

## MEMO

To: Town Board  
From: Michael Kuchta  
Re: Town Administrator's Report

DATES COVERED IN REPORT: Feb. 18-March 4, 2022

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### 1. Accomplished/Completed

- Paul Wilharm and I submitted an updated six-year Capital Improvement Plan for Major Gilbert Field to the state Board of Aeronautics.
- I updated and redesigned the reservations form for Town parks facilities, including Russell Park.

### 2. Coming Up

- **WHEDA Rural Affordable Workforce Housing Initiative.** The pilot project for Ashland and Bayfield Counties officially begins this month. I expect to attend the initial session, which takes place over 8 hours on March 22-23.
- **Town Board Workshop on Affordable Housing.** Presentations from and discussion with UW Extension and Town's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee take place Wednesday March 30 at 5 p.m.

### 3. Town Board Agenda – Information/Comments

- **BIL Funding.** At the March 22 TB meeting, Ben Schram and I expect to seek your approval to apply for federal infrastructure funding (through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation) to rebuild the following Town roads in 2023: Mondamin, Hagen, and at least a portion South Shore. DOT is seeking simple projects for this funding cycle; the "mill and overlay" or "pulverize and pave" work these roads require matches perfectly.  
If successful, the Town would pay 20 percent of construction costs; federal funding would cover the remaining 80 percent. (State funding is typically a 50/50 split.) The Town would need to cover 100 percent of any "design engineering" work, plus 100 percent of project overruns. Local construction funds would not have to be available until 2023 at the earliest.  
The application deadline is April 1; decisions are expected in May. DOT then would work with the Town to complete plans, specifications and estimates by Aug. 1; the state needs to obligate funding by Sept. 30. DOT would take control from there, including handling all bidding, contracting, and construction management. Project construction needs to begin in 2023.
- **Rec Center Bathroom Remodel.** Ben Schram, Ray Hakola and I met March 2 with representatives from Angelo Luppino. Their subcontractor, 5 Star Electric, pledges to install the 200-amp electrical panel the week of March 7.
- **Madeline Sanitary District.** Your packet includes an email from the sanitary district's board of commissioners outlining their challenges to stay compliant with state regulations on effluent quality. They suggest a number of possible causes, as well as adjustments they'd like to see. These would include restrictions on portable restrooms. They ask a few times for our "cooperation," but I have not received any details about what this means or how they plan to get all affected parties involved. Let me know if you want me to initiate discussions.
- **Greenwood Cemetery Mowing Contract.** This renews the existing contract, under the same terms, for 2022.

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- **Planning and Zoning.** No action required tonight. The Plan Commission will discuss a certified survey map for the Hartzell Expandable Condominium proposal at its March 9 meeting; TPC may have a recommendation for your March 22 meeting. Also, TPC holds a public hearing March 23 on the request from Madeline School of the Arts for a conditional use permit to build two 6-room student dormitories.
- **Community Awards Committee.** The committee has two sets of requests of the Town Board:
  - Approve their recommendation for the 2021 Community Appreciation Award
  - Approve their recommendation for the 2021 Hall of Fame recipient
 These recommendations are being made confidentially; it is up to you to decide whether to publicly announce the recipients now, or to allow the committee to personally notify the recipients first (before their names are released).  
 In addition, the committee asks the Board for two motions:
  - Declare that any island resident who served honorably in the armed forces is eligible for the Roll of Honor. (This clarifies that veterans are eligible even if they did not live on the island when they served.)
  - Add “outstanding business” as an award category beginning next year.
- **Chef’s Expo.** The event returns this year from its Covid hiatus; the Chamber requests closing off LeSueur and Bell Streets (to the Cadotte intersection) to increase pedestrian safety for Expo visitors and vendors.

