

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

To: Town Board

From: Michael Kuchta

DATES COVERED IN REPORT: June 20-July 5, 2024

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## 1. Accomplished/Completed

- **Performance reviews.** One-on-one performance discussions are completed with all Town Hall staff and department heads (except one).
- **Raffle license.** State license is renewed and available if departments need it.
- **Town Board retreat.** UW-Superior's Daniella Mansbach interviewed me in advance of September's Town Board retreat.
- **WCMA Summer Conference.** Attended June 19-21 (on my own time and dime).

## 2. Coming Up

- **Great Lakes Islands Alliance.** Rescheduled for Wednesday July 10, 9 a.m. CDT
- **Gazette deadline.** Saturday July 13 (for publication Aug. 3)
- **Wisconsin Towns Association.** Virtual meeting of Town Advocacy Council, Monday July 15, 6 p.m. Link sent to you by email.
- **UW Extension Extreme Weather meetings.** Thursday July 18, 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

## 3. Town Board Agenda – Information/Comments

- See separate memo.

## 4. Follow Up on Previous/Ongoing Projects

- **687 Middle Road.** Habitat for Humanity's construction manager was scheduled to meet with housing committee members July 8 to assess the house for rehabilitation possibilities.
- **Airport hangars.** Sent revised contracts and additional documentation to all lease holders. This is the next step in meeting state requirements that hangars be treated as real property, not personal property.
- **Cell tower lease prepayment.** Attorney Katie Posewitz of the Anich law firm outlined changes to make Harmoni Towers' proposed lease agreement more consistent with the Verizon lease. We sent those revisions to Harmoni. Even if Harmoni agrees to the changes, there is a substantial gap between their proposed prepayment of \$175,410 and Verizon's prepayment of \$500,000.
- **CPAs.** I have requested proposals from two CPA firms (one in Wausau, one in Eau Claire) to provide professional accounting support to Town Hall staff; both firms are more familiar with and comfortable with Workhorse software than our current vendor.
- **Designated tourism entity.** The proposed MOU with the Chamber of Commerce was forwarded on May 31; the Chamber board is awaiting legal review before taking action. I am advising delaying 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter room tax payments until we have a tourism entity agreement in place.
- **Dog park.** Public Works and the dog park organizers are working to place "no parking" signs and directional signs for users.
- **Hartzell development.** The Zoning Administrator, UDC inspector, and developer continue to identify and clear barriers to construction on the seasonal condominiums off Mondamin Trail.

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- **Managed forest land.** DNR and 4 Seasons Forest Products in Hurley are still working to log roughly a dozen parcels in 2024-2025 that are not in compliance with the state program. Property owners were supposed to receive updated options last week.
- **Police training range.** County Board member Mike Starck obtained clearance from the county so La Pointe Police can conduct training exercises at the county gravel pit on North Shore Road.
- **RV sanitary disposal site.** A meeting was scheduled for July 8 with the DNR and Sanitary District to seek agreement on a new MOU and an engineering study to relocate the site.
- **Town Hall copier.** Public Works has decided to utilize the old copier.
- **Zoning enforcement.** In response to complaints, the Zoning Administrator sent letters to property owners with multiple campers on their parcels as a first step toward understanding the status of the campers and getting them into compliance with Town zoning. It is possible that the Town Board may need to authorize eviction in some situations.  
The ZA also sent letters to property owners who are in violation of the Town's sign provisions – primarily involving signs in the public right-of-way.

## 5. Grant Report

- **BBTP accessibility project.** DNR grant manager Patrick Anderson asked if the Town could build the proposed ADA-compliant ramp and bridge without congressionally directed spending. He suggested the Town could receive up to \$489,000 in state grants this year. However, that would require the Town to spend roughly \$1 million of its own, depending on the option selected. At this point, the Town cannot fund that much through the budget or through borrowing. Therefore, the Town would have to pass up any state grants.  
As detailed in my May 24 memo, the Town Board has borrowed \$2.5 million for Town purposes, borrowed \$13.3 million for ferry line purposes, and committed \$3.4 million in borrowing to the ferry line's EPA application for an electric ferry and related infrastructure. Combined, that is 99.5% of the Town's current legal borrowing capacity, leaving only about \$90,000 available. We do not expect an EPA decision until December; that likely will be too late for the DNR's timeline. A decision on congressionally directed spending is not likely until September, at the earliest. (Sen. Baldwin is recommending \$1.362 million for our BBTP project.)  
Without state and federal funding, and with Town borrowing options restricted or eliminated entirely, the Town would have to pursue alternative sources to build the project. Approaches to pursue could include seeking substantial private donations or selling naming rights.
- **Hagen Road.** WisDOT sent final information on the contract with Northwoods Paving; it is about \$309,000 less than first estimated. That would make the Town's 20% share roughly \$302,960. Combined with engineering costs, the Town's approximate contribution for the project would be \$353,920 (assuming no cost overruns). That's about \$60,800 less than originally estimated.

## 6. Lawsuits/Legal Issues

- No updates.

## 7. Other Information

- **Police back pay.** We discovered a spreadsheet formula error in police timesheets dating back to December 2022. The result: officers were not paid overtime at the legally required time-and-a-half rate. Payroll has calculated that the Town owes back pay totaling \$29,998.39, including FICA and WRS contributions. Checks will be sent this week.