

June 18, 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, Nodji VanWychen, and Zach Zebell

Others present: Highway Commissioner – David Ohnstad, County Administrator – Tina Osterberg, Highway Office Manager – Brooke Adams, and Monroe County Herald – Kyle Evans

2. Period of Public Comment

No Public Comment

3. Last Meeting Minutes (Discussion & Decision)

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2024 regular meeting made by Wally Habegger, seconded by Nodji VanWychen. All ayes, motion carried.

4. Review Vouchers and Credit Card Charges (Discussion)

Highway Department vouchers and expenditures were reviewed. Month vouchers: \$573,612.69.

5. Bond Issue Arbitrage Review (Discussion & Decision)

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the primary reason for the discussion is for a Re-Purpose of Funds. After the first review by The Arbitrage Group was completed, it was determined that the maximum interest allowed on the bond is \$124,284.12. This figure is significantly less than what we were told during the bond origination process. As it stands, the amount owed as a rebate back to the IRS is \$86,555.48. A conference call was held with The Arbitrage Group to review the report and have the process explained. During the call, it was discovered that by submitting additional details on the data, the amount of rebate owed could potentially be reduced. With the submittal of additional details, an additional \$2,000.00 would need to be paid for a second review and report.

County Administrator Osterberg stated that during the conversation with The Arbitrage Group, it was explained that the initial allowable interest was based on the bond being active for a full 5 years. The additional detail submitted shows that the funds were able to be spent quicker than they were withdrawn. The bond was for highway projects, not specific roads, and we were able to provide detail showing expenditures that could have been applied previously. A second draft report did come from The Arbitrage Group just this morning and shows that the updated liability will be approximately \$55,000.00. The \$2,000.00 fee for the second review and report is beneficial to the county due to the decreased liability.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the \$55,000.00 in interest may be owed back to the IRS, but the bond was still a positive investment for the county.

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

6. Emergency Response Overtime (Discussion & Decision)

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that this item was placed on the agenda for discussion and possible decision, as the item was placed on the Administration and Personnel Committee agenda to be re-discussed. A report showing the emergency overtime for the 2 Highway Operations Managers was provided to the committee. In 2023, there were 443.25 hours of emergency overtime. Of those 443.25 hours, 63% was related to state highways and reimbursable through WisDOT. Commissioner Ohnstad expressed his surprise that the topic was raised for discussion again so soon and wanted to make sure the committee was aware.

Jim Kuhn stated that his impression of why the topic came up again was that there were guarantees certain things would be watched and regulated, and they're not. Commissioner Ohnstad asked Jim what things he is referring to. Jim responded that the emergency overtime is not being operated as they were told it would be. With a management position, the salary increase is meant to compensate for all hours needed. Commissioner Ohnstad stated that prior to the change, the hourly rate for the previous operations managers was significantly less. The salary increase was implemented when the new operations managers began. The hours identified as "emergency overtime" are unscheduled overtime. Jim Kuhn asked how information is received on an accident requiring Highway Department assistance. Commissioner Ohnstad responded that the request comes in from law enforcement, either State Patrol or the Sheriff's Department. Jim Kuhn asked if the department is responding to fender benders. Commissioner Ohnstad responded that assistance is provided whenever law enforcement calls. The communications center calls come in 24/7. Jim Kuhn asked if it is possible that the Fire Department is generating some of the calls. Commissioner Ohnstad responded that no, the vast majority are initiated by law enforcement. Jim Kuhn stated that he believed the overtime was costing the county around \$30,000 for each manager. Office Manager Brooke Adams explained that the \$30,000

June 18, 2024 meeting of the Monroe County Highway Committee

figures were prior to the change of the management positions from hourly to salary. Last year, 2023, is the only full year of data so far. In 2023 the 2 Operations Managers combined had around \$8,000 in Emergency Overtime call-in pay, the majority of which was reimbursed by WisDOT. Jim Kuhn stated that most of the information he has is what he has read on reports. Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the number of emergency call in hours in 2023 were more than 100 hours less than when the topic was discussed previously. In his opinion, the emergency overtime is working just as it was intended.

County Administrator Osterberg stated that she knows the emergency call in sheets are properly being sent to the HR Director by the Highway Department.

No decision needed. Strike decision.

7. Budget Performance Report (Discussion)

Commissioner Ohnstad reviewed the second monthly budget report. The information in the report is what is used when needing to check line item balances. He felt that there is value in reviewing the report on a regular basis. It provides good information for the department internally, and if the committee would like to continue receiving the report it will continue to be shared.

David Pierce stated that he finds it helpful. County Administrator Osterberg stated that the report is helpful and beneficial as the Highway budget can be challenging to look at.

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that the report will continue to be generated and shared.

8. Corporation Yard Buildings & Grounds (Discussion)

Commissioner Ohnstad stated that occupancy has been obtained for both buildings. We are anticipating salt starting to be delivered with early fill. In the storage building, the mezzanine is complete and functional. Bill Pieper is working on getting the pressure washer installed. There will be some paving done around the front of the salt building and through where the fuel pumps are installed. There is a storm water management basin to construct but there is project work that must be completed first.

9. Commissioners Report (Discussion)

Commissioner Ohnstad provided a report:

- A pre-construction meeting for CTH F was held with Scott Construction. Supervisor Kuhn was in attendance. Preparation work for the project should be near completion by the end of the week. Intersections at Mercury and at Newport will be realigned slightly. Scott Construction will begin importing aggregate. Mid-Late July the paving should begin. The project is estimated to cost a little over \$1,000,000, which was intended to be paid out of the bond funds. The completed project will be just over 7 miles.
- CTH P – was a reserve project on the bond program, but rural funding was awarded. Construction is scheduled for 2025.
- With the bond funds, 120 miles of highway improvements will be done.
- CTH ET – Forbes Rd. to CTH N – has been postponed until 2025.
- CTH ET-Kreyer Creek Bridge – the plan is to expedite design and build of the Kreyer Creek Bridge prior to construction on CTH ET-Forbes Rd. to CTH N. The project would result in a closure for a couple of months.
- A reclaimer was intended to be purchased with the 2024 budget. The equipment was anticipated to be rentable to other municipalities as a revenue source, however, another county has not had success capitalizing on their reclaimer. The funds may be reallocated.
- Notice has been received that a 7th bridge has been approved this year. The bridge is in Town of Sparta and once the town completes a state-municipal agreement the 7th design firm will be used and a contract executed. Once developed and submitted, there will be 4 town road bridges and 1 county bridge with 100% funding for design and construction.
- CTH PC – the Right of Way agreement with the firm handling the acquisitions has been executed. A Right of Way Roundup will be held similar to what was done with CTH ET. The roundup has not been scheduled yet.
- The bridge inventory and assessment project is ongoing. The project will provide a target of what should be taken to legislature for funding requests.

Next meeting date scheduled for 9:00 am, Tuesday, July 16, 2024 the Highway Administration Building.

Motion to adjourn made by Nodji VanWychen, seconded by Zach Zebell. Meeting adjourned at 10:18 am.