

Town of Menasha Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
7th Annual Spring Organizational Workshop
Fire Station #40 - 1326 Cold Spring Road - Friday, May 8, 2009
7:00 am - 12:00 pm

Minutes

Town Chair Arden Tews called the meeting to order at 7:05 a.m. Present were Supervisors Gerhart, Hanson, Ziegler and Youngquist, Administrator Sturgell, Comm. Dev. Dir. Dearborn, Clerk Backman, Police Chief McCants, Assessor Eiberger, Asst. Assessor Telfer, Wastewater Supt. Laabs, Water Supt. Roth, Admin. Asst./Hum. Res. Coord. Burrill, Park & Rec. Dir. Kading, Finance Dir. Piergrossi, Street Supt. Gallow, Network Admin. Plagenz, Fire Chief Kiesow, Dep. Fire Chief Phillips. Resident Josh Woodside was also in attendance.

Administrator's Update

Solid Waste Ordinance and Policy

Adm. Sturgell gave an update. He reviewed the timeline for adoption of Chapter 10 Solid Waste, resident cart selection (no vendor yet selected), and educational tools being used to promote the changeover of solid waste and automated recycling. Adm. Sturgell explained 7 RFP's were received with favorable results. Town staff attended a meeting with Oshkosh representatives on May 5 and narrowed their selection to four vendors. There will be another meeting on May 12 with further discussion. Board members asked questions about warranties, who pays for a damaged cart, if moving/exchange of container size by new resident, additional fees for exchanging/upgrading, pickup costs, the disabled handling a cart, overflow of refuse/tagging, having one uniform cart size versus by choice. Adm. Sturgell referred to a draft handout, "Town of Menasha Solid Waste and Other Waste Disposal Policy" which answers most of these questions (attached). Possible drop-off sites may be made available. Solid waste and recycling pickup dates, and number of trucks used was also discussed.

Stormwater Utility Formation

Adm. Sturgell gave a timeline for the formation of the stormwater utility; June 22 for a public hearing, and first reading of the ordinance; July 13 for second reading and adoption; and fees implemented possibly Jan 1, 2010. Finance Dir. Piergrossi stated the Finance Dept. needed about two to three months for bill setup and she has contacted HTE to see about the possibility of doing a mass data entry. Creation of a Credit Policy was discussed. Adm. Sturgell explained discussions with Michels on impervious surfaces in open pits and their claim of already achieving over 90% of particulate removal. The DNR must determine how to handle this; stormwater fees may then be affected.

Fiber Optics Update

Adm. Sturgell and Network Admin. Plagenz met with the County Sheriff's Dept. and Menasha Utilities about sharing costs of this project. Apparently Neenah School District has now shown interest in sharing as well. A map was shown of the path where the fiber optics will eventually run. The projects must pass various County committee and board meetings, and upon approval, the Town could place this topic on a meeting agenda in July or August with project design in fall 2009. It may then be bid in Feb/Mar 2010, with construction in the spring. The budgeted cost was \$300,000 (Phase 1) if the Town/Utility did the entire project with no cost sharing.

Emerald Ash Borer

Park Dir. Kading gave an update stating the ash borer is close to our WI borders. He gave actions the Town must take such as revise our ordinances, eliminate ash trees, deal with infected trees including trees in parks and right-of-ways, and fund availability for labor for tree removal and treatments. A draft ordinance may be completed next month for Town Board approval.

Business Licenses

Clerk Backman gave the timeline from 2002 when business licenses were researched, a committee formed, and an ordinance placed before the Town Board but went nowhere due to a proposed annual fee. Ever since, she stated most all Town departments have had the need for a business listing, particularly Police and Fire for emergency contact information. In 2008, a committee regrouped and a presentation given at a Town Board meeting promoting registration of town businesses. Clerk Backman explained the HTE Occupational Licensing Program was purchased specifically for this purpose and too cumbersome for the small amount of licenses it is now being used for. Due to the availability of staff in the Clerk's office having no upcoming elections for this year, Clerk Backman asked

whether Board members would reconsider implementing the Business Registration list. It would require passage of an ordinance, distributing an application to businesses to gather accurate contact information, and stressed businesses would benefit through promoting. Comm. Dev. Dearborn and Deputy Fire Chief Phillips gave several comments and reasons for registering businesses, gave positive reasons for collecting current information to benefit the Town's departments, and ways in which to help in promoting our local town businesses. Board members commented. Chairman Tews agreed with the importance of creating a business listing although he felt he would not want to initiate a license nor a fee at this time.

