

**Town of Otter Creek - Caucus Meeting, 7 p.m. – January 14, 2025**  
**Otter Creek Town Hall – E5905 County Road S, Wheeler WI**

**Attendees:**

Chair LeAnn Ralph\*

Supervisor 1 Cecil Hayes\*

Supervisor 2 Bob Bernier\*

Clerk/Treasurer Bev Bernier

13 Guests: Residents: Wayne Tuschl, Jeff Dehnhoff, Randy Simpson, Kelley Hayes, Doug Gross, Gary Axness, Denise Axness, Renee Carrell, Sharla Utpadel, Brian Hawkins, Jon Robinson, Lori Sudbrink, Dustin Johnson (note: after further review, Dustin Johnson is not a resident of the Town of Otter Creek)

2 Guests - Non-resident: Gary Anderson, Chuck Boyer

\*Board Members

Meeting was called to order by Chair Ralph at 7:02 pm.

All board members were in attendance plus 13 residents and 2 non-residents. Advertising had been done in the Colfax Messenger, the Town website and the townhall door.

Ralph explained the two ways available for the process of nominating people for the town offices. Verbal nomination was agreed upon for nominations. Since Ralph is seeking re-election, she will not act as chair for the meeting. Randy Simpson was designated as chair of the caucus. Clerk Bernier informed all participants that only qualified electors who are residents of the Town of Otter Creek are eligible to make a nomination, run for office, and/or vote. Clerk Bernier verified with three attendees, who she did not recognize, that they were residents of the Town of Otter Creek while signing the attendee sheet. These included Wayne Tuschl, Doug Gross, and Dustin Johnson. All three attendees stated they were residents of the Town of Otter Creek.

There would be three offices to be filled for the next two-year term, starting in April, 2025.

Chair nomination: Bob Bernier made a motion nominating LeAnn Ralph for the chair position. Hayes seconded the motion. Dehnhoff made a motion to close all nominations for the chair position. Sharla Utpadel seconded. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Supervisor 1 Nomination – Gary Axness made a motion nominating Cecil Hayes for the Supervisor 1 position. Randy Simpson seconded the motion. Ralph made a motion to close all nominations for the position. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Supervisor 2 Nomination – Jeff Dehnhoff made a motion nominating Bob Bernier for the Supervisor 2 position. Ralph seconded the motion. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Supervisor 2 Nomination – Wayne Tuschl made a motion nominating Jon Robinson for the Supervisor 2 position. Lori Sudbrink seconded the motion. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Supervisor 2 Nomination – Sharla Utpadel made a motion nominating Jeff Dehnhoff for the Supervisor 2 position. Brian Hawkins seconded the motion. Ralph made a motion to close all nominations for the position. Randy Simpson seconded. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Since there are more than two nominations for the supervisor 2 position, all eligible electors must vote for one of the three nominated candidates. Ballots were circulated and the voting result was: Bob Bernier (7), Jeff Dehnhoff (4), Jon Robinson (5), Abstain (1). As a result, Bob Bernier and Jon Robinson will appear as candidates for the supervisor 2 position on the April 1, 2025 ballot.

Since there will be opposition in the supervisor 2 position, it is necessary to determine in what order the names will appear on the April 1, 2025 election ballot. Both candidate names were put in a bowl and non-resident Chuck Boyer drew out a name for first position on the ballot, which was Bob Bernier.

The chair and supervisor 1 nominated names will appear under their specific positions, in first place order.

Simpson made a motion to adjourn the 2025 caucus meeting at 7:23 p.m. Ralph seconded. Carried – 17, opposed – 0.

Bev Bernier, clerk/treasurer, met later with the necessary forms for the candidates to complete in running for their various positions on the Otter Creek ballot, to be voted on at the April 1, 2025 election.

Respectfully submitted – Bev Bernier, Clerk/Treasurer

### **Town of Otter Creek – Regular Town Board Meeting – January 14, 2025**

LeAnn Ralph, chair, called the regular town board meeting to order at the town hall on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 7:23 p.m. All above attendees were in attendance. Advertisement of the meeting was published in the Colfax Messenger, town website, and town hall door.

