

Legislative Committee
Monday, January 26, 2009
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Nancy Barker, Don Griesbach, Tom Ellis, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, Jef Hall, Jim Koziczowski, Harvey Rengstorf, Jo Sievert and Michael Norton

Also

Present: John Casper – Oshkosh Chamber, State Senator Randy Hopper, County Executive Mark Harris, Margie Rankin – Park View Health Center Administrator, Jerry Bougie – Director of Planning & Zoning, Melissa Kok – Congressman Petri's Office, Julie Pagel – Register of Deeds, Representative Spanbauer, and Jeff Bollier – Northwestern

Excused: Kathy Lennon, Dave Albrecht and Tom Widener

Absent: Pat O'Brien

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Chairman Kline had everyone introduce themselves.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of November 24, 2008. This was carried by voice vote.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION: Winnebago County Representatives

Chairman Kline introduced State Senator Randy Hopper to the committee and told Mr. Hopper what the Legislative committee does and when it meets.

Senator Hopper told the committee that he plans to make as many of these meetings as he can. He shared with the committee that he has been meeting with people he knows that his committees will have issues with. He has been meeting with his committee chair people – regardless of political affiliation. He is hoping to put political differences aside and work together. He doesn't feel the core differences are that far apart. He told the committee that if they have any questions or needs from his office – please call the office and you will get an answer back the day that you call.

The committees that Senator Hopper will be involved with are: education committee, small business, which includes small business emergency preparedness, housing and campaign finance reform. He is also on the judiciary, corrections and insurance committees. He is also involved with family and children and workforce development. Mr. Hopper explained how the assignments are made since there are only 33 senators in the state.

Senator Hopper told the committee that his staff has and will be having regular meetings with all other representatives' staffs for this area. He also told the committee, he and Representative Hintz will be meeting on a regular basis to discuss regional concerns.

The biggest topics in Madison right now are the budget deficit and the federal stimulus program. The current Wisconsin budget deficit is about \$5.4 billion. Mr. Hopper feels that estimate is high. The governor is talking about the departments that may be taking cuts. Senator Hopper thinks that there will be an indexed gas tax, a hospital tax, oil and franchise fee tax. There will also be an indexed minimum wage increase.

The budget director for the State of Wisconsin has indicated that Wisconsin will be getting \$2.5 billion from the federal stimulus program. The big question is what strings will be attached to this money. There are 3 areas that the money is slated for: \$1 billion to education, \$1 billion to health care and \$1/2 billion to the infrastructure. It is Mr. Hopper's contention that we cannot use one time federal stimulus money and then saddle the citizens with the continued operational expenses. Senator Hopper also feels that we should not use the stimulus money like we have used the tobacco money, the patient's compensation fund raid or the transportation fund raid. He feels we are just pushing the problems further down the road.

Representative Spanbauer told the committee that creating jobs is extremely important – more jobs means more people earning wages and that means the state starts getting taxes. He feels that transportation and education also need a financial boost. He told the committee he is working on getting

more business and industry to locate in Wisconsin and some of the things they look at are the talent of the workforce, and the ease of getting their product in and out. Mr. Spanbauer told the committee that \$1.2 billion has been taken out of the transportation fund. Those are funds we are now short in this budget. Mr. Spanbauer feels that education is very important, especially re-educating those people that have lost their jobs. He had high praise for Fox Valley Tech. He told the committee in one class – a printing course – there are 5 good paying jobs for each graduate.

He thanked the committee for inviting him to the meeting. He plans on attending as many meetings as he can. He hopes that he learns something from these meetings and that the committee learns something from his attendance.

Senator Hopper feels there will be a statewide smoking ban, the question is when. Right now smoking bans pits communities against communities. Some of the hold up is whether there will be a sunset clause attached to it or not.

Also discussed was raising the minimum wage and the hospital tax. There is \$150 million raid built into the hospital tax. There is a worry that the stimulus package might affect reimbursements we already receive from the federal government.

Both legislators took questions and comments from the committee.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A CHANGE IN THE REGISTER OF DEEDS RECORDING FEE – Julie Page and Jerry Bougie

Mrs. Pagel explained that this idea began in Brown County. She explained that there is not a week that goes by that their office does not return documents because the fees have been miscalculated. This ends up costing everyone more money, and well as time and effort. The fees have not increased since 1990, with the exception of a \$1.00 that went into effect in 2001. With the proposed change – any increases will stay with the county. Mrs. Pagel told the committee that this proposal should double the county revenue. 18 counties have passed this resolution.

She told the committee that the Register of Deeds Office has converted all the paper documents into a digital format. These records will be preserved forever. Some of the funds would be earmarked for GIS to enable them to keep up with the latest technology. She is coming to this committee to find out if Winnebago County wants to support this resolution. Ms Pagel told the committee that we are well under the costs that surrounding states charge for recording documents

Jerry Bougie told the committee that his department's operations touch almost every other department in the county. It is vital that the information his department generates is kept up to date. There is also revenue generated back from the public. He feels that this will simplify the process in collecting fees.

Discussion occurred with the committee.

Supervisor Rengstorf moved that we change the rate structure and notify the state of our decision. Supervisor Hall seconded. This was carried by voice vote.

Melissa Kok of Congressman Petri's office told the committee that Congress Petri feels that there are some good things about the stimulus package and some bad. He is still going through all the details of the bill. She also told the committee that as of June 1, 2009 – you will need a passport to leave the country by driving or flying. This includes Canada and the Caribbean as well as Mexico. She was asked if there is a tentative push to back up changing over from analog TV to all digital to June 1, 2009. She was unaware of any such plan.

Chairman Kline took items from committee members regarding the next meeting which will be held on February 23, 2009.

Motion by Supervisor Wingren to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Supervisor Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Nancy Barker
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office