At 8:45 a.m., a break was taken.

Looking Forward to the 2010 Budget

Finance Dir. Piergrossi stated that upon direction from Administration, she was asked to give a broad picture of assumptions for the 2010 budget. She reviewed in detail payroll, and revenues and expenditures budgeted from the 2009 budget and the built in assumptions (with exceptions noted) for 2010.

Finance Dir. Piergrossi noted the \$700,000 shortfall for 2010 and asked the Board for direction. She discussed how all debts have decreased capital accounts over the last five years. She gave an example of how the Park & Rec. Dept. reduced their Capital Park Misc. account \$50,000. Options discussed were looking at more cost effective health plans and paying deductibles, and reviewing how we provide customer service. Dir. Piergrossi requested that the Board think about how to handle the Community Center renovation debt that is paid for from the open space fund which was \$25,000 in 2009 and increased to \$50,000 in 2010, and whether the Park Dept. can pay for something else with these funds.

Reviewed were charts of: a Cross-sectional Analysis of Expenditures for the General and Debt Service Funds, and General Fund Balance Analysis, 2009 Budget Splits, and Stormwater Utility Total Savings for General Fund (schedules attached). Director Piergrossi stated in 2010 there will not be much room for movement in the budget unless we get more revenues than anticipated. She then gave the 2009 percentage splits by department for Town/Utility, and gave new percentage splits for the proposed 2010 stormwater utility. The Board noted the Assessor missing in the calculation and discussed with staff the prospect of going back for work already performed, although Piergrossi stated you must start with the date the utility was formed, and the Board questioned whether this is governed by state statute. With the stormwater utility formation, the Town general fund will see a \$415,000 expenditure reduction which still leaves approximately \$275,000 shortfall.

Supervisor Youngquist and Chairman Tews questioned the starting date due to the Street Dept. having performed work over the past year and one half doing developing and planning. Adm. Sturgell stated he will check with the town attorney.

Finance Dir. Piergrossi once again asked for some direction.

Supervisor Youngquist gave the following suggestion: 1-\$70,000 out of contingency; 2-\$100,000 removed from road resurfacing; 3-Replacement fund: re-evaluate lives of equipment & vehicles to stretch out further; 4-Reduce customer service levels; 5-Look at Health Ins. (deductibles) and change policies of union & non-union employees. Adm. Sturgell commented and reminded the Board members that staff had been reduced a few years ago with reducing the Dep. Clerk to part-time, eliminating a Finance Clerk, and gave such examples. He stated he felt we were already at bottom for staff as we are and we must think of our residents or deal with complaints which will funnel back to the department staff. Supervisor Ziegler agreed that everywhere you go recently service levels are down. Ziegler also asked Chief McCants about reducing 24/7 officers, and Chief stated they are at their minimum in the department now.

Chairman Tews suggested the following: 1-Less salting, snow plow only when 2-3 in. of snow; 2-Don't plow the trails; 3-Reduce grass cutting; 4-Stretch out the Vehicle Replacement fund 2-3 more yrs.; 5-Hold off on capital spending to reduce 2009 budgeted deficit; 6-Look at Health Insurance savings.

Supervisor Hanson stated some businesses are doing a two-week employee layoff, or cut back on the position; different insurance/same coverage to save money. Again, the Administrator stressed that there will be impacts when reducing staff; Street Supt. Gallow asked the Board to understand and support the departments because, he stated, we are doing the best that we can with what we have. Fire Chief Kiesow stated that since 2008 we have continually had to cut back and asked what the breaking point will be--we can't cut anymore. They are short term fixes, but long term problems.

A short break was taken. Due to some time available prior to the zoning ordinance update, the Assessors presented a PowerPoint presentation - below.

"Assessing Using a Full Value Maintenance Approach"

Assessor Eiberger opened the discussion by announcing since the 2004 Re-evaluation, the Assessors have used a software program called a CAMA System to obtain data, do analysis, management and reports. They have continued monitoring the market, while maintaining the tax base.

