

TOWN
ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 15, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Board of Supervisors, Town of Florence met on the 15th day of April, 2025 with newly elected Chairman Jim Gehlhoff presiding.

Before the meeting begin, Gehlhoff took a moment to recognize those retiring from the Town Board/Office. He presented a plaque and thank you to Tim Bomberg, John Holbrook and Shelly Van Pembroke.

After the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, Gehlhoff called the meeting to order and asked all in attendance to sign in and that copies of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes and the 2024 Year End Financial Report were available for review. Other reports/documents available were: Fire Dept. breakdown of 2024 expenses, Florence County EMS update email dated April 15, 2025, Photos of garbage containers that showed the problems and issues that have been caused over the last year by people overfilling the containers and/or placing items in the containers that are not weekly household refuse.

On a motion by Andy Maglio and seconded by Joe Witynski the minutes of the 2024 annual meeting were approved. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chairman Gehlhoff asked if there were any questions regarding the 2024 Year End Financial Report with there being no questions, he asked for a motion to approve with Kristina Williams moving and JoAnne Friberg supporting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chris Steber, Town Highway Foreman gave a 2024 & 2025 Highway Report. Steber reported in 2024 work that was done including:

- East Shore Road (1/2 mile): Removes stumps, Widened and reshaped existing road way (18' to 20'), Constructed new ditches and back slopes, Installed new culverts and gravel, Pavement laid in September
- 1" overlay of hot mix blacktop on Vivio Road
- Chip Sealed 3.5 miles of existing black top roads: 1st Crossing, Lake Ellwood, East Shore
- Site prep work for new salt shed construction including blacktop surrounding the building (40x64)
- Performed numerous projects and annual maintenance for Town of Commonwealth
- Hauled approximately 10,000 yards of gravel to existing town roads
- Upkeep of all gravel roads
- Continued road maintenance—brush cutting, grass cutting, grading, etc.

Steber continued his report with what is planned for 2025 including:

- Hot mix blacktop bids have been approved for the following roads:
 - o Chapin Street from intersection of US2 to Bill Anderson Drive
 - o In-Comm Drive from US2 to intersection of Montgomery Lake Road and Olive Avenue
 - o Parking lane on both sides of Main Street
 - o New Sidewalk 357'
 - o Fix Existing Sidewalk 90'
- Assess and prioritize existing town roads for necessary repairs and maintenance
- Continued road maintenance—brush cutting, grass cutting, grading, gravel, etc.
- Budget Dependent
 - o Gravel crushing of approximately 30,000 yards
 - o Chip seal approximately 2 miles of roadways

As he wrapped up his report, Steber stated that during the 2024/2025 Plow Season the Town Crew plowed 30 times for more than 2" of snow accumulation. He also mentioned that the highway department is looking at 2024/2025 Equipment Purchases to included 650 John Deere Bulldozer (Joint purchase with Florence Utilities) and 2020 Peterbilt from Town of Commonwealth.

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Gehlhoff asked if there were any questions regarding the road work, and residents from River Forest Road asked how to get on the list for the road to be paved. Steber stated all the roads are on the list, but work is not finalized until the board can see how spring break up impacts the roads. Supervisor McLain stated that there are approximately 70 miles of gravel roads which all present different challenges for maintenance and upkeep.

Fire Chief, Joe Witynski provided the 2024 report for the Florence Volunteer Fire Department. Witynski reported that the department is 40 members strong and were called out of a total of 25 calls with 3 being structure fires, 5 being car accidents, 5 wild fires, 1 vehicle fire and 11 miscellaneous calls. Three new members took the Firefighter entry level/hazmat operations class.

Witynski mentioned the department received a \$2800 FFP grant from Wis. DNR. For PPE, hose for mini pumper 403 and new Mobile Radio for our brush truck. They purchased one set of turnout gear again this year, along with 5 new helmets. These purchases are covered under the 2% fire dues the department receives. They are still searching for a tanker truck to replace 1978 tanker.

Witynski reported that a grant applied for through Tammy Baldwins office for the Spread Eagle Fire Station through the Town. Discussion was held regarding the proposed fire hall that included what the costs would be, if the money the Town had in the budget for the proposed fire hall could be carried over at the end of each year into an assigned account, should a committee be formed to look into this further, has the proper paperwork been done and DNR approval been received for the well, what would the cost to the tax payers be for the new building to construct it, and after it is constructed to maintain it. There are a lot of unknowns. Those in attendance agreed that more research needed to be done, and they would like to see it on a ballot as a referendum question to approve.

Witynski finished his report with a Thank you to the Town Board of 2024 and welcome the new members of the 2025 Town Board. Thank you to the office staff. Congratulations to Shelly on her retirement. Thank you to the Town Crew and Florence Utilities for always helping us when we needed it.

Florence Utilities Manager, Roger Secrist reported that the Florence Utilities had another busy year with many projects and mandatory compliance tasks to complete per Wisconsin DNR, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin and Phmsa or Federal Regulatory Agency, requirements.

Central Ave sewer main replacement project was completed ahead of the June 28th deadline in order for the Wisconsin DOT to start there resurfacing and curb and gutter project that will be completed this summer. We qualified for 65% loan forgiveness on the project and the 35% remaining dollars of the project will be financed at 0% interest for 30 years.

We just finished our Third annual community wide food drive with great success. We collected \$1095 in monetary donations along with 240 pounds of food and toiletries to help out our friends and neighbors in need.

Florence Utilities in partnership with WPPI energy again sponsored the National theatre for children, an electric safety and information program geared toward elementary school students to get them more familiar with electricity. A scholarship for a graduating senior going into the electric, or utility industry was also sponsored. We held our popular furnace filter giveaway program in the spring and the fall as a good reminder to keep your furnace filters clean to help your appliance operate smoothly and efficiently and keep the air in your house as pure as possible.