#### 4. Follow Up on Previous/Ongoing Projects

- **Fire numbers.** The staff work group met Feb. 24. Their goal is to minimize how many numbers will need to change; their hope is to preserve the existing grid by overlaying a useable and functional alpha-numeric system. Next steps include identifying portions of the grid where numbers are nearing capacity, and clearing up numbering and naming along existing Town roads, private roads, and shared driveways where there are problems. The Town currently has \$34,362 set aside for fire number sign installation in a designated fund (34151-13), plus \$6,000 more in the 2022 budget. See Zoning Administrator Ric Gillman’s report for the partial answer to questions you raised last month regarding project status in the county and federal funding.
- **Ashland County Law Enforcement Agreement.** The full County Board plans to vote March 22 on the Finance Committee’s recommendation to terminate our existing agreement beginning in 2023. The Town would receive full funding in 2022; in fact, the first quarter payment has arrived. The county administrator asks that we contact them anytime we want to begin discussions on a new agreement. Glenn Carlson has written an article for the next Gazette spelling out options for Town residents to consider about police funding and services.
- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.** At their Feb. 24 meeting, the committee developed a five-phase timeline for their work through October. They expect to request a workshop with the Town Board and Town Plan Commission in April to share what they’ve done so far, how they plan to move forward, and to discuss your questions and suggestions.  
 Members meet this Thursday, March 10, at 4 p.m.; they will complete Phase One by focusing on lists of priorities they have identified individually, based on their section-by-section review of the existing Plan and “current conditions” research. Future phases: 2) Design Community Survey and Engagement Strategy; 3) Community Engagement; 4) Review Findings and Rewrite Comprehensive Plan; 5) Finalize Draft Plan and Present to Town Plan Commission.
- **Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.** At their March 1 meeting, the committee reached consensus on a framework for pursuing affordable housing in La Pointe. The framework is

comprehensive: It would stretch into years of work; not all activities would begin immediately or take place at the same time. Preferences include:

- Target audience (new and existing year-round workers who make 60-120 percent of the area median income; continue collecting data to accurately demonstrate and forecast need and benefits)
- Types of housing (rental and ownership opportunities, new construction and renovation if available, a continuum of options for all life cycles)
- Location (near town and transportation hubs, able to connect to sanitary sewer)
- Land acquisition and land use (identify Town-owned parcels that can be donated and developed; seek parcels or underutilized structures from private individuals or organizations who would donate or sell at a discount; pursue map changes, density exceptions, or other zoning modifications as appropriate to make development economically feasible)
- Development (pursue public, private, and nonprofit partnerships for financing, construction and management; investigate a land trust or similar model that will ensure long-term affordability)

#### **5. Grant Report**

- See Accounting Administrator Barb Nelson's report for the status of existing grant agreements. One update: The state's Forest Fire Protection grant extended its completion deadline to June 15. Our department is still waiting for delivery of two groups of equipment: radios and boots.

#### **6. Lawsuits/Legal Issues**

- **Defoe lawsuit.** No updates as of this date.
- **Mattingly judgment.** I expect to deliver an update at the March 8 meeting.

#### **7. Other Information**

- **Workforce Innovation Grant.** The Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. opened a second round of funding on Feb. 22 for collaborative efforts "to help the regions of Wisconsin solve their most pressing workforce challenges." I have asked Madeline Island Ferry Line whether they are interested in partnering in a grant application to recruit, train, and retain captains (possibly in conjunction with Washington Island and other communities that have similar maritime needs). The application deadline would be April 15.
- **Wisconsin Rural Economic Summit.** I listened in on the three-hour presentation Feb. 22. It was mostly an avalanche of data about demographic and workforce trends in rural parts of the state – most of it focused on communities (and even counties) far larger than ours. To me, the most-intriguing concept (and most relevant to La Pointe) is what University of Wisconsin economist Steven Dellar calls the "fourth wave" of economic development. He argues that people don't follow jobs, jobs follow people. In this environment, "place making" and quality of life are more important than tax breaks, for example. Communities thrive because they deliver amenities (parks, public safety, education, civic vitality) that attract people, who then create business opportunities and generate economic growth.
- **Gateway Sculpture.** The Public Arts Committee is planning Saturday July 30 for a dedication ceremony of the sculpture in Russell Park.