

Town of Grant  
9011 County Road WW  
Annual Town Meeting  
July 21, 2020

Present: Kruger, Yetter, Winkler, Luecht and Zimmerman.  
Chairperson Kruger called meeting to order at 7:05pm.

**Motion: (Jim Yetter, Dale Winkler) Move to approve Annual Town Meeting minutes from April 16, 2019 as written. Unanimous Ayes. Motion Carried.**

Supervisor Yetter let the Chairman know that because this was an Annual Meeting everyone was allowed to vote.

Annual Meeting Minutes are to be available to review within five business days and posted within 30 days of meeting.

**Annual Report:** Clerk Zimmerman presented the Annual Report following the same format used in previous years. The first page shows the wages paid, as well as \$3046.56 paid to the Wisconsin Retirement system for full time employee Marty Rutz. Social Security/Medicare Taxes totaled \$10,601.07. The cash balance on hand as of 12/31/19 was \$420,980.01. The breakdown of the checking, tax account, equipment savings, and Park Fund were explained. The previous Building Fund is now the Equipment Savings Account. No new money is being added to the Park Fund. It is an account that was established in the past with a subdivision formation. A Certificate of Deposit matured in 2019. Those funds were moved to a money market so the funds would be more readily available. The report continued with the budget. Income was \$22,204 higher than budgeted. Under expenses there is a negative balance of \$438,763. That was due to a loan that was taken for a Mill Road payment. The remainder of the report was a list of transactions that took place.

**Guest Reports:**

- **Grand Rapids VFD:** Robert Piatt, Fire Chief, reported they had 119 calls for fire service and 272 Medical First Responder calls. This was up 14% and 11% respectively from 2018. Staffing has been stable, but they continue to lose young members to fulltime departments and a few experienced firefighters to retirement and relocation. Throughout 2019, staffing averaged 45 members for both Fire and EMS. An Ice/Cold Water Rescue program was started. Currently 10 members are trained to a technician level for this type of rescue. They will continue to use a multi-agency response for any water related emergency. Training, service projects, and equipment purchases continued throughout the year. For a 5 month period, this included a training house in the Town of Grant. The major purchase of the year was a new engine from Rosenbauer America at the cost of \$578,000. The truck is scheduled to be delivered in December 2020. The trends and forecasts for volunteer departments in the future are a concern. Chief Piatt can be reached at 715-424-1815 for non-emergency calls or [Fire.chief@grandrapidswi.org](mailto:Fire.chief@grandrapidswi.org).
- **United Emergency Medical Response (UEMR):** Gary Johnson, Co-owner gave the report for UEMR. There were 45 ambulance calls in the Town of Grant in 2019 and 25 thus far this year. A breakdown of the types of calls was provided noting there has been an increase in calls for stroke symptoms. COVID-19 has hit UEMR hard. The call volume decreased by 65%. UEMR had to invest over \$22,000 in personal protective equipment (PPE). With foresight, they were

able to make these purchases very early in the pandemic and have had sufficient amounts of PPE. Training has taken place less often due to social distancing, but “Go-To-Meeting” has been used. They hope to reconvene in person training in September. All of their employees have been willing to work during the virus. Two new processes are being used for ambulance sanitization. One using an air compressor to spray a virucide disinfectant and a second using an ultraviolet light system. All employees have been fit tested for the N95 respirator. Fit testing also took place for Medical First Responders in their contracted area and local law enforcement. Employees do have the option of a Powered Air Purifying Respirator when increased protection is desired. The arrival of a new ambulance has been postponed two months and will be here in November instead of September. The final cost is close to \$225,000 empty. It is 4-wheel drive and will decrease the chance of getting stuck. A tutorial on the use of face masks can be found on their website. Gary Johnson can be reached at 715-423-7777.

