

Lincoln County Highway Committee
Minutes of Thursday, February 4, 2010 – 7:30 a.m.
Tomahawk City Hall

Members Present: Bob Lee, John Bailey, Graham Rankin, Arlene Meyer, and Richard Berndt
Visitors: Randy Scholz, Heather Marheine, Jerry Jagmin, Jason Lemmer, Scott Gabrich, Ron Mittelsteadt, and Joan Giusto

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 Bailey, seconded by Rankin to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

3. **Set Future Meetings:**

March 4, 2010, Thursday 7:30 a.m., Commissioner's Office – Merrill

April 1, 2010, Thursday 7:30 a.m., Tomahawk City Hall

4. **Claims:** None

5. **Public Comment:** No one was present for public comment.

6. **Harrison ATV Club – Route Request** – Joan Giusto, representing the Harrison ATV Club, was present. She indicated that she is a certified instructor for the ATV safety program and a trail patrol ambassador. The Harrison ATV Club was formed, with are all volunteers, in 2002 with 20 DNR safety instructors. The club is also active in state, county, and community projects. The Committee reviewed a map that Giusto provided also known as Plan A. Their club goals are to bring the trails from the east into the City of Tomahawk. Lincoln County has over 5,000 registered ATV's, Marathon County has over 10,000, and over 300,000 in the State of Wisconsin. Allowing these trails would also bring economic growth to the community especially since it's a year round recreational activity. The proposed plan is not etched in stone which could be changed and could be implemented in stages. If this plan is approved the club would provide the signs if the County would erect them. The Committee discussed if it would be easier just to allow ATV's to utilize the proposed County Roads as long as there is proper signage but as for the Town Roads the club would have to go through the townships. It was agreed that this proposal needs to be approved by the Forestry Department, the Townships, and the City of Tomahawk then bring it back to this Committee. This Committee is willing to work with the clubs. No action was taken.

7. **Financial Report** – Marheine indicated that the end year closing for 2009 should be completed by the March meeting after finance gives their year end numbers. Winter maintenance has approximately \$10,000 remaining in that account which may change with the closing and all the adjustments. Mittelsteadt asked if Jeff Janik's position was included in the 2010 budget or if it was removed after, the budget was in place? Marheine and Scholz explained that the original budget presented to the County Board included all positions but the County Board cut \$100,000 from that budget. This left the Committee with a decision of how they would balance their budget having \$100,000 less. Scholz presented options to the committee and they decided to layoff one-shop foremen. Lee indicated that the Committee had been talking about this throughout 2009. Lee said that this Committee didn't have any choice since the County Board forced us into making \$100,000 worth of cuts. There were no other options since the County Board wouldn't agree to reducing plowing and road maintenance. There was also a discussion on the Tiger Grant but that project will not help with reducing the Highway Budget. There also was discussion on the Highway 51 ramp at CTH C.

8. **Maintenance Reorganization** – Scholz indicated that Joel Wendt is retiring in March. He distributed a copy of the reorganization plan that was presented to the County Board last year

that John Mulder had put together. As Department Heads, it is Scholz understands that we are supposed to work the plan when opportunities come up. The proposed reorganization would involve Scholz taking care of the administration part of maintenance, having a working foreman, and outsourcing electrical, heating/cooling, cleaning etc. There is going to be a lot more research done in order to figure out the pros and cons of this proposal. The Committee felt that discussions and planning should start with the Public Property and Personnel. Scholz said he would not put any time into this until he heard something from the Public Property Committee or Tim.

9. **2009 Safety Report** – Scholz distributed copies of the 2009 safety report. This report is done to take an overall at all the accidents to see if we need to make any safety changes. We had the same incidents in 2009 as in 2008 which were 28. The employees are required to report all injuries. We had 7 OSHA reportable in 2009 and 5 in 2008. Scholz concluded that 2009 was a very typical year for our operation. The Committee placed the report on file.
10. **Report by Superintendents** – Lemmer indicated that the crew has been getting equipment ready for spring and summer. They will be doing a lot of ditching and shouldering. They have been working on signs as well. They haven't been using much salt on the County roads but instead treated sand since salt is 10 times the price. Jagmin indicated that very seldom will you see 2 or 3 plow trucks working together on county and town roads. You may see it on state roads if there is a problem area since everyone is assigned to their own route. There aren't 2 or 3 employees assigned to one route.
11. **Closed Session – Convene into Closed Session pursuant to Sec. 19.85 (1) (e) Wis. Stats. For conducting other specified public business whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session – Bargaining Update and Hot Mix Plant** – Motion by Bailey, seconded by Berndt to go into closed session along with Scholz and Mittelsteadt. All ayes. Motion carried.
12. **Open Session – Take any necessary action on Items Discussed in Closed Session** – Motion by Rankin, seconded by Bailey have an analysis done on the hot mix plant. All ayes. Motion carried.
13. **Commissioner's Report on Highway Operations** – Scholz updated the Committee on the winter conference that was held in January. He explained prevailing wage that we will be required to pay our crew a higher rate of pay for jobs that are done for the townships that are over \$25,000. Prevailing wage doesn't apply to maintenance projects. We would be required to report the prevailing wage electrically to the state and the state isn't setup yet for that data.

Scholz also reviewed NR 40 regarding invasive species on road right ways. He may have a person from the DNR in Merrill who may volunteer her time to inventory Lincoln County's invasive species. She would have to train some college students to help her and we may have to pay them for helping. The other part is if we find any invasive species then we have to treat them. This same person said she would give some suggestions on how to treat them if they did find any. Scholz is also trying to get a legal opinion on who is liable, the County for maintaining the ROW or the state on state roads.

Scholz sent out a letter to the townships asking if they are looking to purchase materials for chipsealing and/or paving so we can request bids and get a lower price if we have a larger quantities.

Scholz indicated that the employee that was placed on administrative leave is back to work.

14. **Adjourn** - Motion by Berndt, seconded by Rankin to adjourn at 9:26 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.