

**FOUR TOWNS**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 7, 2018**  
**CABLE COMMUNITY CENTER**

The previously held Four Towns meeting was held in Cable on February 18, 2014.

This meeting was called to order @ 7:02 p.m. by Art Hancock, Cable Chairman.

Present: Town of Cable- Chairman Art Hancock, Supervisors Jeff Rasmussen and Susan Thorn; Town of Namakagon – Chairman Robert Rasmussen, Supervisors Jack McGregor and Jim Krueger, Clerk - Jeffery Raether; Town of Drummond – Chairman Royden Bloom, Supervisors Dick Fredericks and Chris Elkins, Clerk Andy Tuttle; Town of Grand View – Chairman Jack Iverson and Supervisor Dane Bonk.

Art welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance. Town representatives from each town and around the table and introduced themselves.

Bob Rasmussen discussed the need to share information on how people on the various Economic Development Committees are compensated? Namakagon pays Comprehensive planning committee members \$25 per monthly meeting. Drummond pays each CPC member \$100 per year. Cable Comprehensive planning committee members \$75 per monthly meeting. Most other committees are not compensated. Jack says Grand View pays \$25 per meeting, only meets as needed and only have 2 people left on the committee. Namakagon has many short term rental permits that CPC reviews regularly. Cable and Namakagon are currently revising their CPC plan which is required by statute to be revised every 10 years. Cable is currently sending our surveys to areas business for feedback, to assess their needs.

Discussion on Class B Designation of Bayfield County Highway D and town roads. Bob Lang the Cable Road Forman had the following concerns: Bob wanted to address the Class B roads that have been designated by Bayfield County (County D), and a bunch of roads in Namakagon. When Bayfield County designated County D a Class B road, it pushed heavy construction traffic on to Namakagon roads. I am assuming that is why Namakagon designated a bunch of their roads as Class B. Because Namakagon did this, now we are seeing increased heavy truck traffic on Town of Cable roads. I assume Drummond and Grand View are experiencing the same thing. Obviously this is detrimental to our roads. If we don't reverse this trend, we are going to have to designate our roads as Class B as well. I don't think this is a good idea in the big picture. For those who don't know, Class B roads reduce the weight allowed on the roads to 60% of the licensed weight. It is my opinion that this was a good idea for thru traffic on County D. It is my opinion we should push Bayfield County to allow any work that is being performed in the immediate area to be permitted by Bayfield County. Currently, they will not give permits for these activities. I'm not sure what we can do about this, but I believe we should discuss it to see if we are going to be able to reverse this trend, or follow suit and burden contractors, and therefore taxpayers, by having to pay increased costs to move materials to their job sites. Namakagon stated that they do allow

permitted (contact the Town Clerk) use of the roads for work done in the Town. One of the reasons was to limit thru traffic. Bob Lang encouraged towns to pressure the County to ease

Restrictions or be more generous with their permits. Bob Rasmussen made a motion to contact Bayfield County road Commissioner regarding easing of the restrictions on County Class B roads. Royden Broom 2nd. Motion carried.

Bob Rasmussen discussed the concerns of the County Building Inspector. Namakagon contractors and residents have registered numerous complains about the inspector. Complaints to Bayfield County resulted in the County suggested to the Town to call the State and complain. Namakagon will look into hiring their own inspector in place of the current one (Alder Corp) assigned by the State through Bayfield County. Other Towns agreed.

Bob Rasmussen introduced discussion of Cell Towers. Chris Elkins reported that T-Mobile is providing excellent service around the area. He also stated the lack of population in the area for other providers like Verizon to spend the money to put up additional towers. Namakagon has some of the worst areas for service. Chris says that all Norvado employees are now issued T-Mobile phones. Namakagon still has issues with this service as well.

Discussion of the Room Tax Ordinance. James Bowen reported that Room tax funds that are collected continue to rise every year. James reported that Namakagon is doing a very good job finding individuals who rent out their own homes as well. Room tax funds can only be used for Advertising and Marketing by the Towns and the Chamber. James reported that Namakagon plays approx 75% of all the room tax collected in four Towns. James Bolen stated that he will have his staff do the research to determine and uncover any individuals that do not have their rented homes in the short term rental program in the Towns and therefore not paying room tax. He will then send a list to each Town Chairman for each Town to pursue.

Update on Telemark. Issues remain to prevent going forward. Cable is proceeding with the State Government to begin establishing Tiff formation. The project is currently on hold trying to resolve clear title that will enable the project to continue to close. James Bolan said developers are hopeful the project will still go forward.

Namakagon stated that they have trouble finding and recruiting Volunteer firefighters and is concerned over the long term health of the Department. Sometimes in Namakagon there are only one or two volunteers available during the day, if a call comes in. Nights have better availability. Bob Rasmussen suggested that maybe its time to create a manned department and share services. Cable has same issue (6 volunteers) and hopes the Telemark can help bring in younger and more people. The Other 2 towns are currently OK with manning. Jack suggested encouraging Road crew employees to be on the Fire department. Pay (stipend) was discussed and the Towns that have the least issues with manning compensate the volunteers the most for going on calls, drills, attending meetings etc. Dinner meeting are popular. Drummond offers an incentive program. Jack McGregor suggested the four Towns get the Fire Chiefs together to discuss the future and mutual aid plans between the towns. Paid on call personal may not be too far in our future. Manning is the largest issue. Aging volunteers remains a concern.

Presentation by Enforcement Officer; Kevin Johnson. He provided a report of his previous year. He listed many of his typical call duties and special events monitoring. He provides valuable assist to Bayfield County Sheriff, Fire departments and ambulance, as needed. The Towns encouraged Kevin to pursue advanced training to upgrade his position, to include law enforcement certification. He could then enforce our local ordinances and issue citations on behalf of the Towns he serves.

Discussion on weight limits on Town roads for Spring Road Bans. There was much variance in the surrounding area of what the exact weight limit should be. But things seem to be working out well if the Towns follow the Counties lead.

A discussion on the policy for collecting past due accounts. Namakagon does well with submitting any past due invoice that is over \$50 and past due over 90 days to The Dept of Revenue. The DOR will pursue the over due invoice as long as a 30 days letter is sent to the offender.

Discussion on employee benefits, including Health Insurance and Pension plans. Towns were asked if pay health insurance or offer increased salary to compensate the employee. Cable and Grand view offer the State plan. Jack Iverson said that two employees are needed but only one has to accept the plan, for the Town to be eligible. Drummond goes thorough Great lakes and finds it is more expensive than the State plan. Namakagon will look into this. The Towns of Bell and Washburn use this plan, Grand View consulted with those two towns, on the State plan. Jack Iverson wrote the Employee hand book for Grandview 30 years ago and it has not been updated since. Jack feels these four Towns meeting are very beneficial and he will get back to the group at the next meeting in June about what is the Insurance plan in Grand View. Drummond has gone to a higher deductible plan recently to lower deductibles. Andy Tuttle said Drummond created a HRA account to reimburse the difference in the deductible. Three of the Town that offer insurance does have a HSA account as well.

A discussion was had on sharing equipment. Namakagon uses Cable equipment if needed and pays the standard State rate. Sometimes material items are exchanged in lue of funds. Other towns are encouraged to do the same. Towns discussed what gravel pits are used who provides crushing.

A discussion on inter-governmental cooperation ideas. Perhaps the Towns could get together to develop a mutual employee handbook. Perhaps hire a 3rd party familiar with Towns. Some information can be found on line from Towns, such as Barnes and Gordon. Jack Iverson feels maybe a 4 Towns committee can be formed to facilitate. Northwest regional planning commissions maybe can help us out in this matter. Discussion of WISLR road right of way and PASER reports ensued. They say many of the area roads are actually 50 feet right of way and not 4 roads. Namakagon does their own Passer ratings.

Dick Fredrick and Bob Rasmussen provide a report of Cable Airport. 4 new hangers are planned it the next year. Housing for at least Ten Planes is required to be eligible to get the funding from the State Aeronautics Commission. The funds are a minimum of \$150,000 per year. Funds must be used for maintenance and/or equipment. This should relieve some of the stress on our Towns budgets. The Bureau is currently working on acquisition of additional Land. The Towns of Namakagon, Cable and Drummond contribute to the Airport budget. Continued maintenance of the Old Terminal Historic House

will continue. Many of the Pilots express a Love of this old building. The Gun Club was approved by the FAA to purchase their property from the Airport. This has been a long 3 year process.

Rob Paul gave a report on Great Divide Ambulance. He is still having trouble finding employees. Employees are demanding health insurance to stay on long term with the Ambulance. Pay and training are very competitive for the area and can be a rewarding career. The service continues to loose people to the nursing profession. Less hours and more benefits exists in the Nursing profession. Challenges continue for the Service. The service has 5 trucks but only 4 trucks are manned. A sixth truck is on order. The cost of each Ambulance is approx. \$150,000 each. Namakagon will need to appoint a replacement on the Great Divide Ambulance board for the Late Ted Green. 2017 was the biggest year ever for Great Divide. Rob expressed a thank you to Candy for her service as Business Manger for the last 20 years. All four Towns own great Divide Ambulance. We all thank you Rob and your staff for your extremely professional and high quality service that is unequaled in the northern half of the State.

It was suggested that a future plan for the Four Towns is to meet 3 times per year.

Next meeting to be held on Wednesday June 27, 2018 at 7 PM. Town of Drummond to host. It was suggested the focus of the next meeting to be Town Employee Benefits. All Towns are encouraged to bring their employee handbooks.

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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