

**TOWN OF MANITOWOC RAPIDS
MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

The September 11, 2024 meeting of the Town of Manitowoc Rapids meeting was called to order by Chairperson Stradal at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall, 8624 CTH JJ, Manitowoc, WI.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called, and members present were: Josh Stradal-Chairperson, Tom Wetenkamp-Supervisor 1, John Jost-Supervisor 2, Jeremy Stradal-Road Foreman, Jessica Backus-Clerk/Treasurer, and Constable Jim Wiesner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Stradal presented the minutes from the August 14, 2024 Monthly Meeting. Supervisor Wetenkamp moved to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Supervisor Jost. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Chairperson Stradal presented the September 11, 2024 agenda and moved the fire department discussion to the beginning of new business. Supervisor Jost moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Supervisor Wetenkamp. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Clerk Backus presented the cash flow report. Supervisor Wetenkamp moved to approve the cash flow report, seconded by Supervisor Jost. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Stradal informed the public in attendance that the board was given a proposal from the City of Manitowoc for sections of the township, which they felt the residents and businesses could benefit from. The board would continue to look at other areas that could benefit the town as well. The board was not looking to shut down the fire departments. The fire departments are a service to the township and if contracts are not signed, the board has no direct say on what happens to the contracted service. The board needs to be good stewards of public funds to the township and do what is best for the business and people in the town. He was looking out for the best interests of the town. When the time comes to vote on the contracts, as BVFD Chief, he would recuse himself.

Chairperson Stradal opened public comment at 6:35 p.m.

Michelle Endries, 4000 Redwood Dr, was opposed to the proposal to contract with the City of Manitowoc. She believes this proposal would benefit BVFD and have a negative impact on SCVFD and RVFD.

Marietta Johnson, 2118 Wimmer Rd, surveyed the people in attendance who were opposed to the proposal with the city. The majority raised their hand. She surveyed those in favor of the proposal, in which no one raised their hand.

Dayna Wech, 1618 Whitewater Dr, was opposed to the proposal because the city does not have the proper equipment to fight rural fires.

Kari Check, 4009 Wagon Wheel Rd, was opposed to the proposal. She questioned if the board would be reviewing the BVFD territory as well and asked other departments to service those areas.

Jim Check, business owner at 4801 Dogwood Ln, questioned who the city would call to assist when they need the backup because right now both RVFD and SCVFD are responding to assist. If both volunteers no longer receive to Town funds, how are they going to fund themselves. He believes the volunteers have the equipment to fight rural fires better than the city.

Shelly Moffat, 316 S Alverno Rd, was opposed to the proposal because the Town received an increase in shared revenue and believes those extra funds should be used to cover the increased cost of the ambulance service.

Chad Korte, 4643 Goodwin Rd, commented that if the board took the funding away from the volunteer fire departments, the board would not be providing the same protection the town has now. He was also concerned as to how the city could cover both the city and sections of the town.

Paul Roekle, 2325 Victoria Dr, was opposed to the proposal and would like more study and input. The three reasons provided for the change of better response for town people in those areas, no rate increase until 2030, and possible cost savings on homeowners insurance, are refutable and very weak as an argument. The increase in shared revenue by Act 12 would provide additional funding to cover the increased cost of the ambulance service.

Dale Wagner, 9429 US Hwy 151, was opposed to the proposal. He contacted his insurance company about the possible savings to which he was informed it would increase because the City was further from his house than SCVFD. He has two farmsteads and does not want to see them burn because the city could not handle the rural fire. He questioned why there weren't more conversations with the volunteer fire departments.

Tim Martinez, 2480 Victoria Dr, commented that this this whole conversion has been disrespectful to those that serve on the SCVFD and RVFD after they have provided so many years of service. He believes the board should vote no to the proposal.

Ed Bauer, 1405 S Union Rd, mentioned he spoke with his insurance agent, and it would be a wash for him and doesn't think it will save anyone money. He would like better transparency, more than the Town website because not everyone has access to the internet.

Amy Johnson, 8623 CTH JJ, promoted her store front. She was opposed to the proposal and there should be another plan to review.

Barry Schardt, 801 S Rapids Rd, was opposed to the proposal because the city does not have the equipment to handle the water or the staffing. He believes the volunteers have the power to help rural communities.

Justin Scheidecker, 2216 S Custer, was opposed to the proposal because he believes the city is not equipped to handle rural fires.

Bryce Fischer, 8623 CTH JJ, commented that the community and fire departments need to come together to resolves any issues instead of fighting against each other.

Kevin Klosinski, SCVFD, questioned why there weren't negotiations with the volunteer fire departments. He believes there was only one plan and that would be to use the city. All volunteer fire departments respond to more than just fires. They help the communities with multiple issues.

Roger Patient, 1732 S Union Rd, commented that if the board eliminates the volunteer departments it shows they don't care about the town residents.

Maggie Mies, 2615 Simon Rd, believes this proposal was never about helping the town residents and will not benefit the people in the communities. She expressed concern as to why no one in the town seemed to know this conversation was taking place and there was a conflict of interest surrounding the BVFD and the city. Her final concern was if she has the city respond to a carbon monoxide call, the city will charge her versus RVFD would come as a courtesy.

Glenn Kappelman, 2213 Shadyside Rd, believes the city performs well within the city, but they do not have all the equipment to fight a rural fire. Another concern he expressed was after five years what will the rate increase be. He wants the town to have a plan b because if this goes through, SCVFD would not survive, and the town would be stuck paying the higher contracts with the city.

Wendy Newberg, 6832 Dutch Rd, was opposed to the proposal because the savings are not worth it.

