



# Town of Washburn 2022 Newsletter

March 2022

## Town Hall Update

If you came to the Washburn Town Hall in February to vote, you may have noticed some changes inside.

More room was created after the removal of the large furniture pieces that were taking up space along the south wall. The storage room was organized to better store election equipment and tools needed during elections for the poll workers' use.

The interior of the building has been newly painted by Keith Fleig. He also checked in the attic to be sure that the chimney was not leaking (things were nice and dry) and repaired the ceiling and entrance wall from the time when it did.

Two of the four voting booths are up along the north wall where they originally were. The 3<sup>rd</sup> space has been set-up with the Express Vote machine with access for all but especially for those with disabilities.

After 30-40 years of use, the voting booths are getting very frail. A plan to create new booths that have some of the same historic look to them is in the works. One of the ideas is when the booths are not in use, they can simply be folded up and attached to the wall so that nothing needs to be moved and set-up again.

As more updates are in the works, we'll let you know what's happening.

## New Technology

The Town of Washburn has been investing in technology with the goal of improving communications with town residents.

All public town meetings are now available to be attended online in addition to in person at the town hall. While the online meetings were started out of necessity during the Covid pandemic, the town board has decided to continue to make all public meetings available online as well as in person. Google Meet is used to communicate audio and video on a computer or other mobile device. If you do not have a computer, you can call into the meeting by phone and communicate by audio only.

If you are online, you can view and listen to the meeting. During the public comment portion of the meeting you can speak and have your comments heard by others who are online or are in person at the town hall. Recently a large screen monitor was added to the town hall to improve video reception, as well as conference room speaker phones to handle the audio. Information on how to join a meeting online is included at the bottom of the meeting notice which can be found on the town website or posted at several physical locations around the town.

To support the online meetings, the town has added high speed internet at the town garage and hall. A public wifi hotspot is now available at the town hall. At other times, this wifi hotspot can be used by town residents who might need occasional high speed internet access. The wifi can be accessed from a vehicle parked outside of the town hall. No password is required. We'll continue to make this available to the community if it is not abused. Example: If you do not have high speed internet at your home but need to download a large file.

A new town website is being designed with the help of Superior Lighthouse Web Marketing, a local company that has helped many other towns with their websites. The new site is more friendly for mobile devices and tablets. You can sign up to be put on an email list to receive more timely information. Initially the new website will have much of the same information that was on the old website, but it is designed to be easily updated and maintained. More improvements to the site will be coming in the future.

As with any new technology, there are going to be some hiccups that will happen as we go through a learning curve. We ask for your patience as we work through these problems so that we can enjoy some long term benefits.



## Important Dates

**April 5, 2022 General Election 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

**April 12, 2022 Monthly Town Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**April 19, 2022 Annual Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**April 29, 2022 Open Book 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**May 18, 2022 Board of Review 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Visit our website: <https://townofwashburn.com>

## 2022 Newsletter



### New Voting Equipment

Recently, new voting machines have been purchased and installed for all voting precincts in Bayfield County. Many precincts were using different brands of voting equipment which made it more difficult for the Bayfield County Clerk to tabulate and make a final report. Now all equipment that was purchased by the Towns comes from the same manufacturer, making end of day reporting much easier.

Most voters will use them for the first time at the April spring election but the Town of Washburn will have a chance to use them during the **February 15 primary** for positions for the Washburn School Board. Voters will continue to mark the

printed paper ballots as in the past and feed them through the scanner.

The only difference is that the scanner is now digital and includes a Touch Screen. Generally, you won't need to use the touch screen and simply feed your ballot through. However, if the scanner sees something on the ballot that is questionable, it will stop feeding the ballot and spit it back out. The Touch Screen will then show you what is needed to make corrections.

The other additional piece of equipment we have is called ExpressVote. This sits on a tabletop, making it accessible for those with disabilities. It is a Touch Screen that allows anyone to vote.

A voter inserts a blank paper ballot and follows the directions that come up. Everything you would see on a printed ballot you will now see on the screen. When you are through voting, your ballot will be printed and you will then feed it through the scanner. If the system doesn't like something it sees on the ballot, screens will show what is wrong and how to correct it before printing it out.

Because not as many people will be coming out to vote for the February primary, we encourage you to take some time and try using the ExpressVote.

The screens on both machines are easy to follow and the Poll Workers will be available to help as needed.



*Cheryl Sandstrom demonstrating the new voting machine.*

### Road Work-2021

There has been a great deal of work completed on the roads this past summer. One mile of the Ondossagon Road received a new asphalt overlay. One mile of the Engoe Road had additional gravel added then ground up with the old asphalt and a new layer of asphalt put down. This road is maintained jointly with the Township of Barksdale. The Brevak Road received a new layer of gravel. Recycled blacktop was put down on the Bjork Road. New culverts and French Drains were added to the North Maple Hill Road, hoping to help with the frost heaves that have been present during the winter. This may require more action to take care of this situation. Two culverts on the Nevers Road and the Ondossagon Road had new sleeves inserted. This process maintains existing culverts without needing to tear up the road. After over a year of research the board has developed a plan to make improvements to the South Maple Hill Road from Church Corner Road to Paulson Road. Portions of the road will be moved to the north to lessen the tight curve, give better visibility and to add ditches to decrease the road being

washed out during heavy storms. This will make the road safer and lessen the amount of resources needed for upkeep of the road. Work will proceed during 2022.



### NOTICE

**Keep your driveway cleared of low hanging branches or growth close to the edges. If there is an emergency at your home and the emergency vehicles are damaged, the cost of repairs will be passed on to the homeowner.**

## 2022 Newsletter

### Road Activity & Funding Applications

Last May, the Town Board toured the town roads to discern those which should be prioritized for maintenance/ updating in the near future. That led us to put together a 2-year plan to list those roads, so we could determine which roads should be within the updating mix.

