

TOWN OF FLORENCE  
ANNUAL MEETING  
APRIL 16, 2024

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Annual Meeting for the Town of Florence, Florence Co, WI was held at the Community Center on the 16th day of April, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. with Chairman Tim Bomberg presiding.

Bomberg called the meeting to order and asked all in attendance to sign in and that copies of the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes and the 2023 Year End Financial Report were available for review. Other reports/documents available were: Current map of ATV/UTV routes open for travel, Fire Dept. breakdown of 2023 expenses, Florence County EMS update letter dated October 30th, 2023, Town of Florence list of mitigation efforts by the town about concerns of the Dominion Ice (Image Cast Evolution) tabulator, and copies of business cards for R&R Assessing Services due to Market Reval in 2024.

On a motion by Lisa Witynski and seconded by Becky Wilcox the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were approved. All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Bomberg asked if there were any questions regarding the 2023 YE Financial Report with there being no questions, he asked for a motion to approve, with JoAnne Friberg moving and Linda Opsahl supporting. All in favor, motion carried.

Chris Steber, Town Highway Foreman submitted a 2023 and 2024 Highway report for Tim Bomberg to present. The following is work performed in 2023:

- Joint project with Florence County Land Conservation, WI DNR, Trout Stamp and Trout Unlimited to replace Hendricks Creek culvert
- Blacktop 4 tenths of a mile on Town Road N and a section of Middle Lake Rd
- Started brushing trees and stumps on proposed Spread Eagle fire hall site
- Cleared 1.5 acres of in town gravel pit for future crushing
- Performed numerous projects and annual maintenance for the Town of Commonwealth
- Hauled approximately 12,000 yards of gravel to existing town roads
- Performed normal annual maintenance of brushing, grass cutting, applying dust control grading and patching.

Bomberg continued to report tentative 2024 highway work of the following:

- Repair two 300' sections of Montgomery Lake Road due to spring breakup
- East Shore Road Reconstruction Project - 5 tenths of a mile-Remove stumps-widening and reshaping existing road way-constructing new ditches and back slopes-install new culverts and gravel
- Chip Seal roadways (estimated 3 miles)
- Hot Mix Blacktop various town roadways (estimated 2 miles depending on price)
- Site work prep for the new 64x40 salt shed
- Assess and prioritize existing town roads for necessary repairs and maintenance
- Upkeep of all gravel roads
- Continued road maintenance—brush cutting, applying dust control, grass cutting, grading and patching.

Bomberg continued the highway report with the following:

- 2023/2024 Plow Season-Town Crew plowed 20 times for more than 2" of snow accumulation
- 2023/2024 Equipment Purchases-2023 John Deere Back Hoe (Joint purchase with Florence Utilities), 2024 Western Star Plow/Dump Truck (joint purchase with Town of Commonwealth).

Bomberg asked if there were any questions regarding the road work and Linda Opsahl of East Shore Road inquired if the town could fill in where the ditches are deep on East Shore Road, noting that the refuse collection carts are too big for the shoulder, where they are placed and end up in a 3' ditch. Bomberg agreed to see what could be done.

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Fire Chief, Joe Witynski provided the 2023 report for the Florence Volunteer Fire Department. Witynski reported that the department is 37 members strong and were called out for a total of 41 calls, with 11 being car accidents, 3 structure, CO Calls/Gas leak 4; and 6 Lift assists for EMS; 3 chimney, grass/brush 4 and 4 false alarm. Witynski went on to report ISO inspection was done in 2023. Class 04/4Y – Class 4 applies for properties within 5 road miles of the fire station which is 749 Central Avenue and within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant. 4Y applies to properties beyond 1,000 of a fire hydrant but within 5 road miles of the fire station. Class 10 applies to properties over 5 road miles of a recognized fire station.

Witynski stated the major purchases for 2023 were two each of coats @\$775/ea; bunker pants with suspenders @\$825/ea., 3 pair boots \$339/ea., 6 helmets @\$350/ea. for a total of \$6,347.

Purchases for 2024, just ordered 2 1 ½ attack nozzles @\$378/ea. and 2 ½” monitor nozzle \$2,023. The department is also in need of several feet of 2 ½” hose due to being outdated. The department will continue training in house such as water movement training, pump operations, SCBA training, RIT, wildland fire training, vehicle extrication and other mandated training by the state. Witynski thanked the Town Board, town crew and the Florence Utilities for their continued support.

Witynski asked if there were any questions. Deb Cinni of 4913 Carpenter Road had a couple questions regarding the Spead Eagle fire hall site as to if a feasibility study had been done and if the site has been tested for hazardous waste. Bomberg stated that he has been in communication with the WI DNR and there are monitoring wells at the site with annual testing/sampling being done and with no concerns. Bomberg went on to say that homeowners fire insurance could go down 17-22% with the construction of the Spread Eagle Fire Station. Supervisor, Shane McLain stated that he spoke with two insurance agents who stated the ISO rating is based off of where the dispatch comes from and not based on the distance of a structure from a fire station. Both, Bomberg and Witynski stated that this statement is not true. Charles Kellstrom stated he was pleased to see that the dozer work had been done in where the land was cleared last fall.

Discussion was had to opening an account for donations to be deposited and ensuring that any donation to the fire hall is tax deductible. The town will continue to move forward, slowly in hopes of finding a grant and other financing sources, as the town does not want to pass this expense to the tax payers.

Florence Utilities Manager, Roger Secrist reported that the Utility has celebrated 125 years of service to our community in 2023 as it was established in 1898 which speaks volumes for our community. The Utility just finished our second annual community wide food drive with great success having collected \$1,395 in monetary donations along with 680 pounds of food and toiletries. This exceeded the 2023 numbers of \$1,200 and 420 pounds of food to help out our neighbors. They also held a separate paper products and toiletry drive in February to help with the other hard to come by items as well with great success.

Florence Utilities in partnership with WPPI energy sponsored National Theatre for Children, an electric safety and information program at the elementary school as well as a scholarship for a graduating senior going into the electric industry. They also held their popular furnace filter giveaway program.

The Utility continues to be in our compliance catch up years. After covid they were unable to gain entry to homes and properties putting them behind on things such as meter swap outs for mandatory testing. There are many other tasks that happen every year. Inspections and exercising of water shut off valves. Transformer and junction inspections and a host of other mandatory items that must be performed annually per the DNR, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, and federal regulations.

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Central Ave sewer main replacement project is all set to start from May 1st to June 28th and there will be a public informational meeting on April 24th at 6:00 pm at the Community Center, for anyone with questions about the project as the contractor and engineering company will be there to answer all of your questions.

Kristina Williams, Utility Finance Director provided the following Income Review for 2023:

- Total Revenue & Other Income \$4,752,058\*
- Total Operating Expense & Other Income Deductions \$4,492,184\*
- Total Net Income for 2023 \$259,873\*
- Utility Revenues from All 4 Companies \$4,450,367\*

*(\*Preliminary Numbers—2023 Audit not completed when presented)*

Utility Audit for 2023:

- Baker Tilly- Audit Team from Energy & Utilities Division was onsite April 1st- 5th
- PSC Annual filing and Preliminary Financial Statements and will be complete by May/ June.

2023 Highlights:

- Auctioned off some older equipment no longer using and purchased a new 2022 F350 Service Body Truck
- Purchase of new 2023 JD Backhoe – shared purchase with Town
- Approved by the WI DNR for Clean Water Program Loan/ Grant for US 2/ Central Ave Project
- Repair of Substation Transformer for \$25,000 instead of replacing for \$250,000

Eric Lorensen, sewer, water and gas department head for the Utility provided the following reports:

Sewer Report:

- We replaced the pressure transducer in the blower treatment building that was destroyed by lightning damage.
- We installed a new float system for telemetry readings of the wet well area in the main lift station to replace failing ones due to lightning damage.
- We are currently waiting for other equipment such as electric motors, Scada panels and instrumentation panels to replace the lightning damaged equipment from last summer's storms.
- We had one remote lift station rehab projects completed in order to replace failing equipment which had become obsolete over time and parts were no longer available now we have all new pumps and hardware including floats for the backup systems.

Water Report:

- Hydrant and water main flushing of the entire system was completed and all 120 hydrants were flushed and exercised.
- Commercial and residential water meters were tested and inspected as was all wellhouse meters.
- This was a very extensive sampling year for water which included Lead and copper, VOC, Radiation, Synthetic organics, Radioactive, Bacteria or Bacti and PFAS.
- ISO fire flow testing was performed in 2023 in conjunction with the fire department.
- Street valve and customer service line valve location and exercising program was started and will continue over the next few years.

Gas Report:

- 17 new gas service line installations totalizing around 4100 feet, along with numerous gas meter upgrading projects were installed in 2023 and the removal of 26-gas services that were idled for 10 years per PSC requirements
- Responded to 83 gas leak investigations

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- We had two weeks of Mandatory Public Service Commission pipeline safety & audit inspections were also completed in 2023.
- Over 182 gas meters were changed out for mandatory accuracy testing.
- 55 Business district Leakage surveys were completed per PSC requirements.
- 39 Public building leakage surveys were completed per PSC requirements.
- There were 271 gas service line leakage surveys that were completed per PSC requirements.
- We completed the entire rewrite of our O&M gas manual per PSC requirements
- 50 gas system valve inspections were completed per PSC requirements
- Gate station maintenance and inspections were performed in accordance with PSC requirements
- Training for all gas personal on the Gate station bypass procedures were done in 2023 along with all office staff training on leak reporting procedure's
- Approximately 15 days of employee written and hands on mandatory training was also performed per PSC requirements which includes all written knowledge testing and pipe fusion procedure testing.
- Gate station maintenance such as regulator rebuilding and pilot valving which was starting to fail needed to be repaired and replaced along with the natural gas main heating pressure vessel inspection and maintenance where performed.

Steve Wilcox, Florence Utility Line Foreman and an employee for 33 years provided the following Electric Report:

- Jobs to convert failing overhead lines to underground lines that were worked on throughout the year.
  1. Balsam DR
  2. Brule landing
  3. HWY 107/70
- We had installed 17 new electric services along with repairing 5 underground faults.
- We installed 9,714 feet of primary underground wire and 3,580 feet of Service and secondary lines.
- We had 34 electrical outages throughout the year causes anything from animal contacts to weather related problems including trees
- Numerous electric meter change outs were performed.
- Substation renovations, upgrades and repairs such as the 5-megawatt transformer was reconditioned and placed back in service along with the replacement of Keye's Lk recloser that had failed.
- 2 car verses pole hits that needed to be replaced and repairs were made.
- Various trainings throughout the year for all electrical employees such as locating lines course were completed and JTS which is a specialized lineman and groundman training along with required OSHA training.

Chairman Bomberg opened the floor to the public/elector to discuss items of business allowed under the powers of the town meeting 60.10 Wis. Stats.

Rick Knepper, President of the Florence County Chamber of Commerce submitted a proposal ordinance requesting that all town roads be open for ATV/UTV travel except for Olive Avenue from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on school days, between Norway Avenue and Chapin Street. There were several in attendance supporting the proposal, with a few exceptions expressed by Bomberg and Charles Kellstrom. Bomberg being opposed to Lake Avenue opened for travel due to the location of the fire hall

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station and rescue squad buildings and also mentioned the sheriff's department on Lake Ave. Charles Kellstrom of Tall Pines Rd inquired who is responsible for properly signing routes and speed limits and the ability to enforce the laws. Discussion ensued regarding the crossing of Hwy. US 2/Central Avenue and the need to submit a permit to seek DOT approval and ensuring that kids are prepared and mature enough at the age of 12 yrs. old to operate an ATV and 16 yrs. of age for a UTV. Anyone born after 1988 is required to have a permit to operate an ATV/UTV. Parents must educate and ensure that their child knows and obeys the laws. Discussion also included the possibility of a "beacon" light that could be installed by the Rescue Squad/Fire Department buildings that if an emergency occurred, the "beacon" would be lit informing riders that Lake Avenue is closed for travel.

