

Balsam Lake village "in good shape," auditor says

Discussion held on possible 3-percent water-rate increase

by Marty Seeger

Leader staff writer

BALSAM LAKE – The Balsam Lake Village Board held its monthly meeting on Monday, April 4, with much of the discussion focused on the auditor year-end report given by Steve Scheidler.

"You're in good shape on the general funds. The special revenue funds ... no problem there. The TIFF Districts, we've got a few issues, but you'll cover them with the general funds and hopefully there's some growth," Scheidler said.

Scheidler was then questioned by board member Mike Voltz on how the Balsam Lake Village compared to other municipalities. Voltz pointed out that the general obligation debt was at \$2.5 million, which is 39 percent of the \$6.4 million. Scheidler said some municipalities are at close to 90 percent, but it all depends on what the village needs to do.

Speaking on the Balsam Lake Village, Scheidler said, "Most expenditures I see aren't something we like to do, but something we have to do," later adding, "you're not in bad shape, in comparison to other municipalities."

As a result of some of the issues facing the village budget, there was discussion of a possible 3-percent increase in the village water rate. One resident spoke out against a water-rate increase, but Scheidler said it was something the village may need to do.

Habitat for Humanity

Eric Kube, executive director for the Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity was at the board meeting to promote what they would like to do in the Balsam Lake area.

"We haven't done anything here but we're hoping to," Kube said.

Habitat recently finished their 20th home between Burnett and Polk counties. Habitat began in Burnett County in 1997, but the counties merged together as one in 2009. Kube talked about their new home-repair program titled Brush with Kindness, which is a home-repair program as opposed to building new homes like they've done in the past. Kube asked the board if they had any properties where this project might help. He encour-



The Balsam Lake Village Board listened to a presentation by Eric Kube, executive director for the Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity, on Monday, April 4, during their monthly meeting. – Photo by Marty Seeger

aged anyone to contact him and then fill out an application. Kube said that Habitat plans to do four to eight of these projects this year. He also reiterated that Habitat does not just give homes away.

"We don't give away homes. That's a big misconception of Habitat. They have to pay for these," Kube said, adding, "We work with families that can't afford to buy a new house. They typically build houses and then sell to families interest free. They pay 100 percent of principal."

Kube also promoted Habitat's new Restore building, which had its grand opening on March 26. He said 700 people attended, and they're always looking for donations.

"If it's something that's got life in it, we want it," Kube said.

Some of those tax-deductible items that they are looking for include appliances, building materials, cabinets, furniture and other household items. Contact Kube at 715-483-2700 for more information.

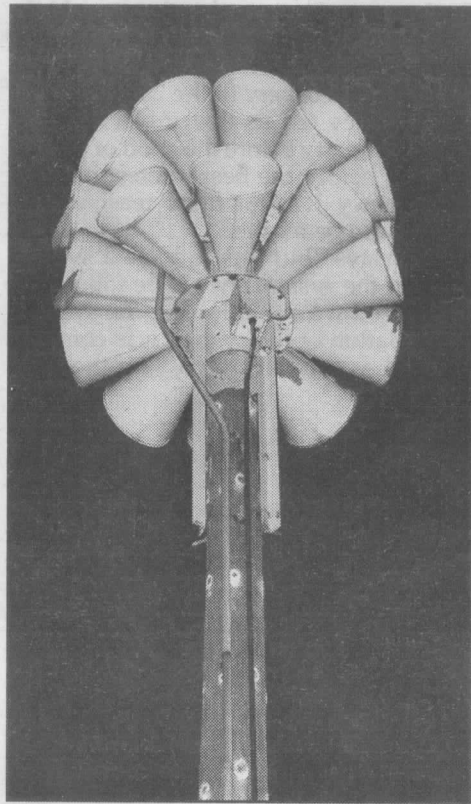
Storm siren wiring costs

The board made a motion to approve a bid from Dalles Electricians Inc. to do complete electrical wiring on the existing storm siren and the new 2011 storm siren. The cost for Dalles to install new wiring and new pipe on existing storm siren will cost \$575. The cost to install a 6-hp AC-DC siren and install other items on the new siren will cost \$2,995. The village is saving \$210 by going with the bid submitted by Dalles Electricians Inc.

Other business

- A request to reduce the speed limit on Hwy. 46 N. was discussed. The area in question is the hill near the 46 Store, but a request to reduce the speed is not under the board's control, but in the state. The board is looking into a possibility of using radar speed boards for that location and areas on CTH I. Also discussed was the need to purchase six new pagers for the fire department if the budget allows. Pagers will cost \$415 apiece.

- Discussion was held on the Endeavors Adult Development Center request to provide janitorial services to the village of Balsam Lake. Endeavors hopes to "provide meaningful employment for the adults" and "to ensure rest rooms are maintained to the standards of quality required by board members of the village of Balsam Lake." The total contract amount is \$1,500. The board seemed in favor of the proposal and it could be a cost-saving move for the village.



The Balsam Lake Village Board accepted a bid to fix wiring on the existing storm siren, as well as install new components of the new storm siren, shown above. – File photo by Greg Marsten

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