the holding tank that needed replacing from last year's meeting. Brazee said it is still not fixed. C. Maertz answered that is all a part of what gets decided on the fire barn.

C. Maertz requested that when there are Special Board Meetings that in an effort to be more transparent to not schedule a meeting that falls on a national holiday. For example that budget meeting where the electors vote on the levy last fall was held on the Wed prior to Thanksgiving. O'Connell explained time constraints related to that meeting. He said that they will be more sensitive to try and avoid situations like that again.

R. Batley asked if there has been any more pressure from the City of Neenah to annex more of the town. O'Connell said he has not heard of any attempts but he feels they are actively looking to acquire land for housing. Again, this is another reason for the town to update the comp plan.

R. Batley commented that he would appreciate that people use the mic to speak into.

S. Frakes wanted to clarify that the annual min from 7/25/2020 are typed incorrectly and need to be changed. She listened to the tape and said you can clearly hear the motion and it was typed in the minutes incorrectly. Farrey asked again from what year. Frakes said 2020 and he said he didn't think that you can amend them. Frakes said she spoke to WTA and they said they need to be amended. The motion on the tape clearly says c/t salary is set to \$30k plus mileage and per diem. It was typed saying salary "includes" mileage and per diem. S. Frakes made a motion to amend the 2020 annual meeting minutes/seconded by C. Farrey. Motion passes. Unanimous ayes.

Set annual meeting date for 2024: Motion made by C. Maertz to set date for 2025 Annual meeting for Wednesday, April 16th 2025 at 7pm/seconded by R. Batley. Motion carried. Unanimous ayes.

Motion made by C.Farrey to adjourn/seconded by C. Maertz. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Starr
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer