

## **Town Administrator's Report**

**January 13, 2015**

The areas, issues and initiatives in which we were involved and/or acted, since the last Regular Town Board Meeting, are as follows:

**Rice Street Feasibility Study Resolution** – Based on the discussion and consensus of the Board, at the last RTBM, a Resolution was drafted accepting the recommendation of the WisDot that they would, at their expense and effort, develop and produce a Feasibility Study with regard to the future of Rice Street. The Study would be the foundation for whatever direction the Town ultimately decided to pursue related to improvement, construction, etc. Importantly, the Feasibility Study would stand as the ‘product’ for which the US Dept of Trans \$ 95,000.00 was allocated. This will, ultimately, relieve the Town of responsibility for any potential repayment of the money. Representatives of WisDot have been kept in the loop and informed of progress and status. The Board will be taking up that Resolution at this evening’s meeting.

**Wage/Salary/Benefit Advance Policy and Documents** – A policy related to advances in wages, salary or benefits was researched and developed - along with the requisite form/agreement. The policy/issue was taken up at the Personnel Policy working group meeting for integration into the new PP – group member Potswald, out of an abundance of caution, communicated with the Wis Towns Association regarding legality/prudence of such a policy. The WTA was unequivocal that, while the policy is legal, it is a bad idea to establish or conduct a broad program of advances. It is a matter that should remain as a one-off, case-by-case issue rather than a broad and universal policy.

**Army Corps of Engineers – Expanding Dredge Limits** – Communication had been initiated some time ago about using the Design Deficiency Correction program to expand dredge limits in the harbor. The DDC was attractive insofar as it provided continuing funding for the expansion as opposed to one-time assistance after which the Town would bear responsibility – and cost – for maintaining the expanded dredge area. The Corp was recently contacted to

determine status and potential for the DDC program – the Corp continues to make requests for federal funding for the program – and will do so annually – with our harbor as a named project, but funding was not approved in this year’s cycle. Congressional contact and encouragement was discreetly recommended by the project managers.

**Alternative Energy Committee, CVAE Contract**— we have worked with Town Attorney, Alternative Energy Committee and Chippewa Valley to ensure we had an executed contract prior to a final report and presentation. While there have been several delays and the concern that accompanies them, we have arrived at a point at which we will have a signed contract, potentially by weeks’ end. The stickler was in the amount of “Errors and Omissions” insurance the Town would require. After having reviewed all documents and talking CVAE, we have squared things away – there is our standard \$ 1,000,000 general liability coverage (with the Town as a named insured) and \$ 500,000.00 E and O insurance as well. This is sufficient to protect the Town under the consulting contract. The final report and presentation is scheduled for February 6 at Town Hall.

**Hegwood Corrective Legislation** – The 2015-2016 Legislative Session began on January 5. We have been in continual communication with both Senator Bewley and Representative Meyers’ offices to ensure that our bills are introduced at the earliest possible moment – this in the hope that we can get the bills passed and the matter resolved in the 2015 session. Senator Bewley’s office is coordinating introduction in the Senate and Assembly. We have prepared an informational/advocacy packet which will be used when the bills have been assigned to committee – we will request a hearing before the respective committees immediately following that assignment. We have communicated with Ashland County to secure a Resolution of the County Board supporting and endorsing the legislation – the Administrator will draft that Resolution and submit it to the County Administrator for integration into the Cty Board Zoning and full Board agendas. The Wisconsin County’s Association has also been contacted – by Senator Bewley’s office to ensure they are supportive – or neutral – on our proposed legislation. There is reasonable, albeit guarded, optimism that the matter can be resolved in the near term.

**Windsled Re-Hulling and Replacement** – We have worked with and through the Winter Transportation Committee to research and evaluate Lake Assault Boats (a subsidiary of Fraser Shipyards, Superior, WI) as a potential designer/fabricator and installer of a new hull for the Windmark Ice Angel. Lake Assault Boats representatives and engineers visited the Island and examined the Ice Angel during start-up (when the floor boards were removed) and proposed potential designs for a new hull – those designs and prices will be received by January 16 and considered by the WTC at its next meeting – January 19. The importance of this contact and the progress made is that we are out in front of the timeframe in which Windsled’s Inc., believes a new hull will be necessary (approximately season after next – 2017). The information and cost will be used to secure grants. In addition, discussions have begun related to the potential of a new mid-size (15-18 passenger sled) using a modified design of the Lake Assault Boats current windsled.

**Additional Insurance Quotes For Town Coverage** – It has been reported that three (3) companies, in addition to the Horton Group, have been contacted with regard to securing alternative/comparative quotes for Town Insurance which is due for renewal @ June, 2015. One company, Rural Mutual, has visited the Island, measured and photographed buildings and met with the Administrator to ask questions and receive the redacted existing policy information. We expect that, at least, one additional company will be reviewing and proposing coverage which will give the Board three options to consider. The Town Attorney expressed some concern regarding casting farther afield for insurance given the complexity of Island coverage – Windsled, etc. – and the fact that Horton was fully familiar with all things unique about the Island – this is an issue the Board will need to consider as new proposers/proposals come forward.

**Long-Range Project Planning** – Discussions have been underway among the Department Heads and the Administrator regarding planning, sequencing and financing some of the capital projects that have been/are being considered for the Town, among them: Town Dock expansion, Solar/Microgrid, Road Equipment, EMS Roof, Playground, and Joni’s Beach. Communication with Smith Group JJR to ensure engineering and drawings are completed – on budget - to allow permit and grant applications to proceed. Additional grant possibilities are being researched and will be pursued – most recently the Rural Development Grant program has been contacted with regard to a the EMS roof. We are trying to

assess, plan and sequence these projects with the understanding that we are going to have to be aggressive and creative regarding necessary revenue generation – the Board will receive continuing updates as to progress and status.

**Increased Publication of Town Board and Committee Mtgs** – We have been in communication with the new Chamber Director to begin using the weekly infoblast and Chamber information vehicles to increase publication of Town meetings – whether they be Board, Committee or Commission. Max Paap is working up a schedule and deadline for information from the Town for inclusion in their publications. This additional avenue will provide broader and deeper reach in the community to expand announcements and, as a result, participation.