Meeting minutes from the December 10, 2024 regular board meeting were not read by the Clerk as Ralph and Bernier reviewed the minutes prior to tonight's meeting and agreed that the minutes did not need to be read. Bernier approved the minutes as presented. Hayes seconded. Motion carried to approve minutes as presented.

**Public Comments** - Public Comment is limited to 3 minutes. As per the state's Open Meetings law, there will be no back and forth discussion with the town board. The state Attorney General's guidance is that board members can ask clarifying questions but that back and forth discussion is not advised. Renee Carrell asked people to subscribe to Menomonie Newsnet (free).

**Communication from Town Chair** – fire bill update of Walt Ruben property fire. Chair spoke to the forester and DNR, DC Highway Commissioner. She was not able to find any funding available. Clerk will phone Walt Ruben to give him options.

**Communication from Town Supervisors – Bob Bernier** - Fuel contract, last month was \$2.76, today is \$2.79. Oil is \$80/barrel. 20 cents cheaper this year than last year. No one is contracting yet. By April may drop some.

**Communication from Clerk** - 2025 elections – February 18, 2025 Primary and April 1, 2025 Spring Election; January 16, two Zoom meetings, one for DOR tax account updates, one for Innovation Planning Grant. January 24 – Zoom meeting for the DOR regulation and taxation of alcoholic beverages. 35% propane – clerk will phone Synergy to fill on next trip through.

**Fuel contracting** – Consideration and possible approval of fuel contracting for April-Nov, 2025. Defer to February agenda by consensus of the town board.

**Ordinance** - Review driveway ordinance pertaining to stacking logs on town road when logging – Section 4. Send letters to loggers and truck drivers (letter to potatoe guys by way of Beskar). Clerk draft letter, send to chair for review. Add to driveway permit.

**Timber Cutting Notice** – Amy Kersten; Logger Flint Roberts. Geary Searfoss; Logger Adam Potaczek. Otto Waldbuesser; Logger Anderson Logging Inc.

**Weber Inspections** December report – no activity

**Mileage reimbursement** effective 1/1/2025 - .70/mile (3 cents/mile increase)

**Trailer** – discussion on possible purchase of trailer for hauling road material. Wirth costs of \$5590 in 2024. Truck has 14,000 miles on it (11,000 from town, balance from driving it for delivery). 107,000 miles on previous truck. New truck may have 140,000 miles on it by year 10. Backhoe has 6300 hours on it. Average 350 hours/year on backhoe. Used

trailer in Wichita, Kansas, \$7750 for 1993 trailer and delivery. \$5750 for the trailer. Truck needs 2 air lines to go to the hitch - \$1,000. We have not discussed license, insurance, etc. We do have an empty bay. Motion by Hayes to table and go through the information, review in February. Second by Ralph. MC.

**Patrolman** - Report from Patrolman on Road Work/Equipment. Drove the truck to Downing, got material, got 7.5 miles/gal. 3 miles/gal plowing.

- Any road materials ordered
- Any supplies purchased
- Any equipment needing repair
- Any damage to roads by nature or man

**Treasurer Report- Budget Amendment** – Review/approval of budget amendment to balance the 2024 budget. Review treasurer’s report. Review/approval of budget amendment to balance the 2024 budget; Hayes motioned to approve the budget amendments for 2024, seconded by Bernier, MC.

**Budget** – discussion and possible transfer of \$11,000 from general fund to equipment fund – fire truck. Hayes motion to move the \$11,000 into the equipment fund, Ralph second.

**Auditing of bills** for payment. Bills circulated and approved by the Town Board.

**Any other business**

**ADJOURN** - Ralph moved to adjourn the monthly meeting, Bernier second, MC. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted – Beverly Bernier, Clerk/Treasurer

CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS IN ORDER OF CALLING:

Gary Anderson – 715-658-1483;  
Bob Bernier – 715-577-6310;  
Bev Bernier – 715-658-0131;

LeAnn Ralph – 715-308-6336;  
Cecil Hayes – 715-577-6334  
Town Shop - 715-658-1319;