

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

DATE: October 18, 2021

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: David Albrecht, Highway Committee Chairman
Chuck Farrey, Highway Committee Member
Joel Rasmussen, Highway Committee Member
Tom Eagan, Highway Committee Member
Robert Doemel, Highway Commissioner

Chairman Albrecht called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A motion was made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Rasmussen to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2021 meeting as written. Motion carried 4-0.

Chairman Albrecht asked for input on agenda items from the public. There was none.

Doug Weihert, Shop Supervisor, updated the committee on the status of the Highway Department equipment:

- He stated that the two trucks that went in to have the longsills replaced were completed and have been returned. He also noted that the two new units that were ordered right after the first of the year, one single axle and one tri-axle cab and chassis, were recently received. These will be sent to have the winter equipment and dump boxes installed as soon as possible. He is expecting it will be April or May of 2022 before they are totally complete.
- He also reiterated how much of a problem getting equipment in a timely fashion has become the last year or two. Anything requested for 2022 cannot be ordered until after the first of the year per purchasing rules, and will not likely be received until 2023.
- Mr. Weihert reported that the Force AVL/GPS controls needed updating since AT&T switched all their service from 3G to 4G. These are used for communication by the trucks. This involved pulling all the control units out and taking them to Waukesha for updating. This update should last until 2030. After his report, Mr. Weihert left the meeting.

Commissioner Doemel gave an update on the CTH "Y" project. He stated that highway crews have completed laying the binder course on CTH "Y". They are currently finishing some paving at the Sheriff's Office and Solid Waste Department. After those projects are finished, the paving will be completed on CTH "Y". If the weather cooperates, the paving is expected to be completed this week. Next week shouldering, striping and signing will be completed. That will conclude the major paving projects for this year. The committee asked for input on the selected contractor. Commissioner Doemel stated that there were some minor issues to work through with the contractor. He also stated that since this was the first block grant project, a few additional steps had to be completed.

The following were reported as general operations:

- ❖ Commissioner Doemel reported that the personnel shortage is still a problem. He noted that there are three truck driver/laborer positions open. One that remains unfilled, one recent retirement, and one resignation. Mr. Doemel also wants to fill the Bridge and Engineering Manager position that he previously held, as soon as possible. He also noted that one of the supervisors is out for a medical issue involving surgery. He stated that if additional personnel are not added soon, it could adversely affect the service provided by the department to current customers, including the towns.
- ❖ Mold issues at the Highway Department were discussed. Commissioner Doemel stated that air purifiers and an air scrubber are being utilized. After testing, he was informed that they are making an improvement in the air quality. A clean up of the building is still necessary to remove the mold.

Commissioner Doemel stated that before doing any building repairs, he will be working with the Facilities Director regarding a building renovation. This item was originally planned and budgeted for, but was put on hold earlier this year. Currently the upstairs meeting room is non-ADA compliant, and only a freight elevator exists. A plan was brought forward to have the office conference room enlarged to host public informational meetings, as well as staff training. There is also insufficient truck parking in the back shop. The two tow plows do not fit into any stalls and must be parked in the isles. This causes issues when the big plows are not needed and many trucks have to be moved around, causing a delay in response time. The heating and cooling system of the Highway Department is obsolete and has caused continual issues since the building was constructed. Commissioner Doemel stated that money has been approved for a feasibility study of the building, and a purchase order issued. He feels that professionals are best suited to make the determination of what is needed. There have been no upgrades to the highway building in 25 years.

- ❖ Supervisor Farrey asked if the street light issue on CTH "A" at CTH "GG" has been addressed. Commissioner Doemel stated that he has a call into the WisDOT and is waiting on a reply.
- ❖ Supervisor Rasmussen advised the committee that the temporary stop lights at STH 21 and Leonard Point Road will be coming down soon. The WisDOT did approve a roundabout in the future for this location.

The term of service for the Highway Commissioner was discussed. There will be a resolution presented to the County Board tomorrow night to have the Highway Commissioner serve at the pleasure of the County Executive. Approval of that resolution will even the playing field with other department heads in the county. This is considered only a language adjustment.

The next regular meeting of the Highway Committee will be on November 15, 2021.

A motion was made by Supervisor Egan, seconded by Supervisor Rasmussen to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Laura Spanbauer
Administrative Associate