

**Legislative Committee**  
**Monday, July 27, 2009**  
**JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER**

Present: Stan Kline, Nancy Barker, Don Griesbach, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, Jim Koziczowski, Harvey Rengstorf, Patrick O'Brien, Tom Ellis, Jerry Finch, David Albrecht, Kathy Lennon, Jef Hall and Jo Sievert.

Also Present: John Casper – Oshkosh Chamber, County Executive Mark Harris, Representative Hintz, State Senator Hopper, Representative Dean Kaufert, John Haese – Commissioner, Sue Ertmer- County Clerk, Gregg Underheim – Congressman Petri's Office

Excused: Tom Widener

Absent:

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

It was moved by K. Robl and seconded by P. O'Brien to approve the minutes of April 27, 2009.  
CARRIED.

**UPDATE ON THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

State Senator Hopper told the committee that since the last time the Legislative Committee met, the state budget has passed. He talked about items in the budget that will effect the county, these included: prevailing wage, increase in tipping fees, (we are the highest state in the nation on this), shared revenue, (Winnebago County had a 5.8% cut) 911 fee, nursing home bed tax fee increase, and domestic partnership registry. Mr. Hopper was not supportive of the budget. He felt that the state is asking everyone else to cut their budgets, while the state increases theirs. The state is once again using one time money (federal stimulus money) to balance the budget, so in two years we will have a structural deficit of over \$2 billion. Mr. Hopper took questions from the committee regarding the budget.

There was discussion around the anti-job climate in Wisconsin. There are no incentives for businesses to relocate here. There is a generation of people that are leaving the state for a few months, and then declaring another state their residence.

Representative Kaufert told the committee there were some bad decisions made on this budget. He also did not support the budget. The governor had promised to cut state jobs. In this budget 234 jobs were added. Mr. Kaufert feels that Madison is a very partisan and polarized place. Property taxes in the state are going up \$1.5 billion; taxes are going up over \$2.2 billion. Spending is up, even though some programs were cut. Mr. Kaufert felt that this budget was a great budget for Milwaukee and Dane County. Most towns in the state took a 15% cut in shared revenue. Mr. Kaufert pointed out to the committee that the second year of the budget is based on 4% growth in revenue. He feels that the state will have a hard time getting 4% growth in that time period. If that happens, there will need to be another budget repair bill.

Representative Hintz also talked about the state budget. Sales tax is down and income is down, the state has lost a lot in revenue. He feels that the state needs a rainy day fund. There is more demand for government services than in anytime in history. The economy is in an inverse relationship. The worse the economy is the more demand there is for education, employment, health insurance and job training. If we took no federal stimulus and raised no revenues, we would take a 20% cut across the board on the state budget. You can pass that on to property taxes and you could eliminate technical colleges, raise tuition. But that isn't the way the state operates. There are still needed services. There was no increase in state sales tax.

Mr. Hintz talked about the raise in tipping fees. 25% of the waste in our landfills were coming from neighboring states. Single stream recycling should help with lowering the amount of garbage people are throwing away.

Mr. Hintz talked about the 911 fee. Wisconsin is behind in emergency communications. The fee that was put on all phone lines was taken for other uses, instead of updating the 911 system in Wisconsin.

Mr. Hintz feels that we may not have bottomed out yet with the economy. There is normally a lag time between when the bottom hits and when it hits the state. He feels that there needs to be a contingency plan in place if something like this happens.

Mr. Underheim talked about the health care proposal. There are a lot of questions about the proposal and at this time there are not a lot of specifics known about the plan.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Kline had Sue Ertmer, the County Clerk talk about the items on the agenda that pertained to her office.

**SUPPORT/OPPOSE EARLY VOTING IN WISCONSIN** – Sue Ertmer – County Clerk

Ms Ertmer told the committee that the GAB's objectives were to alleviate long lines on Election Day, strengthen voter integrity, and lessening the work load of election officials. Much of this plan includes transferring the main control of elections from municipalities to the counties without any additional funding or assistance. At this time, municipalities take care of absentee voting, and if early voting would be imitated, there would be early voting sites. These sites would cover several municipalities. Much of this proposal has not been studied – how this would impact voting in Wisconsin, questions on the equipment that would be used. How the sites would be manned and where the funding would come from. This is part of a five year plan. It is done in other states, but would need to be studied more here. It would mean major changes in the way Wisconsin handles elections now.

**OPPOSING ELIMINATING SPRING NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS AND WEEKEND VOTING** – Sue Ertmer

This is moving through the legislature; however there is no big movement to pass this on.

The committee decided to take no action on either Early Voting in Wisconsin or Elimination of Spring Elections.

**DISCUSSION OF DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP LAW** – Sue Ertmer

This has been passed in the state budget and the clerk's office is ready to handle the taking of the applications for Domestic Partnerships.

**SUPPORTING MORE ARRA FUNDING FOR LOCAL ROADS** – John Haase – Highway Commissioner

Supervisor Finch caught this committee up on the history of this resolution in Winnebago County. This was originally for cities, but now has been re-written to include all of Winnebago County.

Discussion occurred with John Haase, Highway Commissioner and the committee. Jerry Finch moved and Pat Brennand seconded to move this forward to the County Board. CARRIED 15-0

**OPPOSE CHANGING THE LAW OVERSEEING PESTICIDE USE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR RAILROADS** – Jef Hall and Stan Kline

This is a bill that would require the railroads to tell everyone along the right-of-ways by March 15, what kind of pesticide they will be using and when they will apply it. It is hard to know what kind of pesticide will be used that early and the other problem with the bill is that there is a requirement of a 24 hour period after the application of the pesticide that no trains could go through. This would be a great inconvenience for rail and passenger trains. Farmers do not have to tell their neighbors when they are going to apply a pesticide.

After discussion, Don Griesbach moved and it was seconded by Jef Hall to oppose this resolution. 15-0 CARRIED.

Patrick O'Brien left the meeting at 10:35 am.

**OPPOSING THE BLAIR HOLT FIREARM LICENSING ACT** – Jerry Finch

This bill has no co-signers, and there has been no action in committee on this bill. Mr. Underheim told the committee that this bill was a reaction to a shooting in Illinois. Discussion occurred with the committee. It was decided not to get involved with this bill.

Jef Hall moved to table this resolution. It was seconded by Bill Wingren 13 – 1 CARRIED

Jef Hall left the meeting at 10:41 am

**OPPOSING CHANGING INTEREST RATE ON DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES** –

This resolution came from Outagamie County. The current charge for delinquent property taxes is 1% per month. This resolution would lower the cost to ½% per month. Discussion was held by the committee.

It was moved by Harvey Rengstorf and seconded by Pat Brennand to oppose lowering the interest rate. 9 – 3 CARRIED

Nancy Barker absent for vote.

**ITEMS FOR NEX AGENDA**

No need for point/counter point from representatives in future meetings  
Possible funding for Grand Opera House  
Morgue for UW-Extension

It was moved by Bill Wingren and seconded by Pat Brennand to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:  
Nancy Barker  
Secretary

Recorded By:  
Jean Mahy  
County Clerk's Office