



MINUTES

Eau Claire County | Committee on Highway

Thursday, November 9, 2023 | 7:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Eau Claire County Highway Department - 5061 US Hwy 53, Room 103, Eau Claire, WI

WebEx Virtual Teleconference

Committee Members Present: Chair Steve Chilson, Dane Zook, Larry Hoekstra, Mark Beckfield, ~~Nancy Coffey (ex-officio)~~

Staff/Others Present: Highway Commissioner Jon Johnson, Engineer Travis Pickering, Administrative Associate III Natalie Szews, Risk Manager Sonja Leenhouts, Corporation Counsel Sharon McIlquham, Sheriff Dave Riewestahl

1. **Meeting called to order by Chairman Chilson at 7:30 a.m.**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Review/Approval of Past Committee Meeting Minutes (10/12/23) – Discussion/Action**
 - Supervisor Beckfield made a motion to approve. Motion carried 4-0.
4. **Public Comment**
 - Brad Merkel, Charlene Lynam, Kim Lynam, Todd Nelson, and Jim Larsen were in attendance to ask questions regarding the Whitetail Woods Development during the Highway Commissioner Update.
5. **ATV/UTV Policy – Discussion/Action**
 - ATV/UTV routes were discussed at the Towns Association meeting on October 30th.
 - UTV/ATV Route Map draft proposal would open county roads with an average daily traffic (ADT) number of 750 or lower, while county roads with an ADT of 751 or more would require an application that would be brought forward to Highway Committee to give reasoning for route. The county roads in urban areas would require a UTV/ATV route application.
 - The draft proposal would need to be updated so the ADT numbers don't overlap, and some roads will need traffic counts.
 - Next stage would be working internally with departments and inviting towns/ATV clubs to future Highway Committee meeting to discuss concerns.
 - Sheriff Riewestahl advised that ATV/UTV usage has picked up over the years, but there hasn't been a serious problem with car on ATV/UTV accidents.
 - Recreational Officer Deputy Mark Bull would work with Highway and Parks & Forest Departments to address any concerns with ATV/UTV routes.
 - If this policy goes forward, all the roads will need to be signed before they can be traveled on. A sign implementation plan will need to be developed and added to the budget.

- Can look at if ATV/UTV clubs can share in sign costs. There is also the potential for grant funding.
- Common ATV/UTV issues involve headlights, speed, and seatbelts.
- Travis Pickering suggested adding to the policy that the Highway Department has the discretion to deny ATV/UTV access to roads.
- Supervisor Zook made a motion to continue with the ATV/UTV study to clarify the roads and bring the final report to the Highway Committee. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Damage to Road by Animal Drawn Vehicle – Discussion/Action

- Jon Johnson spoke to Town Chairs in Fairchild and Bridge Creek regarding studded horseshoes causing damage to roads. There is currently more concern with oversized vehicles in Fairchild. The Town of Bridge Creek already has ordinances regarding horse drawn vehicles and is working with the City of Augusta to enforce them.
- Eau Claire County already has an ordinance in place, but it's very difficult to enforce.
- Steel wheeled wagons also cause damage to roads, such as on CTH AF you can see wheel tracks.
- The County wouldn't be able to afford to create gravel shoulders for wagons.
- Someone in Corporation Counsel office will investigate the issue further.
- Need to communicate with Town Boards so they can discuss the issue with Amish leadership.
- No action taken.

7. Highway Report

• Highway Commissioner Update – Jon Johnson

i. Whitetail Woods Development on CTH SS/Nine Mile Creek Rd.

- Put together a summary of the analysis needed. Westbrook Consultants will do an existing analysis and a predictive analysis for a 500-unit development.
- The developer has not finalized their plans yet, but the development could have a total of 250 to 500 units.
- Corre Engineering has reviewed the capacity of the bridge and there are no concerns.
- The next phase will be looking at alternative highway layouts based on the proposed development.
- There should be an update on the development at the February Highway Committee meeting.
- The ownership of CTH SS and the CTH KB bridge could be transferred to the City of Altoona if there are substantial investments that need to be made to the road.

ii. Grant applications and Program Review

- Jon Johnson went over the different grant programs that are available.
- Supervisor Hoekstra suggested having someone in the County that focuses on grant writing, so funding opportunities are not missed.
- Supervisor Zook proposed having a data analyst position for the County.

iii. Operational Analysis Update

- The County needs to start looking at paying for educational programs for existing employees.
- The new HR training coordinator may be able to help provide educational programs.
- There are currently no incentives to advance employee education.

- Will be looking at doing an operational analysis/audit of positions within the Highway Department to see how the department is doing.

- **Operations Update – Jon Johnson**

- i. October was focused on training staff. Invested in training staff on new facilities, procedures, winter readiness, and safety.

- **Engineering Update – Travis Pickering**

- i. Bridge grant application was submitted for the Town of Lincoln bridge.
 - ii. Assisted with selecting STP road projects to submit for funding.
 - iii. Reviewed 2023 and 2024 capital projects and budgets.
 - iv. Will continue evaluating and updating 5-year CIP plan.
 - v. Had culvert evaluations and is seeing more culvert issues, especially with concrete culverts. Running into culvert joint separation problems, sinkholes in road shoulders, and erosion issues due to improperly installed culverts.
 - vi. Surveying for 2024 projects is almost done.
 - vii. Updating PASER ratings, which should be submitted by next week. Can go over PASER ratings at the January Highway Committee meeting.

8. Review of Payment Vouchers (10/06/23 to 10/27/23) – Discussion /Action

- Supervisor Hoekstra made a motion to approve. Motion carried 4-0.

9. Future Meeting Dates/Times/Agenda Items

- Future agenda items:
 - Election of Highway Committee Vice-Chair.
- Next meeting: Thursday, December 14 at 7:30 a.m.

10. Adjourn at 8:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Szews

Natalie Szews, Administrative Associate III
Eau Claire County Highway Department

APPROVED 12/14/23