

TOWN OF ARCADIA

Trempealeau County



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Town of Arcadia Minutes of the Special Town Board Meeting Thursday, December 8th, 2016 at 8:45 p.m.

The board meeting was called to order by Chairman Jon Schultz at 8:45 p.m. Open meeting certifications were met. Roll call was taken. Board members present: Jon Schultz, Barb Tock and Donna Brogan. A list of residents that attended is available at the Town Hall.

A motion was made by Donna Brogan and seconded by Barb Tock to adopt the agenda. The motion carried unanimously with a voice vote.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- **Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Town Land Use for Future Ambulance Headquarters:** Cletus Foegen, President of the Ambulance Board, as well as Deb Slaby and Bridget Breska were in attendance. Foegen took the floor, updating the audience regarding conditions that the Ambulance Committee is now facing. Currently the garage at the former hospital is still in use, office space is located in the utility building behind the former hospital, and living quarters is in a house near the historical museum. The ambulance crew needs to be within 10 minutes when they are on call so they stay in town at the house. Ashley Furniture, current owners of the hospital building, had asked the Ambulance Board to be vacated within two years. Time is dwindling away as they group plans for their new headquarters. Foegen provided a tentative drawing of the 4600 square foot facility they are planning to build (housing, training room and garage), and stated that one of the hurdles they are facing is locating land. They have come to the Town of Arcadia in the past to see if it was a possibility to locate the building at the site.
****Ron Tuschner:** asked to reiterate the size of the building, and wondered how many lanes for the garage.
****Foegen:** 3 lanes; could expand in the future.
****Ron Tuschner:** So it will be designed for expansion in the future? Have you determined any costs of the building and the property? What will it be per capita?
****Foegen:** The cost will be based on a per capita basis as it has in the past. We are hoping for major donations and have received commitments already.

****Ron Tuschner:** Will the land be acquired by the Ambulance Board or leased for a period of time?

****Foegen:** We would like to acquire the land as we did not think about the leasing option.

****Ron Tuschner:** But it is still up for discussion?

****Foegen:** Yes.

****Jon Schultz:** Some people have been bringing up that a lease could be considered. If the ambulance service would move, the land would go back to the Town.

****Pat Rohn:** Would there be a possibility of using some of the Town's land value as the Township's payment towards the new facility since the municipalities will be expected to contribute?

****Foegen:** Probably not as we don't want to complicate things. The ambulance service is owned by 8 different municipalities.

****Karen Geske:** How much land would be needed?

****Foegen:** The footprint of the building is 75 ft by 60 ft. It could change slightly. Parking space would be needed as well.

****Geske:** So are we talking one acres or two acres?

****Foegen:** An acre would be more than plenty.

****Jon Schultz:** With that point regardless of how the land is contracted or sold there would have to be some kind of memorandum in terms of Town equipment not being parked in front of the ambulance building, blocking access. Or would we develop a separate access to the highway?

****Foegen:** No, not necessarily. The State does not want too many access points onto the highway. We would probably have to share a driveway.

****Jon Olson:** Wondered what Foegen and the ambulance service has heard regarding acquiring Town land.

****Foegen:** I haven't heard anything negative about it. I think it's an excellent site since we would be at the intersection of two major highways. In the past, we have heard things from Independence that it takes too long for us to get there. This should speed it up as we will be in a good spot no matter which direction we need to go. It would be better for the major population areas.

****Ron Tuschner:** As he has been talking to people he has heard that part of the Town property may also be used for a fire station. A lot of people have said that we have acquired this land at a substantial cost. They have said "we are not going to give the land away, are we?" He felt that some kind of payback was needed, and that maybe a lease agreement should be looked at. That way the land could return to the Township if something happened in the future. He felt that the Township should have the first right of refusal. The people want to protect their financial assets.

****Jason Kamrowski:** he felt that providing an ambulance service is a necessity, and that we are providing a service to save someone's life. The land should be leased and be done with it.

****Jon Schultz:** - We need to provide this service, but there is also value to the land.

****Kamrowski –** we have someone mowing the property when it could be used for a better purpose.

****Carol Bawek:** asked if the committee has looked into other communities. You are focused on the Town of Arcadia. Do other communities have any land available?

