



Winnebago County, WI

Townhall Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, + Thursday 9am to 4pm
Call for appt outside of those hours
Email: office@townofvinlandwi.gov
Website: www.townofvinlandwi.gov
920-235-6953

Winter 2025

The Vinland Voice

From Don O'Connell - Chairman

Hello Friends and Neighbors,

As 2025 draws to a close, I would like to provide you with an update on several key issues the town has been working on that will have a significant impact on its future.

1. Comprehensive Plan - The Town's Planning Commission has been diligently working on updating the town's comprehensive plan with assistance from its planning consultant, McMahon and Associates. State statutes mandate that this plan be updated every 10 years to reflect changes in land uses, demographics and services provided by the town, county and state. This update should be complete early in 2026. The initial phase of the plan update included a survey of town residents. The survey had an 8% response rate and hopefully everyone who desired to complete it had a chance to do so. Results of the survey indicated that most people want the town to retain its rural character and limit development. It will be interesting to learn what strategies the Planning Commission presents in the plan to achieve these goals. Anyone who desires to do so can still provide input to the plan by attending Planning Commission meetings and or reaching out to the town hall staff.

2. MS4 Permit Compliance - The town's storm water permit with the DNR expired in 2024. Its renewal is contingent on the town meeting TMDL (Total Minimum Daily Discharge) limits for phosphorus and sediment in all three of its watersheds (Neenah Slough, Lake Butte des Mort Sand Lake Winnebago). The town obtained a planning grant from the state to study the efficiency of its grass swales (ditches) which serve as its storm water discharge system to these watersheds. Only the most densely populated areas of the town are included in this permit and the DNR has been wavering on which areas in the town to include. I am happy to report that the town meets the TMDL targets for the areas most recently identified for inclusion by the DNR. Failure to meet the TMDL targets would have required the town to implement ordinances requiring new development to significantly exceed the targets or construct pollution control basins at a cost of \$2M-\$3M. These options may need to be considered again in the future if and when the DNR revises the areas of the town included in the permit. Another requirement of the permit is for the town to provide documentation that storm water retention ponds located in the town are being inspected and maintained. These ponds have been inventoried as part of the planning study and the town will be reaching out to and working with the pond owners to establish inspection, maintenance and reporting plans. (Continued on page 2)

Town of Vinland Contacts

Chairman	Don O'Connell	920-915-9857 chair@townofvinlandwi.gov
Supervisor 1	Todd Devens	920-379-4828 super1@townofvinlandwi.gov
Supervisor 2	Mike McNamee	920-851-1301 super2@townofvinlandwi.gov
Clerk/Treasurer	Karen Brazee	920-235-6953 office@townofvinlandwi.gov
Deputy Clerk/ Treasurer	Maggie Starr	920-235-6953 office@townofvinlandwi.gov
Fire Chief	Chris Anderson	920-428-7812 fire@townofvinlandwi.gov
Asst Chief	Jason Schmoker	920-379-1094
Zoning Admin	Don O'Connell	920-915-9857 zoning@townofvinlandwi.gov
Building Inspections	Elisabeth Racine/ SPS Inspection Service	920-266-9611 building@townofvinlandwi.gov

2026 Election Dates are Now Here!

**February 17th:
Spring Primary**

**April 7th:
Spring Election**

**August 11th:
Primary**

**November 3rd:
General Election**





Don O'Connell (Continued from Front Page)

3. Shoreland Zoning – Currently, Winnebago County has authority for shoreland and general zoning in areas identified as “shoreland” by the State of Wisconsin. As soon as November 21, 2025, the county plans on transferring general zoning in these areas to the towns. It will continue to enforce DNR ordinances in shoreland setback areas, but all other zoning issues will be administered by the town. While this is a change in jurisdiction and creates the need for both county and town approval, I don't see this as having a big impact on general zoning practices in these areas. It will require the town to update its zoning map and may result in posting notices and conducting hearings to inform property owners of the change in jurisdiction.

As with these and any other issue the town has, the board wants your opinions. The best decisions are those made when issues are looked at from all perspectives and all the details are made available. I encourage anyone who desires to have their input considered to attend Planning Commission and Board meetings and/or reach out directly to the town hall staff.

Happy Holidays from your Town Board and staff,
Don O'Connell, Chairman Town of Vinland



From Todd Devens - Supervisor 1

Hi! Happy fall and soon winter!

Maybe get your furnaces, wood stoves, and/or fireplace inspected for your safety! Yard work is here and leaf burning is going on. Check weather conditions before burning!

