

**TOWN OF NAMAKAGON  
MINUTES FOR ANNUAL MEETING  
TUESDAY April 19, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairman Rasmussen called the annual meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present were Chairman Rasmussen, Supervisors Jack McGregor and Jim Krueger, Treasurer Arlene Skultety, Clerk Laura Bjork and 17 others; Dave Hanks, Kathy Sill, Dave Haan, Joann Schultz, Carol McGregor, Corrine Rasmussen, Mary D'Andrea, Sarah Boles, Kevin Johnson, Karen and Jim Pliska, Larry Pribyl, Ray Ebert, Kristine Lendved, Judy Krueger, Adrienne Wydeven and Jerome Malmquist.

Agenda was posted at the Town Hall and on the website. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MOTION made by Joann Schultz to dispense the reading of the minutes from the April 20, 2021 Annual Town Meeting and approve the minutes as presented. MOTION seconded by Kathy Sill and carried.

MOTION made by Kathy Sill to approve the minutes from the Special Elector Meeting held on November 18, 2021. MOTION seconded by Sarah Boles and carried.

**2021 Financial Report** was presented by Treasurer Skultety. Account balances as of January 1, 2021 were \$790,349.93. Total Revenues for 2021 were \$1,043,319.02 and Advance Tax Collections were \$531,856.65. Total Disbursements for 2021 were \$978,892.92. Account balances as of December 31, 2021 were \$1,011,664.48.

2021 Highlights on Finances:

Income:

We received a little over \$35,000 more in room tax this year than last year. We received the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of \$12,978.90 and will be receiving another \$12,978.90 this year, which will go towards the purchase and installation of a generator back up system for the town buildings. There was income from the Fire Department selling their radios.

Disbursements:

Ambulance subsidy increased by \$12,660. Room tax expense increased due to the increase in collections. The Town Hall metal roof was installed as well as an upgraded kitchen in the Town Hall! The Fire Department invested in a new truck. The Highway Department will be investing in a new truck in 2022, however, the down payment was made in 2021. Work began on the new fitness park and will continue in 2022. You can see the bike racks that were installed and the new outdoor lighting and new picnic bench. The fitness path was cleared by volunteers, including CAMBA and some local residents. A huge THANK YOU goes out to all who helped! Still yet to be installed will be a new swing bench and the 10 pieces of fitness equipment along the path and also pea gravel along the path. This will partially be funded by the Bayfield County Infrastructure Grant.

**Ambulance Report** Laura Bjork, Business Manager for Great Divide Ambulance Service presented the 2021 Financial Report. In 2021, Great Divide Ambulance went on 1,259 runs, compared to 1,492 runs in 2020, 1,272 runs in 2019 and 1,288 runs in 2018. This is the slowest it has been in the last 3 years. The runs were billed out for a total of \$3,086,099.73. This is a breakdown of the runs:

Fire Standbys 19, DOA 8, Treat and Release - No Transport 24, Lift Assist 7, Cancelled Calls 14, Refused Care 25, False Alarm 4, Standby Search and Rescue 2, Transport Declined or Refused 2, Transports 178 and Transfers 975.

2021 has been an unusual year for Great Divide Ambulance.

First, we would like to thank the Town of Drummond and the Town of Cable for supporting the ambulance through the R2R Grant monies. We received \$7,040 from Drummond and \$3,698.55 from Cable. We also applied for an Infrastructure Grant and received \$48,900.65. The ambulance service would also like to thank those who supported the ambulance service through the Kathy Rasmussen Memorial and the Steve Byrd Memorial. We offer our sincere sympathies to their families. We also want to thank all the people who have donated funds throughout the year. The ambulance greatly appreciates all the support that we have received. These funds will help to be able to purchase new ambulances for the service, which we are in desperate need!

