



Winnebago County, WI

## Townhall Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9am to 4pm

Call for appt outside of those hours

Email: [office@townofvinlandwi.gov](mailto:office@townofvinlandwi.gov)

Website: [www.townofvinlandwi.gov](http://www.townofvinlandwi.gov)

920-235-6953

Summer 2024

# The Vinland Voice

## From Don O'Connell - Chairman

Hello Friends & Neighbors,

It was last year about this time when a group of our neighbors approached the Town Board with their concerns regarding short term / vacation rentals popping up in the town. Their concern was not so much over the practice of residents renting their primary dwelling out for EAA as the reports of large real estate companies buying up property with the sole intention of operating them as short term / vacation rental units. The fear was the proliferation of this type of housing in the town's residential areas would lower property values, increase the frequency of nuisance complaints and generally decrease the quality of life for those actually living and raising families in the town.

The Board conducted some research into these concerns and found that a handful of properties in the town had been operating as short term rentals units without an abnormal frequency of complaints. It was also learned that according to Wisconsin statutes, the town's zoning ordinances cannot be used to restrict how housing units are operated. However, towns do have the authority to impose regulations on the short term / vacation rental operations and also impose a 10% tax on rent collected on these units.

After careful consideration and study of area municipalities' ordinances covering short term rentals along with discussions with legal counsel and an operator of short term rentals in the town, the board decided the adoption of a short term / vacation rental ordinance was warranted. The goals of the ordinance are three fold:

1. Allow the continuation of the rental of primary residences for EAA. Primary residences rented for 10 or fewer days per year are exempt from the ordinance, do not require a permit or pay a fee.
2. Allow operators of properties that are rented for periods of 30 continuous days or less to operate as such after obtaining a permit from the town. Operators of these properties that show evidence that they have been operating these properties as short term rental units prior to the date the town's ordinance went into effect would be exempt from the town ordinance. However, Wisconsin statutes covering these rentals do still apply. In this case, the town permit identifies a contact person for these units in the event a situation arises at the rental property.

(continued on inside cover)

## Town of Vinland Contacts

Chairman	Don O'Connell	920-915-9857
	<a href="mailto:chair@townofvinlandwi.gov">chair@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Supervisor I	Todd Devens	920-379-4828
	<a href="mailto:super1@townofvinlandwi.gov">super1@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Supervisor 2	Stacy Frakes	920-851-3765
	<a href="mailto:super2@townofvinlandwi.gov">super2@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Clerk/Treasurer	Karen Brazee	920-235-6953
	<a href="mailto:office@townofvinlandwi.gov">office@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Deputy Clerk/ Treasurer	Maggie Starr	920-235-6953
	<a href="mailto:office@townofvinlandwi.gov">office@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Fire Chief	Chris Anderson	920-428-7812
	<a href="mailto:fire@townofvinlandwi.gov">fire@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Asst Chief	Jason Schmoker	920-379-1094
Zoning Admin	Mike McNamee	920-851-1301
	<a href="mailto:zoning@townofvinlandwi.gov">zoning@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	
Building Inspections	Elisabeth Racine/ SPS Inspection Service	920-266-9611
	<a href="mailto:building@townofvinlandwi.gov">building@townofvinlandwi.gov</a>	

## Inside ...

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Don't Miss It! **175<sup>TH</sup>**





**(Don O'Connell**

**Continued from front page**

3. Allow future short term rental properties (rented for periods of 30 days or less) to operate as such under the provisions permitted by the town ordinance in addition to Wisconsin statutes.

The ordinance was adopted by the Town Board in March, was published in local newspapers in April and was made effective in May. Details of the ordinance are available on the Town Website. Operators of short term rentals are encouraged to obtain the necessary permit as operating without one is a violation of the town ordinance. Enforcement of the ordinance will occur as follow up to complaints received from neighbors of these units with any resulting violations issued to the property owners.

The initial fee is \$100 which is renewable annually for \$50. The Town Board chose not to pursue the tax which would have been administrated by the Fox Valley Bureau of Tourism. The permit fees are one time payments annually and amount to much less than the tax, 90% of which would have gone to the bureau. For the cost of the permit, operators of existing short term rental property in the town will be minimally effected by the ordinance.

Currently, the impact of absentee owners operating short term rentals are being felt by many communities throughout the country. Their impact on home affordability for residents of Door County communities was presented at a recent Wisconsin Town Association meeting. As a result of this and other negative effects of absentee property ownership of short term rentals, more cities and towns across the state and country are expected to adopt ordinances to regulate them.

Very Truly Yours,

**Don O'Connell, Chairman**

Town of Vinland – "The Heart of Wisconsin"



## Referendum Questions

In August you will find two referendum questions on your ballot.



