

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

To: Town Board

From: Michael Kuchta

DATES COVERED IN REPORT: Nov. 23-Dec. 8, 2023

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## 1. Accomplished/Completed

- **DOR.gov.** Set up backup access to Town account; updated levy limit worksheet.
- **Insurance.** Met in person Nov. 27 with Amy Ralidak and Michelle Strauss of The Horton Group to finalize the Town's insurance package for 2024.

## 2. Coming Up

- **Special Town Meeting.** Wednesday Dec. 27, 5 p.m. Purpose: Purchase of real property from Madeline Island Ferry Line.

## 3. Town Board Agenda – Information/Comments

- See separate memo

## 4. Follow Up on Previous/Ongoing Projects

- **Ambulance fees.** Director Cindy Dalzell and I met Dec. 7 with the billing company Cvikota. The meeting addressed start-up issues so the Town can begin receiving payments for ambulance services. Changes include a new service rep at the billing company.
- **Building inspections.** Sent out RFP; consulted with Bayfield County about possibility of sharing inspector.
- ~~**Managed forest lands.** Public Works crew, Harbor Commission president Michael Childers and I met Dec. 5 with Eli Ladwig (of 4 Seasons Forest Products in Hurley) and the DNR's Michael Mattison to learn about their attempts to log as many as 1,250 acres on Madeline Island that are past due in fulfilling their contracts as part of the DNR's managed forest program. The anticipated logging in 2024 would be a mix of clear-cutting with seed regeneration, single-tree selections, and thinning, primarily on the east end of the island. The challenge is profitably harvesting the wood despite the additional costs of removing it from the island. If that cannot be accomplished, the DNR will involuntarily withdraw the parcels from the program for noncompliance. Landowners will face substantial back taxes and fees – 80 percent of which would go to the Town.~~
- **Parks.** The Public Works crew installed a concrete sidewalk, making the Rec Center pavilion ADA accessible. Also, Nelson Surveying has staked the property line beyond the outfield fence, indicating where a dog park fence can be erected. Finally, the Public Works crew bid successfully to purchase used playground equipment from Chippewa Falls that will upgrade the equipment at Joni's Beach. They intend to dismantle the equipment and install it this week.
- **RV sanitary dump station.** David Lindsley (park manager at Big Bay State Park) and his supervisor, Robert Skalitzky, have received permission from the DNR to begin working out a new agreement with the Town and "preferred solution" to the impact the RV station on the sanitary district's wastewater treatment. We plan to meet in early January.

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- **Town meeting follow-up:**

- **Polka Ball.** To date, the fundraiser collected \$36,686 and has paid \$4,103 in expenses. Net proceeds of \$32,583 are in a designated fund for a new communications repeater.
- **Police overtime.** In 2023, the Town budgeted \$16,425 in police overtime wages, based on staffing of two full-time officers and two part-time officers. In response to staffing changes, the department incurred \$40,893 in overtime through November 2023, or \$24,468 more than budgeted. For 2024, the Town is budgeting \$35,589 in overtime wages for three full-time officers.

## 5. Grant Report

- **Energy Committee.** The police chief's concerns about the impact of ESB solar panels on emergency radio transmissions have been shared with the committee. The committee continues to research two potential grant opportunities through the state's Office of Energy Innovation: the Innovation Grant discussed previously, and a newly announced Rural Energy Startup Program. In addition, committee members are attending a meeting Dec. 13 to investigate including La Pointe an Ashland County application for federal funding to install solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations in county communities.

## 6. Lawsuits/Legal Issues

- **Ashland County.** The Board needs to decide whether to pursue a lawsuit in circuit court on the Sec. 893.80 claim that the county board rejected. The deadline for filing a lawsuit is Dec. 21.

## 7. Other Information

- **Christmas Eve holiday.** Dec. 24 falls on a Sunday; the preference of Town staff is to designate Tuesday Dec. 26 as the holiday instead. Town Hall will close that day.
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