



## MINUTES

**Eau Claire County | Joint Meeting  
Highway Committee | Committee on Finance & Budget  
Thursday, April 13, 2023 | 8:30 a.m.**

**Hybrid Meeting | Eau Claire County Agriculture and Resource Center  
227 1st St. W, Room AG 103/104 and WebEx Virtual Teleconference**

**Committee Members  
Present:**

Highway Committee Chair Steve Chilson, Vice-Chair Nathan Otto, Supervisor Larry Hoekstra, Supervisor Judy Gatlin, Supervisor Mark Beckfield.

Finance & Budget Chair Dane Zook, Supervisor Robin Leary, Supervisor Jim Dunning, and Supervisor John Folstad.

**Staff/Others Present:**

Highway Commissioner Jon Johnson, Assistant Commissioner Brian Spilde, Engineer Travis Pickering, Administrative Associate III Natalie Szews, Risk Manager Sonja Leenhouts, Fiscal Supervisor Kyle Welbes, Corporation Counsel Sharon McIlquham, Finance Director Norb Kirk, Supervisor Nancy Coffey, Senior Accounting Manager Amy Weiss, Administrator Kathryn Schauf, Supervisor Connie Russell.

**1. Meeting called to order by Chairman Chilson at 8:30 a.m.**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Public Comment –None**

**4. Highway Department Funding**

- Reviewed preventative maintenance planning and road ratings.
- Discussed funding sources for Highway Department.
  - i. Due to inflation and decrease in General Transportation Aid (GTA), looking at needing \$400,000 for road maintenance next year.
- **Vehicle Registration Fee – Discussion/Action**
  - i. Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) has been used to complete 16 road projects throughout the County and has saved the County on interest from borrowing.
  - ii. Discussed how the VRF went into effect in 2019 to raise the County's PASER rating with the understanding that it wasn't going to replace any of the Highway Department's budget or funding. Tax levy revenue has decreased every year since the VRF was implemented. If VRF is removed, the funding will need to be replaced with levy funding or capital borrowing.
  - iii. Discussed the option of going to referendum for \$8-9 million that's specifically allocated for highways so there is a steady source of funding each year and eliminating the VRF.
  - iv. Important for the Highway Department to have a consistent level of investment so there isn't a substantial cost loss with engineering projects that can't be done. The Finance Committee will be looking at the debt strategy in

their next meeting. Supervisor Otto motioned to have a follow-up joint Highway and F&B Committee meeting to discuss debt strategy and long-term funding goals. All in favor.

**5. Future Meeting Dates/Times/Agenda Items**

- Will be having a follow-up joint committee meeting.

**6. Adjourn at 9:46 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Natalie Szews*

Natalie Szews, Administrative Associate III  
Eau Claire County Highway Department

**APPROVED 05/11/23**