

TOWN OF NAMAKAGON
Four Towns Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 13, 2020 @ 7pm
Namakagon Town Hall, 23845 Cty Hwy M, Cable

Chairman Robert Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7pm. In Attendance were Town of Namakagon: Chairman Rasmussen, Supervisors Jim Krueger and Jack McGregor; Town of Cable: Chairman Brett Rondeau, Supervisor Tony Merrill; Town of Drummond: Chairman Roy Bloom, Supervisors Chris Elkins and Dick Fredericks; Town of Grand View: Chairman Jack Iverson and Supervisor Mike Oravis AND 6 others.

MOTION made by Roy Bloom to approve minutes from October 30, 2019. MOTION seconded by Chris Elkins and carried.

GREAT DIVIDE AMBULANCE SERVICE UPDATE – Laura Bjork, Business Manager for Great Divide Ambulance, stated that the ambulance service has been looking to purchase a larger building that would house staff and the ambulances together for quite some time. They have set funds aside into a building fund for such an expense, however, last year the ambulance was in litigation, and used some of the money set aside to pay for the lawsuit settlement. There is a definite need for a larger living area, onsite storage of equipment, storage of paperwork and adequate training room. An offer was accepted on the Runamuk building located in Cable on Hwy 63 of \$250,000. The board has agreed to pay for the purchase from their building fund savings. In order for this to be processed, each of the four townships will need to hold a Special Town Meeting, which could be the Annual Town Meeting, to get elector approval of the purchase through resolution and then each township would need to hold a Town Board meeting to get Town Board approval of the purchase through resolution. Each town was given sample notices and resolutions. Great Divide Ambulance saw a decrease in activity and contemplated layoffs, but soon after contemplating, the service picked up pace and has been busier than ever! But even though we have seen an increase in activity, the past two years, the ambulances service has had to use savings funds to balance their budget. This cannot continue, and the board will be meeting to discuss these issues. The building, if purchased, will need renovations. The service is looking to the four towns for financial help with the renovations. C&S Design, an engineering company, has looked at the building, and renovations should cost around \$250,000. Once the building is complete and moved into, the original housing can be sold with the funds of the sale possibly going to renovation costs. Roy Bloom stated that Great Divide contracts service with six townships and the ambulance service is terminating those contracts, which will help in re-organizing Great Divide and allow them to be financially stable. St Lukes in Duluth named GDAS as their main transfer to their hospital. He explained that the four towns portion of \$250,000 would most likely need to be contributed by a loan. One township, Drummond, would host the loan, and the payments would be divided among each township to be included in their subsidies. There was discussion on the renovations that would need to be made.

PRESENTATION BY CABLE UNION AIRPORT – Robert Rasmussen stated that the airport hired Cooper Engineering to do an environmental assessment of the airport. The assessment is for analyzing tree heights in relation to flight paths. There are many trees that are obstructing the flight path. This project is federally funded; 90% federal, 5% state and 5% local. The airport will have allotment money to help purchase lawn equipment. Cooper Engineering will be talking with property owners about tree height restrictions. The airport commission talked about possibly replacing the Libby Parod building, but it would be four years before there would be any funds for this project. Robert Rasmussen volunteered to be an investor and build a building there and lease it out to the airport, but he is not sure if that is possible. Dick Fredricks added that the tree cutting is the main priority for the Feds at this time. Most people have no problem with cleaning up the trees, but some are not allowing the trees to be cut. The National Park Service do not want their trees cut, but the Feds mandate the cutting of the trees. Robert Rasmussen stated that there is a tree height ordinance with easements, but not with all the property owners. As for hangers, there is only one left to rent out. There was discussion on brushing. There was discussion on the economic impact of the airport to the area.

DISCUSSION ON BAYFIELD COUNTY ZONING COMMUNICATION WITH TOWNSHIPS – Jim Krueger stated that the Town of Namakagon has had communication issues with Bayfield County Zoning since the change in administration. The biggest problem is that they are by-passing the town's recommendations when issuing permits. Yet, in zoning rules, it states that the County will approve with recommendation of both the Town's Plan Commission and Town Board. There have been multiple complaints from residents with the county on making decisions because they are making the decisions without even coming to look at the property. Zoning is hired as public servants, and they are not working with the public or townships. There have been some good situations, but overall, there has been major issues with communications. Another example of Bayfield County's poor communication is with short term rentals. The Town of Namakagon met with Bayfield County in August, and a plan was made, but the county never communicated back to the town that they accepted the change or that they were putting occupancy ratings on the short term rentals that they approved. The county should be working with the towns. The town talked about doing their own zoning, but legally that could not happen. But pressure can be put on the county board. Roy Bloom stated that the Town of Drummond has had lots of problems. There are multiple complaints from residents with the county. Jim Krueger clarified that the problem is not with the property owners, but rather with county administration. Jack Iverson stated that Rob Schierman is not even approachable. Mike Furtak and Karl Kastrosky have picked up the slack. Jim Krueger stated that the county administrator was present at the meeting with the Town of Namakagon and still nothing has been done. A meeting can be held with zoning and the four towns. Brett Rondeau stated that the Town of Cable gets their pink sheets. Namakagon is not getting the pink sheets. Laura Bjork stated that you can see what the county is doing if you go to their website and look at their agenda. Some decisions are listed on their website, but not all of them. Brett Rondeau explained that the zoning committee only approves or disapproves by their ordinance. If they do not have a recommendation from the town, it goes back to the town.

This is different than the Board of Adjustment who deals with variances. Brett Rondeau will work on setting a meeting with zoning and the four towns.

DISCUSSION OF CELL TOWERS – Jack McGregor stated that AT&T got First-net contract with the state, so they are being placed in many areas. Namakagon is 5 miles from the scenic waterway, and there were complaints with the tower, but the Town of Cable is only ¼ mile from the scenic waterway, and there has been no problem there. T-Mobile has good service in Namakagon. Verizon has no interest in being in Namakagon.

Next meeting in Grand View or Drummond to be held when Bayfield County Zoning would be able to attend.

Chairman Robert Rasmussen adjourned @ 8:04pm.

UNAPPROVED