Justin Schleis, 7134 Dutch Rd, questioned if the city knows how to handle an agriculture fire. The volunteers know how and have the equipment to handle rural fires. He doesn't want the volunteers to go out of business. He was also concerned with the response time from the city because their station is further away than SCVFD.

Pat Kuehn, 7626 Dutch Rd, commended Silver Creek FD for the two times she has needed them. She is strongly opposed to the proposal.

Randy Drumm, 101 S Parkview Rd, expressed concern that if the town needs to cut from one area of the budget to fund the increase, then the board needs to look at how things are being run. He believes a letter should have been sent to all the residents involved to inform them of the matter at hand because the people should get a say, not just the board. The people know what they have and what they don't want, which is inferior fire protection.

Peggy Raether, 7134 Dutch Rd, commended Silver Creek Fire Department. She believes they are invaluable and should continue to service the Town. The city does not have the proper equipment or knowledge to fight rural fires. She was opposed to the proposal.

Vince Miller, 2238 Victoria Dr, was opposed to the proposal. He believes a letter should have been sent out stating what the plan was, what would happen if this did not work, and where do we go from there.

Naomi Sadowski, 6112 Middle Rd, was opposed to the proposal and hopes the board was listening to their constituents and neighbors. She believes the volunteer departments would dissolve if their contracts were not renewed.

Joe Blahnik, 3003 J-Mar Rd, would be in favor of the city proposal because of the cost savings for the town. He does not know what will happen in five years and we can't expect the board to know either.

Robert Kakuk, 832 S Parkview Rd, commented they had a house fire in October which Silver Creek responded to. He believes they helped save his house from burning down because they have the equipment to handle rural areas.

Jim Webb, 2421 Hwy 42, questioned why did the city approach BVFD on this and not a department closer to the city.

Tim Wirtz, 2624 Valley Dr, commented when there is a rapid spread of fire, the difference between an initial one tank responding versus volunteer tankers would be a house being saved versus the house burning down. He believes the volunteers do great things for the community. He also questioned if the city would require town residents to put in hydrants at their expense.

No one else present wished to speak, subsequently Chairperson Stradal closed public input at 7:14 p.m.

REPORTS

Constable – Constable Wiesner reported he received three calls regarding burning plastic, dogs barking and a dog at large. He requested warning lights for his truck be added to next month's meeting. He will contact the owner of 6924 CTH JJ to cut his grass.

Highway – Road Foreman Stradal reported the chips need to be swept off residents’ lawns and deposited back on the roads of Candlelight Ct and Catalina Ct. He provided two quotes for the back tires of the dump truck. Pomp’s Tires quote was \$2,673.42. Bauer was \$3,333.60. Supervisor Wetenkamp moved to purchase from Pomp’s Tires for the cheaper rate of \$2,673.42, seconded by Chairperson Stradal. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Supervisor Wetenkamp moved, seconded by Supervisor Jost to convene the meeting in closed session at 7:20 p.m. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Notice is hereby given that the above governmental body may adjourn into a closed session during the meeting as authorized by Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes, which authorizes the governmental body to convene in closed session for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session.

The specific subject matter that may be considered in closed session is: Fire Department and EMS Contracts.

Supervisor Jost moved, seconded by Supervisor Wetenkamp to reconvene in open session at 7:26 p.m. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Chairperson Stradal reported that the board discussed the fire department and ambulance budgets. The rates for the three fire departments are: BVFD \$134,370.09, RVFD \$29,013.52, SCVFD \$60,466.54, and City ambulance will be \$31,320 (\$15 per resident) in 2025, totaling \$1,276,350.75 over the next five years. The proposal for 2025 would be BVFD at \$134,370.09 and the city services for \$100,000 (breakdown-fire protection \$68,680, ambulance \$31,320), totaling \$1,171,850 over the next five years. The Town would save \$104,500.75 over five years with the change. He then opened the discussion to the three fire departments.

Tom Ardent, RVFD Chief, requested the board listen to the resident that attended the meeting tonight. Their presences show they value something greater than the savings. If they had to pay more to continue the current service, they would be willing to do so.

Paul Roekle, SCVFD Representative, questioned what if the board would be receiving funds from Act 12. Clerk Backus reported the town would be receiving an increase in shared revenue. Roekle would like to see the Act 12 funds put towards the increase for current service.

Discussion and action on Town Generator

Road Foreman Stradal presented two quotes for a new generator for the town hall. Schnell Electric quoted \$19,943.75. Adams Generators quoted \$19,500. Supervisor Jost moved to approve the purchase of a new generator from Adams, seconded by Supervisor Wetenkamp. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion and action on Stone Rd Speed Limit Reduction

Supervisor Jost moved to reduce the speed limit on Stone Rd from 55MPH to 45MPH for safety purposes, seconded by Supervisor Wetenkamp. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion and action on Town Assessor Contract

Clerk Backus presented the town assessor contract from Tennessen Appraisal for 2025 and 2026 in the amount of \$11,500. Chairperson Stradal moved to approve the contract for Tennessen Appraisal, seconded by Supervisor Wetenkamp. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Update on Truck

Supervisor Jost provided an update that current builds were six months out, which gives a completion date of January 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS

Items for Next Month

FD and EMS Contracts

Warning lights for Constable

Vouchers

Clerk Backus presented the September vouchers. Chairperson Stradal moved to approve the vouchers as presented for the month of August, seconded by Supervisor Jost. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING DATES

Special Meeting – September 18, 2024 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Monthly Meeting – October 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further discussion, Supervisor Wetenkamp moved to adjourn; seconded by Supervisor Jost, and the motion was adopted by acclamation. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Backus, Clerk/Treasurer