

***MINUTES OF THE
HIGHWAY, INFRASTRUCTURE & RECREATION COMMITTEE***

DAY & DATE: Thursday, June 4, 2020
PLACE: Wood County Courthouse, Rm 114, 400 Market Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495; Access available via WebEx as well.
MEETING TIME: 8:00 A.M.
ADJOURNMENT TIME: 10:41 A.M.
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jake Hahn, Supervisor Al Breu (via WebEx), Supervisor John Hokamp, Supervisor Dave LaFontaine, Supervisor Lee Thao
EXCUSED: Not Applicable.
OTHERS PRESENT: Supervisor Dennis Polach; Supervisor Lance Pliml (via WebEx); Roland Hawk, Highway Commissioner; Chad Schooley, Parks and Forestry Director; Fritz Schubert, Forest Administrator; Caitlin Carmody, Highway Administrative Assistant; Chris Staffon, Highway Accounting Technician; Lisa Keller, IT Application Support Specialist; William Clendenning, Town of Grand Rapids; Todd Radtke, citizen; Lindsay Presterl (citizen, via WebEx); Penny Van Tassel, citizen (via WebEx)

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Declaration of Quorum.
3. Public comments.

Todd Radtke stated that he was present in reference to the CTH W and 71st Street Culvert item. He stated he is a resident where this culvert is and it causes standing water in his ditch now for the last two years. He said he and his neighbors are constantly pumping water out of their basements. He stated he was here to listen. Supervisor Hahn invited him to speak again when the committee got to that subject.

4. Correspondence
5. Supervisor Hahn declared the minutes approved as there were no corrections to be made.
6. ATV Trail/Route System Update

Parks and Forestry, Highway, and Planning and Zoning representatives had a meeting in the last month that both Supervisor Hahn and Jeff Masephol from the Central Wisconsin ATV Club were in attendance for. They identified future ATV projects and goals. They will be having another meeting this month to discuss expansion of the mainline route into the northern part of the County. Schooley stated that the committee will need to discuss funding of trail expansion at future meetings. Schooley also stated that the ATV campground finally has all the electric sites hooked up. There are ten campsites that are currently set up as first come, first served and they are starting to get some use. He anticipates them going to a reservation system in the future.

Supervisor LaFontaine asked if Ho Chunk was not doing some signing for ATV trails because it was deemed non-essential. Schooley explained that Jim Webster from the Casino stated they were looking to donate funds for trailhead signage and interpretive signing on a trail as well. He had not heard that they were not moving forward with this.

LaFontaine stated it was just delayed, from what he heard. He wanted to clarify it wasn't affecting any of our projects. Schooley said no.

Hawk stated that they had identified three river crossings that were needed to complete the mainline route. One was a crossing over the Yellow River at Dexter. The Town of Dexter has to pass an ordinance to approve the crossing before the DOT will approve it. They have a meeting in July that Hawk will attend to help them get the ordinance passed.

Hahn asked if Hawk is still working on the list of hazardous roads that he does not want open to ATV traffic. Hawk explained that yes, he is, but that he is working with Schooley to determine how to make the mainline route work through the county still.

Supervisor Clendenning stated that the Town of Grand Rapids got their survey results back from their comprehensive plan. They had a good return rate (approximately 30% return) and on the subject of ATV use on town roads, there was a 53-57% (he could not recall) response saying they do not approve of ATV use on town roads. He recommended that people look at the survey results in their planning. Hawk stated they still do not plan to open county roads in townships that don't want ATV use on their town roads.

7. HIGHWAY

a. Highway Staff Report

Hawk stated that Shop Supervisor Brad Martinson resigned to take a job in the Town of Rome and today is his last day. The Department also hired Chris Staffon to fill the role of Accounting Technician. He also informed the committee of a meeting he will be holding with all interested Wood County townships regarding county services. It will be at the Town of Richfield Town Hall on June 18. He is going to address the possibility of having the County Highway Department contract with Townships to do their summer and winter maintenance, if the township is unable to fill their own road positions.

LaFontaine asked if the issues that former Commissioner Doug Passineau was having with the pay scale in recent years was corrected yet. Hawk stated that he has made many improvements to positions that were struggling in the past. Mechanics have been raised a grade, as have Truck Operators. All positions are currently under another wage study.

