

**Town of Plover, Marathon County, Wisconsin
Regular Meeting of the Town Board and
Public Hearing on Proposed 2023 Budget Meeting
180771 County Road Z, Birnamwood, WI 54414**

Tuesday, October 11, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

1. Call to Order by Chairman, Tony Kautza

Kautza called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call – Town Supervisor, Pete Marien, and Town Supervisor, Scott McRae

Parker noted both Marien and McRae were present.

Also, in attendance: Clerk, Valerie Parker, Treasurer, Connie Sippl

Also present, to possibly speak under Public Comments, were:

Rick Larson, 185153 County Road Z
Tim Micke, 236841 Eau Claire River Road
Doreen Erbrecht, 176680 County Road Z
Matt Szews, 184001 Pine View Road
Erick Jensen, 178808 Pine View Road
Chris Crawford, 234905 Clay Road
Carlton Boettcher, 183216 County Road Z

3. Visitors

None.

4. Public Comments/Concerns (Limit 5 Minutes Per Person)

Micke pointed out that Birnamwood Area Emergency Services (BAES) received an EMS Flex Grant in the amount of \$94,130. Kautza mentioned that the Department will most likely be needing a new ambulance in the near future.

5. Minutes from Previous Meeting

- **September 13, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting**

Motion by Marien, second by McRae, to approve the September 13, 2022, regular meeting minutes.

6. Review and Signing of Monthly Expenditures

The Board went through the expenditures.

7. Review and Action on 2022 Monthly Budget

Erbrecht questioned why the Board does not pay off the Town Hall Loan, and how previous Town Chairman Dale Seymour told the taxpayers it would be paid off early. Kautza explained that if we pay it off early, we would have to pay a penalty. Marien commented that this is something the Town was not aware of at the time this commitment was made. He stated if we were to pay it off early, we would have to give an advance notice, such as a year in advance. Parker commented that she already received the notice from the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands with the 2023 payment that will be due (in March, 2023).

Marien brought up the high revenue amount in the Forest Crop Tax (\$20,888.37). Parker stated that she needs to contact the County or Wisconsin Town's Association (WTA), as she thinks a portion of that amount is actually supposed to be included within the General Property Tax Levy (of \$286,766.00). She assured this amount was not budgeted, and would just need to make a line item correction.

Jensen brought up the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and questioned why we can't use that towards BAES, or just apply it towards the General Fund. Kautza explained that the guidance on what the funds were allowed to be used towards was continually changing, and how we could not use it towards capital equipment, but how we could use it towards services. Parker commented the guidance from WTA was to not go out to be used towards budgeted project and budgeted expenditures, and to not spend it immediately; but, to instead hold on to it

for a while and carefully plan out what we will use it on. It was explained how it was moved into a special savings account because which will make it easier to track, as we need to report on every dollar of those grant funds. Jensen confirmed that the WI Department of Revenue is who the contact would be with questions on the spending.

Motion by Marien, second by McRae, to approve the monthly budget.

8. Clerk's Report

Parker commented on how the November 8th General Election is coming up, and how in the next week she will be working with Chief Election Inspector, Diane Kautza, on training for issuing absentee ballots, since Parker will be out of town later this month. Parker commented on how the County informed all Clerks that they need to have a computer and internet access available at the polls, so that they can access current lists of ineligible voters. Parker stated normally this is not an issue as she is typically at the election poll assisting with any help the election inspectors need, and how Parker usually has her Town Computer and per personal internet (tethers from cell phone). Parker stated her concern is that if something happened where she could not be there to help out, then the election inspectors would not have access to internet.

Parker then brought up T-Mobile internet. She stated how Larson brought his home internet device to the hall tonight to test it out, and it seems to have a good signal. She commented that she did finally get in touch with T-Mobile, and the most the Town would pay is \$50.00 per month. This would allow us high speed internet, with unlimited data, and where the speed does not get "throttled down" after so much usage. She stated she has budgeted funds included in the 2023 budget, but is thinking we may want to just get the service now. She stated it would not be a big impact on the Town's 2022 budget, as it would only amount to \$100.00 (covering November and December).

Kautza agreed we need to get internet service here, especially if we need it for the election. He directed Parker to go ahead and get the service set up.

Parker brought up we only have 9 Banner Banks checks left, and with one of the blank checks that Kautza and Sippl are both signing tonight, she will write a check from Banner Banks to the Towns new CoVantage Credit Union checking account to get that account started, with enough funds to cover upcoming expenditures. She stated she would like to keep the Banner Banks account open for a couple of years to catch any automatic expenditures or revenues that may still go in there that she had not changed yet. Kautza was fine with that.

9. Road Report

Larson stated he has finished hauling loads of granite to our gravel roads, and is finishing up with grading and packing before the freezing weather begins. He stated he is keeping a list of roads that are being done with this so that we know what still needs to be done next year.

Larson stated he has been keeping up on general road grading following rain events that we have received.

Larson stated he worked with Meverden to finish that corduroy road section on Sportsman Drive.

Larson stated once he has his equipment ready (switched to plowing mode), that he will have 2-3 loads of sand/salt delivered.

Kautza brought up an intersection off of North Pole Road, where it is hard to see when due to sumac trees growing in the ditch line, and asked Larson to check those to see if he can reach those with the brush cutter to clear those out.

10. Old Business

• Status of Sportsman Road Project by Meverden Materials

Kautza stated this project area was completed and looks good and how it hardened up well. Larson pointed out the pictures he took and shared with Parker, which Parker shared with the Board earlier.