### **Officers Reports:**

Chairperson Kruger – During the June town board meeting, two of the three board members passed an ordinance “Establishing Appointment of Town Clerk and Town Treasurer.” A copy of the ordinance was available for those in attendance. The ordinance gives the electors the choice of switching to an appointed clerk and an appointed treasurer. The choice to make this switch is up to the voters, but it was necessary to pass the ordinance in order for the item to appear as a referendum on the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 ballot. The cost of a hired clerk and treasurer is anticipated to be higher than the current cost. Appointed individuals do not have to live in the Town of Grant. The neighboring Towns of Grand Rapids and Saratoga have appointed positions. The Town of Plover is also looking into this. There are no plans to combine the two positions.

### **Resolution from an Elector:**

Sharon Schwab distributed a “Resolution Regarding Rescinding of Ordinance 2020-01.”

### **Motion: (Sharon Schwab, Darcy Held): Move to adopt the Resolution Regarding Rescinding of Ordinance 2020-01 (attached).**

Comments prior to the vote: Gertrude Knipple does not want her right to vote for the offices taken away and given to just three board members. Kathy Rogers asked the board for the reasoning behind the ordinance. Chairperson Kruger responded, there was no intention to replace anyone. There is a concern that no one may run for the position or someone could leave office mid-term but he provided no evidence of this. The intent was to allow the electors to decide if they want an elected clerk and treasurer or appointed ones. Appointed positions are not being forced on anyone; the electors would get to decide. It was questioned by Avis Schroer how the topic came before the board. Chairperson Kruger is who brought it up after doing some research. He stated a larger portion of the electors, than those attending the annual meeting, would have a choice on appointed positions if a vote takes place in November. Sharon Schwab commented that at the Annual Meeting everyone was a Board member this evening and had the ability to vote; we are the electors she said. Dorothy Raasch said that someone could leave office whether they are elected or appointed. She said it is important to have a person who understands how a town should operate and can work to insure legal issues are avoided. There will be additional costs as audits would be required with appointed positions. Raasch said the financial situation of the Town is declining and adding additional costs should be avoided. Kathleen Lee stated this issue needs to be considered beyond the current clerk and treasurer and beyond the three persons on the Board. It is a decision for the long term future of the Town. She would like to maintain her right to elect those individuals. Scott Provost expressed the same sentiments. Avis Schroer pressed the board about the current clerk and treasurer and why they were apparently dissatisfied? Supervisor Winkler gave an example where the Clerk did not answer an email right away from a resident awaiting a public

hearing. Clerk Zimmerman responded that the responsibility for that work was with Zoning Administrator who did not do his required tasks. Todd Van Loh then responded that Supervisor Winkler did not do his job as he is still waiting for his lawn to be fixed two years after Winkler plowed it up. Clerk Zimmerman expressed concerns about hiring an individual outside of the Town. That person would not have a vested interest in the Town. An appointed individual may not have a long term interest in the position. During the 14 years she has been clerk for the Town of Grant there have been three Grand Rapids clerks. It was questioned by Scott Provost if there is a risk of a revolving door if each time a new Board was elected there could be a new clerk hired. Clerk Zimmerman added that the Board would decide the length of a term (as short as six months), the wages and benefits. The appointed persons would be negotiating for those things similar to the process with the current full-time employee who wrote his own contract agreement. Eldred Getzloff said the Board should instead encourage other persons to run for the positions if they are not satisfied with the elected persons present and continue allowing the citizens to vote; not take away everyone's vote but the boards. Sharon Schwab remarked that if the ordinance is not rescinded that the persons who will be judged in November are not the current clerk and treasurer but Chairman Kruger and Supervisor Winkler who voted for the ordinance. Doug Olson followed up by commenting that it would be difficult to find better people with more experience than Clerk Zimmerman and Treasurer Luecht. Schwab called the question and asked for a hand vote. There was some confusion by Kruger as to what to do.

