

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
Monday, May 22, 2023  
James P. Coughlin Center  
625 E. County Road Y, Oshkosh

Members Present: 9 – Chuck Farrey, David Albrecht, Steven Binder, Robert Keller, Morris Cox, Nate Gustafson, Karen Powers, Ralph Harrison, and Tom Snider.

Also Present: Winnebago County Chairman Thomas Egan; Brianne Patzer from the Public Defender's Office, and State Representatives Nate Gustafson and Lori Palmeri.

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Farrey called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Farrey opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Approval of minutes of March 27, 2023 meeting**

Motion by Supervisor Cox and seconded by Supervisor Gustafson to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2023 meeting. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

**4. Public Comments**

Brianne Patzer, Attorney Manager in the Public Defender's Office, spoke in support of agenda item 8; the Washington County 22 resolution 63 – "Requesting the State of Wisconsin Review and Revise the Compensation Rate for State Public Defenders". Their office is in a tough role right now. They are short-staffed, having retention issues and trying to recruit attorneys. This has been difficult while maintaining workloads. They are trying to find ways to address those issues. She is very supportive of the structure and amount associated with the resolution.

**5. Correspondence**

No correspondence.

Motion by Supervisor Cox and seconded by Supervisor Albrecht to combine agenda items 6 and 7 together. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

**6. Discussion/Action: Clark County Resolution 3-1-23 – Recommending Revision to State Wind Energy Regulations; Green Lake County Resolution 7-2023 – Resolution Recommending Revision to State Renewable Energy Contract Regulations; and Columbia County Resolution No. 14-23 – Request State to Revise Solar Energy System Law.**

Chairman Farrey provided his understanding of the resolutions. It is his understanding that this is controlled almost exclusively by the public service commission under administrative rule. His perception is that the counties, especially the planning and zoning committees within those counties are raising concerns about the inability to provide more oversight and restrictions if necessary on the placement of these solar and wind farms. There really should be more county oversight especially when we are starting to lose a lot of farmland.

Representative Palmeri asked what the concerns are by the counties with regard to these.

Chairman Farrey responded with what his thoughts were. There is no local regulatory control at all regards to the placement of these solar farms; consuming a lot of productive farmland involving intrusion on the neighbors farms, issues with contracts that are being signed, and big issue with liability. If these solar farms were liable, it doesn't fall on the company, it falls on the land owner based on what Chairman Farrey read and interpreted. There are multiple issues that need to be revised to give local control a little more say to the placement of these solar farms.

Representative Gustafson referenced a bill that is being discussed. It is a community solar panel bill which allows up to 5 acres to be used for solar purposes and then there is a limit on how close those solar farms can be within one another. There are some regulations like this but looking to tighten that up a bit.

Motion by Supervisor Binder and seconded by Supervisor Albrecht to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

**8. Discussion/Action: Washington County 22 Resolution 63 – Requesting the State of Wisconsin Review and Revise the Compensation Rate for State Public Defenders.**

This issue is still being discussed in legislation. There is support to increase the rate of compensation and was favorable in the previous session. This subject is still in the discussion phase but the hope is to increase rate compensation about \$18,000 per year but that is still a moving target, they are not sure where the increase will fall.

Motion by Supervisor Powers and seconded by Supervisor Albrecht to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Representative Palmeri stated that the Senate is taking up the Shared Revenue Bill on May 23, 2023 at 9:00 am if anyone is interested.

**9. Discussion/Action: State of Wisconsin 2023 Bill – AN ACT to create 46.281 (1n)(bm) of the statutes; relating to: requiring allowance for health care providers to refer individuals to aging and disability resource centers for options counseling.**

This item was tabled at the March 27, 2023, meeting and was to be brought back and discussed today. It is a draft bill that is being circulated looking for co-sponsors to show support; let individuals know about the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and that there is options counseling. Options counseling is a decision support service intended to empower older adults, adults with disabilities, and their families and caregivers to make informed decisions about current or future long-term care choices.

State Representative Gustafson stated that this is now Senate Bill #154.

Motion by Supervisor Snider and seconded by Supervisor Powers to approve the resolution and bring to the County Board. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE (Nay: Cox).

**10. Discuss proposed State and Federal Legislation from the Legislative Committee members**

None

**11. Update from County Executive Jon Doemel**

County Executive Jon Doemel was not present.

**12. Update from State Legislators**

Representative Nate Gustafson – District 55:

- The big discussion is the shared revenue bill. There has been a lot of negotiations and discussion among Assembly Republicans, the leadership of Milwaukee County, as well as the city of Milwaukee including the mayor regarding a lot of their pension issues. They are in real tight spot.
- Representative Gustafson thanked everyone here that has served on this board and have made sure Winnebago County is going in the right direction.
- As Representative Gustafson mentioned earlier, the shared revenue bill has been a big topic being discussed with questions such as, how much will each individual entity get, what percentages are they looking at, etc. The legislators want to be sure they are not touching the current shared revenue formula. That would be staying the same but adding new money and that new money is actually going to be reflective of a revised formula to ensure that everyone is getting something out of it.

Representative Lori Palmeri – District 54:

- Representative Palmeri responded and what her thoughts were regarding and relating to the shared revenue bill. She stated that shared revenue is broken, it hasn't kept pace. This is all population based. Negotiations are on-going. She is very hopeful that the Senate will discuss it a little more and the Assembly could get another chance to discuss and negotiate on the issue further.
- There are some bills coming that have the potential for bi-partisan support such as revolving loan funds, workforce & senior housing bills, adding some financing tools and possibly some zoning type issues.

Supervisor Binder requested that the state representatives please look at daycare when state legislators are in session. This is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Chairman Farrey thanked the State Representatives for their attendance. It is greatly appreciated.

**13. Update from Federal Representatives**

There were no federal representatives present.

**14. Topics to be discussed at next Legislative Committee Meeting**

- Resolutions from other counties referred from County Board

**15. Next Meeting Date and Time**

The next meeting will take place on Monday, October 23, 2023 at 8:30 am.

**16. Adjourn**

Motion by Supervisor Albrecht and seconded by Supervisor Harrison to adjourn. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.  
The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Cassie J. Smith-Gregor  
Winnebago County Deputy Clerk