

FOUR TOWNS MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Drummond Civic Center

This meeting was called to order @ 6:30 p.m. by Roy Bloom, Drummond Chairman.

Present: Town of Cable- Chairman Art Hancock, Supervisors Dave Popelka and Susan Thurn; Town of Namakagon – Chairman Robert Rasmussen, Supervisors Jack McGregor, 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.

Community Calendar – Cable has put together a unified calendar that they would like to use to advertise public events. It is open for all four towns to post public events to. It was developed to supplement the calendar the Chamber currently has. The Chamber calendar is restricted events of Chamber members only, which excludes many well-intentioned events. The Chamber has agreed to link to this website.

The new calendar can be found at CableAreaCalendar.com.

Short-Term Rentals & Room Tax – Namakagon has developed short-term rental criteria that they would be willing to share with the other towns. They have also been looking for rentals that fly under the radar through AirBnb & VRBO. When they find them, they send the owner a copy of the rental criteria and room tax procedure. The procedure & criteria are on Namakagon's website.

Equipment Sharing & Exchange – Namakagon & Cable have been sharing equipment and using the County equipment rate schedule for rental rates. Thurn even discussed the option of cost-sharing, since equipment is getting so expensive (ie crack sealing equipment). The group also discussed the benefits of staff sharing as well. The prospect of bidding road repair projects together was brought up and seemed to have merit. The group thought this would be a real practical option to possibly reduce costs (economy of scale). This may be something to consider for road projects this coming spring.

Law Enforcement – The law enforcement officer for Namakagon, Cable & Grand View, Kevin Johnson, is going to school for additional certification. The group discussed the pay he receives. Further debate revolved around allowing a constable or town law enforcement official to be armed and the insurance liability of such. Hancock recommended that Towns using Johnson as their law enforcement officer have uniform ordinances so he is operating under the same guidelines throughout his area. Fredericks has concerns about the the necessary requirements for Kevin to be certified (as college credits are needed). Hancock said they should be more concerned about the position and not necessarily the person, especially in looking at long term planning.

Increased Ambulance Funding - Bloom addressed the group regarding the ambulance service. The ambulance has to start paying overtime and thus has requested an increase in funding for 2019 from the Towns. Bloom also discussed what and how the ambulance charged “non-owner” towns for services. The fees to “non-owner” towns was raised 10%. They still have no ownership in the service and the services are on a contract basis. The Ambulance service is able to choose to not renew other town contracts (expire in 2020) if necessary. There are 7 contracted towns plus 4 owner towns with 3

operating ambulances. Bloom also relayed the concern that retaining employees is becoming increasingly difficult and the employees that are staying are “worked to death”. This is a major problem facing the ambulance looking into the near future. The service is contemplating options for adding benefits and other incentives to maintain employees for the long term.

Town Insurance Policies – Iverson asked about the liability policies of the Towns and would like to have an idea of rates and insurers for comparative purposes. Known information was shared and the group agreed pass along more details at a later date.

Employee Pay – Iverson asked about comparing employee pay rates, benefits, etc. Again, the group shared known information. Wisconsin Retirement System is being or will be utilized by all of the Towns except Grandview.

Employee Handbook – Grandview will be writing an employee handbook. They have reviewed Cable & Drummond’s handbook and are looking for any information that should be included.

Holiday Lighting – Xcel will not allow lighting on any pole that has transmission line, light poles only. Cable is planning on just erecting a “city Christmas Tree”. Other towns are still not sure what to do for holiday decoration.

Fireworks – Grand View currently spends \$7000 on a fireworks display. They expressed their concern as this is a lot of cash for 10 to 15 minutes of fun. The group discussed the pros and cons of such an expenditure.

Airport Billing – The group discussed recent repair and maintenance projects performed by town crews at the airport. Drummond expressed concern at how the Towns are being billed. The current system of towns billing each other and “trading” for labor of equipment seem inequitable. Invoices for completed work by town crews should be sent to airport and then the airport can bill the owner towns for each 1/3rd.

Airport Update – Fredericks & Rasmussen gave a airport update report. The airport is now able to obtain Appropriation Funds and is for eligible for \$100,000/year. This money can only be used for “projects” and cannot be used for annual operating budget. It will create avenue to repair buildings, construct terminal building, purchase lawn mowing or snow removal equipment. They are currently trying to purchase old lawn & snow equipment from the Ashland airport.

The Old terminal building is where Libby Parod lived. They have done many repairs to it and have to decide how much cash to invest into house. It needs a lot of work. They need to decide whether to save it for historical purposes or to invest in building a new structure.

Motion to adjourn was made at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Tuttle, Clerk