

**Regular Meeting
Highway Committee
February 10th, 2014**

Members Present: Gary Steber, Jeanette Bomberg, Don Gardner, and John Halada.

Members Absent: Larry Neuens was excused.

Others Present: Jeff Belongie from Hutchinson Shockey Erley & Co.; Donna Trudell, Florence County Clerk; Ed Kelley, Florence County Board Supervisor; DeMuri and Francie Freeberg.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steber.

Agenda: It was moved by Gardner, seconded by Halada and voted four (4) to zero (0) to approve the agenda as submitted.

Minutes: A motion was then made by Bomberg, seconded by Gardner and voted four (4) to zero (0) to approve the minutes of the last regular meeting held on January 15th, 2014.

Old Business

Information/discussion on bonding for roads, etc.: Jeff Belongie from Hutchinson Shockey Erley & Co. was in attendance to provide the County Personnel with information about bonding for roads and/or infrastructure projects. Mr. Belongie works for a firm to provide financing to municipalities for capital improvement projects. They have worked with the County and the Town of Florence several times over the past thirty plus years. He noted that they will provide all the work necessary if it is decided to bond to complete repairs to our roads. Debt service projects (equipment and capital expenditures) have no limits for the tax levy whereby operational levies do have limits based on the tax laws. Mr. Belongie provided several handouts for the people to review and explained them in their entirety. He said they prefer to work with Standard & Poor's Ratings Services to get an investment rating for Florence County. That rating will determine the investment rates for the investors as well as the interest payment rates for the County. Once it is decided to proceed with bonding and a determination is made for what project(s) and how much money will be needed they develop an amortization schedule for pay back. Bonding rates are very low now and it is a good time to go with this method to finance major projects. This would then safeguard the county's cash reserves for future issues that may arise. He noted that on property valued at \$100,000, the increase in taxes would be approximately \$20. If the County decides to go this route, they will need to provide an "Intent Resolution" from the County Board. This resolution must note "the borrowing of not to exceed" dollar amount and must be passed by three quarters (3/4) of the board. If passed, the resolution is good for three (3) years. Then as things proceed, and a final dollar amount is determined, this must then be passed by 51% of the County Board to actually borrow the money. Mr. Belongie answered the questions of those in attendance. He thanked the board for allowing him to attend and try to update them on this issue. He said if they have additional questions to feel free to contact him at any time.

DeMuri said that he has been working on his long range plan but has had to change it since we did not get the STP Project that he had hoped for. Steber stated it is necessary to get a rough estimate for the highways and building (repairs and/or replacement). Bomberg said this is why it is so critical for the administrators to complete long range plans and provide them to the Board (Audit & Budget Committee). If considering bonding the County Board should look at all the needs of the county. DeMuri said that he is concerned about the highway building as well as the roads. The building has several major problems with it including roof, electrical and drainage issues. DeMuri will work on providing the estimates for repairs to the highways and repairs/replacement of the highway building.

Update on the Wheel Loader bids: DeMuri said that the Volvo loader passed the test that he wanted performed with their loader so he awarded Aring the bid. There will be three annual payments of \$31,638.00. He further noted that he is going to try to sell our existing Caterpillar loaders outright for a minimum of \$84,500 each on Wisconsin Surplus Auction. This is the amount that Caterpillar had as their guaranteed buy back when we purchased them in 2009. If unable to sell them outright, then Caterpillar will buy them back for more money than Volvo offered.

Update on STP Project for CTH "N": There was nothing new at this time so this item was tabled till there is something new to inform the committee about.

Update on hiring process: There were a total of 22 applications received for the position of Common Laborer/Truck Driver. There were all reviewed by Steber and DeMuri and they narrowed it down to the top six (6) applications. The Committee felt that they would like to conduct the interviews on Monday, February 17th. Each committee member said they could be present on that day. The interviews will start at 4:00 PM with 20 minutes allowed for each applicant and five (5) minutes for the Committee to discuss that applicant.

New Business

Update on Highway Personnel: After Dave Bauer's retirement DeMuri posted the working Foreman position. He had three (3) people sign for the posting for the Working Foreman position. The job was given to Todd Donaldson as he had the seniority and the knowledge to handle the job. Bob Butterfield is nearing his six (6) month anniversary date at the end of this month. Butterfield's position was a shared position between Highway and Forestry. DeMuri and Pat Smith would like to do a performance review /evaluation on him.

Five (5) Year Highway Plan: Since we did not get the STP funding we were hoping for, DeMuri said that he had to completely revise his five (5) year plan. DeMuri handed out a scenario of future projects and reviewed them with the committee. The next STP project will not be available until 2016 or 2017. He's not sure how long CTH "N" will hold up or how long the people using it are willing to put up with the rough shape it is in, especially from the Pine River Bridge to Florence. Further analysis will have to be completed, especially if we decide to bond for repairs to our highways. He noted that if the ADT (Average Daily Traffic) is more than 1,500 cars per day we are required to have paved shoulders at a minimum of 3' which will increase the cost of road work.

Jeanette Bomberg left at this point as she had another meeting to attend.

Commissioner's Report: DeMuri informed the committee we had a long and expensive January. We had 17 separate storm events in January and have already used 20% of our 2014 state routine maintenance budget. Our County salt supplies used are up 25% more this year than our 3 year average, we are currently taking state vendor reserve salt and we already had to make more winter salt sand.

Distribute monthly financial statements: The monthly financial statements were distributed and reviewed by Freeberg. It was moved by Gardner, seconded by Halada, and voted three (3) to zero (0) to approve the financial report as submitted.

Present bills: The bills were then presented for review. After discussion and review, it was moved by Gardner, seconded by Halada and voted three (3) to zero (0) to pay this month's bills for a total not to exceed \$118,381.21.

Committee Members comments, concerns and future agenda items: Next month's agenda should include discussions on bonding, the five (5) year plan and the status of the hiring process.

Adjourn to next regular meeting: There being no further business it was moved by Gardner, seconded by Halada and voted three (3) to zero (0) to adjourn to February 17th for the job interviews and then to March 10th, 2014 for the next regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Francie Freeberg
Office Manager