



**Annual Town Meeting
April 19, 2022 7:00 p.m.
Manitowish Waters Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman John Hanson.

Chairman Hanson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

A moment of silence was Observed for Local Residents Who Have Passed and Troops Whom Protect our Country.

Approve Agenda as Posted: A motion was made by Christine Powell and seconded by Jim Powell to approve the agenda as posted. Motion carried.

Approve Minutes of Last Annual Town Meeting: 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes were approved on a motion from Chuck Lippert and seconded by Kim Yencich. Motion carried.

Introductions: Chair Hanson introduced Supervisor Mike Kramer, noting that Supervisor Bob Becker was unable to attend the meeting due to a recent surgery and that he is doing well. Hanson also introduced District 3 County Board Supervisor Mike Biszak.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was available in hard copy at the door. Clerk Hilbert read aloud, the beginning and ending balances for the *General*, *Investment* and *Tax* accounts, asking if there were any questions. Dean Galloway inquired where he could find information on the Investment account, to which Chair Hanson replied that the information could be obtained from the Clerk/Treasurer.

2021 Clerk's Financial Report: Main categories of the Financial Report, (available in print at the door), were read aloud by Chairman Hanson with ample time for questions or comments. Greg Holt asked why there was \$2,700 budgeted for *Library Employee Benefits* but nothing showing up in the actual account. Clerk Hilbert explained that the Librarian retirement benefits target a payroll expense account that does not appear on the P&L statement.

Set Date for Next Annual Meeting: The 2023 Annual Meeting, scheduled to fall on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, was set for April 18th, 2023, and approved on a motion from Greg Holt and seconded by Christine Powell. Motion carried.

MW Chamber of Commerce Report: Chamber Director, Patty Gauthier introduced herself and her newly hired Assistant Director Kelli Straubel, who just started with the Chamber last week. Kelli spoke briefly, mentioning that she was a resident of Presque Isle until relocating to Manitowish Waters the last 5 years. Patty commented on the past year, noting that the *Car & Boat Show* was a great success and will include some additional surprises in 2022. The *4th of July* event also went well with 180 children participating in the "game tent". *Cranarama* struggled a bit with difficulty getting local restaurants to participate due to staff shortages and also, difficulty finding volunteers to man the event. The Chamber plans to completely revamp this event in 2022. Gauthier expressed gratitude to Larry Voss of Aberdeen Lodge for hosting a very nice Annual Dinner Meeting in October of 2021. The autumn *Cranberry Tours* also experienced a few changes in 2021, with the pre-tour visit to the Town Hall being eliminated and the entire tour now commencing right at Bob & Maria Winter's Cranberry Square. Due to COVID restrictions on transportation directly from the school, *Christmas for the Town* experienced fewer children than witnessed in previous years, however was still very enjoyable. *Magic in Manitowish* with plenty of hot chocolate, wintery games and horse drawn sleigh rides through the Discovery Center was great fun. Patty closed expressing gratitude to the Town Hall staff, community member volunteers, and local businesses for all of their assistance with all of the events.

Solid Waste and Transfer Station Report: Supervisor, Mike Kramer announced that Amnesty week will begin Wednesday, June 1st, 2022 and run through Wednesday, June 8th, 2022. Things are running smoothly with our two attendants, Dave Krembs and Scott Clendening, doing a great job. Kramer noted that our compost pile is one of the best in the area, with other communities coming in to research how we operate. The tree and brush collection is working out well for tree cutting, excavation and lawn service contractors who pay an annual fee that covers about half of the cost to have it chipped. Smaller fees from residents and a DNR grant offset a good portion of the remaining chipping fee. A resident questioned the possibility of waiving the brush pile fee due to the large amount of debris created during the winter storms. Kramer indicated that this seemed reasonable. Jerry Yencich inquired about the possibility of a monthly or seasonal pass for residents to contribute to the brush pile charges, rather than paying each time they drop off brush. Kramer was receptive to the idea and said they would put this on the agenda for the next Monthly Board meeting.

Planning and Zoning Report: Planning Commission Chairman, Dan Sleight was not in attendance. Chair Hanson shared the 2021 Annual Permit Report from Zoning Administrator, Tom Thiessen, stating that 56 permits were issued for a total valuation of \$5,844,255 with fees totaling \$8,220.06. There were 6 single family homes, 8 additions, 13 garages and 28 misc. construction projects. The Planning Commission granted 5 Conditional Use Permits (CUP) and 1 Variance. Numbers were down, compared to 2020 which included 70 permits for a total valuation of \$10,469,100 and fees totaling \$15,654.80. Thiessen contributed the decrease in construction to sky-rocketing lumber prices and available real estate being nearly depleted. Thiessen added that 2021 witnessed numerous tree cutting violations and numerous applications for garages which require CUP's because of size, exterior siding, and number of buildings on a single parcel. These two issues will be addressed and hopefully resolved in 2022.

Cemetery Report: Clerk Hilbert shared notes from Supervisor Becker, announcing the members of the Cemetery Committee, which include Chuck Kramer, (Cemetery Sexton), Chuck Rayala III, Jody Miller, Marilyn Wittry and Carol Schott. In 2021 the cemetery was treated for ants and bugs and this treatment will be repeated this year if necessary. A new drilled well along with 3 spigots was installed. A shelter for the pump will be built this year. The entryway was replanted/landscaped in 2021. Plans to add fertilizer to improve the grass and improvements to the landscaping are on the docket for 2022. This will likely require additional maintenance hours by the Town Crew. Long range plans may include an addition to the road and new blacktop.

Parks and Recreation Report: John Hanson reported that Rest Lake Park is now being maintained by the EAU Crew which is a nice benefit to the Town. Problems with the docks at the RLP boat landing will be resolved this spring. At Koller Park, we are looking into remodeling the bathrooms and replacing the dressing rooms with additional toilet facilities and hopefully we can get that accomplished this year. We also plan to work on modifying the floating docks at Koller Park to improve stability. At the Town Hall, we will be installing a State Historical Marker across from the building, in the grassy area between the parking lot and the bike trail. The Marker will commemorate fallen FBI agent, Carter Baum, who is the only FBI Agent to be killed in the State of Wisconsin. Baum was killed by Baby Face Nelson, who also shot Town Constable Christenson 8 times, however, Christenson fortunately survived. With regard to the Park at Little Star Lake Beach, we are working on entering into a long-term land use agreement with the DNR, which would allow us to upgrade the bathroom facilities and make additional improvements to the site

Water Patrol Report: In Supervisor Bob Becker's absence, Clerk Hilbert shared his report, naming members of the Water Safety Committee, including Carla Hammeister, Dan Stella, Frank DiLeonardi, Greg Holt, Lynn Schroeder, and Patrick Solar. In 2021, we had three Water Patrol Officers including Dan Perry, Phil Horter and Joe Kraetke. All three will be returning in 2022, and Dan Perry will continue in his administrative role, overseeing all of the officers. The committee continues to meet periodically, and created a mail insert to encourage safe and courteous boating. They will also have new posters to display at the boat launches. The committee recommends that a GPS locator be added to the patrol boat so buoy locations can be checked and maintained over the summer. The DNR has recommended that we add an alcohol testing unit due to a number of violations in 2021. Hopefully the public will take heed and behave safely. We still have maps of the chain available and need to improve the map distribution this year. The committee hopes that education efforts will continue to improve the safe enjoyment of our lakes.

AIS Program: Chairman Hanson stated that the Town of Manitowish Waters has again contracted with the Discovery Center to manage the Aquatic Invasive Species program. Emily Heald, who has headed up the program for the past many

years, resigned last fall. Jamie Van has replaced Emily in that position and Hanson is confident that Jamie will do an excellent job. In 2022 the program will have four interns as opposed to only one or two last year. The main issue we have in our chain of lakes is Curly Leaf Pondweed. We seem to be keeping this under control and it hasn't spread much over the past several years. Small patches are hand-pulled and larger areas require chemical treatment. Our chain has been fortunate to avoid Eurasian Water Milfoil, with the closest known contamination in Upper Gresham Lake. Another nasty invasive is the spiny water flea, which has been detected in Trout Lake. We get water from Trout Lake through the Trout River, so hopefully we can avoid that species. The Discovery Center is always looking for volunteers in the monitoring program they have for our lakes and with the Clean Boats – Clean Water program.

Fire Company Report: Fire Chief, Bob Skrobot, reported that in 2021 there were 135 ambulance calls (double that of 2020), and 21 fire calls which included 2 structure fires, (both mutual aid), 1 vehicle fire (snowmobile), 8 accidents, and 10 miscellaneous calls (false alarms, downed power lines, gas leaks, etc.). It is the 2nd year in the new station and everything is fully operational and working well. The new rescue boat was delivered last September and does everything that was hoped it would. The compressed air system and SCBA packs and bottles were updated for around \$90,000. This year's Harley raffle will be a 2022 Street Glide. In the upcoming year the MWFC is currently pricing a lift assist cot for the Ambulance which will cost approximately \$30,000 and new extraction tools which will also cost about \$30,000. Additionally, a new first out engine is being looked into to keep equipment up to date. Chair Hanson thanked Bob and stating that the Fire Co. has an amazing ability to raise funds to buy equipment. This, along with their service is greatly appreciated.

Library Report: According to Librarian, Janelle Kohl, 2021 was a different kind of year for the library. Due to COVID, they were hesitant to plan programs which would draw large groups in close proximity. Friends of the Library were able to hold their annual Book Sale in the Lion's Pavilion, and also host their Star Party event on the Discovery Center field. 2021 started out with the lengthy task of inventory, which is required every 5 years. Outdated or unread books were weeded out, shelving was relocated, and more furnishings were ordered for the new addition. Regrettably, the Library suffered a theft in the spring of 2021. An individual broke in and stole two computers. The perpetrator was apprehended several weeks later and the stolen equipment was returned and repaired. As a result, the Library has now installed a security system. The Library was hopping busy over the summer with people checking out materials, using the computers and WIFI, and accessing the meeting rooms. Janelle and Assistant Librarian Sarah Krembs were thankful for the help of their amazing volunteers. The Library currently has approximately 24,000 items available for check out. The 4 public computers and WIFI were logged on 395 times and the wireless had 20,613 individuals log on. These numbers are unable to count how many separate times each individual person logged onto the wireless. Appreciation was expressed to Mrs. Uihlein for donated grounds care and landscaping. They are currently looking forward to installing two picnic tables in the beautifully landscaped back yard. The tables are a donation from the May Family.

Vilas County Supervisor Report: District #3 County Supervisor, Mike Biszak, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak at the Annual Meeting and went on to detail the entire area he serves as the District #3 Representative. Recently re-elected, Biszak was sworn in this morning by Judge Milanowski. Biszak dedicated much of his time in 2021 to serving on three committees including the Highway, Law Enforcement and Zoning committees. Due to the lengthy delay in ordering new Patrol Trucks, the Vilas Co. Highway Dept. is now building their own trucks, and this seems to be working out well. Also noteworthy, County trucks are becoming equipped with salt water brine tanks and using this mix to treat icy roads. With regard to zoning, construction stats are down, and the only thing that went up in 2021 was violations. Relative to Law Enforcement, Biszak mentioned that Sheriff Joe Fath will be running for re-election again this fall. In 2021 Manitowish Waters had 419 calls to the Sheriff's Dept. with 911 hang-ups attributing to 145 of those call. Other calls consisted of intrusion calls, calls about traffic violations, deer collisions, welfare calls, downed power lines, etc. Biszak went on to mention, that like most businesses in our area, Vilas County is looking for employees and has several job openings. Looking to the future, the Hwy 51 bridge will be redone and funds are in place for a feasibility study on the Hwy W bridge. The County Highway Dept. would like the Hwy W bridge to resemble the Highway 51 bridge. The Hwy 51 re-pave from Hwy M to Hwy W may get completed in 2023. A resident asked Rep Biszak how many Police patrol cars are out at one time. Biszak responded that it varies. Chair Hanson added that they will be proposing a 3 lane bridge for the Hwy W bridge, to allow a separate lane for bikes and snowmobiles.

