



MINUTES

Eau Claire County | Committee on Highway

Thursday, June 9, 2022 | 7:30 a.m.

Eau Claire County Highway Department

Committee Members Present: Chair Steve Chilson, Supervisor Mark Beckfield, Supervisor Judy Gatlin, Supervisor Nick Smiar

Staff/Others Present: Highway Commissioner Jon Johnson, Assistant Commissioner Brian Spilde, Risk Manager Sonja Leenhouts, Administrative Associate III Natalie Szews

1. Meeting called to order by Chairman Chilson at 7:31 a.m.

2. Past committee meeting minutes (05/12/2022) – Discussion/Action

- Supervisor Gatlin motioned to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

3. Public Comment – none

4. Driveway Access Policy – Discussion/Action

- Recently had two driveway access applications with issues. While county driveway access policies work for most rural/county applications, there are situations where the current policies don't allow access to property based on the sight distance dimensions measured in the field.
 - Reviewed county highway access policies. Currently working with property owner in Pleasant Valley/Drammen on CTH F where the posted speed limit is 55 mph on the highway. However, traffic is going slower at 45 mph due to the curve and there is about 450 feet stopping distance, so it wouldn't meet the current guidelines.
 - Current policy is from the Facilities Development Manual (FDM), which is the design manual at the state and federal level.
 - Instead of having 55 mph listed in the guidelines, it was recommended to update guidelines to state drivers traveling at the observed speed limit must be able to see a three-foot-tall object from a distance according to Table 11-5 of the FDM and attach table to county guidelines.
 - Will need to investigate legalities of changing policy to prevent accident liability vs. future denial of access locations if policy remains the same.
- Supervisor Gatlin approved motion to update driveway access guidelines and bring final copy to next meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

5. BIL Grant Application - Update

- Applied for 6 county projects for grants, five for highways, one for a bridge. Also applied for two township projects for federal funding for Bridge Creek and Brunswick, and carbon reduction application for state and federal funding. State and federal funding is for 2023-2026. Will be another opportunity this fall to apply for other projects.
- Applied for funding for projects in 2023. These were not successful, and three projects were not funded. Not a lot of projects were awarded as applicants needed completed plans. There is discretionary funding at the federal level and the county will be applying for those grants. Will also apply for highway safety improvement funding to improve safety of roadways.

- Will be meeting with Secretary Thompson to redesign delivery approach of projects with federal funding. The state charges about 15% to review process; want to certify county to do this process or use consultants to save admin costs.
- The county is putting in estimates for projects years down the road, but with inflation unsure if funding will cover inflation. Fuel prices are predicted to have 35-40% increase for next.
- Hwy F project came to over twice the estimate, looking into cutting project in half. Unable to award some projects this year to prevent going over budget.
- Bridge projects have been approved; road projects not approved yet. Should know by end of July.
- County is assisting townships with various projects in Otter Creek, Pleasant Valley, Washington, Seymour, Union, Drammen, Brunswick, Cleghorn, Wilson, Fairchild, and Bridge Creek.

6. Highway Report

- Highway Commissioner Update – Jon Johnson
 - Jon attended and presented with Sergeant Staber on ATV ordinances at WCHA Road School last week. More counties are opening roads to ATV driving, and Eau Claire County needs to work with townships on getting ATV signing. There's an increased number of ATV fatalities since 2010 per DNR statistics.
- Operations Update – Brian Spilde
 - For state work, finished weed spraying program on eastern half of county and working on urban mowing. Working with state on 37 from 85 to 10, mowing down corridor so staking can be done. Also working with state to remove intersection of Weggen Rd. and Hwy 27 to make it safer for traveling.
 - For county work, doing patching and focusing on township work for Bridge Creek and Pleasant Valley.
 - Working on capital improvement projects for County Hwy V from O to VV (culverts and intersections). Working on CTH O culverts. On CTH V from 12 to W of Hillview there is poor subgrade and putting in a grid to stabilize soil base, will begin paving week of 6/20. Working on chip sealing and striping projects.
 - Spring safety training day was in April. There is also a Driving Rodeo with City of Eau Claire for snowplow safety at Carson Park in September.
- Engineering Update – Jon Johnson
 - New engineer Travis Pickering will be starting 06/20/22. Travis will be onboarding and helping with getting caught up on 2023 projects.
 - Engineering consultants in the area are all booked. Need to put projects on realistic timelines as things will take longer due to labor shortages. Many projects in 2023 and 2024 can be designed by county. Federal and state projects will still need to be completed by consultants.
 - Meeting in August with joint meeting with Finance for capital projects for 2023.

7. Review of Payment Vouchers (05/13/22 to 06/03/22)

- Supervisor Beckfield motioned to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

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

- Next meeting: Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 7:30 am
- Future agenda items:
 - Hwy T resolution for official mapping coming up. Needs to be approved at July County Board to meet deadline for Chippewa County townships.

9. Meeting adjourned by Chairman Chilson at 8:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Szews

Natalie Szews, Administrative Associate III
Eau Claire County Highway Department

APPROVED 07/14/22