

DRAFT

TOWN OF BENNETT REGULAR MONTHLY TOWN BOARD MEETING Monday, August 12, 2024, at 6:30 PM

CALLED MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman Brett Hunter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Other officers in attendance were Wesley Koehler and Timothy Haskins, Supervisors, Tamara Johnson, Town Clerk and Stephanie Lintula, Town Treasurer. Cemetery Sexton, Charles Martineau, Fire Chief, Travis Theien, Constable Jay Burfield and several other town residents and property owners were also in attendance. Notices of the meeting were posted at the Town Hall, Recycle Center, and the Town Website on Monday, August 5, 2024.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the July 8, 2024, monthly town board meeting were read by clerk. *Wes Koehler made a motion to approve the minutes as read with a name correction for Tim Haskins in the Treasurer's Report Motion, seconded by Tim Haskins. Motion carried.*

APPROVE BILLS FOR PAYMENT:

Moved by Wesley Koehler, seconded by Tim Haskins, to pay the bills, Checks #19769-19797, Payroll and Withholding payments for August. Motion Carried.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Stephanie Lintula submitted her July report. The account balances on July 31, 2024, were – Checking Account: \$42,782.11, Money Market: \$144,258.95, ICS Account: \$0.01. The accounts balanced with the bank as of July 31, 2024. *Moved by Tim Haskins, seconded by Wes Koehler, to approve the treasurer's report. Motion carried.*

Fire Department: The Fire Chief, Travis Theien, gave his report. A copy is attached to the original of these minutes.

Highway Department: Bruce Sutherland gave the highway report. A copy is attached to the original of these minutes.

Constable: Jay Burfield gave the constable report. A copy is attached to the original of these minutes.

Cemetery Sexton: Charles Martineau submitted a report to the board. A copy is attached to the original of the minutes.

Douglas County Supervisor: Not available

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Sump Pump & Drain Pipe at the Town Hall

Brett Hunter is working on finding a plumber to do this repair.

2. Giffin Lane—Tree Trimming

Brett let the board know that Giffin Lane will need some tree trimming this fall/winter to allow the grader and dump trucks to go through without hitting branches.

3. Messany Road Turn-Around Update

Brett Hunter and Bruce Sutherland will be meeting with the owners of the land that is needed for a turn-around.

4. Research/Hire Assessor for 2025

The clerk sent out requests for proposals from the four assessors who are currently working in Douglas County towns. One said they could not take us on, 2 were no response and the 4th, Kayne Brenner of Chimney Rock Appraisals, submitted a proposal. He informed us that we would require a total revaluation of the town in 2026. He is not able to do it in 2026 but if the town was willing to do the total revaluation in 2025, he would add Bennett to the other towns in Douglas County that he currently has. He would spread the payments into 9 equal payments over the 3-year contract. 2025 Full Revaluation \$36,000, 2026 Annual Assessment Maintenance \$8,100, 2027 Annual Assessment Maintenance \$8,100. Payments would be \$5800 in February, June, and October of 2025, 2026, 2027.

Moved by Wes Koehler, Seconded by Tim Haskins, to hire Kayne Brenner, Chimney Rock Appraisal, for the proposed 2025 Full Revaluation, 2026 and 2027 Maintenance years for the proposed cost of \$17,400 per year. Total Cost over 3 years \$52,200. Motion Carried.

5. Discuss Removal of Trees on Summer Road—The Board will give each town resident present 2 minutes for questions and/or comments before the board makes a decision.

Moved by Wes Koehler, Seconded by Tim Haskins to remove the 2 White Pines on Summer road.

Discussion: The list of attendees that signed up to speak to the board is attached to the original of these minutes. There were very strong feelings and emotions connected to this topic. There were town residents from Kizlik Lane, Minnesuing Acres Road, Summer Road, Giffin Lane and County Road P present to object to the board having the trees cut down.

At the June board meeting the board gave the local residents 2 months to research and see if they could find any loopholes or solutions to this problem. They did not present any solutions at this meeting but showed their anger and frustration with the board that removal of the trees was still being considered. Some of the comments and questions from the local residents were:

- 1) *the likelihood of the trees becoming a liability is very slim,*
- 2) *don't see much difference in a narrow road compared to a narrow bridge,*
- 3) *could trees be added as a rider to the insurance policy,*
- 4) *doesn't believe that the law is as cut and dried as being presented,*
- 5) *this is all based on what-ifs*
- 6) *this is corporate BS,*
- 7) *passionate about the trees,*
- 8) *there is spiritual value to some residents,*
- 9) *debris from an accident on P is much more dangerous and yet nothing is done about that,*
- 10) *drunk driving is not enforced why do the trees matter,*
- 11) *you can hear the neighborhood is upset about this—you should listen to the people here,*
- 12) *so upset—can't figure out why 2 trees are causing so much trouble,*
- 13) *questions that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation would give much attention to the trees on Summer Road,*
- 14) *asked board to leave trees alone.*
- 15) *if removal of the trees would allow the road to meet the legal road standards then the trees should be removed.*
- 16) *if it is necessary to remove the trees maybe they could be made into park benches.*

Wes Koehler and Tim Haskins removed the motion and second to remove the 2 white pines on Summer Road. Wes Koehler then moved that the town board abandon Summer Road and Giffin Lane. Seconded by Tim Haskins.

There was more heated discussion. The local residents again pushed to have 2 more months to see if they could find a solution to the problem such as moving the road, abandoning the road, purchasing an insurance rider to cover the liability that the trees present, etc.

Wes Koehler and Tim Haskins withdrew the motion and second to abandon Summer Road and Giffin Lane. The board unanimously decided to postpone their decision until the October board meeting giving more time for research by the local residents and town board.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Land Use Variance—Wesley Koehler II:** Wesley Koehler recused himself from this decision as it involves his son. Brett moved to approve the variance request from Wesley Koehler II with no objections from the Town Board. Seconded by Tim. Motion Carried.
2. **Resolution to Accept DNR Grant:** *Moved by Wes, seconded by Tim, to pass the resolution TB-2024-04-R accepting the 50/50 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for repairs to the E Bennett Road near Lake Minnesuing. Motion Carried.*
3. **Budget Amendment** – None
4. **Review Permits:** No action needed.
5. **Correspondence** – Nothing presented to the clerk to be added to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A couple more comments regarding the Summer Road Trees were discussed regarding the town board abandoning Summer Road and turning it into a private road similar to Island Lake Road and Rousseau Road. One of the residents on Summer Road cautioned the residents to be careful and consider the cost before thinking about asking the town board to abandon Summer Road, leaving the people to pay for the maintenance and upkeep of the road.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Tim Haskins, seconded by Wesley Koehler. Motion carried.

*Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Johnson, Town Clerk*