

Town of Somerset
Town Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
(Unofficial Until Approved at Next Meeting)

Chair Plourde called the Town Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Demulling, Witzmann, Crotty, and Plourde. Absent: Germain. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. *Motion by Demulling, seconded by Witzmann to approve the agenda. Motion carried.*

Public Input: Clerk has provided the Town Board with all written comments/petitions received.

- Robert Tavis, 569-170th Avenue, commented on his opposition to the self-storage CUP and variance for two driveways. One driveway is within 60' of Tavis's driveway impeding their driveway with headlights shining into their home which is a nuisance. Proposed self-storage facility fails to meet the standards as noted in the Town Comprehensive Plan-preserving rural character and small town feel, encouraging best practices for responsible land use, spot development as commercial facility does not blend into residential area with infrastructure and public safety concerns with 170th Avenue a narrow, rural road, near schools, lack of community need. Tavis stated there are 67 storage facilities within 40 miles and there is no commonsense justification in creating an isolated commercial spot in a rural residential area. Possibility of decreasing property values of neighboring properties. Impervious surface concerns within 300' of the ordinary high-water mark. Tavis spoke on his personal experience in building a shed with ordinary high-water mark. Tavis commented on wetland and ecological impact. Rising water levels/runoff can create irreparable damage to adjacent properties and adversely affect groundwater. Tavis requests denial as priorities are to maintain rural character and not site a commercial use property in a residential area.
- Tom Nielsen, 1698-56th Street, stated he is opposed to the project. They moved out here to have rural property. Nielsen is concerned with the water runoff, wetlands and stated it is not a good place for commercial property near residential so please listen to the people.
- Dave Justman, 1697-56th Street, stated he has submitted written comments prior to the meeting for the Town Board. Justman concerned with the traffic impact study and questioned the traffic volume.
- Susan Sheridan, 544-170th Avenue, adjacent to the proposed self-storage facility requested the Town Board review the written comments she has provided. Sheridan is opposed to the self-storage facility.
- Mark Dewall, 1526 Oak Ridge Lane, Houlton, owns the property at 575-170th Avenue approximately 40 acres directly across the street from this project. Family has owned the property for almost 50 years. Dewall opposed to the Conditional Use Permit as it undermines expectations and is detrimental to future property values, increased stormwater runoff into adjacent wetlands, affecting wildlife and ecosystems. Dewall requests the 100' highway setback is not included in the setback for impervious surfaces. Opposed to exterior lighting, noise, traffic, security. 170th Avenue has several curves, blind hills, and no posted speed limit. Fencing of storage facilities is visually intrusive with the neighboring properties. No job creation or commercial vitality, moreover, there is a surplus of storage units.
- Linda Justman, 1697-56th St., stated she is concerned with 56th Street getting more traffic with turnarounds. 170th Avenue is narrow and has no shoulders. Grey box for communications is underwater in their ditch. Concerned with the water runoff. Justmann stated this facility would be directly out of her kitchen window. Concerned with ecological damage and a business in the middle of all these homes and questioned why. Justman stated she hopes the Town Board can say no to this.

Clerk and Treasurer's Report

- *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to approve the February 4, 2026, Minutes. Motion carried. Motion by Demulling, seconded by Witzmann to approve the February Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.*

Building Inspector's Report-Contract Renewal Consideration:

- *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to approve the February Building Inspector's Report. Motion carried. **Building Inspection Services Agreement**-Todd Dolan and Kelly McNamara were in attendance. 3% increase on commercial and 1.5% increase on residential which is about \$200/new home. #15 indemnification clause was added to the contract. Witzmann complimented Melissa Cook's knowledge and assistance. Dolan stated Cook is a licensed inspector. Demulling asked if contractors are giving any feedback on the Town's processes. Dolan stated a few comments regarding the final inspection bond, but not many, adding the final inspection bond is worthwhile. *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to approve the Building Inspector's Agreement for Services with All Croix Inspections expiring April 1, 2028. Motion carried.**

Animal Control Officer's Report

- *Motion by Crotty, seconded by Demulling to approve the February Animal Control Officer Report. Motion carried.*

Fire/Rescue Commission Report

- The total calls for 2026 are 80 so far compared to 85 in 2025. Preparation of Strategic Plan draft for presentation at the joint meeting in April.

