

Town Hall to be made more accessible

Written by MARK JAEGER

Wednesday, 28 September 2011 17:56

Board agrees issues raised by state should be addressed in 2012 budget

Money is certain to be tight in the Town of Saukville's 2012 budget, but officials have already committed to making Town Hall more accessible to residents with disabilities.

Town Board members made the pledge last week in response to a notice from the State of Wisconsin Government Accountability Board.

The notice cited four areas of deficiency in meeting state and federal election laws regarding voters with disabilities.

The problems were noted during an onsite visit to Town Hall during the May 3 election.

The most significant problem, according to the notice, is the town's failure to provide a wide enough entrance to the hall for residents with disabilities.

Similarly, state authorities said, the town needs to designate a van-accessible parking space with proper signage.

The town was also told it needs to provide a table or booth that provides privacy to voters who are wheelchair bound.

The final notice mentioned the removal of corridor obstacles that could get in the way of voters with handicaps.

"They weren't picking on us, but during their onsite inspection they found these four violations of handicap-access rules," Town Clerk Chris Lear said.

Changes to the east-side door are certain to be the most costly improvement, Lear said.

"Our door does not meet the federal standards, not even close," he said.

Town Chairman Barb Jobs said the access measures are something the town has been planning for some time, especially upgrading the doorway.

"If we had limitless funding, this is certainly something we would have wanted to do anyway," Jobs said.

She told Lear to get estimates on the cost of modifying the doorway, for inclusion in the upcoming budget.

That work is expected to involve redesigning the doorway to include a single wider door and eliminating the slight threshold lift visitors must get past to enter the building.

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Town officials agreed a wide parking space at the entrance should also be designated, including mounting a sign on the building to identify the stall as being set aside for vehicles serving those with handicaps.

They also said a “pod” screen should be purchased to give voters using polling equipment on a low table privacy while completing an election ballot.

With the commitment from town supervisors that the needed money would be included in the upcoming budget, Lear said he would notify the state in hope of heading off any problems.

“They wanted to hear back from us two months ago. Realistically, we’d probably want to have this done by the spring election,” he said.