

Present: Jerry Biller, Ken Pedersen, Robert Stout, Lyle Lieffring, Mike Hraban

Absent: None

Also Present: Scott Emch, Deb Fetting, Andy Albarado, Kitzie Winters, Steve Tiegs, Vern Chandler, Jessica Wiles, Tony Benik, Phil Grassman, Ed Wundrow

Present By Phone: None

Call Meeting to Order.

Jerry Biller, Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes – December 21, 2020.

**Robert Stout made the motion to approve the minutes of December 21, 2020. Motion was seconded by Lyle Lieffring. Motion carried.**

Public Comment

Vern Chandler expressed concern regarding safety due to the ditching done on County Road "O" which is rated a high volume traffic road. He stated the ditching is dangerously deep and showed a picture of a car that slid off the road and rolled onto its side. He was told that the power company will need to replace 4 poles because they are compromised by the new ditch. Vern stated there is not enough room to meet the specifications for guardrail. He also expressed concern regarding the changes causing a high rate of water speed coming down the hill from Dearhamer Road and feels it will cause water damage to the culvert and road in the Town of Atlanta.

Jessica Wiles expressed deep concern regarding the safety for the many people who travel that road, specifically young drivers.

Steve Tiegs introduced himself as the Chairman from the Town of Atlanta. He informed that the township just put in a new 24" culvert and expressed concern regarding the fast water causing a possible wash-out of the new culvert. He stated that the township doesn't have money in its budget to replace it again and asked who will pay for it.

Ed Wundrow indicated the fast water will wash the shoulder and undermine County Road "O." He stated the ditching needs good consideration to be corrected before the road deteriorates and makes matters really bad.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

CTH "O" Ditching Plan of Correction. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch thanked the public for their comments and apologized. He stated as Commissioner, he takes full responsibility; however it was not a planned project and he was also shocked when he saw it. He informed the committee that, after the fact, he provided training to keep this kind of error from happening again. He stated he thought the employees were trained and it was his fault for not making sure of it. Scott explained that, as soon as possible, the Highway Department will use fill from nearby projects to correct the error and that will correct the safety issue as well as the water problems. Scott made it very clear that safety is the first concern for the Highway Department. Mike Hraban suggested that when Scott gets a plan of correction drawn up, he get a copy to the Town of Atlanta, Xcel Energy, and the land owner so they are aware. Scott mentioned that he has already spoken to Xcel Energy. **Bob Stout made the motion that the Highway Department repair the ditch on CTH "O" as directed by Scott Emch as soon as weather permits. Ken Pedersen seconded the motion. Motion Carried. Bob Stout amended the motion to include that Rusk County will replace Town of Atlanta's culvert if it is washed out this spring due to high water coming from the ditch on CTH "O." Amended motion carried.**

Equipment Needs. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch presented a list of needed equipment items that were identified by the Highway Department foreman's and the operations manager. He informed the committee he wanted them to be aware of the needs and explained the priorities on the list. Discussion was held. **No action taken.**

City of Ladysmith Pavillion. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch explained that the Highway Department was doing tree removal along Hwy. 8. Al Christianson from the City of Ladysmith asked if they could have some of those trees to make lumber for a pavilion at the park in honor of veterans. He also asked if we could pick them up and deliver them as a donation. Discussion was held. **Mike Hraban made the motion to approve picking up and delivering the logs to a City of Ladysmith destination as a donation for the veterans pavilion at Memorial Park. Bob Stout seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lyle Lieftring voted no.**

Use of Highway Shop. Possible Motion.

Andy Albarado explained that he talked with Rich Summerfield (Corporation Counsel) in regard to the Highway Department employee's personal use of the shop and equipment. He stated Rich's initial reaction was that it is not a practice he recommended be continued because it creates an unnecessary liability. Rich suggested we go back to the insurance company and get confirmation from them regarding best practice. Andy stated the insurance company's response was not definitive. **After discussion, Mike Hraban made the motion that there shall be no further personal use of any Highway Department facilities or equipment. Jerry Biller seconded the motion. Motion carried. Bob Stout and Ken Pedersen voted no.**

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER REPORT

- Employee Training Update—Scott Emch informed committee members that crew members have completed bridge maintenance training and ditch training. All went very well.
- CTH "V" Guardrail—Scott Emch informed committee members that the bid is out for guardrail on CTH "V." We award at the meeting in February.
- SMA Bridge Contracts—Scott Emch, Lyle Lieftring and Bob Stout will review after today's meeting and make selections.
- STH 40 ATV Update—Scott Emch informed the committee that the State denied the request for an ATV route on STH 40. They stated that a 45 MPH speed limit at that section of highway would have a negative impact on traffic flow and safety.

HIGHWAY SAFETY REPORT

Scott Emch informed the committee that the Drug & Alcohol training has begun and will continue with small groups until all of the crew has completed the training. Sander training has been completed. MSHA training will be on-line this year due to COVID.

HIGHWAY FINANCIAL REPORT

Kitzie Winters summarized the financial reports and there were no questions.

This report includes the current status of Highway Cash, Payables, Receivables, Equipment/Blacktop Plant funds and current Year-to-Date Fund Statement.

HIGHWAY OFFICE REPORT

No current claims.

This report includes Insurance Liability Claims, Workers Compensation Claims and number of FMLA requests.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE- ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

Approve payment of bills.

**A motion to approve the Highway Payables as presented was made by Lyle Lieffring and seconded by Bob Stout. Motion carried.**

Set date for next highway committee meeting.

The next regular Highway Committee is set for February 22, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. at the Rusk County Board Room or by video/phone.

Motion to adjourn.

**A motion to adjourn was made by Lyle Lieffring. Motion Carried.**

Meeting Adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Deb Fetting, Highway Accountant I and distributed after approval at February 2021 meeting.