

Legislative Committee
November 26, 2012
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, James Kozokowski, Tom Ellis, Kathy Lennon, Nancy Barker, Tim Hamblin, Chuck Farrey, Jerry Finch, Larry Smith, Bill Roh and David Albrecht

Also Present: Assemblyman Richard Spanbauer, Mark Harris – Winnebago County Executive, State Representative Gordon Hintz, Supervisors Paul Eisen and Tom Widener, Mark Nielsen – Senator Johnson’s Office, and Ernie Winters – Winnebago County Highway Commissioner, Jean Maaspik and Darla Leuthold – 11 x 15 Prison Reform

Excused:

Absent: Claud Thompson, Patrick O’Brien

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Chairman Kline had those present at the meeting introduce themselves.

L Smith motioned to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2012 meeting. This motion was seconded. Carried by voice vote.

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS:

Representative Spanbauer thanked the committee for the courtesy and respect he received from the committee during his time in office. Mr. Spanbauer discussed with the committee what he felt the next session in the state legislator will be like. He is hoping that there will be much more bi-partisanship.

UPDATE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Executive Harris talked about Act 10 and what the effect it is likely to have on the county. It is difficult to understand what parts of Act 10 are in effect and what are being contested in court. This makes it difficult to manage contracts with the unions.

UPDATE FROM Ernie Winters – Winnebago County Highway Commissioner

Mr. Winters handed out an overview of Highway Operations and Issues. This included:

- Highway Department employs 79 people with a budget of \$10 M
- Oversees and maintains 220 miles of county highway and 30 bridges
- Maintains 250 miles of State controlled highways
- Maintains highways and bridges for 16 townships
- Winnebago County has the most lift bridges in the state with 17 full and part time operators
- Over 300 truck and pieces of equipment
- Provides chip sealing services to Winnebago County townships and neighboring counties
- Highway Tax Levy is one of the lowest in State on a per capital basis

Some of the issues faced by the Highway department are:

- Wisconsin DOT Memorandum of Understanding with Counties and WTBA
- State routine maintenance funding levels keep declining
- General Transportation Aids
- Act 10 and 32 limits counties working together
- “Other” revenue sources need to be developed for future funding needs

Mr. Winters discussed with the committee some of the concerns that the committee had. These included mowing on the state right of ways, and converting to compressed natural gas vehicles.

UPDATE FROM LEGISLATORS

Representative Hintz discussed with the committee about getting to him and other Winnebago County legislators, what the county will need in the new budget. The new budget will be released around the end of January/early February. There is a possible income tax cut since there is a surplus. The surplus is not due to new revenue. Mr. Hintz is still working on banning political robo calls. This will cost nothing and is something both parties can get behind and support.

9. DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION ENDORSING LEGISLATION REQUIRING ON-LINE RETAILERS WITH SUBSIDIARIES/AFFILIATES IN WISCONSIN TO COLLECT AND REMIT WISCONSIN SALES TAX

This item was carried over from the previous meeting. There was information regarding this item sent to the committee members before the meeting for them to study. Discussion regarding this item occurred among the committee members. It is felt there is quite a bit of tax revenue being missed by the State of Wisconsin. After discussion with the committee, Jerry Finch moved and it was seconded it by Kathy Lennon to forward this resolution to the full county board. AYES – 11, NO – 1, ABSTAIN – 2. CARRIED.

10. DISCUSSION/ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

This resolution is being brought to the committee by Supervisor Widener. It has also been passed by Outagamie County. Supervisor Widener had Jean Maaspik and Darla Leuthold from the 11 x 15 Prison Reform campaign present their concerns to the committee. What they are looking for is support from the committee to go to the state and ask that more funding be put into community based programs. Wisconsin has 22,000 prisoners incarcerated. There are 36 prisons in Wisconsin. The 11 x 15 campaign is looking to decrease that amount by approximately 3000 prisoners a year. Right now the cost to maintain a prisoner in Wisconsin is \$33,000.00 per year. This does not include medical costs. We pay more to maintain prisoners than the state pays for education. The population of prisoner that would be targeted are non-violent prisoners that either have a mental health issue or substance abuse problem. One child in 3 in Wisconsin is affected by having a parent or family member incarcerated. For every dollar spent in an alternative program it saves the state \$1.93. There is an epidemic of drug use – however these people are incarcerated but not treated. What is being looked for is more treatment on the front end for non-violent offenders and more treatment in prison and treatment after being released.

This resolution came before the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee and was not supported. The Sheriff and District Attorney do not support this program.

Kathy Lennon left the meeting at 9:45 am

The committee discussed the type of programs already in place in Winnebago County and what is being done in other areas.

Nancy Barker left the meeting at 9:50 am

After further discussion, Larry Smith moved to vote this resolution down. There was no second.

David Albrecht moved to lay this resolution over to the March meeting. Jerry Finch seconded. This was CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Nielsen discussed with the committee the Sportsman Act -2012. Mark told the committee he is unsure how the Senator will vote on this act. There was further discussion regarding what is happening in Washington and Senator Johnson's office.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10.21 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Bill Wingren
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office