

Winona County Highway Department Road and Bridge Committee Meeting

Minutes for February 21, 2023

Attendance Commissioners: Marcia Ward, Chris Meyer
 Staff: Maureen Holte, David Kramer, Tim Fort, Troy Drath
 Others: Richard Ahrens, Tim Ahrens, Josh Elsing

In Commissioner Jacob's absence, Commissioner Ward called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. This meeting was held with all attendees in-person in the Highway Department multipurpose room.

0. Prior to any other action, appointing a chairperson and vice-chairperson for 2023 was completed. Chris Meyer nominated Marcia Ward for chairperson, Dave seconded. Marcia was voted chairperson with a unanimous vote. Marcia nominated Chris Meyer as the vice-chairperson, Dave seconded. Chris was voted chairperson with a unanimous vote.
1. The agenda was approved unanimously following a motion by Marcia and second by Dave.
2. The December 20, 2022 minutes were approved unanimously following a motion by Marcia and second by Chris.
3. CSAH 19 resurfacing concern. Discussion was held regarding input that was delivered via phone from a concerned citizen of the area who had indicated they may attend the meeting, but ended up not in attendance. Concern was regarding the resurfacing of CSAH 19 on the ridge south of I-90 to the end of existing paved surface at the top of the hill that leads into Wiscoy Valley and that this project is not currently on the 5-year CIP. Discussion of this topic segued to the next topic on the agenda.
4. Road and bridge costs and project backlog was discussed. Since the adoption of the 0.5% transportation sales tax the county has been holding its own regarding completion of projects to maintain the condition of roads and bridges. However, cost spikes of approximately 30% in 2022 with no reason to believe costs will go down it is expected that the overall pavement condition will begin to go down in the coming years. Revenue generating options were discussed including implementation of a wheelage tax and increase in the property tax levy, along with bonding (borrowing) to complete a large project that would reduce the current backlog with the intent to keep the average surface condition of the county system where it is or potentially increase. Current funding including that from the Highway Users Tax Distribution Funds were discussed indicating how we receive money back from motor fuel taxes and other components of that fund. Other discussion included cost effectiveness of turning paved sections back to gravel but it has been shown that once roads carry about 200 cars per day it is less expensive to pave and maintain that versus continuous maintenance of the gravel surface. Currently being down one commissioner until after election to be held in August, consensus was to wait until the 5th commissioner was in place to have further discussion on this topic.
5. Discussed updates to the CSAH 32 City-County Maintenance Agreement. Proposed update is to include chipseal as a split cost instead of a city only cost, which will be a long-term cost benefit to the county and city as chip seal will protect and preserve the pavement surface adding life. Motion to recommend the changes to the county board along with a map showing where this section of road within the city is located was made by Chris and seconded by Dave. Carried unanimously.
6. Discussion was held as follow up to previous discussion regarding the makeup and function of the Road and Bridge Committee. Consensus was that the agenda packet should be available and posted online three business days prior to the meeting. Open items needing broader county board policy direction include whether meetings should be recorded; audio or video format; whether recordings would be posted online or available on request; and potential inclusion of public members on the committee. This item will be moved to Old Business pending outcome of potential board policy changes.
7. Cattle pass policy was discussed regarding a possible board resolution authorizing the Highway Department to make a settlement offer to landowners for removal of cattle passes if the land is under the same ownership on both sides of the road. A question of what other counties are doing in this situation will be looked into and brought back to the committee.
8. Tim gave a maintenance update that included information that the county staff will be working with Xcel Energy to remove leaning trees in the Dresbach and Dakota area and then with MiEnergy for leaning trees in the Pickwick area. Also preparing material and trucks for upcoming storm events.

9. Troy gave a construction update including planned CR 1 paving, CR 21 grading and concrete paving, sealcoating of various roads and replacement of bridges on Runaway Road and Cocker Drive. Working on future years' designs. Dave indicated a resolution regarding an EAW for the CR 30 project would be on the February 28 board meeting.
10. Old Business -- As the CSAH 37, "Fabian Corner" reconstruction is shown on the CIP in 2025 this item will be removed from Old Business.
11. Next meetings: April 18, June 20 Road Tour
12. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 AM.

Minutes prepared by Troy Drath, Assistant County Engineer