

TOWN OF ST. GERMAIN

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
P.O. BOX 7

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www.townofstgermain.org

MINUTES SPECIAL JOINT TOWN BOARD MEETING WITH THE TOWN OF PLUM LAKE: JANUARY 24, 2017

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Tom Christensen called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Town of Plum Lake Town Chairman, Will Maines, called the Town of Plum Lake Special Town Board meeting to order.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call, Establish a Quorum:** Tom Christensen, John Vojta, Ted Ritter, Jim Swenson, Doug Olson, Marion Janssen, Town Treasurer, Tom Martens, town Clerk. Also in attendance, Plum Lake Chairman Will Maines, Supervisor Gary Schmidt, Supervisor Vern Wiggenhauser, Sharon Brooker clerk/treasurer, St. Germain Fire Chief Tim Gebhardt, Plum Lake Fire Chief Kevin Rasmussen, and 10 other people.
4. **Open Meeting Verification:** Mr. Christensen noted that he had posted the meeting agenda at three locations in town on January 23, 2017 prior to 6:15 P.M. Will Maines noted that he had posted his meeting agenda at three public places as well as having it announced on the radio.
5. **Approval of the Agenda:** Motion Olson seconded Vojta that the agenda be approved in any order at the discretion of the chairman. By a voice vote Yes – 5, No – 0. Motion carried. Motion Wiggenhauser seconded Schmidt that the Town of Plum Lake agenda be approved. Motion carried.
6. **Discussion Action Items:**
 - a. **Ambulance service for the Town of St. Germain as provided by the Town of Plum Lake; items to be included in this discussion/action item but not limited to them are:**
 1. **Cost and profitability of the present service as provided:** Mr. Christensen noted that the reason this meeting had been called is that the Town of Plum Lake had requested that the Town of St. Germain pay an amount of \$20,000 per year for five years towards the purchase of a new ambulance. Mr. Maines stated that the new ambulance would cost over \$200,000. Mr. Schmidt said that up until about four years ago, the Plum Lake EMS finances were separate from the Town of Plum Lake finances. Ms. Brooker handed out a profit and loss statement for 2014-2016. Mr. Rasmussen added that the billing for ambulance services is done through Life Quest. If 124 calls are billed, payment for only 97 might be received. The annual budget is around \$70,000. The ambulance staff receives \$50 per call. The drivers receive \$20 per call. The Town of Plum also pays a crew \$1.50 per hour 24/7 for 365 days per year to be on call. Mr. Rasmussen estimated that 75% to 80% of the ambulance calls are to St. Germain. Ms. Janssen asked if the Town of Plum Lake levies for the ambulance and fire department. Mr. Vojta asked why the town would want to purchase such an expensive ambulance when the town is only showing a profit of about \$2,300 per year. The current charge per call might be \$700. If there was a trained ALS person, the cost could go to \$1,500 or \$2,000 per call. The intercept fee for meeting the ambulance from Minocqua is \$150 which is added onto the bill to the patient.
 2. **Schedule of service including yearly downtimes for vacations:** Mr. Rasmussen reported that there are now 2 EMR's, 2 EMT's, 2 AEMT's and one Paramedic. Last year when Mr. Rasmussen went on vacation, he had notified the dispatcher that calls should be forwarded to Medic5, but somehow the signals had gotten crossed and the calls were sent to Plum Lake. At that time, Plum Lake could not put a crew together. Mr. Rasmussen was quite confident that would not happen again. Mr. Schmidt added that St. Germain has 365-day service now. If Plum Lake can't respond to a call, the call is forwarded to someone who can.
 3. **Staffing of the ambulance:** Included in item #2.
 4. **Present statue of the ambulance:** Mr. Maines explained that the present ambulance is operable, but that wiring is becoming a problem. The chassis is also in bad shape. Mr. Schmidt said that they did consider a cheaper ambulance, but decided that it would be a good idea to have a four wheel drive ambulance and also to purchase one where the ambulance box can be swapped out. The next time the chassis starts to fail, it will hopefully be cheaper to remove the box and just replace the chassis.
 5. **Equipment needs and how will they be funded in the future:** Mr. Maines said that from the beginning back in the 1960's or 1970's, there has never been a charge to the Town of St.

Germain other than to the patients. Mr. Vojta added that the St. Germain Rescue Squad answers calls in Plum Lake at no charge. Mr. Schmidt said that there are many more ambulance calls than there are rescue calls. Mr. Vojta suggested that possibly the total cost of ambulance service should be put on the tax rolls for both St. Germain and Plum Lake. That way, there would not be any more unpaid bills or a need for any fund raisers. It was the consensus of both boards that might lead to a misuse of the service. Mr. Ritter asked if the purchase of the ambulance would pretty much be a 50-50 split between the two towns. Both towns would benefit and there are no other plans for new equipment.

6. **If seventy percent of the runs are in St. Germain, is the ambulance locate in the correct location of should it be moved to the south:** Mr. Wiggenhauser asked the area of the Town of St. Germain. Mr. Martens stated that it was 43 square miles. Mr. Wiggenhauser stated that the Town of Plum Lake was 99 square miles. And, the ambulance barn is on the southern border of Plum Lake with the northern border of St. Germain. If the ambulance was housed in St. Germain, there would be a much longer response time for the residents on the northern end of Plum Lake. Moving the ambulance would be a detriment to the Town of Plum Lake. Mr. Ritter asked if St. Germain should have its own ambulance. Mr. Maines said that in his opinion, St. Germain had three choices. (1) Remain with Plum Lake. (2) Contract with another service for around \$100,000 per year. (3) Or, purchase its own ambulance, build its own facilities, train its own staff, with probably an initial cost of \$300,000 to \$400,000.

7. **What are the plans going forward for improved services?** Mr. Rasmussen stated that the next level would be to have people trained as IVTECH's. Staff from St. Germain can go on ambulance calls as long as they are "cross credentialed" with the Town of Plum Lake. Mr., Gebhardt stated that members of the St. Germain department are receiving training and are becoming "cross credentialed" with Plum Lake. Mr. Rasmussen added that one person can man the ambulance to the patient's residence. However, in order to transport the patient, there must be a second person. That second person can meet the ambulance at the site.

8. **What will be the role of the Town of St. Germain in the management of the ambulance and the management of the services provided:** The two boards agreed that details will have to be worked out.

9. **What will be the financial agreement between our town towns going forward if the Town of Plum Lake is looking for funding from the Town of St. Germain:** Mr. Maines noted that all that the Town of Plum Lake is asking is for help with purchasing the ambulance. The proposal is for St. Germain to contribute \$20,000 per year for five years. The life of the ambulance chassis should be around 10 years. At this time, there would be no other charges to the Town of St. Germain. After the ten-year period, hopefully, the cost will be much less since the ambulance box can be put on a new chassis. Mr. Gebhardt suggested that the two chiefs and one board member from each town meet to work out an agreement. Marv Anderson thought that there should be a written agreement. Mr. Gebhardt thought that a written agreement would benefit both towns. Mr. Vojta asked how the board members should sell the idea to the public. Mr. Martens thought that by telling the people that without Plum Lake, the cost would be about \$100,000 per year forever, the \$20,000 for five years might not sound so bad. Ms. Janssen said that the Awassa Land Purchase only increased the tax bills by about \$8 per year. This increase would be less than half of that.

7. **Adjournment:** Motion Vojta seconded Swenson that the meeting be adjourned. By a voice vote Yes – 5, No – 0. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 7:52 P.M. Motion Schmidt seconded Wiggenhauser that the Town of Plum Lake special town board meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Town Clerk

Chairman

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor