

Legislative Committee Minutes
Monday, April 25, 2011

Attendance: Stan Kline, Jef Hall, W. Thomas Ellis, Kathy Lennon, James Koziczkowski, Tom Widener, Claud Thompson, Patrick O'Brien, Ken Robl, Bill Wingren, Jerry Finch, Jo Sievert, Chuck Farrey, Harvey Rengstorf, David Albrecht, Pat Brennan

Guests: Gregg Underheim, Rep. Richard Spanbauer, Rep. Gordon Hintz, Rep. Dean Kaufert, Chuck Orenstein, Suzanne Brault Pagel, Larry Last, Debbie Last, Jonathan Krause

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stan Kline at 8:30 AM.

Representative Dick Spanbauer reported that the cut in recycling was likely to not be supported by members of the Legislature. He stated that there was a 70-30 % chance it would be kept in the budget.

He was concerned about the levy limit cuts and is trying to raise it to 1 or 2%. He felt the current proposal would hurt nursing homes.

Representative Dean Kaufert stated the Joint Finance Committee has completed its public hearings and may start voting this week. He expressed concern about the UW split, the recycling proposal, and the 27% cut in technical colleges. He is concerned about the "penalty" that counties like ours might have to pay because of their frugality. He reported that the Voter ID legislation will be dealt with in May. He expects the budget to be completed by the third week in June.

Representative Gordon Hintz stated his approval of removing "policy" from the budget document. He was concerned about the increased funding proposed for roads while the cost of "human infrastructure" is sacrificed. He is also concerned about the proposal to expand Charter schools with a resulting cut to public schools. He feels that it is going to be hard to balance the budget without new revenues. Mr. Hintz suggested that the Budget is like Jenga. We have to move very carefully. He is working to improve the distribution of the existing pot of money.

Suzanne Pagel, representing Senator Herb Kohl, expressed the Senator's hope to be involved in more bipartisan issues. Senator Kohl opposes any cuts in the COPS program and Senior Care which offers assistance to 91,000 people in our state. Senator Kohl is working with the Gang of Six to seek compromises on some budget issues.

Greg Underheim, representing Congressman Tom Petri, stated that of the \$3.7 trillion dollar budget, \$1.7 trillion is borrowed money. He reported that we spend 24% of our GDP at the same time we tax 14% of the GDP. Congressman Petri feels this cannot be sustained.

When the budget was balanced, both were 20%. Interest on the debt is a problem. The Congress is going to have to make tough choices which might require cuts in spending for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the Defense budget.

Representative Kaufert discussed the issue of Voter ID. He reminded us that seniors and nursing home residents are exempt now. There are concerns about where students attending colleges and universities should vote. Tom Widener urged the legislators to continue Same Day Registration.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46.

Bill Wingren, secretary