One of the roads that have been discussed for potential reconstruction for some time, is the South Maple Hill Road at the intersection of Church Corner Road, east to Paulson Road. The Town hired a local engineer who came up with a design for the reconstruction, and who met with residents along the road to update them on the progress of the planning, plus solicited input from the residents. Early on, resident Tom Cogger came up with a design to move the large curve in the road about 15' north, to improve visibility/ safety of such a tight curve as it is currently. That suggestion was implemented within the plan, so such input was very much appreciated. The Town Board voted to reconstruct the road for safety and long-term viability of the road. In anticipation of construction to begin on this project in the spring/ summer of this year, trees were removed in the right of way, plus bids on the project will go out on March 1<sup>st</sup>, and opened at the April meeting to secure the contractor for the project.

Since late summer of last year, Supervisors Sandstrom, Park, and Chairman Raspotnik, have been busy searching for funding for road projects within the 2-year plan. Supervisor Sandstrom applied for two projects via WisDOT funding, administered by the Bayfield County Highway Department. Those two projects were a part of the TRI (Town Road Improvement) funding that the Towns in the County are eligible to apply for. Sandstrom, along with other Town Supervisors in the County, was appointed to the local committee that reviews the funding applications. The Town of Washburn was awarded funding for two projects, which will require a 50% match of funds by the Town to the grant award. One project is to repave 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a mile west of Church Corner Road on South Maple Hill Road. That grant award was \$27,500, and bids for this project will go out on March 1<sup>st</sup> for construction this year. The other grant awarded in the amount of \$12,000, is for gravel to be applied on a stretch of road west of West Maple Hill Road, at the intersection of South Maple Hill Road, on South Maple Hill. The town plans to execute this project sometime within the balance of the year. Another project which Supervisor Sandstrom applied for is under the WisDOT TRID (Town Road Improvement Discretionary) Funding. This project is for pulverizing and re-paving of a 2 mile stretch of Wannebo Road from Chequamegon Heights Road, west to Ondossagon Road. This project estimate is close to \$500,000, with the hope of being awarded half of that amount via the

grant. This is a very competitive grant available to all the Towns in Wisconsin, but we feel we put in a very good application with several support letters. The decision on this grant is to be announced by late March of so.

Supervisor Park assembled two very good grant applications that tie to funding that we would receive via the US Forest Service. This fund is referred to as the FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program Project). One of his applications is for paving of the ½ mile stretch on FR251 west of Pajala Road to the Long Lake Road entrance. The balance of the project is for the application of gravel on 7.4 miles of FR251 which is a gravel road. The total cost of this project is \$324,500, and if awarded, would cover the total cost of the project. The other project Supervisor Park has applied for is for gravel to be applied for on FR252, which goes north of FR251 to County Road C. The total cost of this project is \$164,280, with the potential award to cover this project's total cost. The Forest Service applications require much detailing, and Supervisor Park also secured support letters to round out his strong applications, with the decision and response on these funds to be announced late this spring.

Chairman Raspotnik was appointed to the Secure Rural School – Resource Advisory Committee, known as the RAC committee. She has made an application for \$62,000 for gravel to be applied on FR500. She will attend training regarding service on the committee on March 1<sup>st</sup>, and a decision on the grant is forecasted to happen sometime later this spring.

Road maintenance and funding for the roads are a top priority for the Town Board, and we look forward to additional good news to result for our funding efforts yet within this year.



#### NOTICE

#### Register your dog!

*All dogs in the Town of Washburn should be registered.*

*The form for registering dogs*

*was sent with the property taxes and can be found on the Town of Washburn website.*

*(townofwashburn.com) The form along with the required fee and proof of rabies*

*vaccination should be sent to the Town of*

*Washburn, Treasurer, P.O. Box 216,*

*Washburn, WI 54891.*



Town of Washburn  
30015 County Highway C  
Washburn, WI 54891



## New Road Equipment

This year the town purchased a Handy Hitch compactor. It is pulled behind the grader as the roads are graded. This piece of equipment can be operated by a single person. It is able to maintain constant pressure on the road and will leave a smooth, uniform surface. It results in a driving surface that stands up to the impact of

weather and traffic. The town owned a smaller version but it needed to be attached to another piece of equipment and operated by another person. It was not able to apply the same amount of pressure. This new piece of equipment results in less operator time, less use of equipment and that equals less fuel and less repairs. When Joe Amrein, Equipment Operator, was asked his opinion about the Handy Hitch he said, "This is the best piece of equipment a town can purchase. Having worked on roads without it, I can see the difference it makes on the roads. No town should be without one."

The Town also has on order a new truck. It was hoped that the new truck would be here by now, but with the difficulty with new purchases, it is hoped that it will arrive by next winter. In the meantime, the old truck is being babied along with the hopes it will make it through the winter. Other plans are in place if the truck is not able to make it through the winter, but it might slow the snow removal if the truck does not hold up. Please be patient.

## Please NOTE...

***Remember with the heavy spring storms to mark your well heads, septic systems, propane tanks so the equipment operators have a clear view of their locations as they plow.***

***Protect your mailboxes during the winter plowing season. Google examples of swinging mailbox stands and consider updating yours. The Town is not responsible for boxes that get hit by the plows.***

Town of Washburn—Bayfield County—30015 County Highway C, Washburn WI 54891

Sandra Raspotnik, Chair; Scottie Sandstrom, Supervisor; Jim Park, Supervisor; Kerry Tetzner, Clerk; Lynn Adams, Treasurer