

**Town of Plover, Marathon County, Wisconsin  
Regular Meeting of the Town Board  
180771 County Road Z, Birnamwood, WI 54414**

**Tuesday, August 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**

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**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, Rick Larson, Dick Lehmann.

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

None.

**4. Visitors**

None.

**5. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The Board acknowledged previously reviewing the minutes shared with them in July.

***Motion by McRae, second by Marien, to approve the July 13, 2021, Regular Meeting minutes.***

**6. Review and Signing of Monthly Expenditures**

The Board went through the expenditures.

**7. 2021 Budget Review and Update**

Parker gave an update as to the revenues the Town received since the past meeting. Parker stated we will need to start looking at the budget for next year, and how the Budget Hearing, Annual Meeting of Electors, and Budget Adoption will need to occur in October or November. Parker stated that she will try to start sending the budget documents to the Board a few days prior to each meeting, so that the Board has an opportunity to review the status ahead of time, so that they can come prepared with any questions at the monthly meetings.

Kautza stated with the budget, he thinks there is a 4% allowance that Towns can raise it, which we did not take last year. Parker stated she thinks part of the problem was that we had funds in our savings, which effects how much our budget can be.

Parker stated she received an e-mail tonight from the County Clerk about a public hearing that is scheduled for Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m., at the Hatley Town Hall, on the use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. She will try to find the announcement and share that with the Board.

***Motion by McRae, second by Marien, to approve the expenditures.***

**8. Clerk's Report**

Parker explained to the Board that she attended a Clerk's conference a few weeks ago, and how she was made aware that even when posting Town Board minutes on the Town's website, we are supposed to post printed copies of them in 3 public places (if not posted in a legal newspaper). She stated due to the limited size of our outlying bulletin boards, and since people have to drive to get to the boards, she simply posted a note on the two outlying boards that the printed minutes can be found posted at the hall or on the Town's website. She stated that then since the bulletin board at the hall is also too small, she simply taped a copy of the printed minutes in a window of the hall.

Parker stated that she had to apply for a Federal DUNS number in order for the Town to receive the ARPA funds, and how she also learned at her conference that all municipalities need to also apply for a Federal SAMS number for when they submit the annual report in September, which needs to be submitted whether you spend any ARPA funds or not.

Parker stated that she recently obtained an official WI Certificate of Sales Exemption (CES) number from the State Department of Revenue. This will be used whenever making tax exempt purchases going forward.

Parker stated she will be applying for the 2022 Recycling Grant soon. Tonight she had Kautza sign the Cooperative Agreement for the bonus recycling monies we get from Marathon County Solid Waste Department.

Parker stated she received an e-mail from the State today that our population is now up to 706, which is 8 more than last year.

Parker brought up the address sign the Town received last month, that ended up being for a property out on Eau Claire River Road, not the Town Hall property. She will follow up with the County Zoning to see where our new address sign is at, since our old one is still in disrepair. Larson stated the sign is for one of Kurt Sandberg's properties. He stated that Sandberg must have contacted the County directly for that sign.

## **9. Road Report**

Larson brought up that we had a lot of trees down with that last big storm (of 07/28/2021), which he just finally caught up on cleaning up along the roadways and what was left to clean up on our hall property.

Larson stated that he has done some grading and will do more once we get more rain.

Larson stated our LP tank is down to 6%. He stated he heard the price is currently at \$1.60 per gallon, and how it is predicted the cost will be going back up soon. After some discussion, Kautza asked Parker to call for estimates and go ahead and schedule the tank to be filled by whoever is offering the lesser cost.

Larson stated the landscaping (topsoil, seeded, rocked) around the storage shed is now completed. He stated we just need one more trip piece for the corner.

Larson brought up culvert on Pine View Road, at County Road Y, where he dug the heaved pavement out. He asked if that is still looked at to be paved by the County, or if he should look at putting some cold patch/mix down, or if we are just leaving gravel until next year. Kautza stated he has not had a chance to connect with Jim Griesbach at the County yet to see if they have anything going on in this area, where they could possibly pave that. After some discussion, Kautza requested Larson to go ahead and fill that in with cold patch for this year.

Larson brought up the culvert on Sportsman Road, between Ann Thomas' and Dan Thomas, and if we want to work on that this year or next year. He stated that Dan Thomas wants to lower his culvert yet for drainage purposes, but wants to do that before we replace ours.

Kautza brought up the area along Sportsman Drive where he and Larson need to go out and poke through the edge of the blacktop to get a gauge on what is exactly going under there. Larson stated he will call Digger's Hotline ahead of that. Larson stated once we determine what is going on and what needs to be done, this can be a road repair project then for next year.

Marien asked about the culvert on Hatchery Road. Larson stated he dumped another pail of cold mix on there. He stated how the culver seems to be getting more crushed, and how there is already about 4' of material over the top of that. Larson stated we will need to eventually dig that out and maybe putting the culvert in a bit high. Kautza stated we can monitor that area, as it does not appear there is water ponding there, and how this can be a project for next year.

## **10. Old Business**

### **• LRIP Program Updates – Sportsman Road Project**

Nothing new to report. Kautza stated that he did not get a chance to participate in the webinar that was recently held, but he will see if he can view the recording.

### **• Discussion of American Rescue Plan Act – Possible use of Funds**

Kautza stated that since we have not included that 4% allowance, we may be able to use ARPA funds for the difference.

### **• Status of Red Granite Road Work**

It was brought up that the work had not started yet. Larson stated Jack Kautza has his excavator out there, and that Jack Kautza is tentatively planning to start next week.

