

May 21, 2024 meeting of the Monroe County Highway Committee

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 9:01 am by Chairperson David Pierce.

Members present: David Pierce, Wally Habegger, Jim Kuhn, and Nodji VanWychen.

Members absent: Zach Zebell

Others present: Highway Commissioner – David Ohnstad, County Administrator – Tina Osterberg, Highway Office Manager – Brooke Adams, Zoning & Sanitation Director – Alison Elliott, Monroe County Herald – Kyle Evans, and BCD Services, LLC – Jack Dittmar for public comment

2. Period of Public Comment

Jack Dittmar with BCD Services, LLC requested to be allowed to speak for 4 minutes during public comment rather than the allowed 3 minute limit. David Pierce stated the committee would allow the 4 minute request.

Jack Dittmar provided the committee members with the following: Copy of a section of the WisDOT Structure Inspection Manual; Copy of a letter from the Jackson County Highway Commissioner to Town Chairs, Village Presidents, and the City Mayor in Jackson County, WI; Copy of an email from Commissioner Ohnstad to local municipalities sent on 4/16/24; Copy of an email from Commissioner Ohnstad to local municipalities sent on 4/25/24.

Jack Dittmar spoke - Said the local municipalities have been lied to and bullied. Tax dollars have been disrespected as the department doesn't care about cost. A few towns exercised their statutory rights and the Commissioner tried to lie and deceive the towns. After being called out on state law, the Commissioner got the Highway Committee to approve additional fees. He is not sure that quality control is part of bridge program administration (*referenced section of WisDOT Structure Inspection Manual handed out*). The Commissioner lied and deceived again sending an email using a partial sentence from the WisDOT Manual and purposefully failed to mention the part of the manual that he (*Mr. Dittmar*) just handed out that says that quality control is part of the Bridge Manager contract the department already has with Jewell. The new bridge contract for Program Manager services now charges a lump sum. The handout he provided talks about the Program Manager coordinating all locally owned inspections. The Commissioner talks about being partners with the towns, but being dishonest, controlling what they must do, and then charging them additional fees sounds like a dictatorship (*referenced emails from Commissioner Ohnstad handed out*). Per the manual, a letter to local municipalities is part of Program Manager responsibilities. It lists the inspector and associated costs, asks locals if they want to use that inspector, and gives the locals options without any threats. He is the Program Manager for Jackson County and will be professional and a partner, and will give municipalities options (*referenced letter from Jackson County Highway Commissioner handed out*).

3. Last Meeting Minutes (Discussion & Decision)

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 regular meeting made by Nodji VanWychen, seconded by Wally Habegger. All ayes, motion carried.

4. Special Meeting Minutes (Discussion & Decision)

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024 special meeting made by Wally Habegger, seconded by Jim Kuhn. All ayes, motion carried.

5. Review Vouchers and Credit Card Charges (Discussion)

Highway Department vouchers and expenditures were reviewed. Month vouchers: \$391,490.86.

6. Re-Purpose of Funds (Discussion & Decision)

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that we have maxed out the amount of interest allowed on the bond issue. Arbitrage is the process to determine how much will need to be paid back.

County Administrator Osterberg stated that to date, the amount of interest received to date is \$223,057.09.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the bond issue has been exhausted by retroactively applying force account project work that had been completed on the highways bond funds were assigned to. When contract payments are due for bond issue projects, they will now be paid out of the operating budget.

County Administrator Osterberg stated that the \$2,000.00 is for the first 2 years of the bond, there will be another review needing to be done for 2024 which will cost an additional \$1000.00.

Motion to approve the Re-Purpose of Funds for the Bond Issue Arbitrage Review Fees made by Wally Habegger, seconded by Nodji VanWychen. All ayes, motion carried.

7. Amended Resolution (Discussion & Decision)

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the amended resolution is a technical correction. The resolution that was passed in 2023 had mismatched account numbers and account titles. The resolution is for non-lapsing accounts for Capital Equipment - Highway, Capital Buildings & Improvements - Highway, and Capital Highway Improvements – Highway. The amendment corrects the mismatched account numbers, standardizes account titles, and consolidates same or similar accounts.

Jim Kuhn stated that he thought the original agreement was for 2 non-lapsing accounts. County Administrator Osterberg confirmed that 3 non-lapsing accounts were presented and on the original resolution passed.

Jim Kuhn asked where the money will come from. County Administrator Osterberg stated that it is money already in those accounts. The non-lapsing accounts are to make sure unspent funds in the accounts remain in the accounts as capital funding to be used as intended.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the Fleet & Facilities Manager has developed an Equipment Replacement Plan for the next 10 years, which the Highway Committee has previously approved, and is developing a Facilities Management Plan. Trying to estimate detailed project costs 10 years in advance is not realistic given the current market forces. Sometimes adjustments are needed as bids come in over or under projected amounts. This is not over-budgeting, this is trying to be properly prepared. The resolution itself has not changed. The titles of the accounts and the correction between the list of accounts and the fiscal note are the reasons for the amendments.

Motion to move the Amended Resolution forward made by Wally Habegger, seconded by Nodji VanWychen. 3 Ayes, 1 No, 1 Absent, motion carried.

8. Budget Performance Report (Discussion)

Commissioner Ohnstad provided an example of the requisition sent to the DOT through the DOT created system, MPM. The requisition shows each state project and activity that had charges against it. The first section provides a year to date summary of the beginning balance, expenditures to date, and remaining budget. The requisition is produced from the baseline data entry system, CHEMS (created by the DOT) each month and entered into the MPM system.

