Rusk County
Highway Committee
July 18, 2011


Also Present: N. Mertes, E. Wundrow, P. Montwill, P. Lukowicz, D. Mansky.

Call meeting to order.
Highway Chair Tom Costello called today’s meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of the agenda and move any agenda items as needed.
A Gierke/Freeman motion to approve the agenda and move any agenda items as needed. Motion Carried.

Approval of minutes – June 20, 2011 and July 6, 2011.
A Svoma/Gierke motion to approve minutes of June 20, 2011 and July 6, 2011. Motion Carried.

Public Comment and/or input – 30 minutes.
Don Mansky explained to the Committee he had concerns regarding the Highway Department selling highway equipment through Tony Trolla, the Highway Department equipment broker. Mr. Mansky explained he had contacted Mr. Trolla to bid on some equipment the Highway Department had for sale but Mr. Trolla did not give him the opportunity to make an offer. Mr. Mansky asked if the Highway Committee would consider placing any future highway equipment for sale out for open bid instead of using an equipment broker.

Thomas Boguszewski, PE / AE-Com Engineering regarding County bridge program.
Mr. Boguszewski informed the Committee that he represents AECOM Consulting Engineers and reported that AECOM is interested in providing their services to Rusk County on future bridge projects.

Al Rathsack – Inquiring if the County would be interested in purchasing land from him for a gravel pit.
E. Wundrow explained that Mr. Rathsack contacted him and inquired if the County would be interested in purchasing land from him for a county gravel pit. E. Wundrow told Mr. Rathsack the Highway Department is not interested at this time but he would inform the Committee.

Reduce speed limit on CTH “D” west of Whispering Pines to East of North Shore Drive in the Town of Willard to 45 mph.
R. Gierke reviewed a map showing CTH “D” west of Whispering Pines to East of North Shore Drive in the Town of Willard, indicating the subject area as having a speed limit problem. The current speed limit in this area is 55 mph. Discussion followed. E. Wundrow explained that it would not be a problem to reduce the speed limit at this section of CTH “D” from 55 mph to 45 mph. The Committee would like E. Wundrow to ask the Sheriff to monitor this section of Highway after the speed limit is reduced to make sure the trucks are complying with the new speed limit. P. Lukowicz commented about lack of safety when people are trying to cross the roadway at this section of CTH “D”. T. Costello asked about Pedestrian Crossing signs.
A Gierke/Freeman motion to reduce the speed limit on CTH “D” west of Whispering Pines to East of North Shore Drive in the Town of Willard to 45 miles per hour with the Patrol Superintendent placing signs where necessary and contacting the Sheriff Department. Motion Carried.

Update on Highway 73 project.
E. Wundrow updated the Committee on the progress of the Highway 73 project.
Update on CTH “M” relocation project.
E. Wundrow reported that the State Municipal agreement was signed and returned to Bill Zimmer at the State Department.

Update on Culvert Aid projects.
E. Wundrow reported that the department is currently working on the Kief Road Culvert Aid project in the Town of Stubbs. The Highway Department will begin culvert work on Sheep Camp Road as soon as the permit is approved by the Wisconsin DNR. Big Falls culvert aid project on Fedyn is complete.

Create new Highway Department position – Highway Tech I and forward to Personnel Committee.
The Committee reviewed the need for a Highway Tech I position. Job position duties were quantified and reviewed by the Committee.

Review “Highway Tech I” job description and forward to Personnel Committee.
The Committee reviewed the job description for the new Highway Tech I position. This position will work with the Patrol Superintendent and report directly to the Patrol Superintendent. The Committee reviewed the necessary skills required for this position including education. N. Mertes reported that this position is most similar to the Forester I position - $18.50 per hour/$38,480.00 per year and effective 9/1/2011 $18.69 per hour/$38,875.20 per year.

A Boss/Svoma motion to forward the job description for the Highway Tech I position to the Personnel Committee. Motion Carried.

Highway Commissioner – Sick Leave Benefits.
E. Wundrow is requesting that he be paid 100% of his sick leave instead of the 75% per county policy, upon his retirement. E. Wundrow explained that offering this opportunity/window to employees over 55 will help the county move early retirements forward. Moving the older employees out would create a huge savings for the County. T. Costello asked E. Wundrow to prepare a statement regarding the subject of sick leave buy out for employees over 55.

A Boss/Svoma motion to make a formal request to the Personnel Committee to have E. Wundrow paid 100% of his sick leave (Deposited into an HRA) upon his retirement this year. Motion Carried.

Highway Commissioner – Retirement.
E. Wundrow explained that it is his desire to retire this year however, he will not have a confirmed date until he sees what happens with the sick leave benefits and the Highway Tech I position. The Highway Committee will attend the Personnel Committee meeting that addresses the Highway Commissioner sick leave benefits to support his request.

A Gierke/Svoma motion for the Highway Committee to meet with the Personnel Committee for a formal discussion regarding the Highway Commissioners sick leave benefits payout at retirement. Motion Carried.

Rusk County Code Book – Chapter 1.14 – Appointment and Term for Highway Commissioner.
Section 1.14 Highway Commissioner (1) (c) Candidates for election to the office of Highway Commissioner shall be recommended to the County Board by the Highway Committee who shall be responsible for determining who is most qualified to serve as Rusk County Highway Commissioner.

Thomas Riegel and Rick Rouleau – Committee Notice: Will be requesting authorization from the Personnel Committee to use pro-rated vacation before they retire versus a lump sum pay out of pro-rated vacation.
N. Mertes reported that Mr. Riegel and Mr. Rouleau are concerned about receiving a payout on their pro-rated vacation. They are concerned that receiving a check for pro-rated vacation on the payroll after their last day with the county could negatively affect their retirement payments. P.
Boss agreed that this could be a violation of the 6 month post retirement re-employment rule and should be looked into. Both employees will make a formal request to the Personnel Committee that they be allowed to use their pro-rated vacation instead of getting a pay out on the pro-rated vacation.

Retirement plaques.
E. Wundrow reported that past policy has been that retirement plaques have not been given out to employees at retirement. Discussion followed. Consensus of the Committee to prepare retirement plaques for the employees retiring this year.

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER REPORT.
Highway crews are currently crack sealing on county highways and working on culvert aid projects in various townships. ATV trail work will begin this week. The Highway Department purchased a used 2004 single axle truck with attachments from Barron County for $68,000.00. Committee inquired about safety issues regarding crews working in the excessive heat.

HIGHWAY FINANCIAL REPORT.

HIGHWAY OFFICE REPORT.
N. Mertes reviewed status of workers compensation claims, liability insurance, office personnel activity, crew update, retirements, and FMLA requests. A Gierke/Costello motion to approve the Highway Office Report. Motion Carried.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE- COMMENTS
None.

Action on monthly vouchers.
None submitted.

Sign and approve pre-approved vouchers.
Pre-approved vouchers totaling $383,014.51 were reviewed and signed by the Committee. A Gierke/Costello motion to approve the pre-approved vouchers totaling $383,014.51. Motion Carried.

Set date for next highway committee meeting.
The next regular Highway Committee meeting is set for August 15, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. at the Rusk County Highway Department.

Motion to adjourn.
A Gierke/Costello motion to adjourn. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Highway Office Manager – Nanci A. Mertes

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