

Town of Verona  
Financial Sustainability Committee Minutes  
Town of Verona Community Room, 7669 County Highway PD, Verona, WI  
9/11/2019

**Present:** Laura Dreger, Tom Mathies, Doug Wolf, and John Senseman

**Absent:** Julie Bass-DeVries

**Staff Present:** Amanda Arnold – Planner-Administrator and John Wright – Clerk-Treasurer

**Call to Order, Approval of Agenda** – Chair Dreger called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Senseman moved to approve the agenda; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mathies. Motion carried.

**Approve Minutes** – Motion by Mathies to approve the August 15, 2019 minutes; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dreger. Motion carried.

## Reports

- Citation Proceeds – Planner/Administrator reported that \$9,235 has been collected to date of the \$13,400 budgeted. Arnold confirmed that the deputies have been encouraged to focus upon issuance of citations while on duty to offset costs to the Town. Costs to date are \$28,274; \$45,905 was budgeted.
- Town Hall proceeds – \$3,687 has been collected to date of the \$5,000 budgeted.
- Fee comparisons with other communities – Wright reported that he conducted a search for nearby communities that post their fee schedules online. Of those communities, all charged \$500 to renew an annual intoxicating liquor license; the Town of Verona currently charges \$400. Wright noted that he has revised the fee for a Provisional Operator's License since it is capped by State Statute at \$15. On a related note, a fee for the remaining Reserve Intoxicating Liquor License will be added to the fee schedule update to be presented to the Town Board at the October regular meeting; that cost is \$10,000; this is normally due only once unless the license lapses and would be in addition to the regular annual fee. Although the Town of Cottage Grove charges an overweight permit fee for vehicles travelling on weight-restricted roads, member Mathies thought compliance would be more likely without a fee. There was a brief review of what other communities charge for special meetings when no other Town business was to be conducted. Likewise, the group compared the fees other communities charge for review of plats, re-plats, resubmittal of plats, Certified Survey Maps, etc. The Town of Middleton charges a penalty when paving of private bituminous roads falls below the required density standard; it is a base fee plus a penalty. This will be shared with the Town Project Manager for his thoughts. Member Mathies expressed his opinion that the plat review fee for the Town is too low for the work performed by staff and the Chair if the Plan Commission. Chair Dreger volunteered to work with Town staff to recommend changes to the current fee schedule to be presented to the Board for their consideration; without objection.

**Revised Five-Year Budget Projections** – Planner/Administrator Arnold reported that she reorganized the order of budget lines to reflect how Form C is arranged (an annual report filed for the Town by Johnson Block included in the annual audit costs). Arnold directed the group to line 147; the total income compared with expenses based on current revised estimates has a shortfall of \$10,643.12 in 2020, but that amount rises to over \$70,000 in 2021 and \$32,000 in 2022). Additional trash and recycling containers will need to be purchased next year; the investment will eventually be recouped as carts are sold, but may be over a multi-year period. She further noted that stormwater management costs have been added this year to capital outlay costs. Likewise, increases to the road construction budget and senior services have been increased based upon the CIP prepared by Project Manager Barnes and rates presented by the Belleville Senior Center. The Public Safety expenses will also increase to reflect the addition of personnel for Fitchrona EMS. Funds are available in 2020 from the Local Roads Improvement Program managed by the Wisconsin DOT. The 2020 budget currently has no funds set aside for capital equipment costs.

**Discussion of Payment in Lieu of Taxes** – amounts paid to the Town in 2019 by the Jewish Federation of Madison, the Madison Area Youth Soccer Association, and Department of Natural Resources were presented to those in attendance. Member Mathies thought costs incurred by the Town for local exempt agencies including the Badger Prairie Health Care Center, should be aggregated by staff and presented by the Town Chair to those agencies to see if they would consider a payment in lieu of taxes for the services provided to the by the Town (e.g. voting, EMS, fire protection, etc.); without objection.

**Discussion of Wisconsin Department of Transportation Multimodal Local Supplement Program** – Member Mathies briefly reviewed an opportunity to receive a match up to 90% for read/bridge construction/repair up to \$3.5 million. Projects must be to the economic benefit of the community/region/County/State. Member Senseman thought that reconstruction of Country View Road to the benefit of Epic Systems was a natural fit although Fitchrona Road reconstruction could be mutually beneficial to the City of Fitchburg and Town of Verona. Mathies noted that the application can be based upon estimated costs; competition is State-wide. Member Wolf stated that even if the Town had to borrow 10 to 15% of the costs, it would be a reasonable justification to do so if funded for the remaining 90 to 85%. Arnold agreed to pass the information along to the Project Manager, the Town Board, and the Public Works Committee; without objection. The deadline is December 6, 2019.

**Summary of Pros and Cons of Various Methods for Increasing Revenue** – Arnold and Wright presented a list of options previously discussed by this Committee and the advantages/disadvantages of each approach. Member Mathies thought the Town might consider an increase to the base levy not a means to exceed the Levy Limit. There was a brief discussion regarding whether a Town Board resolution approved by qualified residents at a Special Town Meeting to increase the base levy would be ongoing or need to be renewed each year. Sample resolutions researched by Wright suggested that some Towns sought permission for the same increase to the base each year whereas Mathies suggested it need only be approved once. Member Senseman stated that a local wheel tax could achieve \$40,000 in revenue for road repairs that could be implemented relatively easily. Mathies thought that cutting items from the budget was unrealistic; he advocated for this method to be removed. After brief discussion, those present agreed that debt should only be considered for emergencies or when assumed strategically (such as the multimodal grant) when the long-term benefit outweighs the short-term costs. Senseman would consider reducing or eliminating extra sheriff patrols; he requested more data to base a decision. Mathies ranked the list of options as follows: Increase the base levy 1, shift fire protection costs from the levy to a special charge 2, assume general obligation debt under a strict set of circumstances 3, and wheel tax 4. In general, others in attendance agreed except Chair Dreger ranked moving fire protection to a fee as 1 and an increase to the base levy as 2. Mathies advocated for a modest increase to the base levy by Town Board resolution in 2020 to be approved by the qualified residents in November of this year. Mathies noted that shifting some or all qualifying fire protection costs to a special charge will take far longer to institute and better considered for the 2021 budget. It was noted that the Board will need to have a special meeting in October to consider adoption of a resolution to be presented at the Special Town Meeting for approval of the levy and presentation of the 2020 budget in November.

**Schedule Next Meeting and Agenda Items** – the next meeting will be held on Friday, October 11, 2019 at 2:30 PM. Items on the agenda will include:

- Call to Order, Approval of Agenda
- Approve Minutes from September 11, 2019
- Reports on
  - Fees schedule approved by the Town Board
  - Updates to 2020 Budget and Local Mill Rate Estimates
  - Schedule Next Meeting and Agenda Items
- Adjourn

**Adjourn** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM.