

## LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes – February 03, 2015

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Edwin Kelley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Florence County Courthouse second floor conference room.
2. **Roll Call:** Committee members in attendance included Florence County Board Supervisors: Edwin Kelley, Edward Wenger, and Holly Wahlstrom-Stratton. Supervisor Don Gardner was excused. Appointed Committee members included Wisconsin Town's Association (WTA) Unit Chair, Fred Erwin, and Florence School Board Member, Ron Yadro. Also in attendance: Coordinator, Margie Yadro.
3. **Approval and/or revisions to the current agenda.** Moved by Wahlstrom-Stratton, seconded by Erwin, all were in favor to approve the agenda as posted.
4. **Approval of the January 6, 2015 Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes.** R. Yadro motioned to approve the previous meeting minutes as drafted, supported by Erwin. The minutes were approved.
5. **Old Business:**
  - A. County Board action on resolutions and bills: no action was recently requested as the Legislative Session has just reconvened.
  - B. K-12 Education Reform: R. Yadro reported on two locally led requests to modify Wisconsin statutes related to out-of-state tuition payments, and Boundary Appeal Board decisions, which were both substantially supported by statewide delegates at the recent Wisconsin Association of School Boards' Conference. The local District will reformat the requests as formal resolutions and asked that they be considered as future agenda items by the County's Legislative Advisory Committee. R. Yadro stated that more review was necessary of the Governor's recently unveiled budget. Though Florence Schools may be eligible for increased categorical aids that are being pursued, overall state and federal support is anticipated to decrease. Concern was expressed over the state's public school funding formula that has translated to constantly decreasing state support for Florence County students and their communities.
  - C. Florence County Townships: WTA Local Unit Chairman Erwin reported on discussion/action at their January meeting. Their District #4 Representative presented priorities including gas tax and distributor costs; TRIP money for road improvements; and culvert replacements and permits. Future discussions are expected for Transportation Aids and local contributions and maintenance efforts. Erwin added that websites are now recognized as a legal posting site, though support for local business was acknowledged. Other topics at the recent WTA meeting included an economic and tourism report from the Florence County Economic Development Director, Wendy Gehlhoff; and, Conservationist, Margie Yadro, who updated local officials on required revisions to the County's Farmland Preservation Plan; and, effects of invasive species and noxious weed management.
  - D. National Forest PILT monies: Wenger and Kelley questioned the lack of Payment In Lieu of Taxes for lands purchased years ago by the U.S. Forest Service. Erwin added that WTA is expected to take up this same concern at the state level. Wahlstrom-Stratton questioned local impacts from the expiration of the Secure Rural Schools Act. Kelley asked for direction from the Committee where Wenger suggested the need for more information. R. Yadro reported Florence School District has also been notified of an approximate \$30,000 loss in funds from last year through the 25% Fund along with the maximum state support reduction level. Kelley agreed to request more information on these subjects from state and federal representatives.

