

Regular Town Board Meeting of September 8, 2020

Meeting was held at the Town Hall in Sayner. Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chairman Maines. The Chairman noted that this Regular Meeting of the Town of Plum Lake Board of Supervisors was held at the Town Hall in Sayner on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020. The meeting was duly called with notice posted at the Town Hall in Sayner, the Sayner Post Office, Star Lake Post Office, and notice given to the Vilas County News-Review, The Lakeland Times, WRJO and WERL, as well as posted on the Town Website. Supervisor Schmidt, Supervisor Rasmussen and Clerk Brooker were present and 12 other people. Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda to be Discussed in any Order:

Supervisor Rasmussen made a motion to approve discussing the agenda in any order, Supervisor Schmidt seconded; motion carried.

Question & Answer session with VCEDC Representatives on Broadband:

Kathy Schmitz introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Vilas County Economic Development Corporation. She then introduced Jim Tuckwell as the Board Chairman who was present through teleconference. Bill Niemuth who is leading Boulder Junction was tied up at a meeting in that Town. Kathy started by saying that Broadband is essential for economic growth. She said her committee in February started an initiative to study Broadband in Vilas County by talking with all the ISP's (Internet Service Providers) and Towns. They then compiled all the information and presented it to the Towns and the County Board. The information is available on the Vilas County Economic Development website on the Broadband Tab. Moving forward, Jim said that himself, Kathy and Bill are available to help guide each Town and set up the process to form Committees. They suggest 3 to 4 dedicated people on a committee to help move their town forward to Broadband. There is a Grant available from PSC September 1st thru December 2020. Jim said they have 3 to 4 ISP's extremely interested in working with the various Towns.

Sheehan Donoghue wanted to know about the sign in Town that is advertising Broadband. It is thought to be a company out of Adams County which is an agent for HughesNet. Secondly, she asked who was laying all the lines on Razorback to Camp Highland. Bill Niemuth at this point joined the conversation via phone and said it was Frontier and informed everyone that Frontier had filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy and was bought out by its creditors who now own and operate the company. The line being laid on Razorback is being done thanks to a Connect America Fund Grant. The creditors who bought out Frontier are helping people get Broadband. Knowledge was shared that Broadband is slowed down significantly once it routes into the copper wires already in place servicing the outlying areas. It was noted that right now Vilas County is below the Federal minimums for Broadband speed. Sheehan Donoghue wanted to know who she could contact for Frontier Chapter 11 information. Jim said that starting in October the next available Federal Grant called the World Digital Opportunity Fund will be launching; aka ARDA. This new round of Funding will be committed to Fiber and won't be laying any more copper. The ISP's will be competing with each other. After October 29th, the bids will be looked at to determine which companies will be doing which areas.

Dale Buss asked if the County was planning on taking over getting Broadband. Kathy said the County hadn't figured out what their role would be yet, but that they were incredibly supportive in acquiring Broadband. Dale asked about the satellite service scheduled to go online this Fall with speeds comparable to Broadband and wondered if it would be a better deal for the Town. Bill answered that Star Lake has gotten a lot of attention but said there was still a lot to be determined. They haven't done any Beta testing yet, but Alpha testing shows positive results, but the speeds were disappointing. Bill said buyers should beware until it's up and commercialized to see where the speeds are and if there will be data caps etc. Bill feels the best delivery mechanism is fiber optics. He recommends that Towns wait and see the outcome of the satellite systems. Jim added that Towns really should be considering what they think will be needed 3 to 5 years from now as things are changing so fast. Dale Buss was still concerned about free satellite versus the Town having to take out a loan for Broadband. Kim Lechner said she felt the Town should be looking at all the ISP providers and not just Frontier to decide what the Towns best option would be. She also asked about fund raising and grant status. Bill thought that looking at all the ISP's made good sense and said Boulder Junctions funding was coming from a combination of the Town, WPS and CenturyLink and fund raising. Kim noted that Plum Lake was rated last for their internet connection services. Jim added that connection speed service can raise or lower the value of your property. Supervisor Schmidt had a question on if it was impossible to get Grant funding right now. Jim clarified that just starting out in the process of decisions, the time would most likely be too short for the Town to meet the time frame of the Grant available right now with their deadline being December 1st to have your requests submitted. Clerk Brooker asked when more Grants would become available. Bill answered that by next Fall, the Town should have all their decisions made to get in on the 2022 Grant funding.

Signing a Right - of - Way Plat for the Eliason St. Project:

Jeff Demuth from MSA provided a copy of the Plat to show the Board members and explained the next steps to keep things moving. He said he would need a motion to resolve to approve the plat, and next step would be a final print of the Plat which the Town Chairman would then sign and that would then go to the Court House to be recorded. There will also be a limited temporary easement along the south side of Eliason Street during the construction period. Supervisor Rasmussen made a motion to resolve the approval of the Plat for the Eliason Street Road Transportation Project as proposed, Supervisor Schmidt seconded; motion carried.

Citizens Comments and Correspondence:

Sheehan Donoghue asked if the Lions Club paid for the new Pavilion. The Chairman said that the Vern Wiggemhauser Memorial Fund was going towards it and the Lions Club would cover the rest. Clerk Brooker said that she had just heard that the Alexander Foundation had also donated \$5,000 towards the Pavilion too. Sheehan thought there should be a ceremony for when the Lions Club transfers the Pavilion to the Town and that they should invite Billie Wiggemhauser. Sheehan also questioned #6 and #15 of the agenda saying that they seemed like duplicates. The Chairman explained #6 covered plans and #15 covered funding. Dale Buss asked about the \$4,000 that was supposed to go to the Fire Department. The Clerk said it wasn't on the agenda but would be put on next months.

Approve Minutes from Past Meetings:

Chairman Maines asked if everyone had read the minutes and if any changes were needed. Supervisor Schmidt made a motion to approve the minutes of 4 meetings as presented. Supervisor Rasmussen seconded; motion carried.

Splitting Clerk/Treasurer Position:

Chairman Maines said the workload of the Clerk/Treasurer position has increased tremendously and Clerk Brooker is amiable to splitting the positions back to the way they were in the past. Supervisor Schmidt said he needs more information, such as a breakdown of hours for each position and to check with other Towns and see what the percentage of the workload is in their Towns and what they are paying. Supervisor Rasmussen asked what the time frame was to make the change, and Clerk Brooker said November. It was mentioned it could be an appointed position but would need to go to the Electors for approval. The Chairman said it would be tabled till the next month's meeting when they can go over the information that Clerk Brooker was asked to provide for them.

Building Projects for the Town of Plum Lake:

Chairman Maines said that work would be started this Fall on the Town Garage and the Sand/Salt Shed. Supervisor Schmidt reported that the final plans are done. Clerk Brooker had some questions for the Board. One was if they would be willing to accept bids by email and the other is about whether the meeting should be closed or open when they open the bids. Chairman Maines said he would prefer an open meeting. Supervisor Schmidt said he will contact Steve Jamroz to find out more about accepting bids by email and to ask him his thoughts on opening bids in a closed session versus an open session. He said he also had a couple questions he needed to ask Jake Silkey about the Sand/Salt Shed. Chairman Maines said he would hold off on getting the plans sent out for bids till Supervisor Schmidt had his answers and said if need be, he would call a Special Meeting to get the bids out.

Approval of Cemetery Deed for the Dan & Carla Zimmer :

Clerk Brooker didn't have the information available for the Board to act on for approving the cemetery Deeds. It was decided to put it on the agenda for the meeting scheduled for September 22nd.

Deferring Payroll Taxes:

After discussion Supervisor Schmidt made a motion to decline deferring payroll taxes for the rest of this year. Supervisor Rasmussen seconded; motion carried.

Forming a Citizens Committee for Broadband Grants:

Chairman Maines said Dale Buss had agreed to serve on the Committee. Dale spoke up and said he would like to gather a little more information from Kathy Schmitz about forming the Committee before moving forward. He said he would have the information by the September 22nd Meeting. Chairman Maines said he would table discussion until the meeting on 9/22.

Water Cooler for Town Hall:

Chairman Maines reported that the water cooler died and a new one could be bought for \$320 or it could be rented for \$9.95 a month. After discussion, Supervisor Schmidt made a motion to purchase a new water cooler for the Town Hall in the amount of \$320. Supervisor Rasmussen seconded; motion carried.

Grader Repairs:

After discussion, since the oil leak wasn't too bad, the Board decided to use the Grader as is and put off repairs until the next budget cycle.

Bid Specs for Nixon Lake Road Repairs:

Supervisor Schmidt said he had asked Brian to put the bid specs together and expects him to have them put together soon. Clerk Brooker is to call Brian and find out his time status of getting the bid specs to the Town. Supervisor Schmidt was worried about losing the grant money. Chairman Maines reported the Town won't lose the grant money according to his talk with Craig Dalton, who said the money is waiting in the bank. If Brian gets the bid specs to the Town by the 22nd, getting the bids out can be addressed at the meeting on the 22nd of September.

Repairs to Camp 2 Road:

Chairman Maines said he had taken a ride to look the road over and said it was in bad shape. Supervisor Schmidt said he and Brian Pitlik had looked the road over too and he had asked Brian to put specs together for grinding the blacktop down and then putting gravel over it. Supervisor Rasmussen had also driven up to look the road over and asked if all the black top would be ground up including the blacktop on Weschler Rd. The Chairman said he wasn't aware it had blacktop but would look into it. Clerk Brooker is to call Brian and ask if the bid specs are done for Camp 2 Road yet. Chairman Maines said they would hold off on a decision until they hear from Brian. If need be, he suggested filling in the small holes with cold patch and the larger ones to be filled in with gravel to hold as a temporary fix to get through the winter. Supervisor Schmidt thinks there would be enough funds in the road resurfacing line of the budget. Chairman Maines brought up that it was earmarked for Golf Course Road, but it was agreed that Camp 2 was in worse shape.

Approval of Loans for Building Projects and for Road Projects:

Chairman Maines shared that Tom Reed had recommended that the Town take out a 10-year loan instead of a 20-year loan and that they should combine the Road and Building Projects into one loan at an interest rate of 2.75%. After discussion, the Board members came to an agreement to take Tom's advice. Supervisor Schmidt specified that he was okay combining the loans but wanted them broken down under capital outlay. Supervisor Schmidt made a motion to borrow \$1.25 million with \$250,000 to be used on road projects and \$1 million for the building projects. Supervisor Rasmussen seconded; motion carried. Chairman Maines is to call Tom Reed to get the loan process started.

Approve Vouchers for Payment:

After brief discussion, Supervisor Rasmussen made a motion to approve paying the vouchers for the amount of \$167,701.85. Supervisor Schmidt seconded; motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm. A voice recording of this meeting is available in the Clerk's office. These minutes were taken at the Regular Town Board Meeting of the Town of Plum Lake held on the 8th day of September 2020 and were entered in this Record Book by: