



DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

COMMENTS FROM TOWN BOARD.....TOM MEISNER - CHAIRMAN, MARK SCHMITT - SUPERVISOR, BOB DEVOE - SUPERVISOR

The Town has limited revenues collectively from tax collection, new construction, permit changes, donations, basically the Town is on a fixed income. The Wisconsin legislature years ago put a freeze on local and county governments preventing increasing levy limits. The other side of Revenues is Expenses, what it takes to support the Town annually. Expenses, not inclusive, are equipment replacement, building and property up keep, road repair, culvert replacement, Town wages (all part time employees), unexpected road repairs, gravel road maintenance, brushing, mowing, snowplowing, sand/salt purchases, road sanding, removing trees across roads, fuel, Town insurance and more. We wanted to point out that dumping in the town ditches, right of way or other areas of the town is an expense! Example is tires and appliances, the Town must remove these as they become a traffic hazard and do not present a nice visible picture of our Town. These and other items cannot just be put into the Town dumpster, they must be taken to a disposal site and the Town then pays, as an Expense, to have them disposed of, labor to remove, and truck travel. This removes money from the Expense side, limiting what other needs can be funded, again a limited bucket of funds. Another area of Expense is ATV/UTV ripping up gravel roads. This presents a safety hazard to traffic and destroys the gravel road base. The road must be graded to resolve the damage. This spring the Town located a person with a vehicle doing this and the Sheriff's Officer spoke with the party. The Town is now using cameras to capture this activity. Please notify any of the Town Board members should you see any person dumping or damaging roads in the Town of Big Bend.

COMMENTS FROM ORDINANCE/PLANNING CHAIRMAN.....BOB DAVIS

Things have been progressing slowly because of the COVID virus, but they are progressing. We are in the final stages of completing the Big Bend Comprehensive Plan. An important element of the Plan is the necessity of a land usage map as it stands today and a second one reflecting how the Town feels it will be used 10 years down the road. Town Chairman Meisner signed an agreement November 4th with Northwest Regional Planning Commission to produce the first of the two maps. We should have that at the latest early in 2021. We currently plan on presenting our findings and Plan to the Town citizens during the late winter/early spring.

COMMENTS FROM LEPC CHAIRMAN.....BOB DAVIS

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Thanks to the response of the citizens of Big Bend we now have excellent staffing to the Local Emergency Planning Committee and Response team. We have also been able to equip all members with new radios that allow for communication within the Town and beyond. We are still looking for cash donations to be used to purchase a trailer to be set up as a mobile emergency response unit. Finally, and thankfully, there have been no official call-outs needed of the response team so far in 2020.

TOWN CAUCUS - JANUARY 4 2021....

Town Caucus will be held January 4. What is the Caucus....? A Caucus is to nominate candidates for the town offices of Town Chairman, Supervisor 1, Supervisor 2 and Clerk-Treasurer. It is the opportunity for those individuals interested in local government to express the desire to serve their local Town. If interest please let others know and attend the Town Meeting.

COVID-19 / CORONA VIRUS....

The State of WI included the Town in a COVID grant in the amount of \$6129.00 to assist the Town in making the Town building and employees COVID safe, as much as possible. The Town took precautions by remodeling the men's bathroom to allow maintenance staff to enter from the outside through a new door instead of walking through and touching items within the building creating possible contamination. The project is very beneficial for the reasons of its easier to clean the interior of the hall - decontaminate after use, faucets changed to hands free, toilets changed to hands free flushing, and paper towel holders are now hands free.

Rusk County Clerk - COVID Election Cleaning Supplies were supplied to the Town several times to assist with the cost of decontamination for voting. Cleaning was done by the Town Clerk and Maintenance team many times, before and after each election. COVID has added an additional invisible expense to the Town Budget!

Rusk County Emergency Management - Personal Protection Equipment was provided to the Town and LEPC Team in the form of masks.

TOWN EQUIPMENT ASSETS....

The Town paid off the new red Ford pickup this year! The Town continues to make annual payments on the backhoe, 1 remaining. The Town added a new plow/dump truck to the maintenance vehicles. It is a 2020 plow truck with a front plow, side plow wing, belly blade, sander, amber lighting and camera's for viewing the immediate area when winter plowing or under blade use.

ELECTIONS in 2020.... First the Town would like to Thank each voter for their consideration in Social Distancing, masks and hand sanitizing for each election. Presidential election marked a record to the Town of 100% participation, either absentee, individual in person or coming on voting day. *The Poll WORKERS appreciate that new "normal" was accepted by everyone!* Town Clerk, Sandy, would also like to Thank those WORKERS during a stressful time, please thank them also!

2020 TAXES - PAYMENT INFORMATION....How to pay my taxes

Payments by mail: You may pay by mail at any time. Your receipt is not valid until your check clears the bank. We do not accept credit card payments.

Payments in person at Town Hall: Saturday December 19, Thursday December 31, Saturday January 23, Saturday January 30 - - from 8am until 12 noon each day listed.

Address Changes: Please put the corrected address on your payment stub.

Receipts: Must include self-addressed stamped envelope if you want a return receipt for your payment. If you have multiple receipts, please send a large enough envelope with additional postage.

Name Changes: These cannot be changed by the Town Clerk. You must contact the Rusk County Register of Deeds. Have your actual deed changed for changes to take effect. The only exception is Personal Property.

Escrow Tax Payments: Please have your bank or lending institution verify your tax payment amount with you before sending a check. Over payments are costly to the Town. Smaller overpayment amounts will no longer be returned to the taxpayer due to the expense of processing to the Town.

TOWN HALL OFFICE HOURS....How to reach the Town personnel

All Town personnel are part time - Town Board, Clerk/Treasurer, Maintenance, others are volunteer's on committees. Our response to you will be as soon as possible. If we can't answer calls or return emails immediately Town Official's will get back to you as soon as possible. Office hours are during meetings, elections or by appointment. When the Town office is not staffed, leave a message on the Town Hall voice mail. Emergencies - Town Officials are listed in the web site, www.townofbigbend.com - Use "Town Contacts" tab.

TOWN WEB SITE....Your source of Town Information....

Check out the Town Web Site, www.townofbigbend.com, for the up to date town news. Important information will be on the main page, either as a "Spot Light" on the left, or "News and Notices" on the right. Calendar for the Town of Big Bend or area events is a great place to see Town Meetings scheduled. If you have a "community" event the Town would like to add it to the Web calendar. Web site has Town Contacts, Agendas & Minutes, Ordinances, Snow Plowing, Tax Information, Forms & Permits, Links, and more.

ELECTIONS - 2021....

February 16 - Spring Primary Election

April 6 - Spring Election

Absentee Ballot Requests: Registered WI Voters may request an Absentee Ballot or obtain one online at <http://elections.wi.gov> - Form EL121 or request an Absentee Ballot for any election, you may make the request in writing to the Clerk. We will no longer be able to send the applications to you when you phone in a request. A copy of a photo ID must be submitted with the application. You may submit application and photo ID by mail, fax or email.

CLEARING OF RIGHT-OF-WAYS.....

TheTown continues to hire a contractor to mow the ditches and widen the road, trimming trees. The current budget continues to provide a budget line item each year to fund the continuous control of brush and tree limbs that impact and encroach the Town roadways.

SNOW PLOWING....Gravel roads, citizen snow removal, fire numbers

The Town Board asks for your patience for plowing snow. The Town has 43 miles of blacktop and gravel roads to plow; we clear roads as quickly as possible. Main access to Hwy 40 and County F is a priority. We have a lot of residents who have to get out each day, so in the spirit of fairness, the drivers will plow from the North to South and then the next snow fall, from the South to the North. Gravel roads present a problem in the late fall and spring. Soft gravel roads, not frozen up, tend to peel off layers of gravel - easily, thus some gravel roads are not plowed entirely clear, to the surface. We have two drivers, trading off, to ensure that one driver is not on the road to many hours. Remember when you are clearing your driveways that it is illegal to put the snow onto the town road, as it then becomes a road hazard. It is also your responsibility to be sure the area around your mailbox is clear of snow. For your safety, make sure your fire sign is visible to emergency response personnel - Fire, Sheriff, and Ambulance. **THANK YOU!**

Finally, the Town Thanks You for your input and comments whether indirectly or through the Town Meetings, Committee Meetings or other Town business. You may also call or email any Town Board member expressing your thoughts. Take the opportunity to join others at the monthly Town meeting or sit in on Committee meetings or attend your County Board or Committee meetings. This is your Town, your County.....