Parks, Rec, and Planning Commission Report

- Spike Squire/Twin Springs Trust-Variance request from St. Croix County Ordinance Ch. 17.36 at 1502 Twin Springs Rd. Parcel #032-2082-80-000: Plourde stated Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments have approved. Spike Squire stated there have been no issues and he is grateful for the Town's help. *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Demulling to recommend approval of the variance request for Spike Squire/Twin Springs Trust. Motion carried.*
- Scott & Joy Peterson-2 Lot CSM at 2125-40th St. & Shared Driveway Agreement for Lots #5 (Berger) & #7, (Peterson) Parcel #032-1046-50-235-Mark McClenathan Auth Consulting: Witzmann asked if the shared driveway agreement needs to be changed to reference Lots #5 & #7 rather than Lots #5 & #6 on page 2. McClenathan stated the property has been subdivided and the lot numbers have changed. McClenathan referenced the note on the CSM. *Motion by Demulling, seconded by Witzmann to approve the 2 Lot CSM pending Lot #6 driveway installation. Motion carried. Park fee is paid.*
- Recommendation on Conditional Use Permit-Randy Sullwold Self Storage in R2 District 170th Ave., Parcel #032-2016-50-300, Nathan Gulden REI Engineering & Request for Town Variance to Allow 2 Driveways off 170th Ave.-Variance requested from Residential Driveway Access Standard, Which Allows A Maximum of One Driveway to Permit Two Driveway Accesses for the R2 Zoned Parcel Article V. Sec. 30-198(h): Plourde stated the Town does not allow spot zoning for commercial areas. St. Croix County will allow self-storage facilities on R2 land with a Conditional Use Permit. Nate Gulden & Cory Schlosser/REI Engineering presented modified plans for parcel #032-2016-50-300 with no buildings or impervious within the 75' ordinary high-water mark. The ponds can now hold a 25-year rainfall, 5.1" rainfall. Demulling questioned where the overflow water goes. Gulden stated outflow at both ends at the same rate, into the wetlands, only in an exceptionally large storm event-25-year storm event. Gulden stated that frozen fields do not infiltrate water now. Demulling asked who maintains the stormwater ponds. Schlosser stated the DNR enforces the pond maintenance, and the maintenance of the pond will always follow the owner. Witzmann stated the lighting and landscape plans are vague. Gulden stated a lighting plan is not part of the county's submittal, but the plan is to have downward lighting and not to have the facility open 24 hours. Trees have been added along Hwy. 64. Plourde

