

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

DATE: February 18, 2019

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: David Albrecht, Highway Committee Chairman
Tom Egan, Highway Committee Member
Chuck Farrey, Highway Committee Member
Raymond Palonen, Highway Commissioner
John Fink, Assistant to the County Executive
Doug Weihert, Highway Shop Manager

EXCUSED: Ken Robl, Highway Committee Member
Robert Warnke, Highway Committee Member

Chairman Albrecht called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. A motion was made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Egan to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2019 meeting as written. Motion carried 3-0.

Chairman Albrecht asked if there was any public input on the agenda. There was none.

Commissioner Palonen informed the Committee that CBS Squared cancelled their presentation today due to illness.

Commissioner Palonen informed the Committee about tow plows and how they work. He stated counties in the SW part of the state started using them about 6-7 years ago. Today Brown County has five they use on their interstate system. Last week our Shop Supervisor and one of the Highway Supervisors visited Brown County to see theirs in action. The tow plows allow the driver to cover more lane miles, plowing about 2.5 lanes at one time, which would provide a better level of service to the traveling public. Commissioner Palonen stated he believes that purchasing a tow plow for approximately \$100,000 would be a better investment than a new truck and winter equipment that costs about \$300,000. He stated the tow plows can be fitted with a salt hopper and brine tank as well. The Committee watched videos of the tow plows in operation. Commissioner Palonen stated that he has money remaining in his 2019 equipment budget from items that came in under budget that will be sufficient to cover the cost of a tow plow. He stated that he would like to purchase one on a trial basis and that the new truck that has been ordered will only need a small adjustment to make it compatible. Mr. Palonen stated he already spoke to County Executive Harris who is favor of trying one. After discussion the committee members felt since the money is available in the equipment budget they are in favor of Commissioner Palonen pursuing it.

The 2019 equipment bids received to date were discussed. Commissioner Palonen distributed a hand-out showing the four items ordered so far. They are:

1. One 2020 Western Star Tri-Axle Chassis
2. The winter equipment that will be installed on the chassis (plow, wing, spreader, etc.)
3. A Caterpillar wheeled excavator
4. A Volvo rubber pad mini-excavator

The total for all four items came in under budget.

General Operations:

- A press release was distributed last week regarding the road salt shortage in the county. Due to the severe weather this season the salt docks were slow in distributing salt. Many neighboring counties were also concerned about the low supplies. Since the press release, salt quantities have been increased.
- Supervisor Farrey asked if it would be a good idea to add additional signs on the Butte Des Morts Bridge warning of blowing snow. Commissioner Palonen said that according to the WisDOT the winter severity is 33% higher so far than the last several years. Commissioner Palonen indicated that illuminated signs are already on the highway warning motorists of weather conditions.
- Commissioner Palonen distributed an outline of the 2019 County Trunk Highway System funds through the end of January. Approximately 34.38% of the winter budget has been expended, and 7.2% of non-winter funds expended. With several months of winter left now and the last couple months at the end of 2019, he is guarded whether there will be enough funds remaining in the non-winter fund to cover any overages in the winter budget.
- Supervisor Egan questioned if the department is adding maintenance for another municipality, if they will have enough staff and equipment. Commissioner Palonen stated he still intends to ask for additional staff during the regular budget cycle.

The next regular meeting of the Highway Committee will be held on Monday, March 4, 2019.

A motion was made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Egan to adjourn. Motion carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Laura Spanbauer
Administrative Associate