

TO: Town Board
FROM: Michael Kuchta
RE: Town Administrator's Report

DATES COVERED IN REPORT: Aug. 21-Sept. 9, 2021

1. Accomplished/Completed

- No updates

2. Coming Up

- **Friends of Madeline Island Museum.** I facilitated meetings on Aug. 30 and Sept. 13 with about a dozen residents interested in starting a Friends group for the museum. They are working on bylaws and a memorandum of understanding with the state historical society. I will join them this Thursday, Sept. 16, when they meet with a team of administrators from the historical society who are visiting the island.
- **Bayfield School District.** The school board holds its monthly meeting Sept. 20; I and others will be meeting with district administrator Beth Paap ahead of time.
- **Community Awards Committee.** Glenn will suggest nominees for you to appoint at your Sept. 28 meeting.

3. Town Board Agenda – Information/Comments

- **Rec Center Renovation.** You have a separate memo on revisions to this bid and other proposals to close the funding gap. Ben Schram and Ray Hakola will be available to discuss options and answer your questions.
- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.** You have a separate memo on this recommendation, which you made on Aug. 26.
- **2022 Budget Process.** Barb Nelson and I have drafted a budget schedule. You have a separate memo on the basics.
- **Contract Amendment for Big Water Fire Apparatus.** The contractor is requesting advance payment so he can acquire the fire department equipment described in Invoice 090221. Approving the contract amendment would allow us to do this now and through the end of 2022 if other situations arise where his vendors require payment up front.

4. Follow Up on Previous/Ongoing Projects

- **Public Arts Committee.** Members continue to work through details, funding, and legalities for the fabrication, installation, and rights agreements for the proposed Gateway sculpture.
- **Airport Ordinance.** I met Sept. 2 with Paul Wilharm and Dave Donkers; we made substantial progress toward a final draft of an airport ordinance.
- **Affordable Housing Committee.** Members have completed 26 face-to-face surveys with Madeline Island employers to get information on how housing on the island affects their businesses. A few preliminary highlights:
 - Four out of five employers say a shortage of housing limits their ability to hire workers
 - Two out of three employers say a shortage of housing limits their days and hours
 - According to employers, 90 percent of their workers live *off* the island
 - In an open-ended question, half of employers volunteered that the ferry schedule is a barrier in hiring and retaining workers; 40 percent said the same thing about ferry costs.

Other barriers mentioned include an overall shortage of workers (including in skilled trades), government unemployment payments, and the island's high cost of living.

5. Grant Report

- **Compeer Financial Services.** I submitted applications for grants for the Ambulance Service and Fire Department on Aug. 31.
- **Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.** I am working with Ben Schram to develop an RFP for engineering work to upgrade access to the lagoon at Big Bay Town Park. We estimate engineering would be in excess of \$40,000. The local match would be 50 percent. The grant application deadline is Nov. 5.

6. Lawsuits/Legal Issues

- No update

7. Other Information

- **Census data.** Micaela Montagne received information from Ashland County that, according to census data, La Pointe Township has 428 residents (427 on Madeline Island). That is an increase of 167, or 64 percent, from the 2010 census. Overall, the county lost population. A breakdown of La Pointe census data:
 - Population: 428
 - Voting age population: 370
 - Demographics: White: 376; Black: 23; Hispanic: 7; Asian: 2; Native American: 14; Multiracial: 3; Other: 3
- **Redistricting.** Ashland County will use the latest population data to determine redistricting for county board seats. On Sept. 7, the county's redistricting committee recommended a plan to the full County Board that would put the island in a new district – combining it with the eastern shoreline of the City of Ashland. The proposed district would have a total population of 810 and a voting age population of 679. If the numbers are correct, that increases the opportunity for an island resident to be elected to the county board. The county board holds a preliminary vote on redistricting on Sept. 16; municipalities then have until Oct. 18 to officially weigh in. The City of Ashland, in particular, has significant decisions to make, including how it will redraw its municipal voting boundaries and whether it will reduce the number of city council seats. It is conceivable that, depending on what the city does, the county also could reduce the number of board seats. That would change district boundaries again. The county holds a preliminary vote on final changes on Oct. 26; a public hearing and final vote are scheduled for Nov. 9.
- **Public safety.** I met Sept. 2 with the police chief, fire chief, and ambulance director to review protocols on incident command and managing volunteer crew members who show up when they or their department have not been toned out.
- **Ferry line.** I have requested a meeting with Robin Russell to discuss 2022 ferry scheduling. She says it is too soon "to formulate even an outline of the ferry schedule for 2022." She believes that late December or early January would be a more opportune time.