

Florence County  
**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2015

Florence County Courthouse

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Ed Kelley called the meeting to order at 9 AM with a quorum present.
2. **Roll Call:** Florence County Board Supervisors Ed Kelley, Edward Wenger, and Larry Dzekute; Unit Chairman of the Wisconsin Towns Association Fred Erwin; and, Florence School Board Member Ron Yadro. Supervisor Holly Wahlstrom-Stratton was excused. Also participating: Margie Yadro, Legislative Advisory Committee Coordinator.
3. **Approval and/or revisions to the current agenda:** on a motion by Dzekute, supported by Wenger, all were in favor to accept the current agenda as posted.
4. **Approval of the July 7, 2015 Legislative Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes:** Erwin moved to accept the previous meeting minutes as drafted with an amendment to clarify school district challenges in purchasing used out of state buses. Seconded by Wenger. All were in favor.
5. **OLD BUSINESS – (discussion/action):**
  - a. Legislative Update including recent County Board action taken: M. Yadro had distributed “Thank You” cards to state legislators as directed. No further action was requested.
  - b. School Board update: R. Yadro reported that Florence School’s Superintendent Ben Niehaus had recommended supporting the concept of two bills that have recently been introduced to increase state funding to public schools. Chairman Kelley requested that any legislative action the District’s School Board would like County Supervisors to consider, be prepared in a letter and submitted to the Legislative Advisory Committee.
  - c. Florence County Wisconsin Townships Association (WTA): Erwin reported on legislative highlights of the Wisconsin Towns Association that were also considered by this committee. As part of the Governor’s budget recently signed into law, there was no change to the existing state-local ratio for TRIP-D monies; no cuts to town road aids though state transportation bonding was cut from \$1.2B to \$500M with an additional \$350M available for major highway redevelopment or rehabilitation; shared revenue remained stable; a restoration of \$666,000 was made to the town share of road aids for providing access to DNR owned and managed properties; the county property tax assessment proposal was removed; culvert permitting was eased; \$1M of closed acreage fees will now be distributed to towns (80%) and counties (20%) annually; prevailing wage was eliminated for local governments, including school districts, and will not prohibit towns from contracting with counties; approval of a \$1.5M increase in funding annual broadband expansion grants; regulatory oversight of Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) remains with the Department of Safety and Professional Services; recycling grant funding was reduced to \$15M in 2015-16, and restored to \$19M in 2016-17; AB 113 was signed into law as Act 15 relating to Implements of Husbandry; and, AB 122 became Act 44 with regards to the exemption of certain vehicles of utilities from class B highway weight limitations and certain special or seasonal weight restrictions. Erwin agreed to seek clarification on SB 118 relating to removing caps on town expenditures for certain highway purposes.
  - d. National Forest PILT Monies: Wenger stated that more should be known this fall as the federal budget develops. R. Yadro believed that the local school district anticipates receiving less PILT funding than last year. No action was necessary though this item will continue to be monitored.
  - e. Regional Transportation Aids: Wenger explained the mission of the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission, chaired by local Economic Development Director Wendy Gehlhoff.

Wenger also shared information on the significant regional interest in updating the log rail car fleet to service Northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Multi-million dollar pledges have been made from several stakeholders as part of a recent federal TIGER grant application. Wenger also commented on the challenges in managing invasive plants on road right-of-ways. Erwin reported that a more aggressive approach had been taken by some towns to control wild parsnip and invasive thistles. The Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition has also networked with roadside managers to time mowing for greatest effectiveness. Added state resources for more extensive cutting will continue to be pursued.

f. Department and Partner Agency/Organization Recommendations:

- i. **AB-191:** relating to requiring drug testing and treatment for eligibility for certain work experience programs, etc. Wenger moved to table this item indefinitely. Supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor.
- ii. **SB-203:** relating to changing the assessment method for business improvement districts. On a motion by Wenger, supported by Erwin, a recommendation for legislative action will be requested from Florence County Economic Director Wendy Gehlhoff and Zoning Administrator Rich Wolosyn. All were in favor.

6. **NEW BUSINESS – (discussion/action)**

- a. **SB-215:** relating to increasing School Revenue Limits. R. Yadro moved to refer SB 215 & 216 to future meetings. Supported by Dzekute. All were in favor.
- b. **SB-216:** relating to increasing Special Education Funding. (Included in the above action.)
- c. **SB-210:** relating to EMS exemption for out-of-state emergency medical services personnel from licensure requirements. R. Yadro moved to seek guidance from Sheriff Jeff Rickaby and local Rescue Squads for recommendation on the bill, and to clarify current licensing with ambulance services provided from Iron Mountain, MI. All were in favor.
- d. **AB-197:** relating to the American Health Benefit Exchange. On a motion by Wenger, supported by Erwin, Florence County Clerk Donna Trudell, Health Director Annette Seibold, and Human Services Department Director Jen Steber would be asked for their recommendations. All were in favor.
- e. **AB 284:** relating to Threats to Welfare Workers – causing or threatening bodily harm to certain child welfare and juvenile justice workers, and providing a criminal penalty. Wenger moved to request guidance on this bill from Human Services Director Steber, and Sherriff Rickaby. Supported by Dzekute. All were in favor.

7. **Resolutions:** No action.

8. **2016 Legislative Advisory Committee Budget proposal:** M. Yadro presented a budget draft for 2016 with a 0% levy increase, totaling \$4,000. On a motion by Wenger, supported by R. Yadro, all were in favor to send the budget proposal to the Audit & Budget Committee for further consideration.

9. **Update from area Legislators:** none present.

10. **Group discussion/any other action on legislative business:** Wenger commented on the Governor's budget impacts to the services and operations of the Florence Natural Resource Center. R. Yadro suggested seeking clarification from Senator Tom Tiffany for the introduction of SB 219 that prohibits the Department of Workforce Development from requiring job seekers to provide their social security numbers. Additional legislative topics included a lack of reciprocal laws between states concerning birth and death records, military discharges, etc. M. Yadro also brought up a recent Association discussion regarding discontinuing property tax relief to nonresident Wisconsin farmland owners.

11. **Future ANSWERS/Legislative Advisory Committee meeting agenda items:** current "New Business" items requesting further input.

12. **Set date for next Legislative Advisory Meeting and adjourn:** On a motion by Wenger, supported by Erwin, all were in favor to adjourn until September 4, 2015 at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Margie Yadro*

Florence County Legislative Advisory Committee Coordinator