

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

DATE: January 20, 2014

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Ken Robl, Highway Committee Chairman
Tim Hamblin, Highway Committee Member
Robert Warnke, Highway Committee Member
Dave Albrecht, Highway Committee Member
Tom Egan, Highway Committee Member
Ernie Winters, Highway Commissioner

ALSO

PRESENT: John Fink, Assistant to the County Executive
Lt. William Anthes, Winnebago Co. Sheriff's Dept.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robl at 9:00 A.M. A motion was made by Supervisor Warnke, seconded by Supervisor Hamblin to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2014 meeting as written. Motion carried 5-0.

Chairman Robl asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to address any agenda items at this time. There was no public input.

Commissioner Winters informed the committee that the WisDOT is trying to get any remnant parcels that were purchased by the State deeded back to them if they are not in use. Winnebago County currently has two such parcels; one is a .18 acre parcel, the second a 5.82 acre parcel on the USH 41 corridor near STH 26. These parcels are located on the southwest corner near the frontage road and were purchased in 1945 and 1952. Winnebago County has no use for the land. After discussion a motion was made by Supervisor Albrecht, seconded by Supervisor Egan to approve conveying the right of way of the .18 acre and 5.82 acre parcels of land back to the WisDOT. Motion carried 5-0. This item will be brought before the full County Board in February.

The Winter Highway Conference was discussed. Commissioner Winters stated there were several items of interest brought up during last week's Highway Conference.

- One item was the fact the Federal Highway Administration is considering reclassifying some of the state highways as Class A Highways. Currently USH 41 is scheduled to change to interstate status in 2015. If USH 41 is designated a Class A Highway it could mean changes for the Highway Department. A Class A highway designation requires maintenance coverage 24/7, which may mean additional staff and equipment would be necessary for the department. It could mean the Highway Department would be eligible to receive an additional \$250,000 annually in routine maintenance funding from the State to offset the cost of maintenance. Commissioner Winters stated this item will be discussed in the future when more information is known.
- The State's mowing policy was discussed. Commissioner Winters stated he would like to see the policy changed, stating the current policy limits the department to mowing only one time per year along state highways. For vision and safety issues he would like to see mowing be allowed more often. There will be discussions with the WisDOT on this issue.
- There is an effort by the State to be more consistent on winter maintenance. WisDOT would like to participate in a 26-state joint program where roads that run between states receive the same levels of service. Discussions will be held to determine how to achieve that goal and what criteria should be used. The WisDOT will come back with more details on this item in the future.
- Commissioner Winters distributed copies of a list of the legislative topics that were discussed at the conference. Some of the topics included the State budget, the Performance Based Maintenance project; frac sand mining; rewriting the LRIP program; increasing the speed limit; and a constitutional amendment to segregate the Transportation Fund.

General Operations:

Supervisor Albrecht questioned why the projects that Commissioner Winters is presenting to the County Board tomorrow night are less money than previous years. Mr. Winters explained that the department has less milling and paving jobs lined up for 2014 because the department has other jobs planned. If approved the department will be performing a project at County Parks, paving CTH T from CTH G to CTH GG, the intersection reconstruction of CTH I and CTH N, and the CTH BB and CB intersection job in conjunction with Outagamie County.

Several of the committee members stated they had conversations at the Winter Highway Conference regarding using compressed natural gas to fuel vehicles. Discussion followed. The consensus from the discussions held at the conference was that using CNG is not going to save the County money as originally thought because the mileage is poor. Mr. Winters stated Winnebago County is considering using propane not CNG, and research is ongoing by his department and the Sheriff's Department before any final decisions are made.

Supervisor Egan complimented Commissioner Winters on the letter he sent to Will Dorsey, WisDOT, regarding including STH 26 in Winnebago County in their safety improvement plan. Mr. Egan also commented that he did not think some of the roads plowed by Winnebago County were maintained adequately during a recent storm. Mr. Winters asked that in the future if there are any issues with maintenance that he be contacted right away so he can address it immediately.

Commissioner Winters distributed copies of a meeting notice. The WisDOT will be hosting a meeting regarding the WIS 441 project on Tuesday, January 21st at the Menasha Municipal Complex.

Commissioner Winters distributed copies of an article regarding Milwaukee using cheese brine to replace salt on roads. He also distributed copies of the recent copy of the Crossroads newsletter.

Chairman Robl asked how the department's salt supply is holding up. Commissioner Winters stated so far the supply is adequate but due to many winter weather occurrences so far, the supply continues to deplete.

A motion was made by Supervisor Albrecht, seconded by Supervisor Egan to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Laura Spanbauer
Highway Secretary