

# MEMO

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

DATES COVERED IN REPORT: June 10-23, 2022

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## 1. Accomplished/Completed

- See details in individual categories below.

## 2. Coming Up

- **Covid Vaccine Clinic.** Ashland County Public Health holds a free, walk-in clinic at the ESB on Tuesday June 28 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

## 3. Town Board Agenda – Information/Comments

- **John Deere Bulldozer.** The Public Works director requests authorization to sell the 1988 John Deere 450G Bulldozer to McCoy Construction and Forestry in Ashland for \$17,000. Proceeds would go toward purchase of the John Deere 444K Wheel Loader, which the Town Board approved when the wheel loader lease expires at the end of July. Research suggests that this sale price for the bulldozer is higher than the Town would receive at auction.
- **Dock Railing.** Nelson Construction is requesting authorization to replace three 8-foot sections of railing on the north side of the Town Dock with chains or cables, to make barge loading easier. All work and materials would be at their expense. The letter and drawing are in your packet.
- **Rec Center Contract.** Because of ongoing supply chain challenges in acquiring materials, the completion date needs to be extended to July 31, 2022. The first page of the contract, containing all the amended language, is in your packet.
- **Parks Department wages.** The Public Works director recommends the following wage increases for seasonal Parks employees:
  - Evans Mealman (Parks 1), a 25-cent increase, to \$18.50/hour, effective June 26, 2022
  - Ciara Wiggins (Parks 2), a 50-cent increase, to \$17.00/hour, effective June 26, 2022
- **Recycling Specialist Comp Time Request.** The Public Works director recommends approving up to 80 hours of accruable comp time for David Cook, effective June 19, 2022.
- **Ashland County Law Enforcement Agreement.** The County Board's law enforcement committee meets at 5 p.m. on Monday June 27. I will listen in and provide any relevant updates. The Town Board meets at 5 p.m. on Wednesday June 29 at the ESB to compile information and community feedback on law enforcement coverage on the island.
- **Audit.** Vanessa Kane and Kim Shult of Baker Tilly will give an overview of their 2020 and 2021 audit reports. Baker Tilly delivered its draft report for calendar year 2021 this month; it delivered the audit for 2020 this past February. The auditors' primary concern of significance is that, because of limited staffing, the Town does not build "double-checking" into the preparation of its financial reports. (The auditors concern about not preparing statements "in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America" refers mostly to the fact that the Town historically used "modified cash basis" accounting, not accrual, which the auditing world prefers. That shift is being made.)

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In addition, there are a few recommendations the Board will have to look at long term: the Town is legally required to adopt a budget for each designated fund, not just the General Fund, and to create a debt service fund (see Note 2 on Page 20 in the 2021 Financial Statements). Also recommended: increasing our capitalization threshold (see Page 7 of the 2021 Audit Results Letter), and preparing for new GASB standards, primarily on leases (see Page 19 of the 2021 Audit Results Letter).

- **Emergency Services Building.** Robert Krzyzanowski, director of emergency services at Wendel Companies, met in person on June 15 with Town staff and Town Board member Mike Anderson to continue discussions on the compressor warranty issue. If weather cooperates, Berghammer is scheduled to do gutter and other warranty repairs on Tuesday June 28.
- **Liquor Licenses.** Bell Street Tavern is applying for a "Class B" license that, under state statute Chapter 125.51(4)(v)1 is available only to: "A full-service restaurant that has an interior, permanent seating capacity of 300 or more persons." Your packet includes an architectural plan for Bell Street Tavern calculating that they have useable floor space of 4,142 square feet. Wisconsin Administrative Code SPS 376.05(4) states: "In cafes, restaurants and taverns the capacity shall be based on 10 square feet of net floor area per person." Similarly, SPS 377.02(1) states: "Where permanently fixed seats are not provided, the capacity shall be established by allowing 10 square feet of floor space per person in areas used as dining rooms and dance halls..." That calculation would give Bell Street Tavern a capacity of 414. Your packet also includes advice from the Town Attorney.

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

- **Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.** The committee created a one-page flier explaining their work and informing people how they can help. Members held two phone conversations with principals from Cinnaire, the developers who led the workforce housing project on Mackinac Island. One of those officials is scheduled to visit La Pointe on July 6 to continue discussions about a market analysis and other preliminary steps toward building housing here. The WHEDA Pilot Project for Chequamegon Bay continues; I attended the two-day "ideation session" on June 21-22.
- **Big Bay Sidewalk.** The site survey was completed June 22; stakes show where a 5-foot easement from the property lines would be located. However, if the sidewalk starts next to the curb in the public right of way, a much narrower easement would be possible for much of the project (perhaps only 2 or 3 feet), especially the closer the sidewalk gets to Whitefish.
- **Community Awards Committee.** Names are installed on the plaques in Town Hall; presentations are scheduled for the July 4 celebration.
- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.** The island-wide survey is now available online; paper versions are at Town Hall. Promotional mailings were sent to approximately 475 island post office boxes on June 11, and to off-island street addresses of approximately 535 property owners on June 21. Additional promotion continues. The survey is open until July 10. The survey will be followed by three community forums in early August.
- **Energy Committee.** The committee received the draft report from muGrid Analytics' microgrid feasibility study. Under terms of the state grant, the final report must be submitted to the state's Office of Energy Innovation by Thursday June 30. The study's key findings: It is feasible to link the Town Hall, Library and Clinic into a self-sustaining electricity microgrid. Doing so would

require reconfiguring the existing utility infrastructure along Big Bay Road. The Town cluster could operate for 30 days (and probably longer) in the event of a major outage on the main grid; sustainability would utilize a combination of existing solar power, existing propane generators, and new battery storage and grid control equipment. Unlike in many microgrid projects, the majority of the cost would be in infrastructure reconfiguration, not in new equipment. Initial cost estimates are in the range of \$350,000-\$680,000. The Town could use Xcel's Power Resiliency Program as a source of financing.

- **Fire Department RFP.** The RFP has been published. In addition, invitations were sent directly to four manufacturers.
- **Industrial Zone Leases.** We sent letters to two leaseholders who have materials spilling out of their leased land into the main road. They have until June 30 to remove the materials or Town crews will confiscate and scrap the items, at the leaseholders' expense. Also, we are trying to get current liability insurance information from leaseholders of industrial lots and airport hangars; to date, about half have cooperated.
- **Parks.** The department is removing the posting for the Parks #3 position. Hours will be redistributed among other Parks staff.
- **Police Overnight Compensation.** von Brissen has signed off on a final draft for a formal policy. The police department is reviewing the draft to make sure it covers all situations. We then will cost out the policy based on recent work schedules and bring it to the Town Board for action.
- **Public Arts Committee.** The crane sculpture was installed in Russell Park on June 16; the interpretive sign was installed a few days earlier. Landscaping and other finishing work remains. The committee continues to plan for the July 30 dedication.
- **Revaluation.** North Country Appraisal Services estimates that beginning a revaluation in 2023, if required, would cost \$70,000-\$75,000 over three years. Typically, payment is 25 percent in year one, 50 percent in year two, and 25 percent in year three.
- **Roads, Dock, Harbor.** The passenger shelter was installed on the Town Dock on June 22. Power hook-ups will occur at a later date.

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

- We are waiting to receive a contract for the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program grant to do a feasibility study on expanding mobility access at Big Bay Town Park. The grant year begins July 1; once a contract arrives, we could begin soliciting engineering firms for the study.

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

- No update.

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

- Nothing additional.