

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Scott Emch, Deb Fetting, Andy Albarado, Kitzie Winters, Greg Lazar, Don Mansky

Present By Phone: Unknown

Call Meeting to Order.

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

Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2021.

Lyle Lieftring made the motion to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021. Motion was seconded by Bob Stout. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Greg Lazar thanked the Committee and Scott Emch for their help with getting the ATV trail on Highway 8 in Hawkins. He also wanted to thank the Highway Department for their brushing on the corner of Highway 8 and Homestead Road. He stated it is a very dangerous corner and is much safer with better visibility. He appreciates the efforts.

Don Mansky asked for the total amount spent on the blacktop plant. Kitzie Winters responded the total was \$1.899 million. Don then asked how many tons of blacktop have been produced. Scott Emch, not having the exact numbers with him, estimated approximately 14,000 ton. Don then asked what decision was made regarding the employee shop use policy. He was informed that at the last meeting it was decided that the employees are no longer allowed to use any of the highway facilities or equipment for personal use. Don's last question was, why does the highway department work four 10-hour days a week? Scott Emch explained that it is more efficient for job set-up and reduces travel to the job. He further explained that Burnett County did a data analysis and the results show it is not any more costly to work four 10-hour days than of five 8-hour days in the winter. He also stated that most winter weather events require more than 10 hours, not including clean-up. Lyle Lieftring stated that it is also good for crew morale.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Highway Retirement Notice. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch notified the Committee that he received a written notice of Ben Jiskra's plan to retire. Ben is currently the State Foreman and ran the blacktop plant. He will work until the end of March and then take vacation until June 1st. Scott spoke highly of Ben's loyalty and dedication during his nearly 30 years of working for the Highway Department. He stated this item is for informative purpose only and he is not asking for action from the Committee at this time. Plans for Ben's replacement will be discussed at the next meeting. **No action taken.**

Beaver Contract. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch provided the Committee with a copy of the proposed Service Agreement from the USDA for beaver damage management. The cost is based on a 3-year average of beaver complaints handled for our department and is otherwise the same as the last several contracts. **Lyle Lieftring made the motion to accept the proposed agreement from the USDA for beaver damage management. Mike Hraban seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation Approval. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch provided a list of people who represent a variety of municipalities throughout Rusk County. All of the people on the list responded that they would like to be a member of the Ad Hoc Committee. Scott feels like it is a great group of people. The committee contains 7 voting members along with Scott and Andy Albarado who are non-voting members. The main purpose is to educate the community regarding bidding requirements as regulated by state statutes and savings for tax payers by utilizing Rusk County services. **Mike Hraban made the motion to present the recommended list of member for the Highway Department Ad Hoc Committee to the Rusk County Board for approval. Motion seconded by Bob Stout. Motion carried.** The item is on the next Rusk County Board agenda.

CTH "V" Guardrail Bid Opening. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch received three bids for the guardrail for the Little Jump River Bridge on CTH "V." He read them as follows:

\$23,750.00	Mattison Contractors, Inc.
\$25,305.25	Southpaw Fencing, LLC
\$32,624.50	Smith Restorations

Mike Hraban made the motion that we accept the bid from Mattison Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$23,750.00 for the guardrail on the Little Jump River Bridge on CTH "V." Bob Stout seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

