

Town of Rock Elm

Elmwood, Pierce County, Wisconsin

MINUTES

Town Board Meeting - Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Meeting called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Chairman Tim Bates.

Others present: Matt Holcomb, Supervisor; Chris Thibado, Supervisor; Dave Bechel, Patrolman; Pam Reitz, Treasurer; Dawn Churchill, Clerk; and 5 residents and 1 non-resident.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Matt Holcomb, second by Chris Thibado, motion carried.

Minutes from previous meetings

Minutes from the June 10, 2025, meeting were read. Motion to approve by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

Minutes from the July 7, 2025, CAFO meeting were read.

Motion to approve by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

Financial Report

Dawn Churchill gave the financial report. This month's bills total \$62,476.11. There is expected income from Transportation Aid of \$28,830.

Motion to approve payment of bills by Matt Holcomb, second by Chris Thibado, motion carried.

Review of LP gas contract, pre-buy

Tim reiterated that negotiation of price is possible; there is a \$.40 savings per gallon of LP due to speaking with the Alcivia representative.

Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan adoption

The plan that Pierce County has is to ensure eligibility for future FEMA funds. If Rock Elm does not adopt it, if there is an emergency in our town we would not be able to get money from the federal government.

Motion to adopt the Pierce County plan by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

CAFO meeting discussion

- The Board stated that they don't want to hurt the smaller family farmers with this ordinance. Could we possibly increase the number of animal units to qualify as a CAFO? Comments also on increasing the fees on the application. Clarified that currently fees are \$3 per animal unit for the first 2000, then \$1 per animal unit after that. The ordinance will be changed to 2500 animal units (increase from 1000) to qualify as a CAFO and the fees will be \$3 per animal unit for the first 2500, then \$5 per animal unit after; this was after lengthy discussion.
- How does the town enforce the ordinance for water and road violations? It is felt that contamination of water is going to eventually happen with the amount of manure spread. There will be a third party involved to investigate complaints and the farm would be the one who pays for this. The third party would determine what complaints to investigate.
- Confirmation that the DNR does *not* regulate air/odor/traffic.

- Stevens Point water lab was contacted and one thing asked was if there are any grants or cost share available for testing; waiting for a call back. Also, it was felt that they are a reputable testing facility and the benefits outweigh the savings of going elsewhere.
- It was discussed that Pierce County should be involved. Tim will attempt to get a meeting with Anne at the county and as many other chairmen as possible. Portage County is looking at a countywide ordinance.
- Ridge Breeze Dairy is not a done deal; court decision on permit will not be until after January, so they can have buildings, but no animals. They could go to 8400 cows as they are allowed to go to 120% of their application.
- Conditions can be added after an application is received based on the information in the application; conditions applied, if any, may not be the same for all.
- An email will be drafted and sent to the Board and then to Nick Vivian with questions; Nick is the attorney who has experience with CAFO language and ordinances.

Review of Operators License received

One application was received from Exile bar.

Motion to approve Operators License by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

Highway Report

Presented by Dave Bechel, Patrolman.

- He has finished mowing ditches
- He has been grading roads
- 570th off CC ditch project is completed; seeded and mulched.
- 570th Ave. off PP road project has been started with culverts and adding fill to ditches.
- On June 25th & 26th, heavy rain and flooding throughout the township, with main damage on 70th Street, Sabelko Hill, with washout and loss of some blacktop. Making a plan to divert water to avoid this problem again. Several culverts were also plugged.
- Dust control will begin Thursday, July 10th.
- The tractor broke down. Oil leak on transmission; driveshaft, same as 1 ½ years ago. They want it delivered to Tractor Central for further investigation.

Matt stated that CC should be open soon, so this will take traffic off side roads.

Public Input

The road past Popular Hill cemetery is “barely passable” and wonders if anything is going to be done, as there is a lot of traffic on that road. The Board is aware.

Comment on ARIP; 79.6% of the taxes for the town come from residential properties. When these are sold and converted to ag, there is a big loss of taxes.

How long do dump logs need to be kept? Three years was the consensus.

Closed session for employee review per State Statute 19.85(1)(c)

Motion to go into closed session by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

Board went into closed session at 9:38 p.m.

Return to open session

Motion to return to open session by Matt Holcomb, second by Chris Thibado, motion carried.

Return to open session at 9:45 p.m.

Wage and benefits were discussed for the Patrolman. Dave chose the Simple IRA option for retirement, wage increase to \$32.30/hour, retroactive to hire date of June 19th. There will be a maximum 3% Town match contribution to the IRA.

Motion to approve Patrolman wage and benefits as stated by Matt Holcomb, second by Chris Thibado, motion carried.

Correspondence

Reviewed

Next meeting

The next board meeting will be August 12th at 8:00 p.m.

Motion to adjourn made by Chris Thibado, second by Matt Holcomb, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dawn Churchill, Clerk

Approved 08/12/25