## 11. New Business

- **Discussion on Comprehensive Plan Update**

Parker stated that she contacted the County and how she was advised the Town does need to update their Comprehensive Plan. She said that she can send a link to the Town's 2005 plan again for their review, and in the meantime, can start making basic edits to the dates, etc. She said the back end of the plan has different Town maps and that she is hoping the County can assist with updated maps. She stated the goal is to update this without the assistance of Central WI Regional Planning Commission, which would then cost the Town \$2,000.00.

- **Discussion on Possible New Town Computer**

McRae stated it appears the motherboard on the Town's desktop computer is fried, and not repairable.

Parker explained to Kautza her original plan to see if she could use ARPA funds to purchase a faster laptop for her to use, then Kautza could have the old laptop (that he used to use) which she is currently using (which is not fast enough for what she needs), and then she figured the desktop computer could stay at the hall for any of the Board or even Rick to use.

Kautza instructed Parker to go ahead and order a new laptop and then the current laptop she is using can just stay at the hall. McRae asked Parker to share with him what she finds (prior to purchasing) so he can verify that it will be a good computer.

- **Discussion for Potential Internet Access for the Town**

Kautza commented that the County is installing towers in various places of the eastern part of the County, though none in the Town. He stated there is one being placed on Damitz Road, in the Town of Harrison, but is not sure that will reach much of our town. Parker explained how she has been trying to make contact with a sales guy with Bertram Internet to see if he could come to a Town Board Meeting to discuss our options. She has not had much luck coordinating this. Kautza suggested she keep trying.

- **Discussion on Possible Employee Health Insurance or Alternative Options**

Larson brought up that from what he is hearing, it is not an option for the Town to offer health insurance for him. He stated he has been working with a broker on figuring this out. He said that it appears it is cheaper to go with insurance through Marshfield Clinic versus Aspirus. He said that insurance for Marshfield Clinic would run about \$756.00 per month.

Sippl commented how she is working with Michelle at Bremax Insurance, in Antigo, for health insurance on the Marketplace, which has been helpful.

Larson stated he was hoping that the Town could offer him some kind of an incentive, to help cover the cost for his insurance. Kautza asked Larson what he suggests. Larson suggested to increase his pay to \$22.00 per hour plus a 4th week of paid vacation (amounting to a total of 120 hours per year, based on an average 30 hours per week). Larson commented on how he is aware other employees at places like Easton, earn a higher wage, though, those people are full-time, where he is not.

After some discussion, it was agreed to go ahead and offer Larson a pay increase and additional vacation.

***Motion by Marien, second by McRae: to approve the hourly pay increase for Larson to \$22.00 per hour, plus an additional week of paid vacation, effective September 1, 2021.***

- **Discussion on Possible Birnamwood Area Emergency Services Funding Request**

Marien stated BAES abandoned the idea of the incentive. He stated instead they would rather see \$30,000 in equipment. He stated they would like to get several LUCAS devices (2 for each truck), a power lift cot, and an AED Defibrillator. He stated BAES is still having a hard time getting people to work (which is happening all over), and this equipment will help when short-handed. Marien stated they are now talking about paying a 2-person crew to work 24-hour shifts at \$15.00 per hour. Currently, their budget covers the cost of 1 person. He stated this will be discussed more at their next monthly BAES meeting.

Parker commented how we can use our ARPA funds for this.

- **Discussion on Possibly Requesting Bids for Crack Sealing on Town Roads**

Kautza stated he has not had a chance to contact anyone to get prices for crack sealing and will try to reach out again.

Parker brought up at the last Town Board meeting, it was suggested that we just go ahead and put an ad out there asking for bids. Parker stated she could work with Larson to come up with a list to put in an ad. There was some discussion that it may be getting too late to have this done this year, as most have their projects already lined up and how this can't be done when it starts to get below 50 degrees.

After some discussion, it was suggested that Larson spend some time making a list of what roads are in need of crackfilling, and we could then put out an ad to get estimates that we can use to budget for this work to be done next year.

Kautza stated in necessary, we could expedite the process and get some of these done this year yet.

- **Discussion on Possibly Purchasing Cameras or Alternative Options to Catch Vandals Damaging Roads**

There was discussion on whether it would be helpful to install cameras on some of our granite roads where there appears to be a lot of reckless driving activity, where people are damaging the gravel roads with their vehicles. It was said that cameras would not be effective in getting the actual identity of those driving, as it would not capture quick enough photos.

After some discussion of what people have been witnessing, Kautza stated he will put a call in to his contact at the Sheriff's Department to request they have more of a presence in our area, and how all we can do is advise residents to call the Sheriff's Department every time they see this activity going on, otherwise, nothing will change.

## **12. Remarks from Board**

Sipl brought up that the truck and two storage containers have been removed from that property on North Pole Road, just southwest of her. McRae stated that perhaps the owner is now looking to sell, since he can't build over the existing foundation (the County will not allow, since the foundation is less than 1,000 sq. ft.)

Sipl brought up that the guy who was living in the non-habitable trailer house, just northwest of her has finally fully moved out. She said he appears to have moved into a camper or small trailer out by County Roads HH and G, in Harrison. She said that arrangements have been made with Birnamwood Fire Department to burn the trailer house in the coming weeks.

## **13. Future Items**

- **Regular Board Meeting – September 14, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**

## **14. Adjourn**

***Motion by Marien, second by McRae, to adjourn at 7:15 p.m.***

Respectfully,

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