

Transparency on the Town Board

TOWN OF SYLVESTER

NEWSLETTER

April 2023 Edition

What is transparency?

Transparency is a word that has been thrown around for several decades, typically in political and government circles. When town boards are transparent, they act openly with town residents having knowledge of the decisions they are making. Transparency promotes accountability and communication. The current town board members want transparency in their governance. To that end, they offer the following:

- Meeting agendas will once again be posted at Moe’s Barbershop, Rufer & Son Excavating, the town hall, the township website (<https://townofsylvesterwi.com/>) and Facebook (coming soon).
- We encourage you to attend monthly board meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the town hall. Special meetings and changed dates will be posted on our website, Facebook, and the designated posting locations.
- To have notices of monthly agendas and/or minutes sent to your email address, you can go to “Subscribe Now for Updates” on our website (<https://townofsylvesterwi.com/subscribe-to-updates/>) or email our clerk/treasurer at sylvestertownship@gmail.com to request them.
- A quarterly newsletter will be mailed to every property owner in Sylvester Township. The newsletters will also be available at <https://townofsylvesterwi.com/newsletter/>. If you do not want the newsletters mailed to you, please email or call our clerk/treasurer at sylvestertownship@gmail.com or 608-329-3662.
- While two or more board members cannot meet or speak with you, at the same time, outside of legally posted meetings because that constitutes a walking quorum, you may approach us 1:1. We also welcome your emails and phone calls.

Town of Sylvester
PO Box 763
Monroe, WI 53566

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April 4, 2023 Election Results

Chairperson: Anna Anderson (unopposed) 341 votes

1st Supervisor:

Mike Witt (incumbent)	161 votes
Terry Reed (challenger)	269 votes

2nd Supervisor:

Dave Schenk (incumbent)	133 votes
Dale Howarth (challenger)	303 votes

Board Meeting Protocol

Many town residents have expressed to board members their desire for town board meetings to be civil, respectful, and professional. A public meeting is not a meeting of the public but rather a meeting **for** the public. The elected officials openly meet, enabling the public to hear the board’s discussion and observe the outcome of their votes. While the town board does allow time for public comment at the beginning of their meetings, in keeping with the protocol of many government entities, this should not provide opportunity for unfettered questions or comments throughout the meeting. From time to time, the board will call on specific individuals for their input on the topic at hand.

Should you wish to comment during the public comment period, raise your hand to be recognized when Chair Anderson calls for public comment. Once recognized, please state your name and then make your comment. Comments can be up to three minutes. If you want to make an additional comment during this time, you will be recognized after everyone else has had a chance to speak. As this is a time for public comment only, the board members will not be answering any questions or engaging in discussion or debate.

If there is a specific topic you would like addressed by the Board, reach out to Chair Anderson to request that this be added to the agenda for the upcoming meeting. If considered an appropriate agenda item, it will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Anything that requires a board vote, must be listed on a legally posted agenda.

On the Legal Side

Just like entering into a contract, the Board must vote at an **open** meeting to discontinue a contract, including an employment contract. For example, at the April 18th meeting, the Board voted 3 to 0 to both discontinue the contract of the clerk/treasurer and enter into a new contract with another individual for the appointed clerk/treasurer position.

There were questions at the April meeting as to how the new board could make these decisions without having discussed them prior to that meeting, putting into question adherence to the Open Meetings Law. Newly elected board members are not officially active until 12:01am on the third Tuesday in April. Therefore, the newly elected town board members could legally meet prior to the election, as well as, after the election up until 12:01am on 04/18/23 to discuss any topic without notice to the public.

Roadside Brush & Ditch Clean-up Day

You’re invited to participate in a township community activity. The Sylvester Town Board has scheduled a Roadside Brush & Ditch Clean-up Day for Saturday – May 6, 2023 beginning at 9:00am at the town hall parking lot. Many town residents had negative experiences during the “tree trimming” and brush cutting in the summer of 2021. Some were able to clean up the debris that was left behind but for others, that was not possible. As a result, we are recruiting volunteers to come together and unite to improve the look of our township. We anticipate this to be an enjoyable event and an opportunity to meet your township neighbors. This has the potential of becoming an annual event.

