



MINUTES

Eau Claire County | Committee on Highway

Thursday, March 10, 2022 | 8:30 a.m.

WebEx Virtual Teleconference

Committee Members Present: Chair Steve Chilson, ~~Vice Chair Carl Anton~~, Supervisor Nathan Anderson, Supervisor Judy Gatlin, Supervisor Nathan Otto

Staff/Others Present: Highway Commissioner Jon Johnson, Assistant Commissioner Brian Spilde, Fiscal Associate IV Nicole Spaeth, Engineering Technician Lori Engen

- 1. Meeting called to order by Chairman Chilson at 8:30 a.m.**
- 2. Past committee meeting minutes (2/20/22) – Discussion/Action**
 - Supervisor Gatlin motioned to approve, Supervisor Anderson 2nd. Motion carried 4-0.
- 3. Public Comment – none**
- 4. Work Zone Awareness Week (April 11-15) Resolution of Support – Discussion/Action**
 - We've supported these awareness weeks in the past. WCHA provided a sample news release to announce the awareness week. Continued to see an increase in work zone fatalities despite decreased traffic during Covid years.
 - Supervisor Anderson motioned to pass the resolution off support. Motion carried 4-0.
- 5. Land Purchase Offer from Badger Refrigeration – Discussion/Action**
 - Offer is for property we own on the west side of Eau Claire adjacent to the Badger Refrigeration property. We do not use the 1 acre parcel they are offering to buy, and it would not impact our operations.
 - Discussed the process we take when we are given offers like this and the potential impact on the value of the remaining parcel. Offer would need to be substantial enough to justify splitting up the parcel.
 - Supervisor Otto motioned to have Jon further investigate this. Motion carried 4-0.
- 6. Staffing Update: Hiring Status of Open Position – Discussion/Action**
 - POSITION UPDATES: Fiscal Supervisor – one internal application so far. Have reached out to formal fiscal supervisor to contract him for consulting with some of the higher end accounting tasks. Engineer – posting just closed, Jon will review applications shortly. Surveyor currently being hired. Have 12 applications for open highway operator position. Tim Bowe was promoted to a lead, have a resignation from another operator, and Anita is retiring, so will have 3 positions to fill.
 - Committee will wait for further updates on hiring status at the next meeting.
- 7. Duties of Commissioner State Statute Review – Discussion/Action**
 - Reviewed the State Statute Review PowerPoint presentation including roles & duties of the Highway Committee and Highway Commissioner.
 - No action taken. Committee agreed this information is good to review each time a new committee is seated and when new committee members are added.

8. Formal Statement of Committee's New PASER Rating Goal – Discussion/Action

- Based on current trends and funding levels, having an overall PASER rating goal of 7 is possible. We can continue to increase our current PASER rating at the current funding level; with less local investment (~\$1m) we could maintain/slightly increase our rating depending on how much federal funding we can get. We are currently at 6.6 PASER rating. We could reduce our bonding by 500k and still achieve the rating of 7 if the vehicle registration funding stays intact. If we do move forward with the plan agreed on at the recent joint meeting, we will need full staffing to be able to achieve the goal.
- Discussed the ideal PASER rating to optimize our investment in maintaining our roads. If we maintain our roads at a 7 PASER rating the maintenance cost treatments are 20% lower than maintenance cost treatments at a rating of 6.
- As the county develops and grows, we need to continually re-evaluate our approach to maintaining certain roads as traffic flow increases in areas in addition to damage from fluctuations in weather.
- Supervisor Chilson motioned to set a PASER rating of 7 as the committee's goal for the county & highway department operations. Seconded by Supervisor Otto. Motion carried 4-0.

9. Highway Report

- Highway Commissioner Update – Jon Johnson
 - **WCHA:** Will be a west-central commissioners/committee members district meeting in Black River Falls on April 12. Jon will email that information out to the committee members.
 - **BIL:** Last night the house voted to extend federal gov't funding till Tuesday. Federal government will shut down on Friday if they don't resolve. If the bill (which has been signed into law) still needs to be appropriated. If they delay it too much, we won't be able to get 2022 projects appropriated at the state level. We are still moving forward with our funding programs, identifying projects to target.
 - **TRAINING:** Developing a "Past-Pandemic" training. Once we get fully staffed up we want to invest in training and development of our team.
- Operations Update – Brian Spilde
 - Working on brushing & clearing ops, ending in April. Lots of bids coming in for maintenance contracts. By the end of next week will have a idea of where we will be for bids and project costs.
 - Meeting with Farner next week to discuss how we can stretch the dollars for chip-sealing given the rise in oil prices.
 - Working with Union on their maintenance program for the summer.
 - Seasonal weight restrictions will be going on next week Tuesday the 15th, will be sending out to sheriff, townships, and parks/forest.
 - PBM request for bridge deck sealing we will have to do for the state this summer, as well as crack-filling in Hwy 37 from 94 to 85.
- Engineering Update – Jon Johnson
 - Four proposals out there for infrastructure funding in addition to our usual program. Have all back except 1 bridge proposal. Continuing to move forward with design on all projects.
 - Bridge inspections process – we have a consultant on for 2 years to inspect bridges. Finalized quality assurance plan.
 - Implementing some geo-grid technology on Highway V. Will help to maintain the roadway and with excavation.
 - We won't be able to do engineering interns this year with the lack of engineering staffing.
 - Bringing on quality control for engineering projects.
 - Commissioner's training in a couple of weeks in Steven's Point.

10. Review of Payment Vouchers (2/11/22 - 3/4/22)

- Supervisor Gatlin motioned to approve payment of vouchers. Motion carried 4-0.

11. Future Meeting Dates, Times, and Agenda Items – Discussion Action

- Next meeting: Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 7:30 am (**IN-PERSON MEETING**)
- Future agenda items:
 - Hiring update (surveyor, fiscal supervisor, engineer)

12. Meeting adjourned by Chairman Chilson at 10:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Spaeth

Nicole Spaeth, Fiscal Associate IV
Eau Claire County Highway Department

APPROVED 04/14/2022