State of Wisconsin Delegation of Appropriation Power Referendum - QUESTION 1: "Delegation of appropriation power. Shall section 35 (1) of article IV of the constitution be created to provide that the legislature may not delegate its sole power to determine how moneys shall be appropriated?" Yes or No

State of Wisconsin Allocation of Federal Moneys Referendum

QUESTION 2: "Allocation of federal moneys. Shall section 35 (2) of article IV of the constitution be created to prohibit the governor from allocating any federal moneys the governor accepts on behalf of the state without the approval of the legislature by joint resolution or as provided by legislative rule? Yes or No

The November Election Ballot will have a question pertaining to the Town of Vinland on the Clerk/Treasurer position being appointed or elected. Below are some of the positives or negatives as per the Wisconsin Towns Association July 2024 magazine.

The positives or negatives often depend on one's perspective. But some of the key differences are as follows:

Appointed clerks and treasurers:

1. Do not have to be town residents.
2. Have their qualifications, job descriptions, and wages/benefits set by the town board as they are essentially town employees hired by the board.
3. Cannot be removed by the board during their term of office, unless there is "cause" for removal (misconduct in office or neglect of duties). This means there would need to be a hearing and other due process protections afforded before someone could be removed from office. That said, once his or her term expires, the town board can simply choose not to re-appoint a clerk or treasurer without having to establish cause.
4. Can be appointed for a term not to exceed 3 years at one time. Can be appointed for a shorter term such as six months or one year or whatever the board deems appropriate. The board may also re-appoint the person for successive terms, if desired.

Elected clerks and treasurers:

1. Do have to be town residents.
2. Are answerable to the electorate and cannot be required by the board to hold specific qualifications or obtain training (unless required by state law-such as election training for clerks). Cannot be required by the board to keep set hours at the town hall or be required to work a certain number of hours per week.
3. Can be recalled from office like other elected officials. Can also be removed from office by a majority vote of the board, but only if the reason for removal is continued physical inability to perform the duties of the office or gross neglect of duty, Wis. Stat. § 17.13(2m).
4. Are elected for two-year terms at the spring election in odd-numbered years.

As always visit <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot> to view what will be on your individual ballot!

 **ON THE**  
 **BALLOT**  
 A BALLOTPEPIA PODCAST





## From Chris Anderson - Fire Chief

Greetings from the Town of Vinland Fire Department. It's been a rain-filled summer but looking forward into fall I'd like to remind everyone that we have tickets for our annual raffle for sale. You can find details on the Town's website or contact a fire department member to purchase tickets. Proceeds from the raffle will go to help purchase new equipment for the department. Some of that equipment will likely end up on our new fire truck, which is back from the paint shop and in its final assembly stages at the manufacture. We are hoping to take delivery of our new truck early this fall.

The Town of Vinland Fire Department and First Responders have also placed an order for **new radio equipment which will include handheld radios and a radio for our new truck** along with chargers and batteries for our existing radios. Money for this radio improvement came from funds that were distributed from the **Winnebago County Spirit Fund**.

Here in the Town of Vinland we are very fortunate to have a full roster of members. We currently have three members participating in classes to become state certified firefighters which are a requirement for all of our firemen in the town. They will also take part in classes to become certified in the driving and operating of fire trucks and equipment.

With fall comes along the cleanup of yard waste and leaves. We ask that you be aware of when and where you burn, for your safety, and to be considerate to your neighbors when doing so.

I sincerely want to thank you for your past and continued support of our department.

**Chief Chris Anderson**



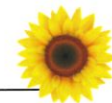
## From Maggie Starr - Deputy Clerk / Treasurer

2024 has been a great year for elections with 2 down and 2 to go. We frequently get questions regarding in-person absentee voting. While absentee ballots get sent through the mail, in-person absentees are voted in the Town Hall during office hours. People choose to vote in-person absentee for various reasons including being out of town, having another commitment, not wanting to travel because of potential inclement weather, or stand in lines. Whatever the case, in-person voting is quick, easy, and confidential. How it works. Come into the office and state you would like to vote. Show photo ID to the clerk or deputy. We will issue the ballot with a return certificate envelope and give instruction to complete the ballot, seal it in the envelope, and then sign the certificate envelope in front of the clerk or deputy. We will be your witness and sign the envelope as well. We then put your sealed vote in a locked vault and it doesn't come out until 7 am on the day of the election. Trained election inspectors then take the envelope and go through the usual voting steps of stating your name and address, get a voting number, open the envelope that is kept in a privacy folder and discreetly enter the ballot into the machine. You can always check your voting activity online at [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov). In-person absentee voting is a safe way to vote without worrying about your ballot getting lost in the mail. Just a reminder that if you choose to receive an absentee ballot through the mail but want to drop it off in the office that is acceptable, but you and only you can drop off the ballot. You cannot have a friend or family member drop it off for you unless you are incapacitated. All votes need to be dropped off by 8 pm on Election Day. If you have your absentee ballot sent to you and you choose to mail your voted ballot back, the USPS recommends mailing your absentee ballot at least 1 week prior to the election. Any ballots received after 8 pm will not be counted. We are here to answer any questions you have.