****Foegen:** Arcadia is the hub, having the largest population, and we are centralized regarding the service area. And there has been a lot of support from Arcadia over the years. Bridget Breska also replied that the site that used to be Club 93 is the center of the service area. Foegen continued by saying that he is proud to be from Arcadia as they have provided tremendous support to the ambulance committee. Other communities have supported us as well, but not like Arcadia does. We need the ambulance service here. We have lost the hospital, we have lost the emergency room. We sure don't want to lose our ambulance service.

****Pat Rohn:** stated that working for a larger manufacturer he has seen injuries that required an ambulance. He continued by saying that a quick response is necessary. “There are many workers in this area, and the ambulance service is a tremendous asset.”

****Karen Geske:** agreed with Rohn’s statement. She then questioned the land value. She asked what the land value was when the Township purchased it. Ron Tuschner stated the cost was \$440,000 approximately ten years ago. “We should calculate what the land is worth”. She continued by saying that she felt that the Township should get compensated for the land, but at a reduced cost...”maybe \$100 a year, etc.” “We need to make sure that we keep this service here in our township.” She also stated that we need to remember that the purpose is to save lives, not interfere with daily tasks. Maybe by having the ambulance building on Town property would help bring City water and sewer in.

****Jon Schultz:** commented to the audience that at any time someone could make a motion. Discussion could continue once a second is received. “Like Karen said we need to figure out if we are going to do this and in what way. If we can get a motion where the Town is willing to commit to using the land in some fashion, the specific terms do not have to be decided tonight. That can allow the ambulance service to move forward with the design and placement on the property. Then the specifics can be decided later. We are not voting on the color of the siding tonight.”

****Darlene Rossa:** Commented that she heard that Tri-City was looking at taking over the Arcadia service. She continued by saying that if the City of Arcadia wanted to annex this property, which they have the legal right to, the lease would then be gone. “It is not about how the land was paid for, it’s about the tax basis for the land. This property should have never been bought for the Town, it should have been bought for business property. The other thing is this going to help us get a paramedic? The annexation is a big thing and I am sure no one thinks about that. And what happens to the ambulance service then if that happens?”

****Jon Schultz –** We would have to agree to the annexation.

****Rossa –** You don’t have a choice.

****Schultz –** Then you are talking about eminent domain.

****Rossa –** You don’t have a choice if they decide to annex. They have the legal right to do it. It’s contiguous.

****Barb Tock –** But you need to have the owner’s agreement.

****Schultz –** Landowner’s have to agree to the annexation.

****Rossa –** Well then eminent domain could be possible.

****Schultz –** Yes, you are right. The City could just decide they need it.

****Rossa –** These are some of the concerns when we talk about leasing. Have you ever heard about Tri-County taking over the ambulance service?

****Foegen:** No, he has never heard that. In the past, they had asked if they could work together to be more efficient, but the communities didn’t want to lose the Arcadia service. Tri-county is run differently than the Arcadia Ambulance service. All they have is an advisory board. It’s run by Gundersen Lutheran.

Rossa: That’s one of the big questions I have. If Tri-County ends up wanting to acquire the service and wants to buy the building, then what happens to our lease?

Foegen: That won’t happen. We are Arcadia ambulance. Someone has to be a sponsor for our employers. We have Bridget and Deb on staff. They are employees of Tri-County, but the ambulance service reimburses them.

Rossa: Would having the headquarters at the Town Hall help bring a paramedic?

****Foegen:** Yes, I think that it would help. They have been pushing for it, but when the building issue came up we had to work on that first. Most of the municipalities were in agreement, only two are not. He continued by saying that having no building has taken priority over the paramedic issue. We still definitely want a paramedic.

****Dave Waniorek:** If the land was to be leased, who would be responsible for maintenance? Are they expecting snow removal from the Town?

****Foegen:** We would be right here so am thinking that we would work with the Town to help with the plowing. We could work on the details at that point.

