

**Town of Otter Creek – December 12, 2023**  
**Otter Creek Town Hall – E5905 County Road S, Wheeler WI**  
**Regular Town Board Meeting – 7 p.m.**

**Attendees:**

Chair LeAnn Ralph\*

Supervisor 1 Cecil Hayes\* - Absent

Supervisor 2 Bob Bernier\*

Clerk/Treasurer Bev Bernier

Patrolman Gary Anderson

Guests, None

\*Board Members

**REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING**

The Regular Town Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Ralph at 7:03 p.m. on Tuesday December 12, 2023. Meeting minutes from the 11/14/2023 Budget Meeting, Special Town Board Meeting to adopt tax levy, and Regular Board Meeting were not read by Clerk as Ralph and Bob Bernier reviewed the minutes prior to tonight's meeting and agreed that the minutes did not need to be read. Meeting minutes from the 11/26/2023 Special Meeting to accept resignation of Clerk Preston were not read by Clerk as Ralph and Bob Bernier reviewed the minutes prior to tonight's meeting and agreed that the minutes did not need to be read. Ralph motioned to approve the 11/14/2023 and 11/26/2023 Meeting minutes as presented, Bernier second. MC.

**Public comments** – none.

**Communication from Town Chair** – Director Don Knutson of the rescue squad resigned effective 1/1/2024. The rescue squad has been very well run. He accepted the clerk-treasurer position in Wheeler and enrolled in seminary. There may be a need to contract with another area if a replacement is not found.

**Communication from Town Supervisors** – nothing.

**Consideration and possible approval of off-road fuel contracting** for April-Nov, 2024. Supervisor Bernier talked with Chippewa Valley Energy, can contract for \$2.99, need to contact 1000 gallons. Contract period is April 1 to November 30, 2024. 2023 Contract was \$3.19 for 1200 gallons. Table the discussion until the January meeting when we will have more updates on pricing.

**DNR Letter** - Review of 12/6/2023 letter from Robert Hoffman of the DNR regarding wetlands off of Hwy SS. Dunn County will keep us informed of further action on the wetlands situation.

**Fire Bill Ordinance** - Review and possible updating of fire bill ordinance, include section on car fires, review time frame to pay (60 or 90 days), interest rate of 1 ½% or 2%. In 2022, \$10,000 in car fires that Colfax FD could not collect on because personal property can not go on property tax statement. Tax intercept program another option to collect such bills. Our current ordinance is at 90 days after letter from clerk that bills need to be paid. Our interest rate is 1 ½%, we can charge a maximum of 2% per statue. Motion by Bernier to approve the updated Fire Bill Ordinance at 2% interest on bills unpaid after 60 days, second by Ralph. MC

**MFL designations**

- Christie Buttke – 15.26 acres open
- Keith Erickson – 24.6 acres closed
- Robert Bernier – 40 acres closed

- Otto Waldbuesser – 80 acres open
- Thomas Palmer – 124 acres closed
- Lawrence Phillips – 78.78 acres closed
- Mark Seyer – 78 acres closed
- Mark Warner – 110.94 acres closed

**Tree trimming** - Shackleton Tree Service completed limb trimming, bill is paid.

**Poll workers** - Review and possible approval of poll workers/election inspectors for 2024-2025. Motion by Ralph to approve the poll worker list as presented by the Clerk, second by Bernier. MC

**12/4/23 Records request** from WisGOP Election Integrity –

- requests our appointed election inspectors for the 2024-2025 terms, along with their partisan affiliations. Clerk will provide a copy of our approved poll worker list.

**11/15/2023 Records request** from Data at Voter Reference Foundation –

- list of electors who have claimed indefinitely confined status; list of postcards/letters to indefinitely confined who failed to return/cast ballot in the 11/8/22 and 3/6/23 elections; copy of postcard that was mailed to indefinitely confined electors; list of indefinitely confined electors who responded to postcard. **Clerk responded that no such records exist meeting these requirements.**

**12/12/2023 Records request** from Josh Nave, Axis North –

- Public records that describe establishment of ROW of any town road in Sec 18, Tw 30N, R 12W, Town of Otter Creek, portion of 570<sup>th</sup> Street (f/k/a Oak Hill Road). Possibility of records in the State of Wis database or Dunn County. The Town of Otter Creek is not aware of any records. There is an old sheep fence that may be applicable with determining the ROW. Chair will contact Anita Rundle, previous clerk, to see if there are any old records she is aware of, and the Dunn County highway department. Don Johnson may have old ASCS maps from 1940. Bernier will contact ASCS to see if any records relative to the request.

