

NOMINATING CAUCUS

The Town ran the best attended caucus ever on Saturday, January 16, with over a half of a hundred residents in attendance.

The residents selected two candidates for Town Chair and four as Board Supervisors. For Chair: Sherry Seaman and Brian Noe. For Supervisor: Russ Volp, Harve Ross, Steve Disterhaft and Mark Krings. The last in each list is the incumbent. Dave Friess chose not to seek another term. This editor will include a statement of 250 words or less from each of these candidates in either the February or March issues if the candidates choose to submit them through the newsletter address: newsletter@townofomro.us

FEBRUARY 16 SPRING PRIMARY

The caucus replaced the February 16 primary as far as local election is concerned but February 16 will still be needed for other state and/or county runoffs. The election for the Board positions will be at the April 6 general elections.

This editor used the link to voting information from the Town of Omro website to try to determine what will be on that ballot. Ballots will not be available until 21 days before the election. However, the ability to request an absentee ballot is open now. One could also contact the Town Clerk to request an absentee ballot. Early voting in person times have not yet been posted.

JANUARY 18 TOWN BOARD MEETING

During public input, questions were raised about paying bills prior to their receipt, Board intention to purchase property and when the next audit would be conducted and how it would be conducted. A complaint was voiced about a quote of the Town Chair in the Omro Herald concerning a property dispute and the Town's role in it.

A Certified Survey Map (CSM) was considered for a property at 4143 Reighmoor Road. It was recommended for approval by the Plan Commission but Board members asked the owners to consider bringing the lot size up to the required 5 acres rather than set a precedent for sub-standard lots. The owners caucused and came back in agreement to the request. This removed the need to re-zone which was the next item on the agenda.

Another CSM was offered by the owners of Wisconsin Tubing. They were expanding their property to the west. This was approved along with a change in zoning on the new acreage to I-2, Industrial, which was the zoning on the existing Wisconsin Tubing property.

The Board reconsidered assigning Industrial Development Per Capita Funds to the City of Omro and, instead, allocated it to US Internet for the purpose of expanding cable in the area.

Two out-lots in the Barony subdivision were offered to the Town by Winnebago County to cover back taxes. The Board postponed any decision until supervisors could give more thought to the issue.

For a second time the Board considered how to create a better shelter at the dump site. It seems that Ripon High School shop class will provide the labor if the Town provides the materials. Weight limits on Town roads were considered but no decisions made as yet.

Board members and staff will begin putting together a list of improvement items for the town hall with the intent that the Board will organize and prioritize the list later.

During the reports, the Town's Attorney mentioned results from issues that were presented to the Wisconsin Elections Commission regarding the recall election. An article later in this issue deals with that.

This editor wishes to remind readers that this newsletter is not a substitute for the official minutes. Errors and omissions are the editor's and not part of the public record. This editor also wants to remind readers that neither this newsletter nor announcements mailed separately from this address are official postings for the Town. All official posting or notices will be on the Town of Omro website and at the posting board in front of the Town Hall. State Statutes still require some postings or notices to be placed at more sites. There is a board on Wendt Road, the road into the dump site and Schynder/Wendt Park. It is located just west of the cable that is about halfway down the road. Another site is at Liberty School Road and County Highway F near the tower. Notices are also sent to the Omro Herald but they are not required to print them.

CANS FOR PARKS

For many years the Town dump has had a couple of barrels in place to receive aluminum cans to be recycled with the proceeds being put into an account to pay for items for the two Town parks and the recreational area behind the Town Hall. The person who has been doing the work of taking the cans from the dump to be converted into cash has finally reached the point where they are not going to do that anymore. The Town is looking for someone willing to take over this responsibility. Every couple of weeks the cans would have to be taken off site and the cash turned in to the Town Clerk. An interested person could contact this editor and they would be given contact with the original can collector.

RECYCLING

This newsletter has contained an article on recycling before. It seems that there are still issues at the site with garbage being dumped into recycling containers. The two containers to the east of the road at the top of the drive and the big one at the south end as you are about to leave are for garbage. The others are for recycle. The big one on the south has particular uses. When in doubt, ask the manager what goes where. More complete information can be found on the Town of Omro web page: www.townofomro.us



At the Town Board meeting this editor received a QR scan code, pictured at left, that is supposed to lead to a better understanding of the waste management tools. This editor's smart phone took him to tri-county recycling when scanned on-screen in the draft of this article.

Alternatively, WBAY TV did a news article about recycling in the Tri-County Waste Management system, which serves Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties. In that article they mentioned "Waste Wizard" which is an online tool to help decide whether an item is waste or recyclable. This editor had trouble tracking that app using a link in the article on WBAY TV's website.

A better route turned out to be using Winnebago County's website, going to the "Property, Environment, Maps" tab and choosing "Solid Waste".

HISTORY BOOK

The Town of Omro Historical Group started meeting in 2009. In addition to other activities the group produced a history of the Town of Omro called *FROM BACK YONDER TO TODAY FORWARD Town of Omro History 1848-2017*. It has 314 pages of varied information. It is available through the Town Clerk for \$25. More purchasing information can be found on the

Town of Omro website home page. Margaret Krause should take credit for being the motivating force in bringing this book to print.

WISCONSIN ELECTION COMMISSION FINDINGS

Several complaints were lodged with the Wisconsin Elections Commission concerning activities before and during the recall election. On January 5, 2021, the WEC posted their findings:

Commission Decision

Based upon the above review and analysis, the Commission finds that the Town of Omro did not substantively violate elections laws. All claims are hereby dismissed, with the exception of a violation of election notice requirements. That violation is mitigated by considerations of impossibility and/or statutory conflict/ambiguity).

In fairness, the report covered 8 pages with discussion of the allegations, the process of discovery and then the findings. Reading the entire report makes the findings more meaningful. One can find these on-line by going to <https://elections.wi.gov> or by Googling the WEC. On the home page, select “About Us”, then “Commission Actions”, then “Complaints and Decisions”. On that page select El 20-21 Seaman et al v Noe et al-Town of Omro and after that pick “Decision Letter”.

A PERSONAL NOTE

The residents of Omro deserve applause and kudos for their participation in election activities over the last year. This was evidenced by the record turnout for the nominating caucus and the full participation within that caucus. There were also large numbers of voters participating in the other elections in the face of the threat of contracting Covid 19.

I am still saddened by the thought that the virus was able to suppress the vote at the caucus. This editor knows of people who did not come, as badly as they wanted to, because they believed a large crowd in such a small room was a danger to their health. The prospect of attendees not wearing masks or wearing them poorly further exacerbated their fears. The caucus might have been difficult to conduct over zoom and this editor feels embarrassed that he has not come up with some other creative solution. Perhaps this is the last time it will be an issue or perhaps others in the town need to come up with ways to fix the problem.

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

This is issue 1 of volume 2 of the on-line newsletter devoted to things in the Town of Omro. Reader contributions (not money) will be appreciated. Questions or thoughts for additional articles are welcome.

Submissions can be sent to newsletter@townofomro.us as can requests to be included in the mailing list.

In the Town of Omro Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan a data table forecast 911 households in the Town by the year 2020. Currently there are 142 email addresses in the newsletter distribution list. Over a half dozen of those are non-residents. This means that less than 15% of the households are being reached by direct distribution. That might not be important for the newsletter itself, but there was hope that this list could be used for important short-term notices (not official postings).

Please share this with friends and encourage them to add their e-mail address to the distribution list.

The editor is Tom Tuschl.