• Status of Crack Filling Project by Fahrner Asphalt Sealers

Kautza stated he recently talked to Dan at Fahrner, and was told that Fahrner was waiting for a commitment from the Town of Harrison on some crackfilling of their roads, which they were supposed to hear about tonight. He stated how Fahrner told him it actually is not bad to put crack filling down in the cold weather, as the road cracks open up more, allowing more material to fill in. He stated that Fahrner is hoping to get out in the next week to do the work, and will come back next year to fix anything that does not hold up through the winter.

- **Reparations for Road Damage on Eau Claire River Road, East of County Road Y**

Kautza stated to Parker that he and Larson did meet on this issue and they have the names and contact details for the billing of this (and the Village Road damages), and will get all the information to Parker soon.

Kautza gave the background of what all happened here to the audience.

- **Status of American Rescue Plan Act – Possible use of Funds**

Kautza stated we have the funds in a separate savings to be used later.

Larson commented perhaps we could use these funds towards the other corduroy road section on Sportsman Drive.

Jensen commented that perhaps we could use it to pay off the tractor loan. Kautza stated we are under the understanding that you could not use it towards capital equipment, and how we could potentially use it towards road projects.

- **Discussion of New Rugs for Town Hall**

McRae and Sippl had been working on this. The rugs that McRae was looking at were going to be too thick for our doorways, so would not work. Sippl has not had any luck finding anything else that would work. After some discussion, Kautza directed that Sippl just look at getting new “similar” rugs from Fleet Farm or Menards, maybe in a black color.

11. New Business

Kautza brought up issues he is having with Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning (CPZ) Department, and how dissatisfied he is with our being under County Zoning. He brought up two similar situations (Jerrod Kautza property and Dan Krimmer property) where the Jeremy Kautza situation was allowed to continue, but the Dan Krimmer one, the County put a stop work order on and charged Krimmer a large amount of fees. He feels they are not being consistent, are not working in the Town’s interest, and is only costing our taxpayers more money through unnecessary fees. He commented how the Town was under the impression, when we switched to County Zoning that the County was going to get our Town cleaned up, but that has not happened.

After considerable discussion, Kautza stated he would like the Town to start discussing getting out of County Zoning. He stated the Town does not need to have zoning. He commented on how Harrison sends all construction projects to Mike Block.

Parker brought up concerns about if there is no zoning, how we prevent situations of people placing houses two feet from each other. Larson explained new homes are different, that those still go through the County, as far as wells, septic, wetlands, etc.

Parker will add this to the next (and future) agenda to continue this discussion. It was brought up that we may want to take this to referendum. The Board is not sure if a referendum is required, but that it may be the best route to take.

12. Public Hearing – Proposed 2023 Town of Plover Budget

- **Open Public Hearing**

Kautza opened the public hearing at 6:52 p.m.

- **Presentation by Board**

Kautza had Parker give a summary of the budget.

Parker explained that first the Board generally (at their September meeting) agrees to amounts on the draft 2022 Tax Levy Limit Worksheet (to be paid in 2023). She explained how the tax levy limit was calculated. She stated that then the draft tax levy limit revenue amount is added on the 2023 budget document, followed by adding in all the estimated different revenue source amounts. This gives us an overall budget amount to work from. She stated then she takes that full amount and spreads it over all the potential expenditures the Town will incur in 2023.

- **Public Comment Period**

Jensen questioned the ARPA funds and asked again what it can be used for and if it can be used to pay off the tractor loan, as it would nearly cover the full amount left due on the loan. Kautza stated that we did not think we could use ARPA funds to pay off equipment purchases; however, there has been some guidance that the ARPA

funds can be moved to general funds. He stated the only issue is we have to account for every penny of the ARPA funds spent and report that later. Kautza stated we may want to use the ARPA funds on road projects.

Micke brought up the 37% increase in Town tax levy last year, and how it was the highest increase he has seen in the 30 years he has been in our town. He stated we need to be mindful of the Forest Crop Land. He brought up the tax levy limit worksheets that were discussed at the September meeting. He questioned if Parker received the verification from the State on if the Town could take the \$26,000 adjustment for the additional EMS costs. Parker answered she did verify that we can take that adjustment.

Micke brought up the \$40,000 that was budgeted for the tractor, and how it was paid on the loan, and how the Town was able to pull \$40,000 out of the general fund to pay down on the initial loan. He then questioned why we can't just pull the rest of the cost out of the general fund balance and pay that loan off. He also suggested the Town use general fund balance to pay on the hall and tractor loans, versus an adjustment. Kautza stated these adjustments will help the Town have enough fund balance to take on necessary road projects, which could be over \$100,000.00.

Micke stated how communication needs to be better to the electors on the budget process. He explained how in his past career during monthly budget discussions, a list of all the bills being paid would be shared with others to see. He stated how the Town needs to keep in mind the interest of the electors.

Crawford stated if the Town could use the ARPA funds to cover the increase in the EMS funding, it would decrease the tax levy.

- **Close Public Hearing**

Kautza closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

- **Review and Discussion on Proposed Budget**

There was no further discussion by the Board.

- **Action by Town Board**

Motion by Marien, second by McRae to approve the proposed 2023 Town Budget as presented.

13. Remarks from Board

None.

14. Future Items

- **Special Meeting of Electors – October 11, 2022, Immediately following the 6:00 p.m. Meeting**
- **Town Adoption of Budget Meeting – October 11, 2022, Immediately following the Special Meeting of Electors**
- **General Election – November 8, 2022**
- **Regular Board Meeting – November 15, 2022, 6:00 p.m. (Revised Date , Due to November 8th General Election)**
- **Regular Board Meeting – December 13, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**

15. Adjourn

Motion by McRae, second by Marien, to adjourn at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully,

Valerie Parker
Town of Plover Clerk
230801 County Road Y
Birnamwood (Town of Plover), WI 54414
(715) 581-4603
vparkerplover@gmail.com
www.townofplover.us