

Town of Oshkosh
Annual Town Meeting – Approval Pending
April 16, 2024 - 7:00 pm – Town Hall

PRESENT: Chairman Jim Erdman, Treasurer Laura Hunt, Supervisor Matt Merten, Supervisor William Demler, Treasurer Laura Hunt, Clerk Jeannette Merten, and an audience of 4.

Chairman Erdman called the Annual Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Town of Oshkosh board members were introduced.

Bill Demler moved, Steve Gawaresky seconded, to approve the Annual Meeting minutes dated April 18, 2023, as written. The motion was carried by voice vote.

Presentation by Action Appraisers about the re-valuation of properties.

Amy Zacharias of Action Appraisers informed the town board that notices will mail mid-August, Open Book is penciled in for September, and Board of Review October 9, 2024.

The review of all properties is completed, entries are made, and currently working on maintenance. An estimated tax rate based on last year's levies (only an estimate) will be sent out with the notices that property owners will have an idea in dollars what their property tax payment could be.

Legislators approved a change and removed some personal property taxes. The change is that personal property that is leased, for example, a cell tower, will have its value added to the real estate value.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT by Steve Gawaresky

Steve Gawaresky, Fire Chief, presented a VFD 2023 Annual Report, which he read through the report. The report is included with the minutes.

Topics in the report include a message from the chief, a mission statement, a chain of command, run statistics, accomplishments, apparatus updates, community outreach, and events.

The information he is receiving at this time, subject to change, is that the fire truck purchase in late 2022 appears to have a delivery date of March 2025, but it could be later. The chassis downpayment is due 120 days before date of delivery, which would be estimated to be about December 2024.

FIRST RESPONDER REPORT by Jason Selwitschka

Jason Selwitschka, First Responder Director, presented an EMS Annual Report. Topics included in the report are current members and their skills (each carries their own emergency bag), grants received, outreach, regional partnerships, accomplishments/celebrations, call statistics, and goals for 2024.

Selwitschka added that they are good on equipment, and they have no plans for major purchases this year.

REPORTS BY OTHER SUB-COMMITTEES, DEPARTMENTS, OR ENTITIES OF THE TOWN.

Carol Kaufmann, Zoning Administrator, was absent and was traveling; no report.

Clerk Jeannette Merten presented a list of building permits issued in 2023. Marty Johnson, the building inspector, has an Annual Town Meeting conflict as chair of the Town of Poygan, which makes attending this meeting difficult.

CLERK REPORTY BY Jeannette Merten

Clerk Merten presented the Annual Financial booklet of 2023, available for public inspection. Booklets were available to voters during the Spring Election, and it is available online for viewing on the town's website. The annual report is a snapshot of 2023 that includes the financial status, revenues and disbursements, information on stormwater practices, recycling news, Plummers Cemetery, and more.

Recently the State's Form CT report was filed along with the annual Recycle Grant.

The Single Audit is nearing completion, which was required because of the CDBG Federal grant funds.

Because of the general audit, changes to the town's general ledger now includes VFD and EMS bank accounts fund totals.

Residents may subscribe and sign-up for alerts that can be sent to them by email or text message. A resident may call to sign-up or sign-up online on the town's website. This is the best tool for town residents to stay informed, and residents are encouraged to subscribe.

TREASURER REPORT by Laura Hunt

Treasurer Laura Hunt reported that the town continues to maintain four depositories: Verve Credit Union, West Pointe Bank, Capital One Credit Union, and Nicolet Bank.

The town utilized our line of credit for the Winnebago Area Sanitary District project, which has been paid off recently in 2024.

The town secured a loan for the land purchase and continues to pay monthly on the loan.

This past tax season, the town implemented an option to pay a tax bill payment by a credit card with mixed results.

The town is currently using one of the accounts for fire truck donations, and we have a fire truck donation CD as well.

In addition, Hunt collects and maintains the records for dog licensing.

SUPERVISOR REPORT by Matt Merten and William Demler

Matt Merten

His mission is to keep the Town of Oshkosh a nice place to live and affordable.

Supervisor Merten additionally responds to stray animal calls, noxious weeds, and manages other miscellaneous concerns, including roads and ditching.

Supervisor Merten shared a recent dog rescue story. He usually will attempt to find the owner first, and if unsuccessful, the dog will be brought to the Neenah Animal Shelter.

William Demler

Supervisor Demler thanked the fire department, and members of the town board. Demler talked about his role in overlooking road projects. He also follows up on other miscellaneous concerns like disposing of TVs and computers from ditches, animals, parking, signage, etc.

Currently, Demler is investigating Perren Way off of County Rd. T, which was created by a certified survey map in 2008. There is no road there except a driveway road cut. There was a discussion on Pip Ln. and how it is not maintained by the town because it was never brought up to town road standards.

CHAIRMAN REPORT by Jim Erdman

The town board works as a team to preserve and keep our town a desirable place to reside, as its main goal.

The town is seeing some development, especially along the channels, as a result of reasonable taxes, no stormwater utility, and sensible regulation.

