

**Lincoln County Highway Committee**  
**Minutes of Thursday, June 4, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.**  
**Tomahawk City Hall**

Members Present: John Bailey, Graham Rankin, Richard Berndt, and Arlene Meyer  
Bob Lee was excused

Visitors: Randy Scholz, Dan Leydet, Jerry Jagmin, Joel Wendt, and Jason Lemmer

1. **Call Meeting to Order:**

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Vice Chairman Berndt.

2. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):**

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Rankin to approve the minutes from May 7, 2009 meeting minutes as printed. All ayes. Motion carried.

3. **Set Future Meetings:**

July 2, 2009, Thursday 7:30 a.m. Commissioner's Office – Merrill

August 6, 2009, Thursday 7:30 a.m. Tomahawk City Hall

4. **Claims:**

None

5. **Public Comment:**

No one was present for public comment.

6. **LRIP/STP & Winter Maintenance Budget Contingency**

LRIP is a 50/50 split with the state and STP is an 80/20 split with the Federal Government. Scholz is looking at setting money aside each year for those projects so the money is available when those projects come up. We may be eligible for CHIP-D this next cycle (approximately \$180,000) which is also a county match. This program is on a rotating cycle with the other counties.

Scholz attended the Finance Committee meeting last month to give them an update on winter maintenance. The Finance Committee was concerned that Highway would not cover the overage in the winter maintenance if it goes over in the future as it did in 2008. They indicated that they would like to see a contingency fund set up within the highway budget. Leydet explained that the Committee would like to avoid a high winter maintenance year like in 2008. One member's concern, even after Randy explained that the winter maintenance budget for November and December is above the 5 year average, is the county can't afford to have these big contingency requests at the end of the year. Leydet recommended within the Roads Fund budget to establish a fund balance and designate that for winter maintenance. That money would be used when the winter maintenance is over budget. Leydet and Scholz had talked after the meeting and they figured the amount that should be in that account should be \$150,000. They came up with that figure by using the average of the last 5 years of budgetary deficits. This amount should be available in an account by 2011. Leydet will take this back to Finance for discussion. Leydet agreed that it's hard to budget for winter maintenance when you could have a budget of \$600,000 one year and \$1,000,000 another year. That's a \$400,000 difference. So, you may never have enough money but any amount would help. Scholz said obviously this money is going to come from somewhere within in our budget and winter maintenance will look high. Meyer asked if this money was going to stay with highway's budget and not looked at in the future as money that the general fund can take away. Leydet indicated he couldn't say that wouldn't happen but it would be held in the Roads Fund to be used for winter maintenance because that's what the intent is. Departments are allowed to carry over 15% of their budgets. Scholz said to come up with this money they would have to eliminate what they do in the summer in order to build up the winter maintenance account. Bailey didn't understand how we could come up with the money when

we're already short. Leydet indicated that the County doesn't have the contingency money available like they used to have. The County's contingency is roughly half in 2009 compared to what it was in 2008 and in 2010 it will even be less. Rankin didn't see why we should have to come up with \$150,000 for contingency when there is \$9 million in reserves available. Take the money out of there and support this department. This department has no control of what the weather is going to be and how can we generate \$150,000. The \$150,000 should come from the County fund balance not this department. Then the department can work on saving from there. Leydet said that there is more than 9 million dollars in reserves but the county has a lot of liability and future obligations for the 9 million dollars. And to move any out of the cash balance to Highway would take County Board action. Bailey indicated that he felt a contingency fund is a good idea but the timing is off. Leydet said he wouldn't support taking money out of contingencies to fund the start of a reserve fund for the highway department because it would put us below what the auditors recommendation and this would also need County Board approval. Leydet said if we have a below average winter, then the contingency fund would built up on its own. The Finance Committee said to cut summer projects in order to build up that fund. Scholz will attend the Finance meeting and present the Highway Committee's comments and report back.

7. **Financial Reports**

There were no financial reports since the closing date was May 31<sup>st</sup>.

8. **Update on Maintenance Location**

Wendt explained that the closing of the Annex building with Haven took place on Friday and Maintenance moved out on Tuesday. Everything is located in the sign shop. Bailey asked if that would work out for their needs and Wendt said it will have too. They haven't had time to setup and get organized everything is just piled up for now.

9. **Update on Summer Work From Townships**

Scholz indicated that we have been talking about layoffs for the last year depending upon the winter maintenance budget and how much township work we get. Scholz felt we should have enough work for the summer. He is working on 2 big projects for the Merrill and Tomahawk airports. We also got an LFA for the state for some crack sealing. He would recommend not laying off staff, that we have enough work for the summer and enough money in winter maintenance. Bailey asked if we are making money off of township work. Scholz said we lose money when we have a guy doing just township plowing. In the past we have been able to shift that worker to other projects in the summer but now with the shortage of funds we are not able to absorb the extra cost. This is similar to the State workers; we cannot absorb them in the summer either if there is not enough state work. Scholz said that when he started, there were 46 guys now we're down to 40 guys so we have been eliminating through attrition. We'll still be there for the towns but the service may change somewhat. Scholz said that at the special County Board meeting it showed that if we reduce our workers that plow only for Towns that would save \$400,000, that wouldn't reduce our budget by \$400,000. We would have extra money to do projects and put on our roads. This department is a million dollars short of where we need to be, we couldn't afford another \$400,000 cut.

10. **Report by Superintendents**

Lemmer explained that currently we're wedging and after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July we'll be chip sealing. Jagmin indicated they were working on ditching on Highway 86. It's been pretty quiet with the state. Jagmin reiterated what Scholz said earlier about the \$400,000 that was discussed at the special County Board meeting. Two months ago Scholz gave a presentation to the County Board indicating we were at 93 years for replacing our roads. If the County takes another

\$400,000 from our budget that would increase the road replacement cycle even more. We all know that a road is only good for 25 years.

11. **Commissioner's Report on Highway Operations**

a. Stimulus Update – Scholz explained we have a pre-conference today for the CTH H bridge and the work should start on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The CTH CC project will start around August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Scholz is working a really big stimulus project for TIGER Discretionary Grant which are usually for projects over 20 million dollars. The plan would be to reconstruct CTH C, approximately 12 miles, from Highway 51 all the way to the Langlade County line and replace one of the bridges, with a deck overlay on another bridge. This would open it up for truck traffic to Antigo. It wouldn't be posted because Langlade County is redoing their portion of CTH C as well. One hitch is there maybe a \$30,000 application fee, but because we're in an economically depressed area Scholz may get that waived. It's due September 15<sup>th</sup>. It also would be huge if we can do the work ourselves. If we can't at least we're getting a good road for the county.

12. **Adjourn** - Motion by Rankin, seconded by Meyer to adjourn at 8:28 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.