

Florence County
LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2015

Florence County Courthouse

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Edwin Kelley called the meeting to order at 9 AM.
2. **Roll Call:** County Board Supervisors: Kelley, Holly Wahlstrom-Stratton, and Edward Wenger; Florence School Board Member, Ron Yadro; and Unit Chair of the Wisconsin Towns Association, Fred Erwin. Supervisor Larry Dzekute was excused. Also participating: Legislative Advisory Coordinator, Margie Yadro; U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's Office Representative, Doug Hill; and, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Northern Director, John Gozdziwski.
3. **Approval and/or revisions to the current agenda:** moved by Wahlstrom-Stratton, supported by R. Yadro, all were in favor to approve the agenda as posted.
4. **Approval of the October 6, 2015 Legislative Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes:** Erwin motioned to approve the previous Meeting Minutes as submitted. Seconded by Wahlstrom-Stratton. All were in favor.
5. **Legislative Action or Recommendations –**
 - A. Florence County Board Supervisors: Kelley reported that all legislative letters brought forward last month had been acted upon as recommended by this committee.
 - B. State and Federal School Legislation:
 - a. AB-254: relating to private roads and driveways of certain rules of the road governing passing school buses. On a motion by R. Yadro, seconded by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all were in favor to support this bill as recommended by Ben Niehaus, Administrator at Florence Schools, and to submit a letter to County Board Supervisors for further action.
 - b. AB-332: relating to pupil participation limit in the statewide parental choice programs. On a motion by R. Yadro, supported by Erwin, all were in favor to oppose this bill following the recommendation by School Administrator Niehaus, and submit a letter for County Board Supervisors for further consideration.
 - C. Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA), Florence County: Erwin reported on research into e-waste disposal options and services to the area. Wenger moved to defer this item to the County Zoning/Recycling Committee for research of possible cooperative services and benefits and to correspond with the local towns and school district. Supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor.
6. **Federal Legislation:**
 - A. S. 1925: Extending Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Program and make permanent the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Hill reported of Senator Baldwin's strong support and co-sponsorship of this bill and how significant all of the related programming was. Even though he felt that there is some push and pull of funding ahead, he also noted that there were good things happening, especially in programs like the Good Neighbor Authority which allows the US Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements with states to perform forest management services on National Forest Lands. On a motion by R. Yadro, seconded by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all were in favor to send a letter to support these programs as described in S. 1925.
 - B. S. 2148 Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2015: Hill reported that this bill co-sponsored by Senator Baldwin would protect an estimated 236,000 seniors across the state from a dramatic increase in Medicare costs. Wahlstrom-Stratton moved to send a letter to related committees and colleagues in support of this proposal. Seconded by Erwin. All were in favor.
 - C. Canadian Softwood Lumber Agreement: Hill stated that it would be important for those entities representing northern Wisconsin's interests to create a letter of support on this issue and forward that to Senator Baldwin and federal legislators. Wahlstrom-Stratton made the motion to support seeking to re-establish an agreement in similar language of the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement between the US and Canada (to reduce the competitive imbalances and minimize the harmful effects of unfairly subsidized imports in the U.S. lumber market). Supported by Erwin. All were in favor.

7. **Regional Transportation Aids:** nothing added.

OLD BUSINESS – (discussion/action)

8. Department and Partner Agency/Organization Recommendations:

- A. SB-239: relating to replacement, reconstruction, and transfer of an approved high capacity well. Gozdziwski shared a written Public Hearing testimony offered by the WDNR regarding SB 291 also proposing changes for high capacity well department review and approval. In the notes, a Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in 2014 significantly expanded WDNR permit consideration to assess effects to all waters of the state including streams, lakes, wetlands, municipal and private wells, cumulative impacts of the proposed well along with other wells on the same property and water withdrawals on nearby high capacity well properties. Though there was some confusion over the focus of each bill, R. Yadro felt that SB 239 was aimed at allowing maintenance up to replacement of an existing approved well without further state approval required. Erwin moved to support SB-239. Seconded by R. Yadro. Wahlstrom-Stratton opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS – (discussion/action)

- A. AB-131, 133, 135, 136: relating to Tax Incremental Districts (TIDs). Wahlstrom-Stratton moved to follow the recommendation of Florence County's Economic Development Director, Wendy Gehlhoff, who supported all four bills that she felt were related to making it easier to implement a TID plan to help grow jobs, businesses, services, and products. The motion was seconded by Erwin. All were in favor to submit a combined letter of support to County Board Supervisors for further consideration.
- B. AB-319: relating to conveying interests in local government land for construction of natural gas lines. Kelley read a response from Robert Friberg of the Florence Utilities that explained that this type of agreement already exists in the electric industry and allows projects that receive regulatory approval to move forward at a reasonable and predictable pace. Friberg felt that there were safeguards also in place to provide a degree of protection to the public's interests. On a motion by R. Yadro, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all were in favor to forward to County Board Supervisors for further action.
- C. AB-361: relating to local government employee participation in ancillary insurance coverage programs offered by the GIB to state employees. On a motion by R. Yadro, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all were in favor to defer this item to the Personnel Committee and School Administration for further recommendation.
- D. AB-385: relating to amending various rules governing the certification of child care operators, the licensing of child welfare agencies, and establishing standards for child care centers, etc. Wahlstrom-Stratton requested confirmation with the Florence County Human Services Director, Jen Steber, on the final bill language and forward her recommendation to County Board Supervisors for further action. Seconded by Erwin. All were in favor.
- E. AB-422 (SB 354): relating to funding for the Florence Wild Rivers Interpretive Center. Wahlstrom-Stratton moved to send a letter of support to County Board Supervisors for further action that could be conveyed during the upcoming Public Hearing. Supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor.
- F. SB-305: relating to requiring DOT to award a grant to Northwoods Rail Transit Commission to fund the purchase of railroad cars and making an appropriation. Though several commented on the far reaching economic impacts of the logging industry in northern Wisconsin, critical challenges are currently being faced in maintaining the log rail car fleet serving the area. R. Yadro moved to draft a letter of support for this necessary investment into the logging industry. Supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton. All were in favor to send to County Board Supervisors for further consideration.
- G. Update from area Legislators: Hill reported that some agreement had been made on the federal budget late last week. Though more appropriations still need to be made, he hopes it will avoid a government shutdown.
- H. Group discussion/any other action on legislative business: Wahlstrom-Stratton commented on impacts to the Wisconsin Historical Society and their volunteers stemming from budget cuts. She asked for legislative consideration for this issue to be put on the next agenda. R. Yadro also suggested an item related to public schools Maintenance Of Effort requirement.
- I. Future ANSWERS/Legislative Advisory Committee meeting agenda items: the next ANSWERS meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2016 at the Florence Natural Resource Center, starting at 9 AM.
- J. Set date for next Legislative Advisory Meeting and adjourn: with December 1st chosen as the next meeting date, at 9 AM, R. Yadro moved to adjourn, supported by Erwin, all were in favor.

Ed Kelley

Edwin Kelley, Committee Chairman
Florence County
Legislative Advisory Committee