Our insurance carrier has advised that no volunteers should be using township equipment. If possible, please bring your chainsaw and other tools for working up wood. There will be three teams of volunteers, each led by a town board member. Each team will be assigned specific roads for clean-up. We will need trucks and trailers or wagons to haul the debris and wood to the County Highway Shop’s dump site on County N. Anyone who would like some of the chunked out wood for their own use, is welcome to take it. Contact a town board member or our clerk/treasurer to volunteer. Town residents also have the option of putting the debris/brush along the roadside near the ditches for the volunteer crews to pick up on May 6th.

Anna Anderson 608-325-7682

Terry Reed 608-934-5646

Dale Howarth 608-325-8103

Catrina Bennett 608-329-3662

Road Repair, Maintenance, and Replacement

While campaigning, it was apparent that town roads are of greatest concern. They are also the largest budget item. It is our intention to create a long-range plan for tending to all town roads based on need while understanding the best laid plans for Wisconsin roads can change with weather and disasters. Prior to taking office on April 18th, the current board members each drove the town roads to determine needs. They worked in coordination with the Green County Highway Department to ascertain the best means of addressing road concerns from the standpoints of longevity and fiscal responsibility. The following road improvements and expenditures will be happening in 2023:

Road	What to be done	Bid Amount
Autumn Ridge/Forest Ridge	Seal Coat	\$12,479
Balls Mill south of 11/81	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$11,660
Forest Prairie Park Road	Seal Coat	\$4,993
Jamerry/Pembridge Trail	Seal Coat	\$12,407
Juniper/Deerfield	Seal Coat	\$13,502
Mohns	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$32,700
Richland	Seal Coat	\$13,290
Statz	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$10,850
Wood Ridge	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$23,320
Greenbush from S to east end	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$21,160
Hiltbrand Lane	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$8,360
Spoerry	Paver patch and durapatch weak areas	\$3,470
Dutch Hollow South	Grind, shape, pave	\$66,505
Schrade	Grind, shape, pave	\$54,296
Ringhand	Seal Coat	\$9,837
	Total	\$298,829

By revising the road plan from the vote taken by the previous board in March, the town board will be able to upgrade 18 roads instead of just six. Also, as a result of this revision, the town board has \$29,100 remaining for shouldering, patching, and emergencies. In addition to the road projects listed here, the town board is looking into grants for some of the larger scale road projects.

Did you know...

There are 17 town roads that are only partially owned by Sylvester Township? That’s right, Witt, Ringhand, Spoerry, Rechsteiner , Decatur/Sylvester, Mohns, Bagley, Monroe/Sylvester, Goepfert, Gutzmer, Greenbush (with two other townships), Stauffacher, Richland, Hildebrandt, Balls Mill, Radio Lane, and High School roads are “shared” with other townships because they are partially in Sylvester township but also partially in other townships. We share roads with Mt. Pleasant, Decatur, Monroe, and Jefferson townships. As a result, each township is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair, and replacement of their section of these roads.

Depending upon how the roads are split, in order for upgrades to be made to certain shared roads, both townships that own a section of them, must be in agreement with what is to be done and when it is to be done. If Sylvester Township wants to improve a shared road but the other township’s budget won’t allow for it and consequently, they decide against it, Sylvester Township has two choices; pay to repair both sections of the road or wait until the conjoining township is in agreement with doing the upgrade. Sometimes the reason for both townships not agreeing on when to do the road improvements is because of budgetary constraints. Other times there are contingencies that must be met first. These contingencies sometimes involve property owners along these roads, which require additional coordination efforts between not only the townships but the property owners.