

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Monday, November 28, 2011  
James P. Coughlin Center

Members present: Stan Kline, Jef Hall, Tom Widener, Ken Robl, Jerry Finch, David Albrecht, Bill Wingren, Jim Koziczowski, Chuck Farrey, Tom Ellis, Tim Hamblin, Pat Brennand.

Guests: Senator Jess King, Representative Dick Spanbauer, Representative Michelle Litjens, Mark Nielsen representing Senator Ron Johnson.

Meeting called to order at 8:00 by Chairman Kline.  
A moment of silence was observed in honor of Supervisor Harvey Rengstorf.

Senator King reported that she is a member of the Higher Education Committee and is interested in promoting programs that will work to increase the number of skilled workers in our state.

Representative Spanbauer said that although this has been a "tough year", a lot has been accomplished. He mentioned tort reform as an example. He reminded us that he did not support the bill to remove collective bargaining rights from public employees.

Representative Litjens indicated that she is working on education issues. She is promoting "Vocational Diplomas" with an emphasis on skill development before graduation. She reported that this congressional district ranks 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation in terms of manufacturing jobs.

County Executive Harris told the legislators that Act 10 has to be repealed. It is difficult to bargain with the jailers and deputies with two sets of "rules" guiding the negotiations. He reported the problem of getting a contract with the dispatchers because of the lack of information on base pay. He has contacted the Department of Revenue on numerous occasions and they have not answered his questions.

A discussion was held on a Senate bill which deals with changes to state mining laws. Wisconsin has many laws and regulations for chemical mining. The intent of this proposed legislation is to deal with the mining of iron ore. Rep. Litjens said that Iron County residents have an average income of \$22K per year. The proposed law projects from 600-1000 jobs at \$60K per year. She indicated that some people are scared off because of the problems with the Crandon mine. She stated that all of the mining equipment itself will be built in Wisconsin. Senator King supported the idea of local people needing to have a voice in this process.

Rep. Spanbauer supports a study of the environmental impact of this mine and stated his belief that the public has to know the details of this endeavor.

It was decided to take no action on either supporting or opposing this legislation at this time. It may be brought back at the next meeting in January.

Senate Bill 125- Pertaining to liability of cities, villages, towns, and counties for damage caused by insufficiency or want of repair of a highway:

This bill is sometimes called the "pothole bill". The State has insulated itself from liability. This legislation would give local governments the same immunity the State has. Senator King voted against the bill which passed 21-11 but may come back to the Senate after the Assembly votes on it. She stated that her view was partially shaped by her work on the Oshkosh City Council. For 150 years, citizens have had a right to bring action when damage is caused by bad roads.

Rep. Spanbauer supports the bill because he thinks it will end "frivolous" lawsuits. He spoke of his experience as a town chairman. Supervisor Brennand indicated that County Mutual support the bill. Pat Brennand moved to approve a Resolution to support Senate Bill 125 with David Albrecht adding a second. Vote 6-5 in FAVOR. This will be sent on to the County Board.

Mark Nielsen said that no budget bill has been passed. There now will be a series of “mini-budgets” to keep the government going.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM.