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Oneida County board: Limit wolf population to no more than 350

Winkler move to eliminate exact population standard gets shot down

By Richard Moore
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

By a 19-2 vote, the Oneida County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution last week calling for a state wolf popula-

tion goal of 350 or fewer animals, as the state Department of Natural Resources continues to revise its wolf management plan.

The two supervisors

voting no were Jim Winkler and Steven Schreier. The county joins 36 other county boards that have passed similar resolutions.

The DNR is expected to have a new plan ready by the end of June.

At the county board meeting, Oneida County forestry director Paul Fiene told supervisors

that Oneida County passed a similar resolution in 2010, and this was essentially a technical update, as the older resolution bore the names of various public officials who no longer serve.

"So this is somewhat of an update to the 2010 resolution whereas if this

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPHS

Mary Reuland of Arbor Vitae will retire April 8 after serving 25 years as the town's clerk.

Arbor Vitae Town Clerk steps away after 25 years

Reuland looks to make the rest of her life the best of her life

By Julie Huotari

SPECIAL TO THE LAKELAND TIMES

Mary Reuland read an advertisement for the Town of Arbor Vitae deputy clerk position at 2 p.m. one summer day in 1997. The deadline to apply was 3 p.m.

Hastily, she threw her resume together and made her way to the town hall where she was introduced to then-clerk Jean Long. "And the rest is history," Reuland said. "I've been here ever since."

Her quarter-century term is drawing nigh. After two years as deputy clerk followed by 23 remarkable years as town clerk, Reuland will step down April 8 into retirement.

"Mary has been very dependable and has gone above and beyond the duties of town clerk," Town Chairman Frank Bauers said. "I value her opinion on a lot of different things and she is very knowledgeable, to say the least. The clerk is so much more than someone who takes the minutes and she's done a good job for this town."

It won't be the sort of retirement spent sedentary — Reuland has a bucket list.

"You know, I'd like to learn how to quilt and basketweave, it's true, but really, I want to spend more time with my family and I want travel. I want to visit the Smokey Mountains. I want to eat lobster in Maine. I want to take at least two trips a year to see U.S. National Parks," Reuland said.

That retirement strategy should not be underestimated if it reflects her lifelong work ethic. A certified tax preparer since 1983, Reuland at times did income tax returns for up to 250

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DEAN HALL/LAKELAND TIMES

BEAT THE BUNNIES

A trio of bunnies pursue kids dressed in fun costumes during the annual Beat the Bunny cross country ski race on Sunday, March 13, at the Minocqua Winter Park. See page 19 for more photographs.

Area towns, Vilas County highway committee deny crane request

Foley's Tree Service has a crane weighing more than 65 tons it plans to put into service in May

By Brian Jopek
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

The Arbor Vitae town board last week was among the latest local governing bodies presented with an over-size/over weight (OSOW) permit request from Tomahawk-based Foley's Tree Service.

The day before, the Vilas County highway committee voted unanimously to deny the request, which is something other towns, such as Minocqua, Woodruff and Plum Lake, have done in recent weeks.

In a letter dated February 18, 2022, that was sent to nearly every town in the Lakeland area, company owner Ted Foley wrote the company "has purchased a four axle all-terrain wheeled crane for tree and crane rental operations."

"We anticipate using this wheeled crane starting in May, 2022," he said in the letter. "The maximum weight for this crane is 137,600 pounds; however, we anticipate operating it

at approximately 120,000 pounds."

Foley said the company would obtain the required OSOW permit from the state of Wisconsin that would allow for operation of the crane on "Class A highways during those times outside of spring breakup/temporary road limit restrictions."

He emphasized the crane would not be operated during temporary road limit restrictions unless an emergency situation

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Reuland

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clients (while clerking) and it was only in recent years that she shaved her existing tax clientele to a mere 50.

"I'm trying to retire from that, as well," Reuland said.

Not to be forgotten is the book-keeping and weekend work she has always done for the family business, Reuland's Catering, headed by husband, Dan Reuland.

The big move

Mary and Dan Reuland had four kids in five years, beginning in 1979. "It's amazing I'm not nuttier than I am," Reuland joked.

When they moved to Arbor Vitae from Aurora, Ill., in July 1996, Andrea was a senior, Jenny was a freshman, Kurt was in eighth grade and Sara was in seventh. Mary made sure they remained her focus, despite everything else.

"She made dinner for us every night and she was always there," Andrea Reuland said. "She still is, and she's wonderful."

This, from the eldest child who, according to Mary, regretted the move north the most.

"Andrea played volleyball then graduated early from Lakeland Union High School after the first semester in 1996. She didn't have to move because we gave her the option to stay with my parents in Illinois to finish up school, but she wanted to stay together as a family," Reuland said.

"She made dinner for us every night and she was always there. She still is, and she's wonderful."

Andrea Reuland

"We did bring her back to Aurora so she could celebrate commencement with her former classmates."