Kristina Williams, Utility Finance Director provided the following Income Review for 2024:

- Income Review for 2024
- Total Revenue & Other Income \$4,537,865*
- Total Operating Expense & Other Income Deductions \$4,183,164*
- Total Net Income for 2024 \$354,701 #*
- Utility Revenues from All 4 Companies \$4,250,957*

#Being a NON-PROFIT- \$ used for capital improvement projects in the next year

*Preliminary Numbers—2024 Audit not completed when presented

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Williams reported that the Utility Audit for 2024 was done by Baker Tilly- Audit Team from Energy & Utilities Division was onsite March 31st- April 4th. PSC Annual filing and Preliminary Financial Statements and will be complete by May/ June.

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

- Jobs to convert failing overhead lines to underground lines that were worked on throughout the year were Balsam DR & HWY 101/70.
- We had installed 17 new electric services along with repairing 6 underground faults.
- We installed 6,976 feet of primary underground wire and 1,741 feet of Service and secondary lines.
- We had 40 electrical outages throughout the year causes anything from animal contacts to weather related problems including trees
- Numerous electric meter change outs were performed.
- Substation maintenance, we replaced the Keyes Lake OCR that caught fire from 2023.
- Tree maintenance, and system maintenance were done throughout the year.
- Various trainings throughout the year for all electrical employees such as phasing stick and hi-pot testing and thumper training. We also have JTS which is a specialized lineman and groundman training along with required OSHA training.
- We had a total of 615 locates for the year.

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

Gas Report:

- 14 new gas service line installations and 2 new main extensions totaling around 3600 feet, along with numerous gas meter upgrading projects were installed.
- Responded to 79 gas leak investigations
- We had two weeks of mandatory Public Service Commission of WI pipeline safety & audit inspections of the course of 2024
- 111 gas meters were changed out for mandatory accuracy testing
- Public Service Commission of WI required leakage surveys and yearly maintenance items included: 55 Business district buildings and street openings, 39 Public buildings, Surveying of 650 gas service lines and all 86 miles of gas main, 50 gas system valve inspections
- Gate station maintenance and inspections which includes valving, cathodic protection, over pressure protection and gas heater.
- The pump that introduces the odorant at the gate station was also rebuilt
- Approximately 15 days of employee written and hands on mandatory training was also performed per requirements which includes all written knowledge testing and pipe fusion procedure testing.

Sewer Report

- The Central Ave sewer project was completed, all old clay tile was replaced as well as the manholes and all service laterals to the back of right of way.
- Electric motors in the Main Sewer Lift and for the lagoon blowers were replaced due to lightning strikes.
- Scada panels in each location we also replaced due to the same lighting storm.

Water Report

- Hydrant and water main flushing of the entire system was completed and all 120 hydrants were flushed and exercised.
- Residential and wellhouse water meters were tested and inspected. We replaced the wellhouse meter in well 2
- 139 water meters were replaced as part of our AMI upgrades
- Sampling for water which included Bacteria, Nitrates, Inorganics, and disinfection byproducts

- Street valve and customer service line valve location and exercising program is ongoing and will continue over the next few years.

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

Supervisor Shane McLain thanked Tim, John and Shelly for all their years of service to the Town. McLain also thanked the Town highway crew, utility and fire departments for all the work they have done especially during this last ice storm.

Newly elected Supervisor Tom Tuchalski stated he is looking forward to working for the people and ready to begin learning about the Town government and operations.

Chairman Gehlhoff stated that the people of the Town of Florence should reach out to him via phone or e-mail if they have any questions or concerns.

Former Clerk/Treasurer, Shelly VanPembrook informed the people that there is a Fraud Protection Program regarding their property which is being offered free of charge from the Register of Deeds Office beginning in June. VanPembrook also thanked everyone that she was able to work with over the years.

Gehlhoff informed the people that there was a printed e-mail update from Amanda Mulvey regarding the Florence County EMS and that they would be inviting her to a future Town Board meeting and would let the paper know when that will be. It will also get put on the website.

Gehlhoff stated that the date for the 2026 Annual Meeting will be April 21, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. On a motion by Gretchen Paupore and seconded by Kurt Person it was moved to set the next annual meeting date with Person requesting that the agenda for the annual meeting be published a couple weeks ahead of time. All in favor, motion carried.

With the date and time of the 2026 Annual Meeting being set, and there being no further business the 2025 Annual Meeting adjourned on a motion by Andy Maglio and seconded by Vanessa McLain. All in favor. Motion carried.

Submitted By:

Jessica Klumpp, Clerk/Treasurer

These minutes are subject to approval at the 2026 Annual Meeting.

Following is a list of those individuals who attended this Annual Meeting:

Andy Maglio	Steve Wilcox	Marcia Krcma	Gene Lefeber
Joe Witynski	John Holbrook	Tracy Asannuma*	Kathi Mnichowicz
Dave Mnichowicz	Kristina Williams	Mike Wessel	Tina Wessel
Tim Grunewald	Francis Mitchem	Walter Mitchem	Desiree Windell
DoriAnne Brooks	Diane Theis	Maureen Howard	Scott Howard
Connie Iversen	Eric Lorenzen	Dan Steeno	Tom Brandt
Joe Mills	Charlie Yonts	Carol Brewington	Jamie Brewington
Jessica Klumpp	Shane McLain	Chris Steber	Tom Tuchalski
Jim Gehlhoff	Shelly VanPembrook	Roger Secrist	John Bomberg
Vanessa McLain	Deb Cini	Kurt Person	Jim Petroff
Mary Brien	Jerry Brien	Scott Baker	Gretchen Paupore
JoAnne Friberg			

* denotes non-resident