

Lincoln County Highway Committee
Minutes of Thursday, October 2, 2008 – 7:30 a.m.
Tomahawk City Hall

Members Present: Bob Lee, Graham Rankin, Arlene Meyer, Wayne Plant and Richard Berndt

Visitors: Randy Scholz, Sarah Olson, Jeff Janik, Scott Gabrich, Kathy Tobin, Jason Lemmer, and Jerry Jagmin.

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 Plant to approve the minutes of the last meeting as printed. All ayes. Motion Carried.

3. **Set Future Meetings:**

November 6, 2008, Thursday, 7:30 a.m. Commissioner's Office – Merrill
December 4, 2008, Thursday, 7:30 a.m. Tomahawk City Hall - Tomahawk

4. **Claims:**

None

5. **Public Comment:**

No one was present for public comment.

6. **Financial Report**

Olson reviewed the reports with the Committee. She explained that Munis shows the department is at 94% but that doesn't include revenue from all the different jobs. When the revenues are included, the budget is at 92%. Miscellaneous general maintenance showed 70%. The 2 big issues are winter maintenance which is a negative \$1,000, and LFA reimbursement from the CTH A construction project. Scholz said the department is where he predicted it would be at 6 months ago. There was a discussion on the length of time it takes to be reimbursed for projects from the state. Motion by Rankin, seconded by Berndt to place the financial report on file. All ayes. Motion Carried.

7. **Budget Modifications**

Olson explained that the budget modification will increase the highway road construction budget by \$491,000. This figure was given to Olson by the State Engineer. Materials for the CTH A project can't be billed out until further calculations are complete since there were extra expenses related to the materials such as a scale rental. When the 2008 budget was put together the county's 20% portion was put in but the 80% match from the state was not put in. Since the county has to incur the cost first then be reimbursed from the state the full project cost should be reflected in the budget. The budget modification would be presented to the Finance Committee in November if it is approved by this Committee. Motion by Plant, seconded by Meyer to approve the budget modification and forward it to the Finance Committee. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

8. **Purchase Skid Loader**

Scholz explained the process he and his supervisors go through when a piece of equipment needs to be replaced. Scholz indicated that the first question he asked is do we need this piece of equipment. If the answer is yes then the next question is can we use another counties equipment for our needs. If the answer is no then we look at renting, leasing our purchasing. If the cost to own the equipment per month is less then leasing or renting then we move to purchase. He explained that the skid loader would be utilized in the Merrill shop. They advertized and put out specifications for either purchasing, or leasing, or renting. After running 3 years worth of expenses for that piece of equipment it showed that it costs about \$425 per month to run that piece of equipment which will help determine if we should

purchase or rent. After opening the bids it was determined that it would cost approximately \$650 per month to rent so it was cheaper to purchase. They had 6 vendors, with some vendors placing 2 bids. Central Wisconsin is the low bidder at \$32,063 which includes a 3 year warranty and they met the specifications. The County should sell the old skid loader for approximately \$5,000. Motion by Rankin, seconded by Berndt to approve the purchase of a skid loader from Central Wisconsin for \$32,063. All ayes. Motion Carried.

9. **Advertising for Plow Trucks**

Scholz would like the Committee to authorize the advertising for 2 plow trucks. The plow trucks would have a quad chassis with underbody in order to use them year round. He would advertise for renting, purchasing, and leasing. They also would look into retro-fitting the newer existing quads to see if that would be cost effective. They would sell 2 – single axle trucks and 2 tri or quad axle trucks. He said that some of the problems they have with the older trucks are getting parts, which when needed, they have to go to a junk yard. Motion by Meyer, seconded by Rankin to advertise for 2 – quad plow trucks. All ayes. Motion Carried.

10. **Attending Winter Conference – January 26 – 28 , 2009**

Scholz asked if anyone was interested in attending the winter conference. There was a discussion on the Committee making their own hotel reservations for the conference since there were a few mix-ups from the last conference. If a Committee decides not to attend the conference then that person would be responsible for the room, verses the County. Scholz said that any Committee member should contact him within the next week if they are interested in attending.

11. **Posting Weight Restrictions on CTH C & Request to Wedge**

Scholz explained there are serious rutting problems on CTH C and it has worsened in the last 2 years. He first would like the Committee to agree to post CTH C at 40 tons. There is a bridge right in Langlade County and it's posted at 40 tons. He also would like to wedge that portion of the road that is rutting. He said that the road needs to be reconstructed but there is no money available. So wedging would make a lot of sense, and is a way to get the road through until we can utilize STP money to reconstruct the road. Scholz is planning on re-building part of CTH C from Hwy 17 to CTH G in 2012 utilizing STP funds. The plan is to use fly ash because he doesn't want to get into purchasing right of ways. He estimated the cost to be around \$100,000 for wedging which is not included in this year's budget. He explained, in past meetings, that the winter maintenance will be over budget. He could probably come up with \$100,000 from some other areas of the budget, mainly in general maintenance because of the CTH A LFA, but with wedging CTH C that wouldn't happen. Motion by Meyer, seconded by Plant to post CTH C at 40 tons. All ayes. Motion Carried. Motion by Rankin, seconded by Meyer to wedge CTH C the approximate 5 miles of road. All ayes. Motion Carried.

