

TOWN OF COTTAGE GROVE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
APRIL 10, 2012

- I. The meeting was called to order by Town Chair Kris Hampton at 7:00 P.M. Town Clerk Kim Banigan recorded the minutes, and Attorney Connie Anderson provided legal counsel. A list of other attendees is available in the Town Clerk's Office. 24 people signed in for the meeting, of which 22 were Town residents.
- II. Flag Pledge
- III. The minutes of last year's Annual Town Meeting were available in printed form. There was no reading of the minutes at the meeting. **MOTION** by Mike DuPlayee/Steve Querin-Schultz to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2012 Annual Town Meeting as printed. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE (22-0-0).**
- IV. Additions to agenda by Electors: Sue Kettinger and Truman Nienstedt asked to amend agenda item 7) to allow for a motion regarding the Joint Merger Study. Hampton introduced new Police Chief Chris Hughes.
- V. Presentation of the 2011 Annual Town Financial Report: The 2011 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures was printed on the back of the agenda. Lisa Klein asked how many patrolmen were included in the highway department wages (the answer was four). There were no further questions.
- VI. Presentation of services offered by the Colonial Club: Melody Riedel thanked the Town residents for their financial support, and gave an overview of Colonial Club services available to Town senior citizens, which include adult day care, supportive home care, meals and information/referrals. In 2011, twelve Town of Cottage Grove residents were assisted by the Colonial club, including 500 meals served. Case Manager Gail Brooks described her role in helping senior citizens stay safe in their own homes. One important service offered is assistance completing paperwork for things such as Medicare D, Social Security, etc. Riedel and Brooks left brochures, including one on Club 301 that allows people of ages to join in support of the Colonial Club. They also invited all to attend their Strawberry Fest coming up on June 23rd. Steve Querin-Schultz commented that Colonial Club services provided to a family member were valuable and not available elsewhere.
- VII. Update on Joint Town/Village Merger Study Committee: Mike DuPlayee began the discussion by giving an overview of what the committee has done so far, including contracting for a tax rate study that indicated mill rates are close enough to make a merger feasible. The pace of the committee's work has been tempered back from original goals to allow time to work through the many issues, but the voters will make the final decision through a referendum held in both municipalities. There followed a lengthy discussion, with questions raised as to what the benefit of a merger would be to Town residents. Hampton said the biggest threat to the Town is a loss of tax base through annexation by either the City of Madison or the Village of Cottage Grove. Opinions expressed by those present were mixed between those who saw value in allowing the study to continue so that voters would have adequate information, and those who wanted the study to end now. Some major points included:
 - Sue Kettinger said the survey in the Annual Report should have asked what people think about merging rather than asking for help with the process.
 - Kristi Williams suggested that the Cottage Grove Area Historical Society publication entitled *How the Two Cottage Groves Grew* should be required reading for the committee, as she felt it provided valuable resources and timely conclusions.

- Ø Steve Anders and Kris Hampton said that there needs to be a way to ensure that ordinances developed by the Merger Study Committee are actually adopted by the new governing body.
- Ø Ellery Jensen said it is important to look out for the future of Cottage Grove. He advocated giving the committee time to study the issue, and said that others not present tonight have expressed this sentiment to him as well.
- Ø Steve Querin-Schultz said that the committee needs to spell out specifically what the advantages to the Town would be.

Truman Nienstedt asked what bearing motions adopted at an Annual Town Meeting had on the Town Board. Anderson advised that since the Town Board has been granted Village Powers by the electors, Annual Meeting motions are much like a referendum – they are advisory to the Town Board.

MOTION by T. Nienstedt/S. Kettinger that the Town should disengage from the Merger Study Committee. All those in favor were asked to stand and count off as they sat down. **MOTION CARRIED 11-6.**

- VIII. Update on Deer-Grove EMS: Hampton reported that Chief Duane Erschen started in 2010. EMT Staffing is accomplished with both paid staff and volunteers, and the service is officially operating at a single paramedic level with two ambulances: one in Cottage Grove and one in Deerfield. Anders said that there are often two paramedics in Cottage Grove, however. Service is also provided to the Town of Pleasant Springs on a contracted basis. The current inter-municipal agreement between the Towns and Villages of Cottage Grove and Deerfield expires on December 31, 2012. The Town of Deerfield has given notice to drop out of the district at the end of 2012. The Cottage Grove Town Board has given the commission indication that they are interested in extending the agreement for another term.
- IX. Discussion of keeping of chickens in residential areas: Hampton explained that if an anticipated amendment to the County zoning ordinance to allow keeping of chickens in residentially zoned areas is introduced, input from the towns will be sought. Discussion was that the City of Madison and some other area municipalities already allow for chickens. Some people didn't realize they are current prohibited in the Town of Cottage Grove. Concerns were over any nuisance they might cause though roaming or manure. **MOTION** by Lisa Klein/Cindy Lease to support allowing of chickens in residential zoned areas. Those in favor were asked to stand and count off as they sat down. **MOTION CARRIED 14-2.**
- X. Stormwater Management Education.
- A. Review importance of grass swails: Hampton explained that as part of the Town's management plan for the Phase II Stormwater permit, solids must be removed from stormwater. This is accomplished primary by the grass in our ditches, which is why it is important not to dump grass clippings, leaves, etc. in the ditches, as they will be carried along with stormwater to the streams and lakes. The DNR may be placing limited on phosphorus levels in the near future. The Town is participating in a pilot study with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District to look for ways to mitigate the movement of phosphorus into the ditches.
 - B. Gage interest in an Adopt-a-highway program: Programs exist for State, County and Town Roads. Adopt-a-highway groups must agree to clean up the ditches at least three times each year. The Town Board is always supportive of such efforts.

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- XI. Set date for next year's Annual Town Meeting: Due to recent changes to election laws, the recommended date for future Annual Town Meetings has been pushed back to the third Tuesday of April. **MOTION** by S. Anders/M. DuPlayee to hold the next Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE 22-0-0.**
- XII. Other Business: As a follow-up to last year's meeting, Hampton reported that the Town has signed a new three-year lease for the former town garage at 4091 County Road N. The rent for June 2012 through May 2013 will be \$17,872.00.
- XIII. Adjournment: **MOTION** by M. DuPlayee/M. Kindschi to adjourn. **MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUSLY VOICE VOTE 22-0-0.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Kim Banigan

Clerk

Approved 4-16-2013