Hawk stated that the CTH U Village of Biron construction project is underway and on schedule. Most issues so far have been related to people not adhering to the planned detour. They have made some detour adjustments to try to accommodate.

b. Highway Revenue Report

c. Natural Sand Bid Results **Motion to accept the quote most advantageous to the county made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by A. Breu. All in favor. Motion carried.**

d. CTH W & 71st Street Culvert (Town of Grand Rapids)

Hawk stated he and Joel Ortman (Highway Engineer) looked back through road plans at the Highway Department and could not find a record of when CTH W

east of 48th Street was constructed. They did find a systems plan in 1956 that had that section already listed. So, they suspect that it was built between the 1940s and 1950s or possibly even earlier. It is a concrete culvert structure that is inconsistent with the rest of the system. They suspect the drainage pattern may have been consistent with the drainage of the time, but it has perhaps changed since then. Hawk stated they inspected the culvert and it is in good shape still. They are planning to do work on that section of CTH W in the next 2-3 years.

Clendenning inquired how the drainage was affecting the county park on Lake Wazeecha. Schooley stated the volume of water is really the problem. He stated that the RC&D flowage ditch historically did not flow into the park very often, but it does now a lot. Schooley stated the water crosses the walking path where it goes into the lake, eroding the shore. Clendenning asked if there was a concern for contaminants in the water, given the smell. Schooley stated he never personally noticed the smell, but his is more concerned about the volume and the erosion problem.

D. LaFontaine asked if there was a place where a retention pond could be put in to slow the flow of water into the park. Schooley said the area within the park that it feeds into the lake is almost at lake level. He has considered putting in a meandering ditch lined with stone and then put a culvert under the walking trail to reduce the issues. LaFontaine asked if Schooley was concerned about phosphorous since it is a barnyard drainage flow. Schooley stated that he believed it had a longer filtration stretch than some areas upstream where farms are directly adjacent to ditches that enter into the 4 mile Creek, which feeds Lake Wazeecha. LaFontaine asked if the County could have Land and Water Conservation do testing on the runoff. Schooley stated he would discuss this with them. LaFontaine suggested there might be grant money available for remediation of the runoff. Schooley stated he wasn't sure of the layout at the farm itself, but that it would probably be more effective for the landowner to address any problem at the source.

Todd Radke stated that his ditch acts as the retention pond. That it is the town's ditch that was dug out last year. Lindsay Presterl stated she lives right next to Radtke and that the farm water isn't flowing anywhere. Clendenning recommended that the citizens get the subject on the township's meeting agenda to discuss as well.

e. Proposed wildflower seeding in CTH W ditch between 38th and 42nd Street

Penny Van Tassel stated that the portion of CTH W/Kellner Rd between 38th and 42nd Street is not frequently mowed and has clumpy native grass growing there. Van Tassel stated she is part of a group of individuals who would like to plant native wildflower plants in the right-of-way to encourage pollinators in that area, and to beautify the roadside. Hawk stated that the Highway Department does mow every year and then every 2-3 years they mow back to the right-of-way line. However, they do not always manage who is working in the right-of-way. Utilities can do work there and there is no protection for private plantings in the right-of-way. The County only requires utilities to do sod and grass planting. Hawk stated he was also concerned about putting in plants that attract wildlife for obvious reasons related to traffic safety. Additionally, they are concerned about having wild lupine planted because it provides habitat for the endangered Karner

Blue Butterfly which thereby limits what activities the County can do along that roadway. The County is committed to not eliminating wild lupine where it occurs naturally, but does not want to intentionally plant it.

Van Tassel emphasized that they would like to plant pollinator friendly plants that specifically attract monarchs and some other pollinators. They could not plant lupine, if that was the wish of the county. Van Tassel also said they are not concerned about utility trenching – if the utility digs it up and replaces with sod and grass, that's fine.

Hawk stated he would like to see the following happen for him to approve of it:

- Support from adjacent property owners
- A list of what plants would be planted
- A statement of liability relief
- Township support
- Right-of-way permit

Van Tassel agreed to meet those conditions and then speak with Hawk further about the planting.

- f. Highway Vouchers - **Motion to approve the voucher listing made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by J. Hokamp. All in favor. Motion carried.**

8. **PARKS AND FORESTRY**

a. Parks & Forestry Staff Reports

Schooley addressed the subject of the playground equipment at White Sands Beach. A while back, he and the committee had been approached by Pam Ironside about building an accessible playground feature at the beach. Since then, Sarah Salewski with Coffective LLC, has gotten involved. She helped write up a grant application for the Legacy Foundation in Wisconsin Rapids. Salewski and Schooley also approached three different vendors to get some quotes or samples of different projects. Schooley shared an example drawing of a playground. The grant, if approved, would cover a \$500,000 of the equipment and installation of a project. The County would cover the site preparation costs. Hahn asked what the lifetime of the pour-in-place surface is. Schooley said 20-25 years.