Asst. Assessor Telfer began the presentation by giving some history on previous reassessments from 1985 up to the 2004 Re-evaluation of the Town and described how homes, a building, and various areas/floors of homes were missed and how it affects all property values. The potential of using the Town's own in-house assessors (with possible seasonal help) to perform the task of a town re-assessment was explained in detail. Asst. Telfer explained the use of the same methods as outside firms and utilizing the same maintenance procedures currently used. There would be field review of 1/5 of residential improvements every year, and field review of commercial improvements varying dependent on the market, with statistical analysis of each parcel value annually. Asst. Telfer explained the need for reassessments every 5-10 years, and the importance of maintaining an equal tax base. Several positive reasons were given for an in-house re-evaluation such as having control of the assessing process/maintenance, better communication with the property owners, maintaining an equal tax base, and sustainability benefits. Telfer stated hopefully in June, the assessors will be putting together a financial analysis on this concept.

Finance Dir. Piergrossi's opinion was that having equalized values helps in equal distribution of the other taxing jurisdictions' tax bases; the Town's borrowing maximum capability would increase since it is based on 5% of equalized value; seasonal employees are more cost effective but would fall under the levy limits set by the state, however contracted services are able to be borrowed for; there is also substantial savings. Asst. Telfer stated there would be the ability to shift monies around more frequently, rather than over 10 years. Supervisor Ziegler commented that we should keep equalized values low to keep people moving into the Town of Menasha.

Zoning Ordinance Update

Comm. Dev. Dir. Dearborn gave an update on the Town having their own zoning. A committee has been reviewing the County Zoning ordinance and Dir. Dearborn feels that near year-end or early 2010, there will be a recommendation to stay in or opt out of County zoning. The Town Board must adopt a new ordinance, and create a Board of Adjustment, and gave benefits. Dir. Dearborn stated the Town will do the same things done at the County, State and Federal levels such as advertising, and holding of public hearings. Things to think about are the added staff time involved, and the establishing of new fees. He described the process of quasi-judicial actions and the change of roles and responsibilities by serving on boards. The Town will also appoint a Board of Appeals comprised of citizen members. Discussion ensued about Town Board members serving on boards and the importance of impartiality when making decisions. Adm. Sturgell alerted supervisors that they must be careful when serving on Boards because their rolls can change from their roll as a Supervisor to their roll as a Board member, and explained.

Street Maintenance Program

Street Supt. Gallow explained how the Street Dept. budgets for the various road projects. He explained a form called the 2007 Pavement Rating-Mileage Totals, used to evaluate what type of action is needed on roads based on ratings from 10 (best condition) to 1 (worst condition), and the total number of miles to correct. The pavement rating is done every two years. Supt. Gallow presented descriptions of the ratings from 10-1 for concrete pavement, and asphalt pavement, and gave various examples. Supt. Gallow stated it takes him one week to evaluate all the roads in the entire Town. Supervisor Youngquist asked if there has been progress with our road maintenance, and Supt. Gallow said no, we are going backwards. Supt. Gallow and Town Engineer Lee Reibold met and will be providing the Board with a plan for the Town's 97 miles of roads. Chairman Tews asked whether, in order to achieve this, the Town should be special assessing and it was discussed. Supt. Gallow discussed borrowing, however Finance Dir. Piergrossi stated you pay interest but it stays off the levy. Supt. Gallow asked for direction from the Board. In order to remedy the deterioration of Town roads, what can he do to achieve this; have more equipment, more people... The Board asked about crack sealing and having our own machine, but Supt. Gallow stated the Town outsources because it is more cost effective for us.

Open Discussion

The Town Board had asked Finance Dir. Piergrossi to investigate other auditors to provide service to the Town for the 2009 financial statements. In order to obtain RFPs, she first pooled other municipalities and found Schenck Business Solutions to be the largest used firm, followed by Virchow Krause, and then Clifton Gunderson. However, discussion ensued with the preferred auditor, Schenck, and Town Board Supervisor Youngquist being an employee of the firm who refuses to audit while Supv. Youngquist is working for the Town. Differences in the three firms was discussed with two other companies under consideration, however Dir. Piergrossi asked Board members whether they would delay for one year the obtaining of RFPs for an auditor. The Board agreed to wait.

With no further discussion, Chairman Tews thanked all of the staff, expressing how proud he was of them in these difficult economic times. Adm. Sturgell agreed and also expressed his thanks stating, there are other communities in worse shape than the Town of Menasha. We have good debt levels, and the addition of the storm water utility will bring us in line.

At 11:55 p.m., the spring workshop adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Backman, Town Clerk

Note: *These minutes are not to be considered official until acted upon at an upcoming regular meeting, therefore, are subject to revision.*