

Legislative Committee
January 24, 2011
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, James Kozokowski, Joanne Sievert, Tom Widener, Harvey Rengstorf, Tom Ellis, Kathy Lennon, Nancy Barker and Tim Hamblin

Also
Present: County Executive Mark Harris, Sue Ertmer – County Clerk, Julie Pagel – Register of Deeds, Mary Krueger – County Treasurer, Mark Harris – County Executive, Representative Spanbauer, Marlene Mielke – Senator Kohl's Office, John Haase – Highway Commissioner, Debra and Larry Last – Citizens and Gregg Underheim – Representative Petri's Office

Excused: Chuck Farrey, Jerry Finch and David Albrecht
Absent: Patrick O'Brien and Jef Hall

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Kline had those present introduce themselves.

There was a motion made to approve the minutes from the November 22, 2010 meeting. This motion was seconded. . Carried by Voice Vote.

5. WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION: Representative Spanbauer

Representative Spanbauer told the committee that the main focus of the last few weeks in Madison has been jobs. A series of job bills were passed to help initiate new growth and jobs in the state. State shared revenue is a big topic. Many communities rely heavily on state shared revenue. Governor Walker made it clear to the legislature that there were be many cuts in state spending. Representative Spanbauer feels that the State Voter I.D. bill will be passed, and that the Prevailing Wage issue will be over turned. Mr. Spanbauer took questions and comments from the committee.

6. UPDATE FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Mark Harris

Executive Harris stated that Winnebago County is currently 1.3% below our operating rate limit. He feels that real estate values for the county are going to drop more than 1.3%. If this happens, we will have to cut the levy. We are not the only county in this predicament – Columbia County has already cut their levy significantly for their 2011 budget. Fond du Lac County is within .04% of their limit. The state does not give out the numbers for equalized value until August. This is too late to start the budget process. It needs to be well underway by that time. The state is looking at giving the counties tools to control costs. This means ways of cutting compensation. What has been suggested is that the State may put in a QEO. (Qualified Economic Offer) What this basically means is that if the pay package increased by the QEO, means you couldn't lose at mediation or arbitration. Rumors are the QEO will be set at whatever the levy freeze amount is. The maximum you raise your property tax at, is the maximum you could be forced to pay on an increased contract. With rising health care costs and pension costs rising, this would mean decreased take home pay for each and every year the QEO was in effect. If the state is going to balance their budget, the counties will be taking some cuts. What Executive Harris is worried about is taking back shared revenue that we will have no way to make up, since most of Winnebago County's employees are making some contributions toward health care and their pensions. Most towns have few full time employees and are working with bare bones budgets now. They will have no way to recoup any of this money. Mr. Harris feels that any substantial cur in revenue sharing will push the City of Menasha into bankruptcy. Executive Harris took questions and comments from the committee.

7. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON A RESOLUTION OPPOSING A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROVIDING FOR APPOINTMENT INSTEAD OF ELECTION FOR CERTAIN COUNTY OFFICIALS.

Sue Ertmer told the committee that the Associations representing the Clerks, Register of Deeds, and Treasurers have become aware of legislation that would have these offices appointed instead of elected. There is also some legislation being circulated in Milwaukee County to combine these offices. This would require a change of the state constitution. Questions and comments were taken from the 3 elected officials that would be affected from the committee. After discussion with the committee, B. WIngren

moved and it was seconded by K. Lennon to reject approval of this amendment. AYES – 9, NAY – 3
Carried

After further discussion, it was realized that there was confusion on how the amendment was stated. Pat Brennand moved and Bill Wingren seconded to reconsider this resolution. AYES – 12, NAYS – 0 Carried

After further discussion – it was decided to amend the resolution. Pat Brennand moved and it was seconded to oppose the constitutional amendment. AYES – 11 NAYS – 1 Carried

8. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING RESCINDING THE CHANGES IN THE PREVAILING WAGE LAWS.

John Haase, Highway Commissioner told the committee that the ceiling for the Prevailing Wage Law ceiling needs to be put back to \$234,000 from \$25,000. Mr. Haase gave several examples of how this law has affected Winnebago County. After discussion with the committee, T. Widener moved and K. Lennon seconded to support this resolution. AYES – 11 NAYS – 1. Carried.

At this point in the meeting, Ken Robl presented to Joanne Sievert a plaque in honor of her years of service to the Highway Committee. The committee gave Ms Sievert a round of applause.

MARLENE MIELKE – Senator Kohl's Office

Jobs are the priority for the Senator. The contract the Senator Kohl was able to help with will create a 1000 or more jobs for Marinette Marine. Over the next two years, this congress will be working on a massive road bill. There will be much debate on this and the smaller towns will be greatly impacted.

GREGG UNDERHEIM – Congress Petri's Office

Mr. Underheim discussed with the committee about redoing the Air Traffic Control system. It is now land based and will be moving to satellite based. He also discussed with the committee regarding Health Care Reform.

NEXT MEETING: February 28, 2011

Tom Widener moved and it was seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Bill Wingren
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office