40-Hour Overtime Compensation. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch stated that under current Rusk County policy, the crew doesn't get paid overtime for working on Saturday or Sunday if they use PTO or there is a holiday during the week. Using Polk County as an example, he proposed that Rusk County take on the same policy by starting the work week on Friday instead of Sunday and pay overtime for anything over 10 hours for any time outside the regular scheduled hours on Monday through Thursday. He also proposed paying overtime for any hours worked on Saturday & Sunday. He explained that it is Rusk County's policy not to "pay out" PTO. For example, as it is now, if a person used PTO on Monday and the semi-monthly pay period ends on Wednesday, and the person gets called to work on Saturday; that person could be paid 40 regular hours plus 10 PTO hours between the two pay periods, which is essentially a PTO pay out. To limit this from happening, Scott explained that by starting the week on Friday, the crew would not likely use PTO Monday through Thursday if they already worked 40 hours. Despite it being an unscheduled day, if they get called in on a Friday they would be paid at regular time because it is the first day of the work week. The townships would also benefit from this policy. As it is now where overtime is paid only after 40 hours worked, if the crew works for a township toward the end of the week, the township gets charged 1-1/2 time for labor if the total hours worked is over 40. If the crew gets paid overtime the day the excess hours are worked, the job that required the excess time would get charged the overtime. Scott stated that these policy changes would also be a huge morale booster for the crew. It happens often enough that the crew is very frustrated to have to come in on their day off without incentive especially knowing other county's do. Discussion was held.

Lyle Lieffring made the motion to approve that the Highway Department work week start on Friday and that overtime is paid for anything over 10 hours for any time outside the regular scheduled hours on Monday through Thursday; and that overtime be paid for anything beyond 40 hours a week and Saturday and Sunday. Bob Stout seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

County Vehicle Use. Possible Motion.

The use of Rusk County vehicles was an agenda item discussed at the last Rusk County Board meeting. The Commissioner and Operations Manager use of Rusk County vehicles was specifically questioned. In the interest of following proper procedure, the item was put on the Highway Committee agenda for discussion and possible motion. Andy Albarado reported that driving the commissioner's truck home each day was part of an employment offer to accommodate the position. Scott Emch stated there is no purpose of using Highway vehicles for personal use other than infrequent stops at the grocery store on the way home. \$3 per day is reported as income on the W-2's for both employees. Discussion was held. **Jerry Biller made the motion that for bona fide non-compensatory business reasons, the Highway Department requires the Commissioner and the Operations Manager to commute in Highway Department vehicles, that are not to be used for personal use. Motion was seconded by Lyle Lieffring. Motion carried.**

Equipment Purchase—Safety Lift. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch presented information for 2 safety lifts from Dawes Rigging & Crane. Discussion was held on the pros and cons of each one. **Mike Hraban made the motion to purchase the JLG 800S straight boom aerial lift for \$39,400.00 from Dawes Rigging & Crane after the lift has been physically seen. Jerry Biller seconded the motion. Motion Carried.**

Approval to Request Bids for 56 Acres Farm Land by Scott Pitt. Possible Motion.

Scott Emch reported that the 3-year contract for the rental of 56 acres of farm land by the Scott Pitt is expired. He is looking for approval to place an ad requesting bids for a new rental contract. **Bob Stout made the motion to approve placing an ad requesting bids for a 3-year contract for the rental of 56 acres of farm land by the Scott Pitt. Mike Hraban seconded the motion. Motion Carried.**

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER REPORT

- Safety Committee Update—Scott Emch reported the Safety Committee is up and running and reviewed the minutes from the last meeting. He stated he would like to see the income tax issue resolved for safety jackets. He sent an IRS link to Kitzie to determine the category that they fall under. If it remains an issue he will put it on a future agenda. The AODA Safety Training has been completed by all crew members.
- ATV Route Updates—A letter has been sent to the Village of Hawkins with instruction to get the route approved by the State of WI.

HIGHWAY SAFETY REPORT

Due to COVID-19, each of the crew members will complete the MSHA Training on-line. If the public inquires, we will share the information on how they can contact United Safety Solutions to register for their own on-line training.

HIGHWAY FINANCIAL REPORT

Kitzie Winters summarized the financial reports and there were no questions. Scott Emch did an approximate appraisal on the blacktop plant and estimated \$100,000 worth of parts that can be sold and the funds returned to the blacktop plant fund.

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

Kitzie reported that a couple of liability claims are finished up and closed and there are 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 March 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 9:15 a.m.

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