We have seen a decline in the number of ambulance calls for 2021 and as a result, patient fees in income from services has also declined. With traveling farther distances than normal due to COVID-19, we have seen increases in fuel expenses. Our ambulance repair expenses continue to be high due to older vehicles. We have ordered 2 vehicles already because of the demand for vehicles on the market currently, and we most likely will be receiving both of them in August of this year, however they were not accounted for during the budgeting process as we were told that they would not be available until 2023. We may need to seek out financing to purchase both of them.

Our service continues to step up to the plate during COVID-19, taking extreme caution sanitizing and protecting themselves from viral spread. Even with all these precautions being taken. The ambulance has taken a cut in employee shifts with a lack of demand for service, and to hopefully save some funds for the upcoming new ambulance purchase. The ambulance service moved locations in the Spring of 2021 from Jenkins Road to Hwy 63. We want to thank the Town of Drummond for sponsoring a \$150,000 loan to be able to make this happen. The facility has been a great asset to the service allowing for plenty of space for employees as well as ample space for ambulance storage in the same location. The ambulance service was able to sell the old house rather quickly, which was extremely beneficial with the expenditures of the new building. There has been ongoing discussions for years for the service to be able to be in a building big enough to be able to function effectively, and we can now say that it is complete! We hope to have an open house next year, as it was postponed last year due to COVID-19.

The ambulance would like to welcome Natalie Susienka to the service during this past year. And just recently, Paul Popelka. The service has seen a drop in employees this year, losing 11 during 2021. As of today, the service has only 6 Paramedics and 10 EMTs. We desperately need workers, especially Paramedics to join our team. We will also be losing a paramedic this summer as he will be moving out of the area. We need workers!

We did switch billing companies this year, which was costly, but we now have assurance that things are being done accurately and effectively. For the first time in a very long time, we now can balance our patient income in our accounts because of the detailed accuracy of this new company. We will see an increase in billing fees next year.

On the financial report presented, it seems as if we only used \$27,461.00 in contingency funds but understand that we did not budget the sale of the old house to go so quickly.

We had budgeted the income from that sale to come in the 2022 budget. So, if we take that out of this year's budget, then the total used for contingency funds would be \$135,181, which is a bit higher than expected, but very close.

We purchased Cardiac Monitors this past year and was able to spread the payment of the monitors \$81,000 out over 3 years which helped the budget.

Currently this year, we are running steady and have had a little over 300 calls, including transfers. This puts us close to be the same as last year. We continue to have internal employee issues, which need to be worked on. Hopefully we will have the time to work on this as we are completely moved and settled. We continue to need workers. Hopefully we will see a relief with equipment expenses with the purchase of 2 new ambulances this year. We just received another stimulus of almost \$30,000, which will be put towards the ambulance purchases. As for budget purpose, the towns budgets most likely will remain the same for next year, but there is an uncertainty. We will have more info towards the end of the year after evaluating financials.

Thank you all for your support of the ambulance service.

The Town Board thanked the ambulance service for their service.

**Fire Department report** was presented by Dave Haan, Fire Chief. The transition in the Fire Chief has been fairly smooth. Membership continues to stay at 17.

The Fire Department went on 29 calls which included false alarms, mutual aid and snowmobile accidents.

The Fire Department has another Certified Inspector, John Moore. We also have one more Fire Fighter trained to FF 1 Level, David Green.

Since the transition in the Fire Chief position, all NFRS reports are up to date for 2% dues.

In the last year we were involved with the area events, such as Birkie, Wienie Roast Races, Northend Classic and Fat Tire.

The Pancake Breakfast will be held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, so mark your calendars!

Projects in 2021:

- Required yearly hose and ladder testing completed
- Finalized \$16,000 DNR Dry Hydrant grant to replace 3 hydrants (2 Lakewoods & 1 Garmisch)
- We started the replacement of the old Brush truck. A newer pick-up truck was purchased and the UHP unit was ordered UHP (Delivery 2 -3 weeks out). This was funded from the Volunteer (fund raising) account funds.

- An AFG Grant was applied for to purchase Battery powered extrication equipment. The grant would cover \$31,000, and the town would put in 5%.