The revaluation of assessments will be done in 2024.

The City of Oshkosh proposed a major 520 unit apartment project in 2023 along Lake Butte des Morts Drive between Ryf Rd. and Westwind Rd. The Town of Oshkosh had no legal authority over this project. There was substantial city and town resident opposition, but the multi-phase \$100 million project is starting now.

Erdman and Demler issue culvert permits. The fee is \$300. The applicant agrees to the project cost minus the initial fee. Drainage improvement is part of the culvert project. The town does not subsidize culvert or drainage improvements.

Reminders to the townspeople: 1) Concrete is not allowed in the road right-of-way of driveways. 2) An excavation permit is required from the town clerk when work is performed in the road right-of-way. 3) Placing fill requires approval from the town board. A fill permit may be given or denied at the discretion of the town board.

The town board did a road review on April 11, 2024. The town requests estimates to determine which projects will be completed in 2024. Overall, the town roads are in good shape.

Municipalities were given a federal ARPA fund during COVID-19 about \$100/person. We used our funds for road safety project which could not be done otherwise. A hill on a curve was lowered on Hickory Ln to improve visibility and Plummers Pt. is being widened to improve safety.

The Town ordered a new Pierce fire engine fire truck in 2022. Delivery is scheduled for 2025. The Town tax levy was raised \$120/k per year to save ahead for this purchase. Donations are being taken and are appreciated. In addition, the town received \$145/k ARPA check from Winnebago County and this will go toward the downpayment on the new fire truck.

The WASD project was completed in 2023 after decades of disputes and years of delay. All water and sewer utility infrastructure along with street and sidewalk was replaced. Drainage was improved. The million-dollar project turned into almost two million due to design changes, inflation, and delays. Federal grants paid about 90% with 10% being special assessed to the affected properties. Approximately \$3500/per housing unit plus the cost of lateral from the house to the street. The

new sanitary district commission will be taking over management of their affair in the near future. This neighborhood will now be secure from city annexation.

Erdman said he is privileged to be a member of the WTA TAC committee (Town Advocacy Council) that examines and weighs in on legislative proposals. Legislation Act 61 now allows Wisconsin towns to opt out of county zoning with a five-year notice. Winnebago County Zoning staff doesn't recognize Acts 41 and 145 granting towns general zoning authority. Such as (land use, street, and sideyard setbacks in shoreland areas). Erdman remains in contact with WTA attorney Larry Konapacki. Konapacki is working with Wisconsin County Association attorney Andy Philips to resolve this issue with Winnebago County zoning staff and Winnebago County executive Jon Doemel.

Another issue is the T.M.D.L. phosphorus guidelines, which come with stricter, more expensive sewer requirements from the DNR and EPA. He is encouraging the WTA to work with the Wisconsin County Association attorney and the Wisconsin League of Municipalities to get the DNR to revisit this issue and be more reasonable.

Man-made ditches and inlets on your neighbor's shoreline presently limit building rights on your property, also floodplain fill guidelines unfairly limit property use. Erdman is trying to work with legislators to address these inequities as we strive for local sensible land-use authority, reasonable county ordinances, and fair state zoning statutes. A constant issue with the State is always road funds and shared revenue.

The Town of Oshkosh has a DNR-approved MS4 H2O discharge stormwater permit. Thanks to our open ditches and swales (no underground storm sewer pipes), we presently don't need town retention ponds or a utility. We will be checking for illicit discharges and swale conditions again this summer. Last summer, Erdman helped Chuck Nahn, the town's stormwater expert, to check on several outfalls and to keep our town compliant and will do it again this summer.

The town purchased a 15-acre parcel adjacent to the Bill Rupnow house property and town hall last year with a 10-year bank loan. Keeping this parcel undeveloped is of real value to the town. The purchase was approved at a Special Town Meeting of electors. This purchase did not affect the need to increase the town levy.

Loren's Auto's conditional use permit was approved with a settlement agreement. The property will be cleaned up when the owner sells or passes away.

The Town of Oshkosh is in good financial shape for now. However, we don't know what the economic future will be. The Town of Oshkosh may be forced to visit combining services with the Town of Vinland someday if the city expands significantly to the north.

Erdman thanked the whole board and all the VFD and EMS volunteers for their team effort.

**OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT, QUESTIONS, OR MAKE DECISIONS
AS DEFINED UNDER THE WI STATUTES.**

There was discussion on replacing and installing a new floor in town hall meeting room. The flooring is the original floor from when the building was built in 1977. Jim Erdman Jr, Chair Erdman's son, would be willing to oversee the contractors for the floor replacement. Demler said he is willing to have a tile tested for asbestos, which will determine options on how the floor can be replaced.

Set next year's Annual Meeting date to April 15, 2025.

Motion made by Bill Demler, Jason Selwitschka seconded, to set year 2025 Annual Meeting to Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall. The motion was carried by voice vote.

Motion made by Steve Gawaresky, Jason Selwitschka seconded, to adjourn. The motion was carried by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Jeannette Merten/Town Clerk
Town of Oshkosh