- E. Terrestrial Invasive Species support: Conservationist M. Yadro reported a citizen driven petition underway to list invasive wild parsnip as a County noxious weed. She went on to say that an Invasive Species Ad Hoc Committee was appointed by the County's Land Conservation Committee to begin development of a county-wide Invasive Species Prevention and Management Plan proposal that will soon be reviewed by forest and highway managers, etc. Differences were noted in Michigan and Wisconsin grant funding opportunities for education, planning, and control projects, where Wisconsin currently has little earmarked for terrestrial invasive species treatment. Discussion followed regarding potential Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) support. M. Yadro clarified that requesting more state funding on the terrestrial side could negatively result in dividing the limited budget currently used for aquatic invasive species management. Lack of state and federal highway system mowing resources were also named as a significant problem in managing road right-of-way hazardous plants. Wahlstrom-Stratton suggested a letter to request additional support from WDNR, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and Department of Tourism. Wenger asked that County Highway Commissioner, Jeff DeMuri, be invited to give his opinion on these issues and impacts due to changes in transportation aids. Chairman Kelley offered to contact WDNR Northern Director John Gozdziński to get a better understanding of related funding in the proposed State biennial budget. On a motion by R. Yadro, supported by Erwin, this item will be referred to the March Legislative Advisory Committee meeting. Motion passed.
- F. In-County Residency: though several committee members acknowledged the value of community support and involvement by local employees, this item now falls under new Wisconsin Law which primarily affects only the travel distance for emergency personnel as updated in the County's Personnel Policy. No further action was taken at this time.
- G. Regional Transportation Aids for the North: As this item will be better defined in the new State budget proposal, Wahlstrom-Stratton moved to refer this to the March Legislative Advisory Committee meeting agenda, supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor.
- H. Support for separating Fire monies from Timber management monies on Federal Forests: Kelley supplied a letter from U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's Office where she claims to have cosponsored a bipartisan bill to fix wildfire suppression funding "fire borrowing" to the western states, and support Wisconsin's timber and paper industry. R. Yadro moves to send a letter to state and federal legislators in support of Baldwin's efforts, seconded by Wahlstrom-Stratton. All were in favor.
6. **New Business –**
- A. Resolutions from LCC: M. Yadro updated the Committee on some of the issues brought forward through the League of Conservation Voters. Wahlstrom-Stratton expressed concerns with plastic microbeads polluting the Great Lakes. No action was requested from LCC at this time.
- B. Letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services: Kelley supplied a letter originating from the Alliance of Northern States Working to Ensure Regional Stability (ANSWERS) members that addressed the pitfalls in potential listing of the Northern Long-Eared Bat as an Endangered Species. Wahlstrom-Stratton stated that the possible impacts to forestry management and local economies would suffer if more restrictions are placed on wildlife habitat which is not a factor in current bat population losses. Wahlstrom-Stratton moved for County Board consideration of a letter to the Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, copied to state and federal legislators, which would request issuing a special ruling concurrent with a threatened listing that would still allow certain typical forest and land management activities to continue, supported by Wenger. All were in favor.
- C. Letter to Senator Stabenow re: U.S. Postal Service Closures: Discussion followed regarding potential closures to Post Office facilities including the Kingsford Mail Processing Center. A motion was made by Wahlstrom-Stratton to refer this item to the ANSWERS April meeting, supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor.

- D. SB-009, relating to Restraining Orders and Injunctions: Wahlstrom-Stratton reported that this bill was sponsored by area state representatives and moved to refer this item to the County Human Services Department and Sheriff's Department for comment, seconded by Wenger. All were in favor.
- E. AB-001 and SB-001, relating to School Accountability Reports: Wahlstrom-Stratton motioned to refer this matter to the School Board and Superintendent at Florence Schools, supported by R. Yadro. Motion passed.
- F. AB-002, regarding town line highways: Erwin noted several shared town roads in the County and felt this could be an upcoming Wisconsin Town's Association agenda item. R. Yadro moved to refer this issue to the local WTA meeting for consideration, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton. All were in favor.
7. **Update from Legislators**: no legislators present.
8. **Group discussion/any other action on legislative business**: Wahlstrom-Stratton believed that the AB-015 Microbeads issue was to be taken up today in the legislature. The County Health Department also brought forward support for a proposal to ban e-cigarette use. Wahlstrom-Stratton shared health concerns related to these vapor smoking devices which currently are not included in the State's ban of indoor smoking in public places. Wenger moved to the table this item until more science is explained, supported by R. Yadro. Motion passed.
9. **Future meetings**: Erwin requested future discussion of transportation alternatives for safe rides home. Wahlstrom-Stratton suggested input from the local Tavern League and moved to include this as a March agenda item, supported by Erwin. All were in favor. Erwin will pursue information on similar programs in neighboring counties.
10. **Adjournment**: With all business complete, R. Yadro motioned to adjourn, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton. The next meeting will be held at 9 AM on Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

*Respectfully submitted by: Margie Yadro, Legislative Advisory Committee Coordinator*