**In-person absentee hours: Tuesday, July 30-Thursdays, August 1, 9am-4pm and Monday, August 5-Thursdays, August 8, 9am-4pm or by appointment.** Please get out and vote!

See you on August 13 and November 5!

**Maggie Starr**



## From Todd Devens - Supervisor 1

Hi, Summer is here with a lot of moisture. We have had a lot of water issues in our ditches. The Town Board does their best to figure out what needs to be addressed. The fact remains that the ditch can only handle so much water in a short period of time. This year's monsoon season should give us all a renewed appreciation for the role the town's storm water drainage system serves and a reminder that its ditches need to be maintained to proper grade, width and depth. It is with this in mind that the Town Board has approved changes to the Town's Driveway, Culvert and Road Right of Way Ordinance.

The Town's road right of way includes that area of land typically within 33 feet in either direction of town road centerlines. Effective August 1, 2024, it will be illegal for any resident to excavate or hire a contractor to conduct excavation work within the road right of way. Culvert installation is the primary reason for this type of work and it will still be allowed. However, the town will contract Winnebago County to perform the work. Residents still need to apply for a culvert permit from the town. The town will contact the county to provide the culvert, properly grade the ditch and install the culvert according to accepted standards and practices. The county will bill the town for the work which will invoice the property owner as part of the permit's closure. The benefits of having the county provide and install all culverts include:

1. Culvert type and installation will be standardized across the town and the installation at a specific site will also provide for drainage needs upstream and downstream from the installation.

2. Property owners will bear the cost of the culvert and installation as they currently do. However, the county does not profit from performing services for the town. Therefore, the cost may be less than that of a private contractor.

Another change, requested by Winnebago County and approved by the Town Board is to require all driveway aprons located in the road right of way that are paved in the future to be of asphalt material. However, existing concrete aprons will be allowed to remain in place. Asphalt causes less damage to county snow plows and is easier to remove in the event work needs to be done in the ditch. As part of the county's culvert installation, ditch depth and culvert diameter will be designed to provide for sufficient top cover to prevent the culvert from heaving.

This year's rainfall has provided a significant test of the town's storm water drainage system which, after years of doing its thing virtually unnoticed, has areas in need of some maintenance. You can help by keeping the culverts and ditches clear of debris, leaves and grass clippings. There are also some sections of ditch that do not have the capacity required to handle the excessive rainfall we have had this year. Your help in identifying these areas by taking a photo and sending it to the town is the first step in planning actions to increase the capacity of those ditches.



Is your address sign faded? Call me to get on the list for a new one!

Please make sure your sign is visible from both directions and is standing upright! If you have any questions on town issues, please call me. I'll do my best to help. And as always, a FYI that the town board meetings are the 2nd Monday at 7pm every month. Please attend.

**Todd Devens**







**Town of Vinland**  
6085 County Road T  
Oshkosh WI 54904



Hello to all! I trust everyone is enjoying summer and all the outdoor events that come with it! I'd like to remind everyone to put our **175th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, September 14th, 2024**, on your calendar!! See the attached invite of events for the afternoon.

An update concerning the book being written on the Town of Vinland which has taken a few turns in recent months. First, the Winchester Area Historical Society has decided that they will no longer pursue the publishing of the "History of Vinland Township" book. They have turned the book project over to Dave Tovar, a former Town of Vinland resident who now resides in the city of Waupaca. Dave has been working diligently writing the towns history and collecting historical documents and photographs. At this point, he intends to make the book available free of charge in some type of electronic format and is also looking at the option of making it available as a print book for a fee. Dave can be reached at [dtovar@new.rr.com](mailto:dtovar@new.rr.com) or **920-410-6601**.

With all the precipitation we've had I'd like to share a few words from the DNR on private wells.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages private well owners to consider testing their drinking water after significant rainfall and flooding. Heavy rains, such as those that swept through much of northern Wisconsin the past week, can impact drinking water quality.

Flood waters and runoff contain bacteria and other contaminants that can affect private water supplies and cause the spread of waterborne illness. Wells located in pits, basements and low-lying areas are especially susceptible to contamination.

Well owners who experience flooding or observe changes to the taste, color or sediment levels in their water following heavy rainfall should assume their well is contaminated and take the following steps:

- Stop drinking the water and find an alternate source of safe water.
- Disinfect your well. This procedure is best done by a licensed well driller or pump installer with the expertise and equipment.
- Before resuming water consumption, sample the well after pumping and disinfection to ensure its safety.



Even without obvious signs of flooding, a well can become contaminated. The DNR's Recommendations for Private Wells Inundated by Flooding webpage provides information on how to test and disinfect a private well after a flood event.

Testing kits are available at the UW0 783 Pearl Ave., Oshkosh, WI 920-424-3148 for a nominal fee.

**Be safe and hope to see you all at the 175th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, September 14th, 2024!**

**Stacy Frakes**