****Bridget Breska:** The Town Road Crew has always been good about keeping things plowed out, even at the old hospital.

****Ron Tuschner:** He has been attending these meetings for quite some time, starting out at the high school. The Town and City of Arcadia have been the top promoters to keep the ambulance service here. We have voiced our concern about paramedics many times. To me the greatest amount of work that needs to be done later is to set parameters if the Town wants to have the building here, how we are going to work together. The rules are very similar between the ambulance service and fire department. We need to keep things rolling, we should set people up between the Town and City to work out the details. Should have City, Township and Town of Glencoe representation. At this time, we shouldn't impede the ability to move forward on this project.

Ron Tuschner made a motion to give preliminary approval for the project to proceed, working out the details in the future. Jon Schultz asked Ron to clarify his motion, so a second could be received. The discussion could continue from that point. After a few changes, Clerk Rohn read the motion to the audience...“The Town of Arcadia will commit to work with the Arcadia Ambulance Service to proceed with tentative planning for the new facility on Town property pending committee approval.” Tony Przybylla seconded the motion. C. Foegen said that he, too, would like a plan as to where the building would be located so it's not in the way for any future needs of the Township. “We want to plan this out so it's in a good spot.” Discussion continued.

****Jon Olson:** stated that he would like to be on the committee. “I think the service needs to be here. I don't want it to leave”.

****Jon Schultz:** If the motion passes we will set up a committee.

****Lynn Axness:** Asked if a traffic study had been done. Her concern was that it might be very hard to get through the four-way intersection during really busy times. “There always seems to be a lot of traffic at Kwik Trip. Where's the traffic going to go when you are trying to get through?”

****Foegen:** It's not going to make any difference.; somehow we always seem to get through when we need to.

****John Jasin:** Heard that the fire department is looking for additional space, and wondering if there would be a plan to combine both the fire department and ambulance service into one building. “Once the Fire Department hears that the town will be working with the ambulance service they will be knocking on the door to join this opportunity.”

****Foegen:** Responded by saying that they had met with the fire department and the City of Arcadia, and found that they are not interested in this property. “The Ambulance Committee thought it would be a feasible idea, but the fire department feels it won't work. They have an advantage over us as they have time, we don't.”

Schultz – The concept was there, but there are some people that have strong reservations for this location for a fire service.

Donna Brogan: She also spoke with Fire Chief Jeff Halvorsen and found that the fire departments concern was getting through the four-way intersection. “When the firemen are trying to get through the traffic with their own vehicles it is really difficult.”

Foegen: So what is the difference if the firemen are all here and they have to go the other way through Town?

Schultz – They feel that it would be harder getting through from this side of town because of the 4-way intersection.

Mike Chitko – He wanted to get back to discussion about the motion. “Since we are talking about granting use of the land will this give the Service more leeway in coming up with concrete plans to move forward?”

Foegen: “We don’t have a choice. We have to move forward.”

Chitko: “When you talk to professionals...designers or DOT, etc., you can say we have the okay from the Town. Do you feel that they would consider working with us on this site?”

Foegen: I will give you my perspective of what came out of this meeting. You probably want to get something for the cost of your land, but I don’t think you are going to rob us blind. I don’t think I need to worry about that. The Town always treated us very well.

Chitko: There is no doubt that we would like to keep the ambulance service here, it’s just that you’re are trying to put a building here with access to it, and there might be possible future growth. What are your plans right now? Anything concrete?

Tock: He has sketches.

Schultz: Yes, it’s a pretty efficient layout. Mike is raising an interesting point. We made this motion. We need to talk about the committee. We can determine how much authority this committee will have, and talk about whether it will be a lease or sale.

Tock: Would the committee recommend or completely decide?

Schultz: The committee can decide.

Tock: wanted to know if it has to come back to the full Township to decide if we are going to sell or lease.

Chitko: I am still asking some questions. I am trying to keep this within the discussion of the motion. “Is there anything that would stop you from using this particular site? “

Foegen: said that he heard there are many underground cables and wiring to deal with in some of the areas. “We would have to look at a footprint of the area.”

Ron Tuschner: “Mike has an excellent point. I have to come back to my word of tentative. There could be things that come up that could completely take this project out of the water. How do we know until we proceed? So let’s work at this.”

Jason Kamrowski: Regarding the motion can we set some kind of timeframe? We don’t want this to drag on.