Future Endeavors:

- replace the 2001 Pumper or move to reserve status
- replace the 1998 Chev. Mini pumper with Pumper Rescue combination. This option would reduce the fleet of apparatus by 1.
- increase in the Pioneer Station Budget to include either Cell Phone Service or internet.
- Joining the Sawyer County Emergency Association (\$1,500 per year) for Mutual aid coverage to include but not limited to Aerial pumper, Search and rescue team and dive team.
- Replace Turnout gear that was acquired by an AFG grant over 10 years ago, plus start replacing SCBA bottles from the same grant as they near the stated life of use.
- Begin conversation for a high flow well for filling tenders, and replacement of a crowded and inefficient main station fire hall

I would like to thank the Town Board for their support of the Fire Department over the years.

The Fire Department will have an Open House on Saturday, June 11 8am to Noon for the community to have their fire extinguishers inspected and recharged if necessary, and they can buy new ones if needed.

The fire meetings continue to be on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 6pm giving us approximately 60 hours of training for each member throughout the year.

The Fire Department will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Community Club dinner on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Town Board welcomed Dave Haan as the newly appointed Fire Chief.

**Airport Commission Report** was presented by Chairman Rasmussen.

The airport acquired a John Deere compact utility tractor, snow blower and grooming mower (\$25,000 paid by the state, and we spent about \$10,000). We also purchased a mower.

The Environmental Assessment continues. Cooper Engineering has contacted adjoining property owners and worked throughout the year to develop pros and cons for different alternatives for the Environmental Assessment. The alternatives are, for example: do nothing, try to clear air space for our current runway of 3,400' or try to achieve full runway of 3,700 feet. The plan will include to address concerns of neighbors, apply for required easements, installation of approach path indicators, accommodation of 3,400 feet thresholds, and consideration of the Namekagon River, rare and endangered species, and to the airport historic district. The three towns are responsible for 5% of costs associated with this project.

Repairs were done to the beacon on Mt. Telemark.

A Needs Assessment of the current terminal took place and a decision was made to restore the Libby Parod Terminal rather than build a new terminal. Assessment also was taken and found that roof work on the Parod Hangar needs to take place to keep water from damaging the interior and contents of the building.

Work was done to identify airport boundary lines so that signage may be placed there in the future.

We are using Wisconsin/FAA funds to begin development of a Phase 2 Hangar area development area.

Brushing of trees and shrubs were done by all three towns.

There have been some security issues in seven areas where recreational traffic have entered airport property, and in which damage was made to hangars. Gates (2 sites) and rocks (5 sites) are being installed around the airport property lines to deter outside traffic from being able to drive on airport property.

Provided Young Eagles flying experiences for youth under 18, and also sponsored a hamburger cook out with 29 planes coming in and a Fall Festival pancake fly-in was offered to aviators in Wisconsin.

**Comprehensive planning report** was presented by Sarah Boles.

The CPC members for 2021 consisted of Jim Krueger, Linda Kraft, Larry Pribyl, Jeff Raether, Sarah Boles, PC Rasmussen, and we welcomed Ruth Goetz as our new member.

This year 2 members terms were up and 1 member is moving as of 2022. Jerome Malmquist filled one position and PC Rasmussen continued in his position. The last one is still to be appointed by the Town Board.

The CPC met on six occasions. April, May, July, Oct., Nov., and Dec.

The CPC approved our draft of an Emergency Management Plan and we sent it to the Town Board for approval in May.

The committee recommended approval of 6 permit requests, including 3 Shoreland Grading, 2 Special Use and one Variance.

The committee met on an "As Needed" basis the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm.

This might be changing to accommodate the new members.

The Comp Plan does need to be updated every 10 years with guidelines to be followed.

