

**4-TOWNS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024 - 600 P.M.
CABLE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Town of Cable Chairman Holly called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS

Thank you to everyone in attendance. At the end of each agenda item there will be open discussion for brief public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board members reported that the November 3, 2022 minutes were approved at the 2023 4-Towns Meeting. The 2023 minutes had not been received and approval was tabled to the next meeting.

AMBULANCE UPDATE - Rob Puls

- Personnel is short.
- In the last 14 months Great Divide has operated with 7 people, 2 trucks 24/7. No person works under 72 hours so there is a lot of overtime.
- An RN from Ashland is now working with the crew.
- Personnel shortage is nationwide. Applicants seek the highest wage per hour plus health insurance. Great Divide does not offer health insurance but does offer PTO and an excellent retirement plan. There are times when no transfer truck is available when people call because of staffing. Offering health insurance would make Great Divide competitive, but it is very expensive. The difference would be \$1600/month.
- Bayfield County as a whole is struggling to provide ambulance service.
- The county established an ad hoc committee to look at ways to make the service viable. A consultant has been hired to do a study on a countywide service. Tony Lang, Great Divide Operations Officer, is on the committee which will reconvene in January 2025.
- Great Divide equipment consists of two ambulances that were purchased in 2023. Each has accumulated 100,000 miles.
- Hope for savings by purchasing a remounted truck on a new chassis. Delivery is expected in October. The chassis is paid but not the truck box.

- A loan of \$100,000 has been paid off. There are two payments left on the building. There is still a loan on one of the two trucks.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL PRESENTATION - Desi Niewinski, Bayfield County Short-Term Rental/ Environmental Health Specialist

Niewinski outlined the steps to apply for a short-term rental permit through Bayfield County.

- A one-unit short-term rental permit is \$250 with a completed Land Use Permit Application
- A 2- to 4-unit short-term rental is \$500 with a completed Conditional Use Application
- Both of these applications will generate a Town Board Recommendation Form which is sent to the local township for approval.
- Niewinski will schedule an inspection. If the Health Department License application and Planning and Zoning application are submitted at the same time, both inspections can be completed on the same day.
- Applicants are required to check with their local municipality regarding local requirements for a short-term rental permit.

Questions:

- How town regulations interact with county requirements? Niewinski responded that most towns will want applicants to have a county permit before a town permit is issued.
- How there can be control on who does not pay the annual permit fee when the renewal is June 30? Niewinski stated that a notice of renewal is sent in May. If the fee is not paid, the permit is in violation. Michelle Simone, Bayfield County Health Department, added that the state sets the June 30 deadline. The county has no control.
- Why is the municipality not involved earlier in the process? The county does not ask for a town recommendation until after county review. Until a recommendation is returned to the county from the town, a permit cannot be issued. Niewinski responded that applicants will check in with the municipality earlier with a better line of communication between the town and county.

ROOM TAX PROPOSAL

The room tax is a good investment for revenue to the Chamber. The room tax is currently 4%. Of this amount 75% goes to the chamber, 24% to the town and 1% to the rental owner. If the room tax were raised to 6%, it would still be below surrounding communities. The challenge for Lakewoods was acknowledged for putting out bids for conferences.

It was noted that Hayward is the only Cable competitor. Tourists do not consider a county line when making a reservation. The Hayward rate is at 4%.

The financial report from last year showed a room tax loss. The Room Tax Commission is supposed to submit an annual report to the towns, but that is not done. The last time the Room Tax Commission met was last fall with trouble getting a quorum. It consists of representation from each township and two at-large appointments. When a room is booked, no one asks the amount of the room tax. The extra money would help the Chamber. State statute requires that towns turn in at least 70% of revenue to the Room Tax Commission which decides how the money is to be spent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Le Sedlacek suggested a local sales tax of 2% or 3% that would capture revenue on every sale, not just lodging. That revenue would go to the budget. The property tax increase was voted down. She would rather have a sales tax increase that is spread throughout the town, including those who visit.

Ted Harmon expressed concern about approving short-term rentals that are owned by people who live out of town.

Karl Kastrosky responded that short-term rentals have property managers. A 1% or 2% increase is a fairer way to gain revenue than raising the annual fee.

Chair Rasmussen stated that the rate of 4% operates well. The chamber is doing well. Raising the room tax would benefit towns harder hit for revenue. It would not help Namakagon. All towns participating in the Room Tax commission must agree on the same room tax rate.

Motion by Supervisor Larson, seconded by Supervisor Popelka to increase the accommodation tax from 4% to 5.5%.