inquired about the hours of operation. Gulden stated no overnight guard, but the gates would lock down after hours. Town engineer, Jeff Reynolds/Jewell Assoc. concerned with the water volume and with the liner installed all the way underneath the safety berm, making the entire pond impervious in addition to the paving and buildings. Reynolds is concerned with the water and the pond size being significant to manage total volume-100-year event, 3 million gallons. Reynolds reiterated his concerns with water and discharge, so that it does not become a nuisance to the neighbors. Plourde asked how many units are anticipated. Gulden stated that it is unknown and based upon demand but approximately 25 buildings. Demulling inquired about the height of the buildings, insulated/non-insulated, any electrical service and the appearance. Gulden stated no windows in the units and no finalized building type. Sullwold stated a rollup door, and maximum height would be less than 18' for camper storage and no outdoor storage. Plourde inquired about the Town variance request for the two driveways. Gulden stated it was for ease of access and good circulation. Demulling asked if the units would be rented out to businesses and contractors. Demulling concerned that contractor rental becomes a daily visit and commercial business. Sullwold stated the intent is self-storage and regulated hours. Demulling stated he does not want to see it become retail or commercial businesses. Plourde reported the Planning Commission recommended denial based upon stormwater issues and the road. Gulden read a report on traffic volume from observed data. Gulden stated in theory, it could be parceled into six homes, and the projection of self-storage traffic is less than the residential traffic it would generate. Gulden addressed the concern about crest of the hill to the west and stated the site distance is 560'. Gulden commented on the impervious within 300' of ordinary high-water mark, because the water is going into a stormwater pond, it is not applicable, but they do need to meet the 75' setback from the wetland. Demulling stated he has driven around the local area, and almost all these facilities access off a state or county road. Schlosser stated the runoff in the plan is less than in the current condition. A few small wetlands were determined to receive an artificial wetland exemption by the DNR so they can be filled in. Demulling asked Sullwold why do you think this project is specific to this location and would you want this project by your property. Sullwold replied the property is up against Hwy. 64 and would you want to build a house up against the highway. Sullwold stated he is not asking for rezoning, he is asking for a Conditional Use Permit through the county. Sullwold added if it were annexed into the Village, there could be 80-100 houses, and this is a better option for traffic volume. Sullwold stated the area is continuing to grow and the Village housing development across the highway limits parking on the streets and small lots, so the demand for these facilities is growing. Witzmann stated he wants to highlight three standards in St. Croix County's evaluation criteria 15.710 (4) #1 location site to future access roads. 170th Ave. is a 21' road with less than 1' of shoulder and is questionable. #2 questioned the 800 units proposed, large and small and the need for proposed use in that location. #3 stated it is a residential area, and county allows the use in R2 but that is not compatible with maintaining the Town's rural character. Witzmann reiterated his concern with compatibility with surrounding area with potentially 800 units, congestion of traffic, lighting, and effect on neighboring properties. Plourde added the concern with fencing and lighting is that these issues do not come back before the Town Board. Witzmann asked if the county approves the CUP that adjustments be made on lighting, fencing, and driveway for the adjacent landowners.

Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Demulling to recommend denial to St. Croix County for the Conditional Use Permit for Randy Sullwold/Nate Gulden REI Engineering-Self Storage Facility in R2 District off 170th Avenue, Parcel #032-2016-50-300, referencing these three items out of St. Croix County's evaluation criteria 15.710 (4) (CDC): 4bf-location and site with respect to existing and future access roads-Witzmann has safety concerns with 170th Ave., 4bg-need of proposed use in that location-Witzmann concerned with potential 800 unit storage unit density in R2 zoning, 4bh-compatible with uses of adjacent land-Witzmann stated not maintaining rural character and property devaluation in that area. Demulling added he is concerned with stormwater runoff, lighting, landscape, and fencing plans. Demulling, Witzmann, Crotty voted yes to deny. Plourde abstained. Motion carried.

- Request for Town Variance to Allow Two Driveways off 170th Ave., Parcel #032-2016-50-300-Randy Sullwold/Nate Gulden REI Engineering: *Motion by Demulling, seconded by Witzmann to deny the variance to Article V, Section 30-198(h) Town Ordinance to allow two driveways off 170th Ave. Demulling, Witzmann, Crotty voted yes to deny the variance. Plourde abstained. Motion carried.*
- Recommendation on Conditional Use Permit-B & R Properties/Alice Inc/Stephen Kaufman-104 Site Campground with Manmade Swimming Pond in R2 District at 712-170th Ave., Lot #4 on New CSM: Steve Kaufman was present to request a recommendation for a Conditional Use Permit for a 104-site campground with possible manmade swimming pond at 712-170th Ave. Plourde stated Planning Commission approved with discussion on no liquor license, no tubing originating out of the site, quiet hours, and no live/outdoor concerts. Demulling concerned with the dam on the Apple River. Kaufman stated he is hosting two meetings with Fire Dept, Somerset Police Dept., and Xcel Energy concerning the warning system. Witzmann expressed concern about adequate flood warning system in place regarding heavy rain or dam failure. Demulling inquired about septic holding tanks. Kaufman stated the five storage tanks get pumped regularly. Witzmann questioned if the shared driveway will be paved with a cul-de-sac. Kaufman stated no plans to pave. Witzmann advised if presenting this to St. Croix County, please clarify that the road access is gravel and is existing. Witzmann concerned Lot #1 future owner be aware of the campground using the shared access. Kaufman stated he still owns Lot #1. Plourde commented there will be no liquor license, no live outdoor music or concerts, quiet hours and Kaufman stated he would pursue moving the commercial next year. *Motion by Demulling, seconded by Witzmann to recommend approval to St. Croix County for B & R Properties/Alice Inc., Stephen Kaufman for a 104-site campground with manmade swimming pond Conditional Use Permit at 712-170th Avenue in R2 District-Lot #4 on newly approved Certified Survey Map. Motion carried.*

