

Town of Sand Lake
Regular Town Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 16th, 2024
5:00 p.m.

- Call to Order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairwoman Melanie Connor Johnson.
- Roll Call of Officers – All present.
- Public Notice – Public Notice of the meeting was made on 03/19/2024 alongside the Annual Meeting Notice and again on 04/15/2024.
- Approval of Agenda Order – Motion to approve by Supervisor Ken Pardun, seconded by Supervisor Karolyn Kroll. All in favor, motion carried.
- Approval of Minutes from the Regular Town Board Meeting on 03/11/2024 – Motion to approve the minutes by Kroll, second by Pardun. All in favor, motion carried.
- Public Comments – Sand Lake residents who wish to make a public comment need to state their comment to an agenda item, state their name and address so it can be recorded in the minutes, and use a maximum of three minutes.

No public comments.

- Chair Report – “On March 11th, The Burnett County STR Zone Commission sent letters of notification to 14 Sand Lake Short Term Rental Operators regarding the application and collection process of the 8% Short Term Rental Tax. In effect April 1st, first collection payment will be after June 30th. March 12th, I emailed Jeremy Burton, County Highway Commissioner regarding the 6-20ft Bridge Inventory Collection and sent him the signed for designating Brad as the person responsible for the first step of identification and inventory. March 15th, I responded to a question from Beth Esser (One Energy – Solar) in response to her request for a contact name and number for the St. Croix THPO, Wanda McFaggen. March 16th, I called Darwin Brown, Lafollette Chair regarding the question of public notice for development projects. After a good conversation, regarding challenges. It was decided that I would reach out to the WTA for legal guidance and share the response with Town of Lafollette. March 29th, I received a response from WTA Carol Norwrocki and shared it with Darwin Brown. ***“Towns with village powers may adopt an “informational” permit requirement whereby they require folks putting up buildings to fill out a permit so the town knows what is going up, etc. and can let the assessor know. Also, if neighbors contact the town, you would be able to indicate a permit was taken out and what it was for, etc. I am not aware of any authority to make the property owner inform neighbors of what they are doing. It would be better to require them to inform the town and then the town can inform the neighbors if an inquiry is made”***. From these conversations, it feels like the Town has no compliance mechanism to enforce a project developer inform the neighbors. It also seems an overreach to think that the clerk or chair could “send notification letters” to all concerned neighbors. As it’s likely that not all developers will participate willingly in the provide an “informational” permit notice, example is the cell phone tower. This board asked that company to notify the neighbors as a curtesy and they chose not to, as there is no mechanism to make them comply, in comparison Energy One has complied willingly with the notification request. We can consider adopting an information permit requirement and publish those projects who volunteer to submit it, for the public as notice on the website. Municipalities without zoning mailing notices are at risk of missing a project if not self-reported by the developer and appearing biased against projects that do self-report. I was working with the County Commissioner, St. Croix Tribal Roads, WI DOT and the BIA on some zoom and in person

meetings about funding to improve Emerson/Gaslyn Road. We had 3 meetings regarding these projects, then on March 20th, Mr. Thompson posted on Facebook a picture of the bridge and emailed the County Roads Commissioner, which shifted the conversation a little. I spent some time working with these partners gathering information regarding Emerson Bridge and the other 2 Sand Lake Bridges. The State of Wisconsin has a funded program to improve and replace bridges. When a structure falls below an SR of 80 they can submit that structure be included added to the WISDOT Bureau of Structure Eligible Bridge List. Emerson Bridge at the last inspection has a Structural Rating (SR) of 74.8, due for inspection again this year. “Seriously deteriorating local bridges with a SR of 80 or less are included on an eligibility list and are eligible for rehabilitation. Local units are then notified which bridges are on the list. Federal and state funds for local bridges are allocated by formula to each county based on statewide proportional share of bridge replacement costs. Counties then prioritize the projects that were applied for. The threshold for replacement is a SR below 50. Dave O’Donahue Supervisory Civil Engineer BIA Roads / DOT “I pulled the NBI for that bridge and find the bridge in pretty good condition and therefore not eligible for funding”. I spoke with the County Commissioner and he will add Emerson Bridge to the WISDOT Bridge list. I then received an estimate from Larson Construction and they estimate cost to repair the concrete spall is \$100,000 estimated total cost with engineering is \$150,000. April 1st, I submitted an ARIP application for \$475,000 for improvements to Emerson Road and Emerson Bridge. I’m not completely optimistic about being funded, as our eligibility was not a great fit. But our application will show need in this area. March 24 -26, we had winter and considering the heaviness and length of the storm and warm base, the Road Crew did a great job keeping up. I only had one call about plowing, and forwarded it to Ken and Brad right away and they responded that had been done. I completed the Board of Review Training. WTA meeting is on April 25th, Open Book is on April 19th, Board of Review is on April 29th.” – Submitted from Chairwoman Melanie Connor Johnson

