

**Lincoln County Highway Committee**  
**Minutes of Thursday, July 2, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.**  
**Commissioner's Office - Merrill**

Members Present: Bob Lee, John Bailey, Graham Rankin, Richard Berndt, and Arlene Meyer  
Visitors: Randy Scholz, Tim Meehean, Tony Kemnitz, Jim Wayda, Mike Rick, Tony Fischer, Dean Neumann, George Janssen, Mike Woller, Burl Byer, Steve Koch, Dave Pankow, Bill Zietz, Jason Lemmer, James Taylor, Jeff Janik, and Scott Gabrich

1. **Call Meeting to Order:**

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

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

Motion by Meyer, seconded by Bailey to approve the minutes from June 4, 2009 meeting minutes as printed. All ayes. Motion carried.

3. **Set Future Meetings:**

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

September 3, 2009, Thursday 7:30 a.m., Commissioner's Office- Merrill

4. **Claims:**

None

5. **Public Comment:**

No one was present for public comment.

6. **Financial Report**

The Committee reviewed the financial reports. Motion by Rankin, seconded by Berndt to place the financial reports on file. All ayes. Motion carried.

7. **Closed Session: Convene into Closed Session pursuant to Sec. 19.85 (1) (e) Wis. Stat. For conducting other specified public business whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. Sec. 19.85 (1) (e) – Workforce Reduction Strategies**

Motion by Meyer, seconded by Rankin to go into closed session with the Committee, Randy Scholz, Tim Meehean, and Bill Zietz. All ayes by roll call vote. Motion carried.

8. **Open Session – Take any necessary action on Items Discussed in Closed Session**

Motion by Meyer, seconded by Berndt to authorize Meehean and Scholz to look at all options including workforce reduction for the budget shortfall and reporting to the Committee. All ayes. Motion carried.

9. **Results for Traffic Study at CTH FF and CTH K Intersection**

Tony Kemnitz from Traffic Analysis and Design was present to review the traffic study at CTH FF and CTH K intersection that was approved by the committee in May. They took an analysis of the existing conditions, the crash history for the last 5 years (.41 crashes to a million vehicle entries), and they measured the travel speeds on CTH K. They concluded that there is minimum site distance in that area for vehicles pulling onto CTH K from CTH FF traveling southbound, everything else met the minimum standards for that intersection. Their recommendation it was not necessary to have an acceleration lane at that intersection. They would recommend that intersection be upgraded with a 100 foot tapered lane which is typically done in a rural intersection. They also recommended an enhancement of a sign indicating intersection ahead warning which are the yellow diamond signs with 2 orange flags initially. Motion by Lee, seconded by Meyer to enhance the intersection of CTH FF and CTH K with a 100 foot tapered lane on CTH K and place a yellow diamond sign with orange flags on CTH K indicating intersection ahead as recommended by the consultants. All ayes. Motion carried.

10. **Winter Maintenance Budget Contingency**

Scholz explained that the Finance Committee has asked the Highway Department to establish a contingency fund for winter maintenance with a minimum of \$150,000 in the fund within the next 2 years. Scholz indicated that the Highway Department owns 160 acres on Swamp Road in the Town of Merrill and he has been talking with Kleinschmidt from Forestry about select cutting the timber. The revenue that would be received from the cut would be put into the contingency fund so the contingency money wouldn't have to be taken out of the operation budget. If this is not possible or doesn't generate enough money then he would recommend selling the property as well. There may be a possible easement issue with this property but he still has more research to do. Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lee to pursue the possibility of cutting the timber off of the 160 acres off of Swamp Road in the Town of Merrill and/or sell the property to establish the contingency fund for winter maintenance. All ayes. Motion carried.

11. **Request for Change in Policy for Cleaning up Ice after a Fire**

Scholz indicated that he received a letter from the Town of Pine River Fire Department requesting that the policy be changed for cleaning up ice after a fire. It has always been the policy of the highway department that whoever causes the hazard on the road would be responsible for the cost of clean up. Scholz indicated he didn't have a problem with taking care of the hazard in the case of a fire but it does require the Committee to change the policy. He also felt that the Town of Pine River should be responsible for the bill in April since it was the policy at the time and if the Committee agrees there wouldn't be a charge in the future. Bill Zietz, Town of Pine River Chairman, gave the Town's view point. The fire chief felt that the hazards aren't caused deliberately and this is just part of taking care of the roads. He felt that if you aren't going to bill in the future then why would they have to pay for the bill that occurred in April? They have talked to other fire chiefs and they haven't been billed for any ice cleanups. Jagmin and Lemmer were present and they acknowledged that other fire departments have been billed in the past for hazards as well. Motion by Bailey, seconded by Rankin to change the policy for cleaning up after a fire that it would be at the cost of the county and not bill the townships and that would include the bill from April, 2009 for \$246. All ayes. Motion carried.

12. **Report by Superintendents**

Lemmer indicated that the crews are done with blacktopping CTH A and U and will start chip sealing CTH B, D, A, W, Q, and K along with the Town of Harrison the week of July 6<sup>th</sup>. They have ditching and blacktopping to do in some townships as well. Jagmin indicated there were a few blow ups on Highway 64 and 51. The crews have been working hard. He will start compass training July 6<sup>th</sup> which is a 3 – 4 weeks of training.

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

a. Summer Conference – Scholz reported that at the summer conference the huge talk was the budget and NR 40. NR 40 will require the state, counties and townships to inventory the invasive species in the road right of ways. When they mow in the area of the invasive species they will have to stop after mowing that area and clean off the mower. Scholz hopes to work with UW Stevens Point – Tree Heaven using an internship and have the inventory completed for no cost to the county but he still has to work on those details. If we don't comply we could be fined \$10,000 and up to 6 months in jail. Another hot topic is the federal reallocation, which could include the raising of the gas tax anywhere from 4 cent to 44 cents. The clean water act could really affect the highway department as well.

b. Impact of State Budget – The state budget was proposing to include a provision that would require County Boards to bid all improvements over \$25,000 and eliminate the ability of the County to do work on their own system, with their own funds, with their own crews. This also would eliminate the ability of counties to do work for municipalities in their county and

requires the municipality to bid all improvements over \$25,000. The state representatives were bombarded with calls and these provisions were removed from the budget. But this is a temporary fix because there's talk that it will come back in a form of a bill in the future. Included in the budget was any project over \$25,000 will require that prevailing wage be paid which will really hurt the townships but he wasn't sure if municipalities were exempt from that provision or not and the WCHA is waiting on a legal opinion.

c. Update on Providing Supervision for City of Merrill Street Department – Scholz indicated that they are still working out the details for the County to provide supervision to the City of Merrill Street Department. No formal decisions have been made.

14. **Adjourn** - Motion by Meyer, seconded by Bob to adjourn at 9:00 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.