Old Business

- Michael, Eugene & Angela Baratto-Consider Quote/Length of Fence Installation on 205th Ave.: Barratos not present. Plourde reported on measurement of fencing and previous TLE/fencing negotiation by Jewell. *Motion by Crotty, seconded by Demulling to authorize to pay Cyclone Fence \$4150 for installation of Baratto fencing on 205th Avenue with the stipulation that the installation and payment be made after the reconstruction of 205th Avenue. Motion carried.*
- 60th St. Update-Plourde stated Jeff Reynolds, Bill Lawson and himself have met on 60th Street with some options. Three DNR grants will be pursued. Resolution 2026-01 WI DNR Municipal Flood Control (MFC) Grant Program 2026, Resolution 2026-02 Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grant Program 2026, Resolution 2026-03 Targeted Runoff Management (TRM), and Urban Nonpoint Source & Storm Water Management (UNPS&SW) Grant Program-2026. *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to adopt Resolutions 2026-01, 2026-02, 2026-03 for Jewell Engineering to draft and apply for three DNR grants for 60th Street drainage. Motion carried.*
- Parent Street Update-Doug Zahler has provided a legal description.
- Town Stormwater Requirements for Minor Subdivisions-Witzmann will pursue.
- 205th Ave. TRID Project-Total Excavating has submitted contract and bid bond to Jewell. Plourde requested a point person from Jewell for the project.

New Business

- Set Open Book & Board of Review Dates/Times: *Motion by Crotty, seconded by Witzmann to set Open Book on Fri., April 17, 10am-12pm and Board of Review on Mon., April 27, 5pm-7pm. Motion carried.*

- June 30th T & F Meeting & July 1st Town Board Meeting Dates: *Motion by Plourde, seconded by Witzmann to reschedule the June 30th T&F Meeting & July 1st Town Board Meeting to Tues., July 7, 1 pm & Wed., July 8, 7 pm respectively. Motion carried.*
- Letter of Support for St. Croix County Orf Overlook Recreational Trail 2026 Grant Application to DNR: *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to authorize a Letter of Support for SCC/Orf Overlook DNR Grant Application. Motion carried.*

Transportation & Facilities Committee

- Sealcoating-Approve Details/Advertising for Sealed Bids: *Motion by Crotty, seconded by Demulling to approve the specifications, map, and list of roads for hot oil seal coating sealed bids. Motion carried.*
- WTA Road School: The agenda was reviewed and it was noted that the Town will not attend.
- Seasonal Road Weight Limits: Thurs., March 5th Town roads will be posted for weight limits.
- Update to Road Maintenance Employee Handbook: Crotty stated handbook has been tabled at this time.
- Update to Emergency Operations Plan: Crotty stated draft will be presented at April Town meeting.

Announcements & Adjourn

- WTA Dist. Meeting, Eau Claire, Sat., March 7 (Board of Review Training)
- Parks, Rec & PC Meeting, Wed., March 18, 7 pm
- *Motion by Witzmann, seconded by Crotty to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried.*

Jeri Koester,
Clerk