



La Pointe Harbor Commission
Madeline Island

Stay Tuned
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The Harbor Commission, after the sprint to complete our applications for federal funding to underwrite an upcoming purchase agreement, now must wait (a bit) before taking that next step. In the last weeks of spring, we will know the value of the assistance that will come our way. That knowledge will inform every aspect of the purchase and payment process. In the meantime, there's plenty of work on our plate.

When an organization is working through the challenges of its formation, a little help can be particularly welcome. The Harbor Commission, as of this writing, sits in a position that demands spending money now while anticipating income that will come later. Our small and highly valued team of legal counsel, property, vessel and financial advisors are defining the purchase and financing options I spoke of in the last Gazette. Together, they are helping us map the course ahead through what you'll forgive me for saying, are wholly new waters. It will surprise no one that these 'navigational instruments' come with very real costs.

The Town Board has twice stepped up to loan the Commission start-up funds it is using to launch the organization that will purchase and operate a publicly administered ferry service. In Oct we received \$47K. In March, \$50K. Today, we are focusing on how and when those dollars will be paid back to the Town. Here is where more friends have stepped in. The story begins with Governor Evers' annual state budget. Anticipating the Commission's formation expenses, we asked, in November 2022, that somewhere in his 2023 budget, \$200K be set aside to pay back our loans from the Town.

As you may know, the Gov's budget recommendation is a necessary but by no means only step in defining the WI State budget. Every even numbered year budget requests are submitted. By good fortune, last year was an even numbered year. The process then stipulates that, in March of odd-numbered years, the Governor releases a capital budget for consideration by the State legislature. In early March senior staff in the Gov's office wrote us to say, "Your request was identified as a potential eligible project for the Neighborhood Capital Investment Fund Grant Program.....I encourage you to have discussions with legislative members.....to include this important program in the final State budget." And, thanks to Sen Romaine Quinn and Rep Chanz Green that is precisely what has happened.

Last month, Sen Quinn introduced a Senate budget amendment for \$200K to be directed to the La Pointe Harbor Commission, "...for costs incurred in establishing the harbor commission and investigating the potential and preparing for the provision of ferry service.....". Simultaneously, in the Assembly, Rep Green introduced the language for an Assembly budget motion. This gives very significant bicameral legislative support for our request. Between April and May the State's Joint Finance Committee will create



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a budget recommendation. In June, the Assembly and Senate is scheduled to act on a budget and deliver, in July, its version for the Governor's signature. While certainties are scarce in today's political process, so is any budget item supported by representatives of both legislative houses previously introduced by the leadership of the State's executive branch representing a different party.

As I also mentioned at the Town's Annual Meeting, the Harbor Commission has very recently been contacted by the WI DOT to initiate discussions to inform us of on-going operating income sources available only to Wisconsin publicly owned transportation authorities. With a completed purchase of the MIFL, that is just what the Harbor Commission will be.

The Harbor Commission is now approaching a time when we can determine a negotiated price for the MIFL. Soon we'll have a much clearer understanding of potential debt and the mechanisms best designed to service it. Shortly after the late June conclusion of the DOT RAISE grant application we'll be able to brief you on the terms of both. At no point, however, is it our intent or expectation to put the service of debt on the Island tax role. Rather we will look to operations to fund whatever borrowing model we select.

With so many initiatives now in motion, it's our promise to keep you informed throughout each and every step. Please stay tuned.