**Hand vote: 25 for, 4 against. Motion carried. Chairperson Kruger will place the topic on the next monthly board meeting agenda.**

**Other Directives to Town Board:**

**Motion: (Sharon Schwab, Kathleen Lee) Essential workers (Poll and Transfer Station) be paid \$15 per hour effective August 1, 2020.** Discussion prior to the vote: Jim Yetter asked how long the increase in salary would last Schwab commented the increase could last indefinitely. The possibility of road workers being included in the increase was discussed, but no amendments to the motion were made. Gertrude Knipple made the point that road workers are driving vehicles or operating equipment and do not have face to face contact with the public. The motion was exclusively for essential workers. Clerk Zimmerman said a recent increase in salary for Transfer Station workers was for \$1, resulting in a current rate of \$13 per hour. Ron Becker stated it is important to know the budgetary impact of an increase. Schwab stated that the Transfer Station costs are included as a Special Assessment on tax bills so any increase this year could be financed next year if necessary. She further commented that Poll Works do not work many hours per year, so an insignificant increase would be expected.

Heather Grys-Luecht questioned if any budget amendment occurred at the February meeting following an increase in the salary of the full-time employee. Yetter believed an amendment passed, but the minutes were not available at the meeting. Grys-Luecht would like to see the amendment. Clerk Zimmerman stated an amendment decision was delayed until the end of the year to see the status of highway wages. The 2020 budget does reflect the 2018 highway wages increase but no other. A wage increase for the F.T. employee was never discussed during budget planning for 2020; nor discussion regarding the six-year contract he received.

Call for the Question on Motion regarding Essential Workers. **Passed with a hand vote of 24 to 2.**

Lee Chipman asked if a “Stop Ahead” signs and 45 mph speed limit sign could be added to Mill Road (CTH F and CTH U). Schwab commented that Towns have the authority to drop the speed limit to 45 mph. Traffic and speed has increased on Mill Road since its improvements. There is a concern that it could now become a race track. Ron Becker stated if a speed limit is not posted in a Town it is 55 mph. A resolution that designates a starting point and an ending point for the speed limit would be needed. It does not become effective until the signs are placed. Ron Becker offered to help work through the process of changing the speed limit. Flags could be added to the top of the stop signs.

Marvin Brahmstedt expressed concern about the speed of ATVs and the time of day they are operating. Dorothy Raasch said ATV related injuries have occurred this year. She has noted people driving later than 10 pm.

Kathy Rogers asked how and why payment for a road project was approved without bidding process. Supervisor Winkler said he talked with contractors regarding projects that needed to be done. He said it was brought up in a meeting that he would talk with contractors. Rogers asked if the Board members did not know that bids were required for projects exceeding \$5000 in cost. She asked if it is accurate that they made arrangements without bids and signed a contract. Supervisor Winkler conceded that they had. Chairperson Kruger said it was an oversight on his part that bids were not sought with a Class II posting first. After the Clerk made him aware of the need for the bids, the Class II posting for bids took place and the job was awarded a second time. Dorothy Raasch stated that Supervisors Winkler and Yetter have more experience than the chairperson and should have known the bidding requirements. She said it was high time Chairman Kruger familiarized himself with the statutes. Supervisor Winkler said the Board was not allowed to have conversations outside of the posted Board meetings. There was no comment following.

Charles Rickman stated he would like a sound system if meetings were held at Double Down in the future. A microphone was available, but it did not turn on at this point in the meeting.

Thank you to Clerk Vicky Zimmerman for arranging a site that allowed for social distancing. Thank you to Nathan Zuelke, the owner of Double Down. He set up the chairs and did not charge the Town for the use of the banquet hall. It was suggested that the citizens of the Town could thank him by supporting his business.

**Motion: (Jim Yetter, Trudy Knipple) Move to adjourn @ 8:40 pm. Unanimous Ayes. Carried**

Respectfully submitted by,

*Vicky Zimmerman*

Vicky Zimmerman, Clerk Town of Grant

Approved: April 20, 2021 Annual Meeting

Posted Draft Minutes: August 18, 2020

Town Hall, Transfer Station Website