After much discussion, it was agreed that the Blue Ox Trail Riders would identify a final map that would identify all routes they'd like to see opened and submit this to the town board for consideration.

Marcia Krcma stated that the town board has the authority to go to all hand paper ballots for hand tallying and to eliminate the Image Cast Tabulator. Krcma noted WI §5:40(3) provides exceptions to populations that are less than 7,500. Bomberg stated he agrees that the board has the authority to authorize paper ballots and only hand tally votes, but it is federally mandated that the town have accessible voting equipment available for individuals with disabilities. Krcma stated she will look into it and added she feels the town would save money by eliminating the voting machine.

Lisa Brouillette commented that she doesn't know many of the people at the meeting and suggested that when people wish to speak, they announce their name first.

Michelle Floriano of Romitti Road stated that the road is pure mud with several pot holes and asked when the road is scheduled for paving. Bomberg explained that the delay was due to the scheduling difficulties of the blasting of the rock outcrop that was needed to improve visibility. Bomberg stated that the road is scheduled for paving this year.

Clerk/Treasurer, Shelly VanPembrook reported that R&R Assessing Services will be performing a Market Revaluation in 2024 and that all property owners should be vigilant in paying attention for assessment notices late August/September. VanPembrook noted that town is at an assessment level of 58% however with the revaluation taking place and the level of assessment they will be targeting is 100%, the mill rate for 2024 should go down approximately 42%. If spending from the taxing jurisdictions are comparable to the previous year. The mill rate goes down with the increase in overall value to the township the taxes can be spread amongst that larger value base.

Bomberg expressed appreciation for the good working relationship with the town crew, town office, utility and fire department. Bomberg also credited all the volunteers in the community stating you cannot put a price on what they do. Bomberg feels that the EMS Management Team is doing a good job and he commended.

Bomberg asked for a motion to support a re-occurring authorization for the town board to purchase land, if necessary, to improve or lay out a town road in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. A motion was made by Linda Opsahl and seconded by Lisa Witynski. All in favor, motion carried.

Bomberg stated that the date for the 2025 Annual Meeting will be April 15, 2025 and inquired as to if people preferred a time of 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. On a motion by Jerry Heidtke and seconded by Jim Hixon it was moved to set the time of all Annual Meetings going forward to 6:30 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

With the date and time of the 2025 Annual Meeting being set, and there being no further business the 2024 Annual Meeting adjourned.

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Submitted by:

Shelly VanPembrook  
Clerk/Treasurer

These minutes are subject to approval at the 2025 Annual Meeting.  
Following is a list of those individuals who attended this Annual Meeting:

Jerome Heidtke	Joe Witynski	Joe Mills	Lisa Witynski
Kristina Williams	Eugene Lefebber	Mike Scholke	Charlie Yonts
Steve Wilcox	Devon Wilcox	Jamie Brewington	Tami Balfanz
Craig Balfanz	Allyssa Wetsel	JoAnne Friberg	Becky Wilcox
Melanie Fischer	Roberta Anderson	Maureen Howard	Adam Butterfield
Kim Butterfield	Linda Opsahl	Carol Brewington	Tim Wilcox
Tom Jonet	Lori Lomma	Poppy Neustrom	Deb Cini
Mary Brien	Jerry Brien	Desi Windell	Sandra Nick
Fred Nick	Tom Brandt	Scott Howard	Tracy Huth
Jodi Anderson	Cathy Curran	Rob Graham	Tracy Kattar
David Kattar	Steve Gauthier	Patsy Gauthier	Dorianne Brooks
Michelle Floriano	David Martens	Eric Lorenzen	Lisa Brouillette
Doug DeWitt	Vanessa McLain	Chris Boor	Tasha Short
James Hixon	Jim Petroff	Beth Paine	Marcia Krcma
Darren Setner	Jed Hall	Charles Kellstrom	Jessica Klumpp
John Holbrook	Shane McLain	Tim Bomberg	Shelly VanPembrook
* Rick Knepper	*Alane Kennedy	*Matt Petraska	

\* Denotes non resident