

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

DATE: February 19, 2024

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: David Albrecht, Highway Committee Chairman
Chuck Farrey, Highway Committee Member
Donald Nussbaum, Highway Committee Member
Ralph Harrison, Highway Committee Member
Tom Egan, Highway Committee Member
Robert Doemel, Highway Commissioner

ALSO
PRESENT: Steve Binder, Winnebago County Board

1. Chairman Albrecht called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. A motion was made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Harrison to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2023, meeting as written. Motion carried 5-0.
3. Chairman Albrecht asked for input from the public on agenda items. There was none.
4. A project was discussed along CTH I from W. Waukau Avenue to W. Ripple Avenue. Commissioner Doemel reminded the Committee that he brought this item to them a few months earlier. He stated that when he originally brought this forward, the resolution was missing one word and needed to be edited. He stated that the project will consist of diamond grinding the existing concrete pavement and creating a new section as a three-lane roadway with two travel lanes and a middle turn lane, bike lane, storm sewer and curb and gutter. He said currently the road has a 45-mph speed limit. After the design study was completed, the conclusion is that the speed limit will have to be reduced from 45 mph to 40 mph to meet the criteria. Right now, no additional right of way is necessary to complete the project. With committee approval, this will go to the county board for approval. Supervisor Farrey stated that he has some concerns with this. He asked if this is considered an urban project. He stated that he has always been very concerned with this type of project, getting rid of the ditches which provide adequate pollution reduction specific to MS4. Supervisor Farrey also stated that historically the county pays for the project, then the city will annex the highway in, or we'll give it to them. Commissioner Doemel stated that he is not aware of any boundary agreements with City of Oshkosh and that he spoke to the Land & Water Department, who had no issues at this time. He noted that in the past there has been major flooding in this area near Basler's. Most of the water comes from I41, through the airport, then floods this location. The construction along CTH I is planned for 2025. After discussion, a motion was made by Chairman Albrecht to approve lowering the speed limit on CTH I from W. Waukau Avenue to Hartland Road from 45 mph to 40 mph. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Egan and carried 4-1. Supervisor Farrey voted nay.
5. Commissioner Doemel updated the committee on the Highway Department front office renovation project. He stated that the bids received for the renovation came in higher than anticipated. He spoke with Mike Elder, Facilities Director, who informed him the funds are short for this project. Mike will meet with the County Executive to look for the additional funding. It was determined that funding is approximately \$225,000 short. The Facilities Dept. is in charge, and they are going to discuss at their next meeting. Supervisor Egan stated that this happens too often, that bids are not processed for months or years, and by the time they are, the bids come in higher than anticipated. Supervisor Egan stated this has been at least two years since this was first addressed. Commissioner Doemel stated that he did not see a whole lot of delay in this process, but stated the bidding process in general is complicated. The committee asked what is included with this renovation. Commissioner Doemel stated this is the front office renovation only. He stated that originally, they wanted to add a conference/training room but that the city permitting and addressing the ponds would have delayed the project up to 18 months and the health of the employees is more important.

6. Upcoming legislative items were discussed. Commissioner Doemel stated that there are a few items being proposed that affect the Highway Department:
 - Senate Bill 591 – requires a minimum of 30 minutes of instruction for driver's education for work zone safety. Commissioner Doemel thinks this is a fantastic idea.
 - Senate Bill 614 – proposal would allow local governments to install cameras in work zones to capture video and photographic evidence for accidents. This would be another tool to make using videos legal in a court of law.
 - Assembly Bill 1039 – revolves around the ATV/UTV legislation that would eliminate the requirement that a highway have a speed limit of 35 mph or less. Commissioner Doemel stated that personally he has concerns with this for safety reasons.

7. Commissioner Doemel informed the committee about a bridge program initiated by the WisDOT. He stated that potentially there is 12.5 million dollars available to inventory structures that are greater than six feet, but less than 20 feet. Anything wider than 20' is considered a bridge and needs an annual bridge inspection. He stated there is a great need by the towns and county to have these structures inventoried. The Highway Dept has done theirs for years. The department has two bridge inspectors now on staff and will have a third later this year to be certified. Right now, Winnebago County has 1,416 potential structures. The towns and cities can do the inventory on their own, have the Highway Department do it, or hire a consultant. The WisDOT will pay \$100 per structure if it qualifies. If an inspection is needed, the DOT will pay \$350 each for the bridge inspection by a licensed bridge inspector. In the future, if it is determined that corrections are needed on the structures, there may be federal or state funding available. Commissioner Doemel stated he thinks this is a great idea going forward to have everything identified. He will keep the committee informed.

8. The following were reported as general operations:
 - Crews: Commissioner Doemel informed the committee that the Traffic Operations Supervisor retired on 2/12/2024. A candidate from within was hired to fill that position and will be starting on March 4th. Commissioner Doemel stated there were several good people who interviewed, and it shows that the crew know a lot about what they're doing, and it's good to see that people are interested in moving up. Interviews will be held to fill the foreman position that was vacated. Also, the department hired three mechanics and made an offer to an equipment operator 1. This fills all the open positions at the department after operating short staffed for a long time. Currently, of all the employees at the Highway Department, 50% have five years or less of time in. Commissioner Doemel stated he feels that the pay increases helped to bring in talent.
 - Equipment Arrival: A 55-ton heavy haul trailer was recently delivered. We also received the 25-ton trailer that was ordered two years ago, and a one-ton dump truck. This year there will be a hot box and skid steer bid out, a couple foreman's trucks, and winter equipment to complete the chassis received earlier.
 - Supervisor Egan stated that the Highway Department did a super job cleaning out one side of the ditch on Witzel Avenue and the people out there appreciate it.

9. The next meeting of the Highway Committee will be held on March 18, 2024.

10. A motion was made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Egan to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.