The CHEMS system does not communicate with the county financial system. Knowing that a timelier and more detailed report than what is available from the county financial system is desired, Brooke created a report (still a work in progress). All timesheets and requisitions are entered into the CHEMS system, and once entered the data is accessible for reports. Looking at the report Brooke created, and will be updating on a regular basis, has substantial value to evaluate budget performance, and what funds are available.

Commissioner Ohnstad provided a copy of the report and read through each section heading. The left hand column is the budgeted amount, the middle column is the amount used to date (report updated to expenditures through 4/26/24), and the third column is the balance remaining. The next columns provide the percentage used to date and the percentage remaining.

Not every line item will be pro-rated equally throughout the year. Some items are paid once per year, others are seasonal, some should be equal month to month (for example, Salaries).

The report does take an extra effort, but there is value in reviewing it as it demonstrates how the budget is performing. The report will be refined as it is reviewed and we get comments back from others.

David Pierce stated that the budget books are overwhelming. To have a synopsis page like the report is helpful. Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the report is something being done informally, but planning for a monthly update to review.

9. Corporation Yard Materials Stockpile (Discussion)

The Highway Committee had requested the matter to be on the agenda. David Pierce asked Jim Kuhn if he would like to speak on the matter as the chair of the Sanitation and Zoning Committee.

Jim Kuhn stated when the issue was brought up 2 ½ years ago, they noticed during a review of the dog pound that there was sand over the fence and in the dog pound area. Either the sand pile got bigger, or the elevator was moved. Worker's Comp got involved with the matter because a committee member is personally involved in safety and questioned if there were any safety hazards. The report from Risk Management said that there may be a potential hazard, but will not know unless tests are done.

Alison Elliott stated that she has the permit from the original dog pound construction as well as aerial photos in relation to where the building itself is, and the sand around it. It appears that in 1984 the area was cleared to put a sand pile in. Prior to that it was vegetation.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the Highway Department has owned the property since the 1950's. If ambient monitoring needs to be done, that is fine. During the summer the sand pile has a tarp on it.

Alison asked if the pile is just sand, or sand and salt. Commissioner Ohnstad responded that one pile has between 5% and 10% salt. Alison said at one point the play yard was white and needed a shovel to remove the

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material. The concern is not just for the safety of the employees, but also a grinder pump that has only a 2 inch pipe. If there is build up in the grinder pump, it will need to be repaired or replaced. The dogs and people track the sand into the building, and the sand coats everything which then needs to be cleaned up. The blowing of sand hasn't been noticed since the pile level is back below the fence and covered. It is just certain times of the year that it is an issue.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the sand/salt pile remains covered until we are ready to start prepping for winter, and then it is left uncovered until spring.

County Administrator Osterberg stated that there needs to be a compromise somewhere. The concern is for employee health. The Risk Management agent that provided the report may be able to supply the county with a monitor to do testing in the building.

David Pierce requested County Administrator Osterberg look into the possibility of the monitor.

10. Commissioners Report (Discussion)

Commissioner Ohnstad provided a report:

- Notification was received Friday, 5/17, that Congressman Van Orden has included an \$8.4 million for CTH ET funding request in the Federal Budget Appropriations. If the funding is approved through all steps of the federal budget process, a decision will need to be made of which stage the funds will be applied to.
- The CTH ET – Forbes Rd. to CTH N project has been postponed until 2025. A notice has been sent to property owners advising them of the change.
- CTH ET – Forbes Rd. to CTH N – design, Right of Way Acquisition, and Right of Way clearing were expedited to accommodate the schedule that had been established. We are requesting the DOT research and seek change management to increase federal and state contributions to the project. This has also been sent to Representative VanderMeer.
- With the CTH ET – Forbes Rd. to CTH N being postponed, there may be an opportunity to move the replacement of the short-span structure on Kreyer Creek up prior to the highway project starting rather than completing it after the project.
- STP applications had been submitted for stages 3A and 5 of CTH ET. Was informed Monday, 5/20, that the STP funding requests were not approved. The CTH ET West STP Application was ranked 17/32 statewide, and the CTH East (section in front of the VA) STP Application was ranked 20/32 statewide. The top 15 applications were awarded funding. STP Applications can be submitted again in 2 years.
- Applications for CTH J and CTH Y for STP Rural funding were not approved.
- Town of Sparta received 100% funding for a bridge project. That is the 7th bridge awarded in this cycle. There are 3 county highway bridges and 4 town bridges.
- The short-span inventory project – the assessment for County Highways will be done by Bridge Program Manager, Jewell Engineering. For the towns, villages, and cities, a vendor will be selected by the Towns Association, or WCHA.
- Towns, villages, and cities have been notified about bridge inspections for bridges enrolled in the NBI.
- CTH PC – starting Right of Way Acquisition. Construction schedule for 2026.
- CTH F – Prep work is being done now. The culverts have been mostly replaced, working on drainage and minor widening.
- The contract for Bituminous Surface Treatment has been executed.
- Working on contracts for design on bridges awarded.
- The contract for resurfacing on CTH F has been executed.
- The contract for CTH BC – Putnam Ridge has been executed. The project is scheduled to begin in July.

Commissioner Ohnstad requested a copy of what was handed out during public comment. Defamatory language was used during public comment and he is not going to have the department, the committee or our contractors subjected to it. He will be forwarding a copy of the meeting minutes to Legal Counsel for review.

11. Tour of Storage Buildings, Sparta Corporation Yard

Members were invited to attend the optional tour of the Storage Buildings and Sparta Corporation Yard following the adjournment of the meeting.

Next meeting date scheduled for Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 9:00 am at the Highway Administration Building.

Motion to adjourn made by Jim Kuhn, seconded by Nodji VanWychen. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 am.