Ayes: Grand View: Jack Iverson and Dale Ahlvin;

Cable: Jamie Holly, Zach Larson, Tony Merrill, David Popelka

Nays: Drummond: Royden Bloom, Jeff Hurula, Scott McKinney;

Namakagon: Bob Rasmussen, Jim Krueger, Jack McGreger

As it was a tie vote, and all towns must agree to an increase, the motion did not pass.

INNOVATION PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION

At the spring Wisconsin Towns Association meeting, it was announced that the Innovation Grant was funded. The purpose of the grant is to instigate innovation and cooperative services between units of government. Towns are able to apply

for a planning grant up to \$100,000 to hire a consultant to look at ways a town can combine services or equipment with other towns to save money. If the four towns apply in one application, it would be a stronger application. At this time, however, while the money has been allocated, the Department of Revenue (DOR) has no one to administer it. Once the planning grant is complete, the towns would be eligible to apply for the full grant which could be up to \$3 million.

It was the consensus of the four towns that to apply for the planning grant to see what ideas may be generated and what benefits may be gained--how Fire Department debts can be handled, how equipment can be purchased cooperatively, how the towns can increasingly work together.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Chairman Rasmussen stated that there is a lot of trouble and delays in getting building permits from Bayfield County. Bayfield County has announced it is currently reviewing all county zoning ordinances. By statute, this review allows an opportunity for the four towns to create their own zoning administration.

Karl Kastrosky noted that Zoning is losing personnel and is now run by the County Administrator. He offered his assistance to set up a zoning process for the four towns. The towns would capture all fees and revenues. Bayfield, Spider Lake and Washburn all have their own zoning code and administration.

Mike Furtak, former assistant in zoning, stated that fees have doubled and tripled. Houses that will solve the housing shortage are manufactured homes. Fees are charged for a basement, for the house, and for a second story. Fees and delays in permits have caused a number of contractors to no longer work in Bayfield County.

Discussion focused on towns receiving no communication from the county. Calls are not returned, and a town may be bypassed with construction projects. Taxpayers pay for this help. The statute reads that if the county announces a major renovation to the zoning code, towns can opt out immediately from county jurisdiction. If the towns wait a year before deciding to be removed from county zoning jurisdiction, it is a two-year process. Developing a streamlined system by hiring a consultant and inspectors to administer zoning was briefly discussed. At this time there is not enough information to make a decision, but it was the consensus to send a letter to the zoning board about the possibility of opting out of county zoning and creating a local unit. An attorney will be consulted, and the chairmen of the four towns will stay in touch. Also, the town of Barnes will be approached to participate.

Larry Nelson, a surveyor, stated it takes 60 working days for construction approvals. The construction season is short, and this affects everyone. In Sawyer County, approval is granted in 24 hours if the application is in compliance. If an application is not in compliance, other counties will indicate what is needed and how to solve problems. Bayfield County does not help applicants solve compliance issues.

Moton by Chairman Rasmussen, seconded by Cable Supervisor Popelka for the four towns to agree to research creation of their own zoning system.

Motion carried unanimously.

EQUIPMENT COLLABORATION

Chairman Rasmussen noted that towns cannot buy much equipment for \$300,000 or \$400,000. Renting equipment from the county could be a solution that would eliminate maintenance costs. Innovation Grant funding could be used to share equipment. At this time, town road crews work well together, as do Fire Departments.

NEW FIRE HALL

Among new regulations for fire departments, fire halls must be split off from town halls to prevent contamination for firefighters and equipment. The Innovation Grant can be used for planning collaboration and a new combined fire hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Holly declared the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.
Next year the meeting will be in Grand View.

PLEASE SIGN IN

4-TOWNS MEETING - JUNE 26, 2024

	NAME	TOWN
1.	Debi McCann	Cable
2.	Desi Niewinski	Bayfield County
3.	Cyndi Kastriski	Cable
4.	John Smith	CABLE
5.	Larry Nelson	Cable
6.	Zach Larson	Cable
7.	Dale Ahlert	Grandview
8.	Sack Everson	Grandview
9.	Jamie Holly	CABLE
10.	Jack McGreggor	NAMAKAGON
11.	LARRY Nelson	Grandview
12.	Tommy Dewey	Cable
13.	Tony Erba	Cable
14.	Bob Pals	Grandview
15.	Joe Harmon	Cable
16.	Le Sedlacek	Cable
17.	Tom BIASI	NAMAKAGON
18.	Elizabeth Holand	cable
19.	Mike Choate	↓
20.	Dave Haan	Namakagon F.D.
21.	Deanne Allen	