Jason Kamrowski then made a motion to amend Ron Tuschner’s motion by adding an expiration date of 180 days out. Jon Olson seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mike Chitko: How does this timeframe work for the Ambulance Board?

****Foegen:** They gave us two years 5 months ago. We need to be out by January 1, 2018. Bridget Breska said that 180 days will be enough time. We can work with the engineers to figure out any changes. Foegen also said that time will be needed for water/sewer layout, etc.

****Schultz:** I think that it's a fair amount of time.

****Donna Brogan:** What is the point of 180 days if they need more time to get the project completed?

****Schultz:** This is just for Town approval.

****Donna Brogan:** said that she thought what we were going to do tonight was have a motion that says that the Town of Arcadia agrees to use some portion of its land to house an ambulance building. "And then another motion perhaps saying that the Town of Arcadia may seek some compensation from the ambulance service, or no compensation. And that's all. And if we were to do that, we would not specify any details or a timeframe. We would just say to go forward. To Ron's point, something could always happen of course. We might find out that the State doesn't want us to build a building here for some reason. We don't know that now, but that could happen. I thought all we were going to do tonight is to grant permission if people agree that we would like to see our land used this way, and whether or not we expected compensation."

****Jon Schultz:** I think fundamentally we are. I am comfortable with the idea of a timeframe, though. It lets the ambulance service know that we as a Town want to show what our commitment will be. I am anticipating that we will have a committee that will make recommendations and talk to the ambulance service on whether it's a sale, lease or donation. They would make the recommendation and then meet again where we would discuss and vote on the options. We need to go back to the motion to the amendment.

****Brogan:** So the 180 days is for us to have a concrete proposal. Is that right?

****Foegen:** Yes.

****Pat Rohn:** I think the 180 days is fair amount of time. We are looking at an agreement in principle. There will be lots of infrastructure issues (underground cables, water/sewer). The committee could then make a concrete decision after that.

****Foegen:** stated that there was a motion on the floor.

Jon Schultz called the question for the amended motion. A hand vote was taken with 22 in favor and 5 abstaining. Schultz then called the question on the original motion to move forward with the project. A hand vote was taken with 23 in favor. Four abstained.

Discussion regarding the committee ensued. Some of the items that need to be addressed are where the building should be, the amount of land needed, compensation for the land, do we reach out to the City for water and sewer, etc. Brogan asked if a helipad would be included. That may be discussed at a later time. Schultz reiterated that the purpose of the committee is to help the ambulance service move forward with the project.

John Jasin made a motion to create a 5 person committee consisting of 1 person from the Town Board, 1 person from the City of Arcadia, and 3 constituents from the Township. Ron Tuschner felt that it has to be a majority from the Town. It's our land. Jon Schultz asked J. Jasin to repeat his motion. A second was received by Karen Geske. Discussion continued.

****Beth Killian:** wondered if this committee will meet with the Arcadia Ambulance Board? Her concern is that some of the people that were mentioned in the motion already meet with the Board.

****Jon Schultz:** The roles will have to be clarified. The Board member can be a liason.

****Pat Rohn:** Stated that this is the Township's property. He felt that the committee should consist of Town of Arcadia residents only as it is the Township's land.

Ron Tuschner made an amendment to the motion, removing the 1 person from the City and replacing with a Township resident. Jason Kamrowski seconded. A hand vote was then taken which resulted in the motion carrying with a unanimous approval of the 27 attendees.

Karen Geske and John Jasin stated that the Board needed to return to the original motion as it needed to be revoted on. Jasin should have been asked if he agreed to change his motion. Karen Geske agreed which changed her "second". The motion was voted upon by a hand vote. The motion carried with 26 voting, and 1 person abstaining.

Ron Tuschner felt that a Board member should be at the first scheduled meeting to see what should be covered.

Members from the audience volunteered for the committee. Committee members will consist of Ron Tuschner, John Jasin, Jon Olson, and Lynn Axness with Jon Schultz being the Board representative.

Jon Schultz asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was received by Jon Olson, and was seconded by Donna Brogan. A hand vote was taken. The motion carried with 26 voting in approval, and 1 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm.

Confirm next meeting date: The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, December 22nd, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy Rohn
Town of Arcadia Clerk/Treasurer
