Name: Michael Didier
Age: 36
Address: 4627 Hwy. KW.
Family: Married, two children.
Education: Graduated from Port Washington High School in 1992. Earned a diploma in automotive technology at Universal Technical Institute in 1995. Earned Wisconsin real estate license in 2005.
Occupation: Realtor with Re/Max United, Port Washington.
Elected offices: None.
Organizations: City of Port Washington firefighter from 1993 to present; member of the board of directors of Ozaukee Realtors Association; chairman and director of Ozaukee County Realtor Political Action Committee; member Wisconsin Realtors Association, National Association of Realtors, Port Washington Historical Society and St. Peter of Alcantara Catholic Church, Port Washington.

Name: Scott Heatwole (Inc.)
Age: 61
Address: 3346 Terry La.
Family: Married, two children.
Education: Graduated Port Washington High School in 1968. Earned bachelor of science degree from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.
Occupation: Self-employed.
Elected offices: Appointed to the Town of Port Washington board in 2006, elected in 2007 and 2009.
Organizations: None.

Name: James M. Rychtik
Age: 40
Address: 4855 Hwy. B.
Family: Married, two children.
Education: Graduated Port Washington High School in 1989.
Occupation: Owner, Rychtik Construction.
Elected offices: None.
Organizations: Member First Congregational Church, Port Washington, National Federation of Independent Business, National Rifle Association.

ncumbent Heatwole vies for supervisor seat along with challengers Didier, Rychtik

Town of Port Washington residents will bring some new blood to the Town Board in the April 5 election when two supervisors are elected.

Incumbent Scott Heatwole and newcomers Michael Didier and James Rychtik Jr. are vying for two seats on the board.

“I’m quite delighted there is interest in the seat,” Heatwole said. “The more interest the better. I would love to see more people at meetings, too.”

Jim Melichar, who served as a supervisor for the past decade, is not seeking re-election but instead challenging Town Chairman Lee Schlenvogt for his seat. A story about that race ran in last week’s Ozaukee Press.

All three men seeking the supervisor’s seat on the board said they want to give back to the

community in which they have lived for much of their lives.

One of the major challenges facing government today is dealing with ever-tightening budgets.

The town is expected to lose 37.4% of its state shared revenue and 3% of its transportation aid under Gov. Scott Walker's budget bill. While the total amount is relatively small — $11,841 — it's a significant loss in a community with an annual budget of $547,000 and a tax levy of $450,000.

"The Town of Port doesn't have many services," Didier noted. "You can raise fees, but that's the same as raising taxes to me, and that's not something I'd look to do."

A significant amount of the town's budget is devoted to road work, and Didier said the town should look at privatizing this service instead of automatically hiring the Ozaukee County Highway Department.

"You have to open it up for bids," he said. "I think privatizing that might be something in the town's future. I don't see how the county can compete with private companies."

The Highway Department charges the town for its actual cost to maintain roads, including snowplowing.

At a recent meeting, Didier said, he was surprised when Highway Supt. Bob Dreblow explained that plow operators earn time-and-a-half for snow removal operations that occur outside the standard 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. hours Mondays through Fridays. The county should adjust the workweek so these employees get time off during the day if they're plowing early in the morning or late at night so they don't get paid overtime, he said.

That would reduce the town's cost significantly, he said.

Rychtik, whose sister is Town Clerk Jennifer Schlenvogt, agreed that the town should privatize road services, including snowplowing, ditch cutting and fixing culverts and downed signs.

Too often, he said, town residents are inconvenienced when roads aren't plowed immediately and they need to get to work. With a private service, the residents may be able to get a quicker response.

"If you could do it for even a small savings, it would be worth it because residents would be happier," Rychtik said.

Heatwole said that the township should look at all its options to contain costs, including privatizing roads.

"We've talked to the county and talked to them about their bills," he said. "I think we'll probably look at all our options, but right now we don't have any data."

The town is in good shape to weather the cuts in state aid, Heatwole said.

“We’ve been very responsible for a lot of years,” he said. “Our roads are in good shape.”

Because of that, the town can postpone roadwork for a few years to help conserve funds, he said.

“You wouldn’t want to do it for 10 years, but you can do it for a year or two or three,” Heatwole said.

Rychtik said the town should also explore sharing services, such as the planner and engineer with neighboring communities such as the Village of Saukville.

The town should also examine whether it truly needs the town planner to attend as many meetings as he does, Rychtik said.

“It seems like we can’t do anything in the town without the planner at the meeting,” he said.

Didier concurred, saying the town should look into having the planner attend via teleconferencing or scale back his meeting attendance, perhaps having him attend half the sessions instead of all of them.

Didier and Rychtik also said they want to see the town streamline its review and approval processes.

“They seem to over-analyze things a bit,” Didier said. “They come to the right conclusions, but it takes a long time.”

He believes strongly in property rights, Didier said, and would look at things with that perspective.

“I think we should look for reasons to say yes, not to say no,” he said.

The town should have a letter to present to people seeking approval that outlines the costs and time frame they are looking at, Rychtik said.

Although the proposed state budget would remove the recycling mandate, all three candidates said the town should continue its recycling center.

“If at any point we can recycle things, we should,” Heatwole said. “People are trained to do it, and they should.”

The town should poll its residents to make sure it’s something they value, Rychtik added.

Didier said he has attended a number of town meetings and doesn’t anticipate any major changes if he is elected.

“When all is said and done, they’re going in the right direction,” he said. “The land-use plan and zoning code seem to make sense to me.”

Rychtik said the town needs to remain business-friendly, adding that officials should visit each company in the township at least annually to touch base and see if anything can be done to help them so they remain in the community.

“I think we just need to continue to do good planning,” Heatwole said. “Give the town the best economic planning we can and make it a business-friendly place for people. We’re trying to do that and still maintain the rural character of the town.”