12. **Budget Options for Next Year**

Scholz explained that he came up with 4 different options on how to reallocate money for future budgets and use that money for summer projects. These options would not reduce the tax levy amount but move money from one area to another. 1. Stop painting the white edge on roads which would save approximately \$15,000 per year. We are not required by state statute to paint the white edge on roads so this could be eliminated. He said that the white paint edging is his 2nd biggest complaint that he receives with speed zones being the #1 complaint. 2. Reducing winter service which he estimates to save approximately \$200,000. The public will not like this option. We currently go out the minute it starts snowing and plow until it stops snowing. He proposed that we do not send out plow trucks after work hours, and

on week-ends and holidays, until there are 3 or more inches of snow. If this option is selected a resolution should be presented to the County Board. This will be discussed later on in the meeting under items #13 & #14. 3. Lay off part of the crew in September if we foresee going over on the winter maintenance budget. Scholz would like to work out the particulars with the union in advance, so if the Committee chooses this as an option it wouldn't be a last minute thing to work out. This may or may not happen, it depends on a lot of things such as if we get a lot of work from the towns or how much snow we get. He understands that this really could affect the moral of the crew and/or we may even lose good workers, as well as personal hardship for the crew and possible internal arguing. Randy would want to keep certain positions working such as the shop positions, state positions if the RMA supports them, etc. If the employee doesn't work any part of the month the County isn't required to pay health insurance. The latest the Committee could act on this would be the August meeting, to allow this to happen in September. 4. Stop plowing for townships. Scholz explained that because the budget is not able to keep up with the dramatic cost increases they are not able to perform as much work. If they are not able to perform as much work then the staff has to be reduced. The only way that we could reduce staff is to stop plowing for townships, because there are no extra guys that plow on county roads that could be cut. The township would be notified and we would let them know we no longer will plow for their township or we will plow when we have the time and that may be a day or so after its done snowing. It would be up to the town to make the decision if they want the county to plow or not. Scholz would also go to the Town meetings to explain both possible options with them. Scholz indicated that in order to keep the roads at a 20 year average we are \$1.5 million under budgeted for 2009.

13. **Policy for Winter Maintenance**

Item #13 and 14 were discussed at the same time. Notes included with item #14.

14. **Presentation to County Board**

Lee explained that if a policy for winter maintenance is approved then a presentation and a resolution should be presented to the County Board. We will need to explain the predicament that the Highway Department is in. The resolution would not only affect the Highway Department, there are other departments and other municipal agencies that would be affected by this as well. That's why it's important to do a presentation to the County Board. The after effects of the 2% tax levy freeze has caught up with us, the after effects are not for the future they're here now. We are going backwards with these freezes and we may be going back to gravel County Roads. Scholz reviewed the policy with the Committee and a discussion followed. The State Statutes say that the County is required to plow the roads within 3 weeks after it snows and we would be well within those requirements with the policy. Scholz indicated that if this is approved by the County Board he would advertise it thoroughly through the media. Motion by Plant, seconded by Meyer to present the policy for winter maintenance as a resolution to the County Board along with a presentation. All ayes. Motion Carried.

15. **Policy for ATV Routes**

Scholz reviewed the ATV policy with the Committee. The policy also was reviewed by the ATV clubs prior to this meeting. Scholz worked with Dan Adamec, Kevin Kleinschmidt, and Nancy Bergstrom on the policy. Motion by Berndt, seconded by Rankin to approve the policy for ATV Routes as presented. All ayes. Motion Carried.

16. **Letter to DOT about Speed Zone on STH 8**

The Committee discussed items #16, #17, & #18 all at the same time. All 3 letters were included in their packets for the Committee to review. Plant asked that the dates be changed.

Motion by Lee, seconded by Plant to distribute the 3 letters as presented with the changing of the date. All ayes. Motion Carried.

17. **Letter to DOT about Bridge Posting on STH 64**

See item #16

18. **Letter to Governor and Legislators about taking Money out of Transportation Fund**

See item #16

19. **Report by Superintendents**

Jagmin indicated that they have completed the STH 64 culvert project and he reviewed the 2009 state RMA. He predicted that he will be 8 – 9 % over budget at the end of the year. He said that going back to gravel roads isn't the answer either. Years ago when we did have gravel roads we had more men and more equipment and now we're looking at reducing both men and equipment. Jagmin said he doesn't know of a road in Lincoln County that could last 25 years let alone the 93 year plan that we are on. We have received all of the county salt and we're now receiving the state salt.

Lemmer indicated that the CTH A project is complete and they're working on the culvert on Pier Street. They also have been doing some ditching for some townships.

Both shop foremen are getting the plow trucks ready for winter.

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

a. Safety Report – No reportables. Scholz explained that everyone of the crew has to have NIMS 100 and 700 training. They have had the training they just have to take the test. The supervisors have to take another class but they can do that on-line. Scholz has to have 6 classes and he only has one left. He wants the department to be NIMS compliant by the end of 2009. We would be the first county in the state to do so. NIMS is tied to federal money that's why we are required to do these classes. The crew will also be having CPR and first aid training on October 14 and 21 through the Merrill Fire Department and they have had their hearing test.

21. **Adjourn**

Motion by Rankin, seconded by Berndt to adjourn at 8:50 a.m. All ayes. Motion Carried.