- Clerk Report – With the assistance of Momentum Computer Solutions, the Clerk laptop was replaced. It has backup systems in place to ensure data is safe. She will be working on the Form CT annual financial report. Reminder Open Book is April 19th from 5:00-7:00 p.m. and Board of Review is April 29th from 5:00-7:00 p.m. New website has option for notifications of meetings if you sign up with an email.
- Deputy Clerk Report – Election was April 2nd, Julie and Kurt Anderson are new election workers. Thank you to them, thank you to Susan Shutt and Laurel Scriviani as well. New website. Sign up for notifications of meetings, it sends out the agenda and previous mtg minutes for review.
- Treasurer Report – General Fund acct balance as of 03/31 \$189,498.85 with total additions of \$9,929.14 and subtractions of \$16,293.75. Equipment fund balance as of 03/31 was \$15,967.21. Summary of additions, timber stumpage from the county, dog licenses, and interest. Motion to accept the report by Kroll, second by Pardun. All in favor, motion carried.
- Supervisors Reports – Pardun has nothing. Kroll completed Board of Review training. She has an upcoming Webster Fire Mtg on 04/24. One request for snow removal on Shrider Road for mail delivery during the end of March storm, was forwarded to Pardun.
- Planning Commission Report – Nothing to report.
- Road Report – First snow event, plowing was done in shifts. Working on spring grading, sweeping for motorcycles/bicycles.
- Matters for Discussion and Possible Action
 1. Viola Solar Project – Beth Esser with One Energy Renewables, alongside Steve Stroshane (CEO) and Heather Gerber (CFO) from Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative. One Energy Renewables is an independent company that develops, engineers, and constructs solar projects. She works

through a printed slideshow. Solar helps to diversify farmer's incomes. 100% of electricity production in WI would take only 1% of the farmland. Substation was indicated as in need from Polk-Burnett. 12-15 acres will be used for the Viola project. Hertel substation has a lot of seasonal demand. Solar project alleviates some of the demand on the substation. Question regarding how to connect to the Hertel substation, answer is it will connect to the poles already existing along the property. Chairman thanks the project for their willingness to come and present and also send letters to neighboring properties, asks about long term plans following warranty expiration and if they will be decommissioned. Beth states 30-year warranty, designed to last that long with an option to extend another 10 years. The company signs a long-term purchase agreement with the co-op. Once the project is no longer producing power, the commitment is to remove all equipment and return to agricultural land within one year. Chairwoman asks if there is an impact on taxes or property values? The land remains agricultural and tax assessor normally assesses as commercial. When taxes go up from that, the company pays the difference. Taxes and shared revenue on larger projects are a different scenario that does not apply to this project as it is only 2.5 megawatts. Studies around the country – Chisago County MN (home to several large solar projects) – show no significant change in property values. Guest question about posts going down 10 feet, drilled or driven. Beth states it depends on the soil, tests are done prior. Guest asks how old the company is? Founded in 2009 in Seattle, Madison office opened in 2016 with first project in 2018. Question on when the project will begin? Constructed in 2025. Is there another one in line after this? Planning ahead. Polk-Burnett is proposing one adjacent to Luck substation. Guest asks how much of the solar power will go to the casino? It goes right into the substation and the electrons go where they want, per Polk-Burnett.

2. Public Records Access Policy Wis. Stat. 19.34 – Tabled.

3. Concealed Weapon Resolution – Tabled.

- Pay Bills – Motion by Pardun to pay the bills, second by Kroll. All in favor, motion carried.
- Adjournment – May 2024 meeting should have Executive Session for Employee Reviews. Motion to adjourn at 5:59 p.m. by Pardun, seconded by Kroll. All in favor, motion carried.

Next Town Board Meeting – Regular Town Meeting – Monday, May 13th, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.