

Legislative Committee
April 27, 2015
James P. Coughlin Center

Present: Bill Wingren, Chairman; Tom Ellis, Tom Egan, Paul Eisen, Ken Robl, Larry Smith, Jerry Finch, David Albrecht, Robert Warnke

Also

Present: Sen. Rick Gudex; Rep. Amanda Stuck; Rep. Michael Schraa; Mark Harris, County Executive; Supervisors Nancy Barker and Mike Norton; John Casper, President/CEO, Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Wingren and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Supervisor Finch and seconded by Supervisor Egan to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2015 meeting. Carried by voice vote.

Resolution: Oppose legislation that would eliminate personal property taxes and computer aid payments to local governments:

Executive Mark Harris brought this resolution to the Legislative Committee because of the negative financial impact it would have on Winnebago County and other local units of government. Mr. Harris explained that Winnebago County receives \$2.4 Million in personal property taxes each year. If these funds are eliminated, that amount would have to be shifted to property taxes or eliminated from the county's budget, which is difficult when budgets are already tight.

Senator Gudex agreed with Executive Harris's numbers, but feels that personal property taxes are an unnecessary burden, especially on businesses. However, because of how these taxes impact municipalities, they will be very difficult to get rid of them. Senator Gudex doesn't believe that this is the right time to try to eliminate these taxes, and because of the way the bill is written—if eliminated, they would be shifted to property taxes—Governor Walker wouldn't sign the bill if it did passed.

Rep. Schraa agrees that these taxes should be repealed and signed on to the bill because it wouldn't shift these funds to real estate taxes, but take the money from General Purpose Revenue (GPR). However, he also feels that this may not be the best time to make that shift.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Supervisor Finch, seconded by Supervisor Egan, to support this Resolution and send it to the County Board for action. Ayes: 9 – Wingren, Ellis, Egan, Eisen, Robl, Smith, Finch, Albrecht and Warnke. Nays: 0. CARRIED.

Resolution: Seek Rate Increase Funding Sources to Avoid Further Medicaid Rate Cuts to Most Nursing Homes:

Supervisor Ellis brought this resolution forward on behalf of the Park View Health Center Committee and explained how the proposed state budget's lack of Medicaid rate increases for nursing homes will negatively impact Wisconsin's nursing homes. Supervisor Ellis explained that this resolution urges the Wisconsin Legislature to increase the nursing home bed tax rate and the Medicaid rate in both years of the state's budget.

Sen. Gudex commended Morgan Hinkley, Park View Health Center Administrator, on her diligence as an advocate in Madison for Winnebago County. He also explained that until revenue numbers become available in May, this part of the state budget is very "fluid". He has submitted an amendment to this bill that would increase the acuity rate by 1.5%, but doesn't feel it will be possible to get both a bed tax increase and an acuity rate increase.

After additional discussion, a motion was made by Supervisor Finch, seconded by Supervisor Ellis, to support this Resolution and send it to the County Board for action. Ayes: 8 – Wingren, Ellis, Egan, Robl, Smith, Finch, Albrecht and Warnke. Nays: 1 – Eisen. CARRIED. .

Outagamie County Resolution Pertaining to Microbeads:

Rep. Stuck reported that this issue has already been taken up and passed by the state assembly and senate and signed by the Governor. Chairman Wingren stated that since this has already been passed by the state no action will be taken by this committee.

Updates on Legislative Matters:

Sen. Gudex presented information on the following issues:

- Joint Finance committee is waiting for the May release of revenue numbers.
- Working on the roll out of the 24/7 bill.
- There is a push for new drunk driving laws with mandatory sentencing and felony convictions. Sen. Gudex does not agree with these recommendations because it takes sentencing options away from judges. Supports 24/7 bill because it treats alcoholism as an illness and provides people with treatment alternatives and not just jail time.
- Working on eight Tax Increment Financing (TIF) bills.
- Watching potential shore land zoning and farmland preservation legislation.

Rep. Amanda Stuck presented information on the following issues:

- Sits on the Jobs and Economy Committee. They've had an information meeting on the potential use of drones by businesses in Wisconsin.
- Housing and Real Estate Committee proposed legislation that would change regulations for camping units.

Rep. Michael Schraa presented information on the following issues:

- Waiting for revenue numbers.
- Their work on local transportation aids and local transportation assistance has been postponed until revenue numbers are available.
- Transportation Fund – estimated ending fund balance was \$11 million, but the actual balance was \$84 Million.
 - Resulting from higher motor fuel tax revenues and lower debt service costs.
- Depending on the revenue numbers, general consensus is to fully fund K-12 education at a cost of \$130 Million. Other places where money is needed—UW system and transportation.
- Potential “revenue uppers”—prevailing wage; reinstate gas tax indexing—not likely. Governor Walker wouldn't support them because they raise taxes.
- Hope to have all executive sessions on the budget completed by the end of May.

Executive Harris discussed the following state budget issues and they're impact on Winnebago County:

- Money has been put back in the state's budget to pick up deer carcasses along highways.
- Removed language that would transfer property assessment responsibilities to counties.
- Monitoring nursing home reimbursement and proposed elimination of the acuity premium; proposed changes to IRIS, ADRC and Family Care.
- Explained that other actions taken by the Joint Finance Committee have benefitted Winnebago County.

Correspondence:

- Supervisor Eisen serves on the WCA Judicial & Public Safety Committee. He gave an update on the state budget and its impact on the courts and public safety.
- Supervisor Norton spoke about the proposed changes to IRIS, ADRC and Family Care; and the state's non-emergency medical transportation system.

Chairman Wingren announced that the next meeting of this committee will be June 22, 2015. Motion by Supervisor Finch and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Susan T. Ertmer
Recording Secretary