Road Report: Supervisor Mike Kramer reported that the Road Crew has been cleaning up and chipping debris in the right-of-way, following the ice storm. To date, there have been 10 plowings, 15 scrapings, and 14 sandings. Kramer went on to

note all the extra duties the crew handles in addition to taking care of the roads, such as turning the compost pile bi-weekly, installing all of the LED lights at the Library and Town Hall, all building maintenance, installation and removal of seasonal equipment like buoys, picnic tables, bike racks, floating docks at Koller Park, garbage removal at the parks, etc. A new patrol truck has been ordered but will likely not arrive until 2023. Resident, Brian Vukevich, who lives down Mitchell Road, across the highway from the ball field, expressed concern about pulling out onto the highway after the County plow goes through and deposits a large pile at the end of the road. Visibility to the south is an issue at this location because of the curve in the highway, and trying to get through the plow pile further complicates the danger. Chair Hanson offered to try having the Airport plowing crew clear the pile after the County plow goes through. Jerry Yencich asked about the possibility of leaving snow on the shoulder portion of Powell Road for snowmobiles, to which both Supervisor Kramer and Chair Hanson responded that the limitations of the plow boom arm make this an unlikely option.

Airport Report: On behalf of Bob Becker, Chair Hanson provided a report on the Airport. Hanson currently serves as the manager at the Airport, with Scott Clendening in charge of maintenance. Scott, who also works part-time at the Transfer Station in the summer, has done an outstanding job taking care of Airport building maintenance and is also really good at keeping all the equipment performing well. The main project currently going on at the Airport is hangar expansion. Approximately 5 acres have been cleared for the development of much needed hangar space. Final plans are just about ready to be approved. Four individuals are prepared to start construction on box hangars that are similar to the 3 private hangars that are presently there. A group of people are working on constructing a T-hangar unit, similar to the four existing T-hangars that are privately owned. When all of this occurs, we will have about 2 million dollars of construction going on out there, which will be good for the community and good for the Airport. Development of the hangar site will be 95% federal and state funding, with the Town only responsible for 5%. We are currently looking at replacing outdated poor condition equipment. All lighting in the Airport buildings has been replaced with LED lighting. All of the recent landscaping out at the Airport was donated by Uhlein's and we are very thankful for that.

Subjects from the Floor: Dawn Holt requested an annual Broadband report. Chair Hanson responded that we have been working with CenturyLink, and last year they sold off all of their assets to Brightspeed, (a newly formed company). Brightspeed is in the process of getting up to speed, and hopefully we can have a conversation with them by the end of the month. Hanson added that StarLink seems to be a successful WIFI option for Manitowish Waters.

Lands Traded, Gifts, Easements: In 2021, the Town sold a water access strip of land that was located between Little Bohemia Lodge and the Johns' private residence for \$65,000.00. Beginning in 2021, but not closing until 2022, Chair Hanson explained the purchase of two parcels at the end of the paved runway on Powell Road from Roemer and Slaney residents. This 18 to 20 acre purchase is paid for with 95% Federal and State funding, and costing the Town only about \$10,000. The Town is also purchasing a 50' strip beyond the Town right-of way, along Powell Road to Pelkola Road. This would allow for a bike trail if Bike Trail Inc. ever decides to go ahead with the Cranberry Loop, and also create a buffer between the Airport property and the Town road. This buffer would protect the scenic beauty with regard to Airport tree trimming as well. The cost of the strip is \$32,000 plus an additional \$25,000 for the engineering firm that did the surveying and administrative services.

Adjourned: 8:21pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Dana Hilbert
Clerk/Treasurer