**Law enforcement report** – Kevin Johnson has worked over 30 years in law enforcement. The goal is to be aware of the surroundings at all times, be caring, compassionate, understanding and patient to the people he may have contact with, and to be as safe as possible in performing the duties required. He does a lot of people contacts. He is very active with the townships being present as needed. It has been very busy the past two years as there has been many people in the area. A lot of things that are dealt with are non-criminal cases to help alleviate Bayfield County with their job load. He hands out Kwik Trip coupons to kids to build a good repour. He responds to fire and ambulance calls, has ATV/UTV contacts, assists with motorists, does property checks, assists with Deputy contacts, assists with contacting the coroner and funeral home, assists with towing vehicles, assists with special events, patrols and monitors boat landings, assists during storm warnings, responds to animal complaints, assists the Town Crew as

needed and has public contacts. These are just a summary of what is covered in the town for the year.

**Road Report** was presented by Chairman Rasmussen. He stated that gravel was crushed again this year. The town applied and was approved for LRIP funds for Birch Bend Road and McCann Springs Road. A new truck has been ordered and should be coming in the next couple of weeks, with a belly blade addition. Maintenance continues as needed. Lake Five Road was partially blacktopped in 2021. The Town has a good road system which is kept up to date. LRIP funds were applied for a Garmisch Road project. There is another funding called BIL funding, and the Town Board is considering applying for Garmisch Road, however the requirements are to have the project engineered and state let, which increases expenditures dramatically.

**Lake Association Report** was presented by Larry Pribyl.

The Namakagon Lake Association (NLA) would like to start off this annual report by thanking the Town of Namakagon for all the support this past year. It is greatly appreciated!

In 2021 the NLA Board of Directors said good bye and many thanks to Steve Musser, Kathy Johnson, Denise Dupra and Linda Fisher. Their dedication and service to NLA over the years kept the NLA moving forward. NLA Board of Directors welcomed new members Jeff Johnson, Jerome Malmquist and John Schneider and retuning member Jim Krueger. The rest of the members consist of Jim DeRoma, Terry Cramer and Larry Pribyl.

NLA membership has increased from 314 members in 2020 to 404 members. This past year donations were over \$26,000. Overall, the financials are in good shape with assets about \$100,000.

Some of the key initiatives in 2021 were:

Led by Mike D'Andrea and Ted Peichel

- 21,000 extended walleyes were stocked in the fall of '21.
  - The team is working on potential spring '22 egg collection and rearing with the help of Red Cliff Tribe and Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility (NADF).
- 16 fish stick complexes identified for construction during the winter of '21/'22.
  - We were not able to complete any of the fish sticks due to lake slush/poor ice conditions.
  - Looking into extending the Healthy Lakes Grant. The DNR permit for these fish sticks is valid through '25.
  - The team is looking into other "best in class" methods to complete fish stick projects moving forward.
  - Initiated discussions with USFS to complete "tree drops" on forest service lands around the Forest Lodge property. Project timeline tad.
- An additional \$25,000 Healthy Lakes grant was approved for '22/'23 to be used on additional fish stick/lake restoration projects.
- New DNR biologist for our area: Nate Thomas

Led by Jim Deroma and Laura Bjork

- Invasive weed monitoring by staff at three landings on summer weekends and holidays
- Camera monitoring
- Grants have been renewed for the staff and camera monitoring initiatives.

Led by Jim DeRoma and Larry Pribyl

- Invasive weed treatment (spraying) was performed in 2021 with mixed results. Three different chemicals were tried in different areas. Two of the three did show results. However invasive weed mapping later in the summer showed that the invasive weeds are continuing to expand.
- We have retained the services of Cheryl Clemens of Harmony Environmental to help with grant writing and administration of the grants. This past year we were successful in obtaining a large scale grant for \$150,000.
- We are busy formulating a treatment plan for 2022.

Led by John Schneider

- NLA has updated its web site and is now able to receive member dues and donations electronically.

Again the NLA would like to say thank you to all the volunteers and supporters of the efforts to keep Lake Namakagon healthy.

**Library Report** was presented by Kristine Lendved.

The Forest Lodge Library has endeavored to continue to offer essential and effective service to its patrons through the pandemic and the seemingly never-ending winter. We have worked to maintain a safe environment for patrons, with our masking policy amending to conform with CDC, State and County guidelines. Our current policy is “masks recommended” and we continue to offer complimentary disposable masks and curbside pick-up for those who prefer it.