That was a long time ago. Today, Andrea works side by side with her father running Reuland's Catering. Local government in her blood, she is an outgoing Woodruff town board su-

"That's when I decided to retire. I knew I needed to take all the time I could to be with the people I love. I didn't want to miss one more minute of their lives."

Mary Reuland

pervisor and member of the Brandy Park Commission. Andrea is the mother of Owen Long, the eldest of Mary's eight grandchildren.

Dan broke away from the family business, Reuland's Food Service, in Illinois, and Mary said it made sense to move north where they had always vacationed.

"My extended family has always vacationed here so when we moved, we still got to see them quite a bit," she said. "And the catering business gave Dan much more freedom in his schedule.

"In Aurora with his family's business, they always sold Thanksgiving dinners and they cooked something like 250 turkeys every year. We never saw Dan on Thanksgiving. Our first Thanksgiving here, I remember we went cross country skiing as a family and we laughed the whole time. We felt free," Reuland said.

Decision 2020

The town clerk's job description would be a mile long if one typed it all out. Elections, town budgets, accounts payable, payroll, liquor licensing and endless state reports, to name only several. In Wisconsin, there is an annual municipal clerk turnover rate of 25-30 percent, which makes Reuland's 25 years in office notable.

"I liked that the job was never so repetitious that you'd get bored with it," Reuland said, "Elections were huge, but budget time was my favorite part."

Over the years, she said, the way elections are administered has changed dramatically. "For a whole lot of years, elections never changed and there was no need for a lot of training. I educated myself. Then around 2009 things really started to change," she said. "Today, everybody questions everything. It's a ton of responsibility. You have to educate others, and you have to represent the town."

The year 2020 was particularly difficult. Administering five elec-

tions in one year is demanding; throw a pandemic into the mix and clerks across the state were dropping like flies. According to a June 13, 2021 AP report, more than two dozen retired since the November 2020 election, another 30 clerks or deputies quit by the end of 2020 and 13 left between January and June 2021.

"It was a struggle, but I had help. Our treasurer, Melody [Gillespie] assisted with absentee ballots. Oh my gosh, did she ever," Reuland said. "For the presidential election, we had about 2,500 registered voters and 1,900 of them had absentee ballot requests."

There was a lot of stress building up. She said some people were offended by the absentee ballot process and some were mad that people were voting in person. She was short on poll workers and it was one election after another all year. The catering business was doing everything to stay afloat in an industry that depends on large gatherings to flourish.

"That was a difficult year," she said.

Although that was not why Reuland retired — it would take something far worse than a tough election year for a seasoned vet like her to leave. Just before the November 2020 election, Reuland got the devastating news that Andrea was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer.

"It was so hard," Reuland said. "Then, her first chemo was scheduled for right after the election and I ended up getting Covid on Election Day. I couldn't even be there for her. Sara drove from Waterloo to bring her.

"That's when I decided to retire," she said. "I knew I needed to take all the time I could to be with the people I love. I didn't want to miss one more minute of their lives."

Andrea fought the cancer with the most aggressive treatments and surgeries, and she was declared cancer-free in July 2021. Mary's prayers were answered.

Hard goodbyes

Reuland has many fond memories of the people she worked with over the years. "My town board has always been good to me. I've had a lot of really good deputy clerks, and I've been honored to work with all of them," she said. "I've made a lot of nice friends in the community through my job. The job was challenging, but you know, I wouldn't have changed a thing."

For all but two of Reuland's years, Frank Bauers was the town chairman and she had nothing but praise for him.

"Frank is a super leader. I don't know what I would've done without him. I just can't really say enough about his leadership and I was blessed to have had him," she said. "He always made me feel like a very important part of the town."

As hard as the goodbyes may be, Reuland feels a tremendous sense of relief. Family is everything to her. She travels a lot to see her children and grandchildren out of town.

"My car puts on a lot of miles, but I don't want to miss another soccer game, basketball game, Christmas concert — nothing," Reuland said.

Her last day is April 8. Incoming clerk Emily Biertzer will be sworn in on April 6.

"Mary has been a very good clerk. She is greatly concerned with the town and she's done an excellent job training the new clerk to ensure a smooth transition," Bauers said.

She's off to make the rest of her life the best of her life.

"Mary has been very dependable and has gone above and beyond the duties of town clerk. The clerk is so much more than someone who takes the minutes and she's done a good job for this town."

Arbor Vitae Town Chairman Frank Bauers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPHS

Mary Reuland cherishes this photo of the whole family together on Thanksgiving Day 2021. Pictured are, top row from the left; son-in-law Alex Cummings, daughter Andrea Reuland and her boyfriend David Lorenz (behind her), son, Kurt Reuland, grandson Owen Long, son-in-law Jason Braun, daughter Jenny Braun; middle row: daughter Sara Cummings, daughter-in-law Christina Reuland, Mary Reuland with granddaughter Harper Cummings on her lap, husband Dan Reuland and grandson Jack Braun; bottom row: grandsons Kurt Reuland, and Rigliee Reuland, and granddaughters Bella Reuland-Cummings, Molly Braun and Olivia Braun.