

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

DATE: October 16, 2023

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: Mary Anne Mueller, Corporation Counsel
Paul Kaiser, Director of Finance

1. Chairman Albrecht called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. A motion was made by Supervisor Harrison, seconded by Supervisor Farrey to approve the minutes of the September 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. Commissioner Doemel updated the committee members on the proposed 2024 budget. He stated that there have been significant increases under the Highway Services and Capital Improvement sections for next year. The budget numbers consider increases in energy and fuel costs, and material prices. The cost to rent equipment, such as winter loaders, has gone way up from previous years. Wages will increase, but since Highway is an enterprise fund, most costs will be direct billed back to the customer. Commissioner Doemel informed the committee that during COVID many jobs for the State of Wisconsin were cancelled. For budget year 2024, it is projected that they will resume the epoxy overlays, which will mean additional revenue from the state. Commissioner Doemel stated that Capital Equipment is starting to become available, but costs have all increased. He is hoping that next year prices will begin stabilizing on culverts and other materials. He informed the committee that the County Executive did not make any changes to this proposed budget as presented.
5. A discussion regarding an Adopt-A-Roundabout program was held. Commissioner Doemel provided a copy of the application and terms from Outagamie County as an example, as well as photos of roundabouts. He stated that he spoke with Corporation Counsel regarding this issue. He is concerned for the safety of people working in these areas, as traffic control is different with traffic coming from four directions. He is also concerned about the proper signs and what liability this could mean for Winnebago County. Mary Anne Mueller addressed the committee. She stated that she reached out to other counties on this matter but received no replies. She read an email from the WisDOT who stated that the state will not consider these Adopt-A-Roundabouts due to safety concerns. Ms. Mueller stated that she is not aware of any liability claims, but she will reach out to our insurance carrier to see if there are any claims of this type pending. She will also reach out to the Sheriff's Department to get their opinion. This item will be addressed at a future committee meeting.
6. Commissioner Doemel received a request from the Town of Vinland to add CTH T, from CTH G south to Maxwell Road to the approved list of ATV/UTV routes. He stated that most of the roads in the area have too high of traffic counts, but this section does meet the requirements and will tie in with existing roads in the town. Traffic crash data was analyzed and approved for this area. After discussion, a motion was made by Supervisor Farrey to approve CTH T from CTH G to Maxwell Road as an UTV/ATV route. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Harrison and carried 5-0.

7. Commissioner Doemel updated the committee on the CTH E ditch issue in the Town of Algoma. He stated that he intends to have the culverts replaced as part of a capital project in the future. A capital project could include installing storm sewer, tiling, and repairing ditches. If a CIP is not approved, the culverts can still be replaced. Commissioner Doemel stated that before the next meeting, he will try to get prices to replace the culverts and find out when the last time the culverts were inspected. In the meantime, he stated that the Highway Department will do ditching out there as their schedule allows, after the paving has been completed for the season. Supervisor Egan stated he feels this is the county's responsibility since a previous commissioner signed a permit allowing the construction of the Sanitary District. Commissioner Doemel stated that a conversation needs to be held with the Sanitary District before digging around their pipes.
8. The CTH T/Pioneer Road project was discussed. Commissioner Doemel stated that after his last meeting he was told that the contractor would be putting a schedule together to finish the project. Last week he was informed by a representative from Radtke that the contractor backed out of the project, and they are liquidating their equipment. He was told the representative would speak to the company owner and reach out on Friday, Oct. 13th. To date, he has not heard anything back from Radtke Contractors so he will call them. Supervisor Farrey asked what kind of consequences the contractor would suffer for not completing the job. Commissioner Doemel stated that he intends to speak with Corporation Counsel on that issue. It was asked if the Highway Department can finish the project if the contractor does not. Mr. Doemel stated that he's hoping the contractor will fulfill their obligations.
9. The following were reported as general operations:
 - Finalizing Maintenance Projects: Commissioner Doemel reported that the project on CTH JJ has been finished. The department is completing a few paving jobs for townships. There are also a couple culvert cuts and miscellaneous small paving projects remaining. Commissioner Doemel informed the committee about an incident that happened recently while the crews were working along CTH "F". A disgruntled property owner started harassing the highway crew and threatened them with a firearm. The Sheriff's Department was called. Mr. Doemel stated this shows the reality of where we are in this country, and it is very concerning. When the crews reported back to finish the job, a sheriff deputy was onsite for their protection.
 - Winter Truck Prep: Commissioner Doemel stated that the department has been installing the equipment on a few trucks for winter. The state trucks are done first and must be together and calibrated prior to November for WisDOT staff inspection.
 - State Salt Brine Maker: The state purchased a new salt brine maker to replace our outdated unit. It should be delivered here in the next week or two. The new unit will have triple the capacity of the current unit. The old brine maker will be kept until the new one is up and running. At that time, it may be sold as used online.

The next meeting of the Highway Committee will be held on Monday, November 20, 2023.

A motion was made by Supervisor Egan, seconded by Supervisor Harrison to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Laura Spanbauer
Administrative Associate