**Tax bond** - Clerk resubmitted tax collection bond to Rural Insurance.

**Insurance coverage** - Supervisor Bernier worked with Rural Mutual to review insurance coverage – coverage of \$412,000 for buildings, added trailer, removed skid steer.

**Weber Inspections** – December report – no activity

**Mailings** - SW&R permits, dog license reminders, clear driveways for emergency services, mailed out in December.

**Report from Patrolman on Road Work/Equipment** – Graded everything last week, went through all dirt roads. Been having trouble with Higbie area, just gravel, tends to ripple. Finished 1070<sup>th</sup> clean up. Little bit of sanding on icy roads. Backhoe trouble 12/11/2023. Screen does not stay up long enough to see what the issue is. Called and talked to JD service manager regarding coding. Holds 16 codes. Found out it has electric throttle on it, use when digging with backhoe, not going down road. Sensor for injection pump may be an issue. \$164.75 for one sensor, throttle control sensor is \$389.72. Electric control and fuel one also have sensors. Trying to avoid service call if possible, will try to change sensors himself. Does not guarantee fix, could be wiring

problem in the seat or switch. Gary wants to put his own backhoe in the stall in case the town backhoe does not start. Has 6000 hours on backhoe. These issues are not uncommon. JD recommends we change the two switches to start. We had the same issue with the truck in the Fall of 2022. Gary will call JD to see if they can test the sensors before we replace. Grader blade repair – Cook Salvage/Equipment in Michigan has a long waiting list for service. Could cut the blade and put a piece in. Cutting would be very difficult, this material usually breaks when heated.

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

**Review Treasurer’s Report** – Motion by Ralph to accept the treasurer’s report, second by Bernier. MC

**Any other business** – none.

**Closed Session** – Motion by Bernier to go into closed section pursuant to Wisconsin state statute 19.85(1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility -- town patrolman and town clerk-treasurer, second by Ralph. MC. Chair met with patrolman, reviewed driveway permits, logging affect on roads. Gary has a 5-year road plan so we can have a capital improvement plan for road improvements. Roads are being maintained. We will have the 690<sup>th</sup> bid out early in 2024. Gary is requesting several options for his compensation package for 2024:

- 1) .50 increase, two more weeks vacation.
- 2) \$1/hour increase, one week vacation, one week unpaid vacation.
- 3) Town buy a pickup truck, drive back and forth to work, not to use at home, take 4 weeks unpaid time, no increase for 4 years.

Retirement plan of age 75.

Changes: 1) Move accrual date from December 12 to January 1.

Research truck prices and municipal discount plan. Ralph and Bernier will work with several dealerships for pricing and discount plan. Clerk to check with Rural Insurance regarding insurance details for a company vehicle. Discussed keeping a log in the truck for miles, maintenance, etc. Provide update at January meeting.

**Clerk review** – have \$6,000 in training budget. Part of succession planning to have a competitive salary now and for future clerk. Have a step pay plan progression for incoming clerk. Table to January, 2024 meeting to review pay adjustment as Hayes is not available for this meeting.

**Open Session** - Motion to convene into open session and to take action appropriate to Wisconsin state statute 19.85(1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility -- town patrolman and town clerk-treasurer which resulted from the closed session. Motion by Bernier to return to open session, Bernier, second by Ralph. MC.

**Action item** - No action items from closed session, discuss topics at January 9, 2023 regular town board meeting.

<b>Clerk reviewed the finances.</b>	Equipment Account -	\$61,248.33
	Tax Account -	\$48,286.30
	Checking Account -	<u>\$71,405.28</u>
	Total of all accounts	\$80,939.91

**ADJOURN** - Ralph moved to adjourn the monthly meeting, second by Bernier. MC. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

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;