Our circulation continues to rebuild, with 2021 circulation being up 2.75% from the prior year. Our number of registered users also continues to grow, up 6% from the prior year. Significant increases are seen in use of our digital offerings. Ebook checkouts are up 14% and e-audiobook checkouts up 20%. The number of people visiting our library increased by 43%, which makes sense since we were able to keep our doors open! While we saw a 21% decrease in the number of people using our public access computers, we saw a 241% increase in wireless internet use! These days, most people arrive with their own devices in hand. Just the same, we do maintain three up-to-date public access computer stations. They will see heavier use during summer months.

We have a couple of new available services that we’re excited to share with our patrons. One is Kanopy, a streaming service that offers over 30,000 movies, documentaries and TV series as well as access to over 7,000 of the Great Courses. There’s also access to a Kanopy Kids collection. This service is only available to Cable and Namakagon patrons, not to all patrons in the Northern Waters Library Network. Subscription is by individual library and all you’ll need is a library card! And, yes, home internet access. Although, if

you lack that, you could enjoy the service using one of our public access computers! If you don't already have a library card, we hope you'll see this is a great reason to get one! You can read more about Kanopy on our website, [forestlodgelibrary.org](http://forestlodgelibrary.org).

The other new service we have to offer is wireless printing, via a company called Princh. This enables anyone, patrons or not, to print directly from their own phone or laptop. While payment can still be made in cash at the circulation desk, Princh also allows people to pay by credit card. It would even be possible to order a print job from home and pick it up curbside! Here, too, you are encouraged to read more about this service on our website.

Because of the pandemic, we were unable to celebrate our 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, So, we had a 95+1 celebration in 2021! On August 15<sup>th</sup>, a Sunday, we celebrated with a day of music and activities and a visit from a Thai food truck. Northwoods mystery writer Jeff Nania was on hand to talk about his work and donated his profits from the day's booksales to the library. (If you haven't read Jeff Nania, his mysteries take place in the Spider Lake/Hayward area. They are very readable and fun because you'll recognize many of the locations and probably some of the characters!) Thanks to all who came out to celebrate with us!

A few other things that happened in the last year:

- We reviewed and renewed our Joint Library Agreement with the Towns of Cable and Namakagon.
- The garage building on the Book House property was removed. The roof on the building was failing and we didn't want to test it through another winter. Thanks to Mark Rasmussen who accomplished the removal and to the Town of Namakagon for allowing us to deposit the remains at the transfer site!
- The Katie Flowers Endowment, on behalf of the library, was the recipient of \$472.79 from a SAVE TO GIVE energy saving challenge offered by Focus on Energy/Xcel Energy. Seven Bayfield County non-profits participated in the challenge, most in the Washburn/Bayfield area. Bayfield County Xcel customers were asked to log in and complete some energy saving activities for which they got points and we got money.
- The Katie Flowers Endowment was able to have the Book House open for book sales most Saturdays as well as on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and during Fall Fest.

Speaking of the Book House, we stopped taking material donations late last fall, which provided an opportunity to weed through the books and materials that were there and to remove non-current items, many of which had lingered for years. The Katie Flowers Endowment plans to offer book sales this summer, for those dates when volunteers can be scheduled AND we plan to start taking material donations again at the end of this month. Please visit our website for information on when and where to drop items off as well as what you can and cannot donate.

We offer our thanks to departing Board member Kathy Bergin and welcome new Board Trustee Jan Berlin.

We offer our best wishes to Jennie Hancock, who worked at the library for a few months and recently moved out of town. We offer our regrets, sincere thanks and very best

wishes to Jayme Morey, who was here for many years. Jayme accepted a position with the Chequamegon Humane Society, and, since working with animals is where her heart is, we are very happy for her. We're also happy that she plans to continue as the Forest Lodge Library's housekeeper!

