

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Town of Silver Cliff
Marinette County

Special public meeting of the Town Board on December 19th, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Silver Cliff Town Hall N11929 County Road I Silver Cliff, Wisconsin.

Minutes

1. Call to order & Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Bruce Weber called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Roll call and verification of proper public notice: Present; Chairman Bruce Weber, Supervisor Dee Farley, Supervisor Jay Van Frachen, Clerk Amy Vannieuwenhoven and 116 Electors. The Notice and agenda were posted on November 29th, 2023 at 1:30 pm and December 11th, 2023 at 12:30 pm, at the Town Hall, Town Shop, Town website, BP, Rustic and Rapids.
3. Motion to approve the agenda: Motion to approve the agenda made by Supervisor Dee Farley, seconded by Supervisor Jay Van Frachen, motion carried.

Consider for approval or other action:

4. Discussion and possible action regarding the purchase of property located at 13393 County Rd C, Silver Cliff WI 54104. This is the peoples meeting, only people eligible to vote in the Town of Silver Cliff are able to vote on items. Property owners are able to speak on town items but are not able to vote: Chairman Bruce Weber reminded attendees to sign in. The Diocese needs an answer by January 1st 2023. Bids for building the Emergency Services building came in higher than anticipated. Funding to purchase the church is not impossible, but harder than if bids came in lower.

Reminder to keep the meeting orderly and civil. The intent is to let as many Electors speak that want to. With a large crowd, comments are limited to 5 minutes, you may not speak again until all others have had a turn. Comments will be rotated by position (yeah/nay) on purchase of the church. When/if comments become redundant, it will be time for a motion on the floor. Ideally, 1 motion on the floor. Chairman went on to give the advantages of purchasing the property; it's an investment, long term use of the land and building, sits on the main highway and comes with 6 acres. Purchasing real estate is a security for the town. The property can be sold at a later date if the town does not use the property as intended. The capacity of the church is larger than the current town hall, there is room for offices and storage. Inspections have been done on the well, septic and furnaces. All other needs of the town are addressed in the 2024 budget. The Town will look for grant opportunities to supplement needs. The existing Town Hall has asbestos, is a 100-year-old building, needs painting, windows, a furnace, a roof and the basement is illegal to use for meetings. There is no storage. There is no intent to tear down the existing Town Hall, the building is still able to be used but at some point, repairs need to be made. It's possible to look at entering the building into a historical society. The priority is to get the Emergency Services building built.

Public Comments:

In favor of purchasing the property:

Vicky Farrel; if the town doesn't buy the church, we run the risk of apartments being put there.

Ed Burdick: Large purchases can be painful, once you tear the band aid off, you realize it was a good decision. This is an opportunity that fell I our lap, it's a gift. We could spend \$75,000.00 to fix the current building and we still wouldn't have enough room.

Pete Vannieuwenhoven: Could prepay propane for a cheaper price. Also, if the Town doesn't purchase the church and a private party does, what if it's turned into an eye sore to look at?

Mark Delaski: This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and is cheaper in the long run.

Jason Doersch: This is a good opportunity but the fire department is a priority. Where is the money coming from? Couldn't build a new building for less than \$800k but it's not the right time, let it sit.

Mitch Piontek: Was driving in Pulcifer WI, used to be a church and is now a junk pit.

Nancy Alberte: There are grants for energy costs and renewable energy, could take heating costs out of the equation.

Comments not in favor of purchasing the property:

Citizen: How many gallons does the well pump? Not known at this time but we can find out.

Citizen: The building would need to be brought up to code after purchase. Chairman Bruce Weber spoke to a State Building Inspector, there are no items needing to be brought up to code, unless the bathrooms are remodeled.

Citizen: There is no insulation in the church. The cost to heat averages \$3,000.00 at a minimal temperature of 55 degrees. The offices would need zone heat.

Mike (Citizen): has done work at the church, they are on their 3rd round of heating and heat stays more on the ceiling.

Citizen: Is the foundation frost free? Will find out

Laura Fencl: Called Ferel Gas. In 2020 the church purchase 1909 gallons of propane. In 2021, 1515 gallons were purchased and in 2022 1839 gallons were purchased, and that is only heating a few hours a week.

Chris Norten; County taxes are up, FDRS budget, this sale would bankrupt the future of the town. Why not put walls up on the park building and use for a fire and rescue building, there is also 40 acres at the park. Town roads are crap, we need to allocate funds for roads and staffing to do the work at the Town Shop. The Emergency Service building needs to be furnished, stop spending money on items we do not need. Chairman Bruce Weber responded to the comments; The Emergency Services building plans have been approved. There is no tax increase to residents if purchased. The town still would have 2.5 x the funds in reserve of what the State recommends for a town our size. The Rescue secured a grant to purchase furnishing for the Emergency Services building.

Donny Citizen: Can't insure for full value.

Motion to purchase the church property, made by Lois Weinrich, seconded by Mark Delaski.

116 voters

64 Yes

52 No

Motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Supervisor Dee Farley, seconded by Jay Van Frachen, motion carried 7:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Vannieuwenhoven,
Clerk, Town of Silver Cliff

Request from individuals with disabilities who will need special accommodations to participate in this meeting or hearing should be made to the Town Clerk at 715-757-3163 advance notice is recommended.

