

Florence County

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2013

In attendance: Chairman Edwin Kelley; Supervisors Holly Wahlstrom-Stratton and Edward Wenger; and appointed members Ron Yadro and Fred Erwin. Supervisors Don Gardner and Larry Neuens were absent.

Also in attendance: Land Conservation Department Administrator - Margie Yadro, and School District of Florence County Superintendent - Ben Niehaus.

Chairman Kelley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Land and Water Resource Management workroom at the courthouse.

Wenger moved to accept the agenda as drafted, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all were in favor.

On a motion by R. Yadro, a second by Erwin, all were in favor to accept the October 1, 2013 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Old Business:

A – County Board Action:

At the October County Board meeting, Kelly reported that the Conservation Congress supported AB 194 regarding increased authority to hunt certain animals with a crossbow. Wahlstrom-Stratton expressed her concern about affects on a quality rifle season hunt with this added pressure. This bill currently waits to be signed into law by Governor Walker. No further action taken. Unanimous County Board Supervisors' support was given for Resolution #2013-19 that requested a statewide wolf population management goal of 350 animals in a timely manner. Legislative letters were also approved for support including SB 278, relating to closed access on mining exploration areas of MFL lands; and, AB 289 in regards to re-determining the value of the tax incremental base of certain tax incremental districts. AB 390, concerning parental notification for questioning of pupils was not supported. Florence School District Superintendent Niehaus explained to the Legislative Advisory Committee that the need for the school to question students, no different than parents (acting in Loco Parentis) about even the simplest of actions may lead to a better understanding, sometimes discipline, or in the extreme case, criminal behavior. The concern of this bill as written is that the school district's hands will be tied and unable to question students at all, until the parents are brought in, as any occasion might lead to uncovering criminal activities that would require parental notification. Niehaus will research further and was invited to report back. Wahlstrom-Stratton voted to table the matter at this time, supported by Wenger. All were in favor.

B – Educational Reform:

R. Yadro gave voice to a recently identified concern regarding tuition paid through School Choice. As the School District of Florence County is a property rich district, the level of state aid funding is very low, approximately 11%. This year, the local tax and state aid generated per pupil for the Florence District comes in at \$9,258. Under Open Enrollment, students can attend a neighboring district, where Florence Schools count the pupil for state aid but pay tuition to the school of choice at a cost of approximately \$6,585 per student. The state trend to reduce or eliminate tertiary and/or secondary aid to property rich districts has resulted this year in Florence County taxpayers paying \$5,467 out of the local levy to have a student taught in another district. Wahlstrom-Stratton suggests that it would seem more equitable to exchange tuition of the state aid portion only. Superintendent Niehaus explained that Michigan schools do not even have reciprocity at the border in accordance with a statute on the books that predates the 1940's. When Niehaus called this to area legislators' attention, they have not taken this up as a statewide issue yet. Niehaus will look for further clarification and direction from John Forester of the Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance.

C – Replies from Departments/Outside Agencies:

M. Yadro shared Administrator responses received since the last meeting.

AB-381: relates to the definition and operational restrictions of ATVs and UTVs. Forestry and Parks Administrator Pat Smith recommended the Committee oppose this bill. Erwin spoke on behalf of economic sense to allow passage of these all terrain and utility terrain vehicles into

Florence County. It was also noted that youngsters would need certification to operate these vehicles on public roads. The ANSWERS Committee has been working toward opening up the tourist flow between counties where the bridge crossing has been a detriment. On a motion by Wenger, supported by Erwin, all were in favor to draft a letter in opposition of this bill and request County Board consideration. (Placed on the state's October 15th calendar by Committee on Rules)

AB 270: Health Department Administrator, Annette Seibold, forwarded the recommendation of the Wisconsin Public Health Association and the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, which was to table this item at this time. On a motion by Wahlstrom-Stratton, supported by R. Yadro, all were in favor to table AB-270.

AB 343: involving the distribution by schools of a concussion head injury information sheet and the participation by pupils in a youth athletic activity. R. Yadro says that he feels the intent is right, but the wording is confusing as do other committee members. Niehaus will request clarification from the Wisconsin Schools Administrators Alliance. R. Yadro motions to refer this item to School Administration for clarification, supported by Wenger. All were in favor.

AB 355/SB 279: Kelley believes the Governor has signed this into law relating to annual or consecutive month permits for vehicles or combinations of vehicles transporting loads near the Wisconsin-Michigan border. No further action taken.

New Business:

SB 349: the Town of Fence has drafted a resolution to oppose SB 349, authored by local Senator Tom Tiffany, which concerns local governmental authority to regulate air quality, water quality and quantity, and the use of explosives; local government highway use contracts and local regulation of material disposal sites related to transportation projects of the Department of Transportation (DOT); and local governmental authority to regulate nonmetallic mining. Wenger believes this will not be further acted upon in this session. After discussion, Wahlstrom-Stratton moved to oppose the bill and send the item to County Board for further action, supported by Erwin. R. Yadro and Wenger abstain until further clarification. Motion passes.

AB 251: under this bill, a county that houses a person in a county jail may file a suit against the person in circuit court to be reimbursed for expenses incurred by the county for housing the person, regardless of whether the person is sentenced to a county jail, placed on probation, or sentenced to a state prison. After reviewing Sheriff Jeff Rickaby's comments, Wahlstrom-Stratton motions to table this item, supported by Erwin. All were in favor.

AB 396: this bill relates to absentee voting at residential care facilities. County Clerk, Donna Trudell, believes that this will not affect her election duties, but it may involve voting at a convalescent home in the Town of Florence. Wahlstrom-Stratton motions that a letter be sent to the Town of Florence to request their input and then ask that this be an agenda item at a county Town's Association meeting, supported by Wenger. All were in favor.

Discussion was held regarding volunteer healthcare coverage affects on fire and rescue units. Wahlstrom-Stratton moves to keep this as a future agenda item, supported by R. Yadro. All were in favor. Economic Development Director, Wendy Gehlhoff, sent in correspondence to consider supporting railroad access to the area. Wahlstrom-Stratton motions to support Northwood's Rail and asks that Gehlhoff keep the committee informed for future support, seconded by Wenger. All were in favor. Economic Develop Director Gehlhoff requested legislative support for the newly formed bi-partisan Congressional Paper Caucus. On a motion by R. Yadro, a second by Wahlstrom-Stratton, M. Yadro was directed to prepare a letter for County Board consideration to send to legislators in support of this industry in Wisconsin. Gehlhoff plans to present information at an upcoming ANSWERS meeting.

On a motion by Wenger, supported by Wahlstrom-Stratton, all are in favor to adjourn and meet again at the discretion of the chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

Margie Yadro
Legislative Advisory Committee Secretary