Yes, we are still working on our Capital Campaign. We are technically still in the "quiet phase" but hope to hear, within the next month, what the response to a significant grant request will be. We updated our marketing materials, a project that was accomplished in June of 2021. Through the summer months and into the autumn our campaign volunteers reached out to a number of individuals who we thought might be interested in this exciting project which, we think, will be such an important asset and resource for our communities and which will enable us to offer important services to our patrons and to those who visit and spend time here. The Katie Flowers Endowment, who is holding donated funds on behalf of the library and the project, reported an increase of \$142, 242 between March of 2021 and March of 2022. Additional Naming Opportunities have been spoken for since our last report: The Hans Rasmussen Family/North Entry Foyer/Vestibule, Phil & Kathy Rasmussen & The Lakewoods Resort/Donor Recognition Wall, Jan & Irv Berlin/Young Adult Booth Seating Area and the families of Jan Geimer and Mary Hinze/Book Drop. There are remaining Naming Opportunities. We'd also like to offer our thanks to those serving on our Capital Campaign Committee: Laurie St Aubin Whelihan, Janis Pribyl, both Board Trustees and Scott McKinney, Zach Larson, David Popelka and Linda Parker. We also thank all the volunteers who've assisted with direct fundraising solicitations, particularly Gary Crandall, Kathy Rasmussen and Ron Bergin. And, of course, everyone's efforts are much appreciated. We will keep you posted. This just in! The Forest Lodge Library is going to be featured on a Wisconsin Life episode on Wisconsin Public Radio! We'll certainly let you know when it'll air; stay tuned!

As always, we thank our communities for their strong support and our patrons for their appreciation of our work. If you are not already, may this be the year you get a card, which, yes, you CAN do that online, as well, and become a library patron!

**Town update** – Laura Bjork reported that the fitness park has broken ground this past year with CAMBA and resident volunteers clearing a path. Two bike racks have been installed, a new metal flood light and a picnic table. A swing bench will be installed this spring. The Road Crew will put in pea gravel on the path and install ten pieces of fitness equipment along the path.

Jack McGregor stated that the Town Board is considering the purchase and installation of a generator for the town hall and possibly all the buildings located on the property. This will help with emergency management. The Town Hall is designated as an emergency shelter, and this will help to fulfill that designation.

Arlene Skultety stated that roadside clean-up has begun. The letters have been sent out. The date for the fish fry is on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm, however the clean-up can be done at any time. Volunteers are needed to work on Old Grade Road and also on County Highway M. Clean-up bags are available at the Town Hall. Bags can be dropped off at the dump. As soon as road bans go off, a dumpster will be placed at the Town Hall. Please RSVP for the Fish Boil.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** –

**Set elected officials compensation** – Town Supervisors are making \$4,000 per year, and the Town Chairman is making \$8,000. The salaries have not been changed in at least ten years. MOTION made by Ray Ebert to increase the salary of the Town Supervisors to \$6,000 and for the Town Chairman \$10,000. Adrian Wydeven seconded. Dave Hanks asked if there was any state statute limitation. The board responded that they were not aware of any. MOTION carried unanimously.

**Public Comment** –

Sarah Boles reminded the board to install “no ATV” sign on Namakagon Sunset and another 25 mph speed limit sign for ATVs on Namakagon Sunset and Garden Lake Rd. Kathy Sill thanked the Community Club with their help in purchasing equipment through the years, especially this year in helping purchase the new truck and UDC unit.

Adrian Wydeven mentioned that he noticed a new sign on Garden Lake Island which states no swimming, picnicking or camping. The DNR was contacted, and the sign will be taken down.

Joann Schultz stated that there is a mange deer and a young one that looks like it has mange. She was wondering if anyone else has seen mange in the area. No one has seen anything.

Date set for next Annual Meeting: Tuesday April 18, 2023.

MOTION made by Arlene Skultety to adjourn the Annual Town Board meeting at 8:38pm. MOTION seconded by Judy Krueger and carried.

Respectfully Submitted by

Laura Bjork, Town of Namakagon Clerk