Schooley also addressed the matter of the Emergency Management Huber worker programs Steve Kreuser from Emergency Management informed Schooley that the Huber program that supplies workers that normally assist in the Parks with park maintenance has been put on hold until at least July due to COVID-19. The Parks department gets about two full-time employee equivalent hours out of the Huber crews annually. They do a lot of the weed cutting, hauling firewood, brush cleanup, etc. If the shut down of the program continues, there could be a significant impact to what the Parks department is able to achieve in a year. In addition, Schooley stated they are essential for the maintenance of the Powers Bluff winter sports area.

Lastly, Schooley highlighted the latest Parks news release. Everything is back up and running now. The state waterski show tournament has been cancelled, but

organizers are still looking at the possibility of hosting a 1 day individuals tournament.

Schubert stated that he sent an email with some additional forestry updates. He had met with Joel Ortman from the Highway department regarding the Hay Creek ATV project. They can't really move forward until they have DNR approval and the DNR is currently not field reviewing projects due to the covid-19 shut downs.

b. Timber Sale Contract Extension: #766, #770

Schubert recommended extending these contracts for one year with no increase in stumpage. Hokamp inquired if the land for #770 was land locked. Schubert explained that they do have access through the adjacent cranberry marsh due to landowner permission. Hokamp asked if that was impacting the cutting. Schubert stated there are just extra considerations they must make when working with the landowner to ensure good working relationships. He said that timber sale area, as well as landowner's property is really a winter only access site.

Motion to grant the extensions and direct the Forest Administrator to inform Yoder Logging that payment history must improve before granting another extension to them made by D. Lafontaine and seconded by A. Breu. All in favor. Motion carried.

Schubert did clarify that while Yoder has been a bit tardy on payment sometimes, they have generally been good to work with. Schubert expressed they are relatively new to working with counties, their operations are improving, and he cautions against discouraging good contractors from bidding.

c. Timber Sale Bid Opening Results & Award Contracts

Schubert stated this was the poorest bid opening in his recollection as far as the number of bidders. Schubert stated that many recent bid results in other counties have seen similar and worse results. Primary reasons seem to be sales with winter only access, market uncertainty, and possibly overpriced bid minimums. Winter harvest wood is in oversupply due to the past several short winters we have been having. Schubert explained that the one Wood County sale that did not get a bid has marginal access but not great wood quality. This unsold sale will be put in with next bid opening in the fall.

Motion to award the sales to their respective highest bidders made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by J. Hokamp. All in favor. Motion carried.

d. Wood County Forestry 15-Year Plan: Draft Chapter 600

Schubert had shared the timeline and the actual draft chapter with the committee via email. He stated that they are a bit behind on the timeline, but should not be a problem because DNR can't get all 29 county forest plans reviewed at the same time anyway. Schubert reiterated that these chapters currently being presented are just in draft form and once all are approved through the committee, he will compile the final draft, submit it for public comment, and then present to the County Board.

Motion to approve the Draft Chapter 600 of the Wood County Forestry 15-Year Plan made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by L. Thao. All in favor. Motion carried.

e. Parks Revenue Report

Schooley indicated that camping revenue was a little behind on reservations for May because they stopped taking May reservations with not being sure if they would be open or not. But people were self-registering for camping. The shelters still have a lot of reservations. Schooley stated that refunds done via check are not reflected on the revenue report until the end of the year, so the real revenue numbers are a little different than what's presented.

Schooley also said that he was informed by Emergency Management that they did receive their first check from FEMA for the storm damage last year. The Parks and Forestry department will be receiving a portion of that.

LaFontaine asked if the Powers Bluff project (donations) were still active. Schooley stated they were not actively seeking donations for that. The annual Ho-Chunk allotment of \$27,500 will be going towards single track trail development at the park this year. All donations are in a non-lapsing dedicated fund for future development. Hahn asked if the trails were for biking or hiking. Schooley said the one being funded was for a single-track bike trail. There is a multi-use trail that is a work in progress. Hahn asked how many miles of bike trail the park will have. Schooley stated 7 miles total, with an additional 3 miles of multi-use trail.

f. Forestry Revenue Report

Schubert stated no sales were being actively cut in May which is not that unusual. They did receive an \$8000 check from one logger on June 2nd that is not reflected on that report.

g. Parks and Forestry Vouchers

LaFontaine expressed his disappointment with all the additional work that staff have to go through now with so many vouchers for each vendor. L. Pliml stated that this is still being worked on and that it appears to be an issue with the software and the ledger.

Motion to approve the voucher listing made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by L. Thao. All in favor. Motion carried.

9. Future Agenda Items

- GSB 88 Pavement Maintenance (Highway)
- 2019 Parks and Forestry Annual Report

10. Set next regular meeting date: Thursday, July 9th, 2020 at 9:00 AM. Location to be determined.

11. Adjournment at 10:41 AM.