Think of your neighbors, so the smoke doesn't blow into their homes! Stay with the fire until it's out!

Check your ditch and culverts for leaves or other obstructions that will slow our spring melting and flowage!

Speaking of snow! Most of our town roads are plowed by the County Highway Department. They do their best. They have an order in which they have to go by. State roads first, county roads next and town roads last. Please be thoughtful and be respectful to the county employees! They work some crazy hours to keep our roads open. With that in mind, watch your local weather. Maybe leave 10 minutes earlier

REVIEW YOUR VEHICLE REGISTRATION to Avoid the City Wheel Tax

As you are most likely aware, the City of Neenah has enacted a \$30 annual wheel tax, an official vehicle registration fee, to fund street and sidewalk improvements. The fee will take effect starting in January 2026 with expected revenue of approximately \$800,000 annually.

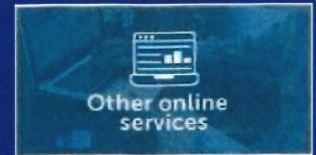
The wheel tax will be collected through the State of Wisconsin DMV at your annual registration renewal. As a Town of Vinland resident, it's important to register your vehicle correctly to avoid the city wheel tax. It's easy to do and if you haven't yet, we encourage you to check now to avoid unnecessary charges on your annual vehicle registration.

To double check your vehicle registration,
go to the WisDOT site at <https://wisconsindot.gov>.

1) Once there, click on “DMV Services” and select “Online Services:”

DMV Services - De
DMV Homepage
Online Services

2) On the Online Services page,
click on “Other Online Services:”
Other Online services



3) Next, in the bullet list of topics, choose “Update where my vehicle is kept:”

- Purchase my vehicle record
- Purchase my driver record
- Purchase crash reports
- Sign up to manage my vehicle
- Update where my vehicle is kept

4) After completing the information to find your vehicle registrations, a list of vehicles will appear. Here's the important part; under “Municipality,” make sure that “VINLAND (T)” is selected:

Municipality
(City, Village, Town, Unincorporated)
VINLAND (T) V

If you find an error on your renewal notice, or are incorrectly charged the wheel tax, report it immediately by contacting WisDOT's customer service at (608) 264-7447. They may be able to issue a refund and correct your record for future renewals. Please reach out to WisDOT for any questions regarding your vehicle registration. Being proactive and checking your registration will help avoid any incorrect charges and save you time and \$\$\$\$.

and not be in a hurry, be safe!! Cold weather is also time to keep an eye on any elderly neighbors in your area. Check on them, give them a phone call. They will appreciate it!

Our monthly meetings are the 2nd Monday of every month at 7pm at the townhall. Stop by, meet your town board and see what's happening in the Town of Vinland. Any questions, please call me at 920-379-4828.

Thank you,
Todd Devens



From Maggie Starr - Deputy Clerk / Treasurer

2025 has been a quiet year election wise. I'm sure we are all grateful to not be inundated with political ads!

Absentee by the numbers:

In 2024, we had 733 absentee voters. 366 of those absentee voters were people who did "in-person absentee voting" in the office prior to the election. Over those 4 elections, we mailed out 425 ballots. As everyone knows, the cost of postage continues to increase. Postage prices in the spring were \$0.68. We mailed out 131 absentee packets for the February and April elections totaling roughly *\$178 in postage for each election. We spent roughly *\$414 in the fall for the August and November elections as postage prices went up to \$0.73, and we mailed a total of 284 ballots. Plus, over the 4 elections we had a total of 58 ballots not returned. We are also required by State Statute to put postage on the (interior) return envelopes. There is not a way to determine how many of our mailed absentee ballots are returned by hand delivery. Many people who request an absentee will hand deliver their ballot or put it in our drop box. While I don't have the capability of running a report that tells me how many envelopes are hand delivered and not mail back, I can estimate at least half. This is costly for the town as the price of postage increases along with the cost of purchasing envelopes. A way to save on postage and supplies would be to in-person absentee vote in the clerk's office. We can begin in-person absentee voting 14 days prior to every election. Please utilize in-person absentee voting whenever possible, it not only saves on postage, and also ensures that you receive the ballot timely, but it also ensures delivery as well!

*Extra postage is often needed on the outer envelope due to weight.

2026 Election Dates:

February 17- Spring primary (if needed)

April 7- Spring election

August 11 - Primary

November 3 - General election

Absentee ballot requests can be made for the entire year beginning on January 1, 2026. Go to www.myvote.wi.gov and select which elections you would like sent to you or reach out to the office and we can assist.

Best,
Maggie Starr

From Karen Brazee - Clerk / Treasurer

Special thanks to our fellow residents, Dr. Joan Naomi Steiner and Julie Maxwell for taking on the extensive task of digitizing the town meeting minutes. State law requires all meeting minutes to be kept as permanent records. We have found meeting minutes that go back as far as 1848. They have now started sorting boxes of old documents involving the town cemeteries. Those records are required to be kept permanently also. We are working on organizing the materials and establishing a process for better record keeping and preservation. We are so fortunate to have them volunteering their time on this process, as it is a very time-consuming project. If anyone has any documents involving Allenville or Brooks cemetery history, we would welcome the opportunity to review anything you have!

Secondly, I would like to stress to everyone to be aware of a local scam that I've seen lately. If you happen to get an email from what "seems to look like" the Town of Vinland asking for payment for land records, please call the office to confirm. Scammers are using emails similar to the office email, but are not exactly correct. Our email is office@townofvinlandwi.gov. We have removed personal phone lines and emails from the website, as we're trying to keep our information out of the hands of scammers. We will also be redacting any personal information from our meeting packet documents. If you need an email address for any of the Board members or need to contact them, please call or email the office, so we can provide you with that information. Sorry that we are living in an era of needing extra security! Always call to verify if an email is valid before clicking on an attachment, and also be aware that we will not email a bill or invoice, unless you have requested us to email it to you.

Property tax season is upon us. You typically will see your tax bill by the middle of December. We will always accept check payment at the office during normal business hours of 9am to 4pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We do not accept any debit or credit card payments. We are also adding a Saturday collection on December 20th from 9am to Noon. Keep in mind that we still have a drop box on the east side of the building by the employee entrance.

Last but not least, if you have holiday lights that you are no longer using or want, we are accepting strings of Christmas lights and extension cords in the town hall foyer, as we are hoping to keep them out of the trash bins! And we are still collecting grocery plastic bags and plastic bubble wraps (*no styrofoam, hard plastic, animal food/bedding bags, or other trash please!*)

Wishing you the best for the remainder of your year and Happy Holidays!

Karen Brazee

From Mike McNamee - Supervisor 2

Hello residents,

Since being elected I have been busy taking classes, and going to workshops so I can better serve the town.

The town board has been working hard on the budget and the MS4 permit.

Good news on the MS4 permit as we came in compliance with DNR's regulations, so the permit will be renewed.

As we head into winter I would like to remind you not to burn your leaves in the ditches because when the water flows this will take the ashes into the waterways and pollute the waterways.

If you have any questions feel free to call or email me.

Mike McNamee



Reminders!



From Don O'Connell - Zoning Administrator

From Your Zoning Administrator:

As a board member and now as Zoning Administrator I have come to appreciate the value of our Town's Zoning

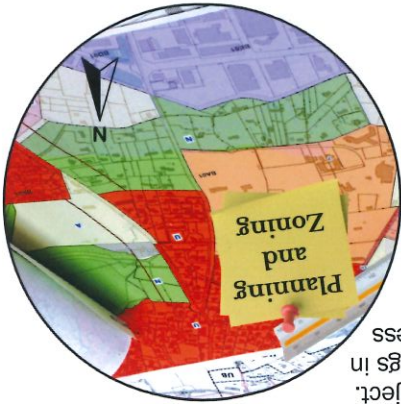
Ordinances as they attempt to prevent conflicts in land use within specific areas of the town. I also understand the frustration that residents can experience as they try to navigate through them

as part of completing their desired projects. This is particularly true in certain cases that also require Winnebago County Zoning approval. Changes in zoning designation or changes to property boundaries are two examples that require the town's zoning

decision to also be adopted at the county level. In such cases, the county can override the town's zoning decision if it conflicts with county zoning ordinances. The county's change to its

shoreland zoning ordinance will also result in both town and county zoning approval in the future. The county has zoning jurisdiction in the shoreland setback areas while the town will

have general zoning authority outside the setback distance. Most properties in the shoreland areas have portions in both the setback area and beyond which leads to the requirement for approval from both entities.



As a general rule, it is better to reach out to the town and/or county zoning departments prior to starting your project. Compliance to both county and town zoning ordinances addressed during the project design phase will help to avoid unpleasant and potentially costly consequences of changing the plan midway through the project. The zoning process also brings in the building inspection process that ensures systems are installed according to current building codes and results in a project that provides safe, long-lasting enjoyment of your investment.

Don O'Connell
Zoning Administrator,
Town of Vinland