

Legislative Committee
February 27, 2012
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, James Kozokowski, Joanne Sievert, Tom Ellis, Tim Hamblin, Al Jacobson, David Albrecht, Mike Norton, Tom Widener, Ken Robl, Jerry Finch, and Patrick O'Brien

Also Present: Representative Spanbauer, Representative Gordon Hintz, John Casper – Chamber of Commerce, Representative Michelle Litjens, Representative Dean Kaufert, State Senator Jessica King, Representative Penny Bernard Schaber, Mark Nielsen – Representing Senator Ron Johnson, Mark Harris – County Executive, Christian Gossett – Winnebago County District Attorney, Supervisor Paul Eisen and Mike Bonertz- Executive Director of Advocap

Excused:
Absent: Nancy Barker, Jef Hall and Kathy Lennon

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Kline had those present introduce themselves.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 23, 2012 meeting. B. Wingren moved and it was seconded to approve the minutes.

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS:

Representative Spanbauer talked to the committee about a bill passed by the Assembly regarding vegetation around signs. This bill passed 76-18 The bill allows the state or county to come in and cut the vegetation around signs. He also talked about AB28 – Campaign Finance Reform bill. This bill did not pass. Mr. Spanbauer was disappointed that this bill did not pass. Last term this bill went through committee and the Assembly with unanimous support only to get caught up in politics. Mr. Spanbauer feels that there is too much money coming in from outside of Wisconsin, and this money is not controlled.

Mr. Spanbauer also discussed with the committee SJR51 – County Officers to run as non-partisan. This bill was not passed. He told the committee about the bills that will benefit Veterans in the State of Wisconsin, making Wisconsin a more attractive place for Veterans to live and work.

Mr. Spanbauer told those present that he was proud of the work he had accomplished during his tenure and he will miss serving the citizens of Winnebago County and the State of Wisconsin

Representative Litjens talked about the Farmland Preservation Plan for Winnebago County not being approved by the state. She did tell the committee that the conversion fees for going into Farmland Preservation were taken out; however the new session of the Legislature may put them back in. She would love to see the whole Farmland Preservation Program go away completely. She is against the state being able to tell someone what they can or cannot do with their land that they have owned for their whole lives. She feels this is a local government problem and that is where it should be decided.

Ms Litjens stated that the ADA bill has passed out of committee unanimously.

Representative Kaufert told the committee that this session is winding up. He is hoping to see the caps lifted on Family Care. This program needs help if it is going to be sustained. The only place money was put into the budget this year was Medical Assistance, \$1.2. Billion. Mr. Kaufert does believe the cap will be taken off. The program was short \$80 million dollars this year, but the department is working hard to find ways to absorb that loss and run more efficiently.

Mr. Kaufert told the committee that the redistricting issue will be winding up soon. He reported that revenue for the state is still soft. Agencies and departments are doing their part with their cut budgets; however the revenue side of the ledger is not keeping up with projections.

Regarding the mining legislation, Mr. Kaufert feels will be wrapped up before the end of the legislative session.

Mr. Kaufert told the committee that there were 110 roll call votes so far in this session. 68 of those were voted on were bi-partisan. This proves that the both sides of the aisle can work together.

Representative Hintz told the committee that March 16 is the last scheduled work day for this session of the legislature. He stated that all 3 of his terms have been completely different from the others.

The mining bill has passed in the Assembly; however that version does not look like it will pass in the Senate. An alternative version has been put out and there is an interest in getting something done in this session.

Voucher schools have been expanded to the Racine and Milwaukee area. Many people would like to see this program go statewide.

Mr. Hintz told the committee that any bills coming in with a price tag will have a difficult time due to the soft revenue situation. \$25 million of the mortgage foreclosure money will be used to help with the budget deficit.

State Senator Jessica King commented on the Farmland Preservation program being denied in Winnebago County. Ms King is trying to find out how many farmers in her district are in the program and to make sure they have been notified what has been happening.

She told the committee that the WisNet bill has been passed in committee for a 1 year extension.

Ms. King and Representative Spanbauer have proposed a study committee for this summer on the Impact of Post 911 Veterans. 3000 service members have returned to Wisconsin last month and by 2016, Wisconsin will have 16,000 more service members returning. Many of these are females.

There has been a new version of the mining bill proposed. It is very different from the other bills that are out there. It provides certainties and deadlines that the mining company was asking for.

Representative Schaber is on the committee regarding the mining bill. She is happy about the amendment that has been proposed.

Ms. Schaber supports lifting the caps on Family Care. She told the committee that an amendment has come through that will require a much more active review process for any expansion.

She told the committee that there are multiple changes to the length of trucks, and the weight of trucks that could affect counties.

County Executive Mark Harris talked about the correctional officers retaining their bargaining rights. In Winnebago County – we have lost more highway workers than deputies. This is a pattern repeated across the state. Mr. Harris feels that local governments should be able to manage their own affairs.

Mr. Harris is concerned about the size of manufacturing and agricultural credits passed during the budget process. He talked to the business community and found no one knew this had been done.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A BILL ESTABLISHING A PAY PROGRESSION PLAN FOR ADA'S

Christian Gossett told the committee that both executive committees passed this bill unanimously. It is being well received. This bill could be a game changer for many district attorney offices. Right now, it is about \$2 million a year to train new assistant district attorneys. After discussion among the committee, Patrick O'Brien moved and it was seconded to support this resolution. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FEDERAL FUNDING OF COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

Mr. Bonertz told the committee that Advocap serves 3 counties, Fond du Lac, Green Lake and Winnebago. A community service block grant of \$300,000 a year comes into this area. Local governments decide how poverty issues are dealt with. Fond du Lac and Green Lake counties have already passed similar resolutions. After further discussion, T. Ellis moved and it was seconded to support this resolution. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Representative Schaber told the committee the bill would give communities the opportunity to create a regional transit authority. The Appleton and Neenah/Menasha area has increased in size and will not be eligible for the correct amount of federal funding. This is being worked on with Ms Schaber by Senator Ellis. They are double tracking this issue in the legislature. After discussion among the committee it was moved by J.Finch and seconded to support his resolution. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE WORKFORCE MOBILITY ACT

Ms King told the committee that there were projections regarding the Transportation Fund and how much money would be available. There is currently \$32 million in the fund. In the budget, there was a 10% cut to municipalities. This bill would restore that 10%. That amount would be \$9.2 million. Senator King has put this before the joint finance committee, and it may or may not be taken up. After discussion, it was moved and seconded. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION REGARDING RELOCATION OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS

This bill will be taken up in a committee hearing on February 28, 2012. Since there is not enough information of this – it will be brought back as more information becomes available.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING/OPPOSING A WHELL TAX BILL WHICH WOULD REQUIRE A REFERENDUM BEFORE A MUNICIPALITY COULD IMPOSE A WHEEL TAX

There was not enough information regarding this issue to take it up at this time.

Supervisor Brennand – Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Committee gave an overview of the Winnebago County Farmland Preservation issue. The issue will be going forward to the Winnebago County Board of February 28, 2012.

At this time – the committee discussed with the legislators questions and concerns regarding items on the agenda.

There will be no meeting in March unless needed.

It was moved by T. Ellis and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 am

Respectfully Submitted By:
Bill Wingren
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office