



# Menominee County Highway Department

---

W2703 Chief Carron Road  
Keshena, WI 54135  
Ph: 715-799-3369  
Fax: 715-799-3789

## **Menominee County Highway Committee Regular Meeting Minutes Tuesday, May 9, 2023 Highway Department Conference Room**

- 1. Call to Order.** 9:01 a.m.
- 2. Roll Call.** Committee members present: Keith Tourtillott, Eugene Caldwell, and Gregg Malmstrom. A quorum was present. Others present: Jeremy C. Weso, Highway Commissioner; Ken Casper, Patrol Superintendent; Brittany Anderson, Office Manager; and Pat Roberts, Mechanic.
- 3. Election of Officers**
  - A. Chairperson: E. Caldwell nominated K. Tourtillott. G. Malmstrom seconded the nomination. K. Tourtillott became the Chairperson by acclamation.
  - B. Vice-Chairperson: K. Tourtillott nominated E. Caldwell. G. Malmstrom seconded the nomination. E. Caldwell became the Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.
- 4. Community Input**

E. Caldwell expressed his concerns about the poor condition of STH 47 and STH 55. The Commissioner informed him that these two roads are on the schedule for repaving in 2028 and that supplemental funding for spot patching has been allocated each year to short up small stretches that are in the worst shape.
- 5. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of April 11, 2023.**

Motion by E. Caldwell to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 20, 2023. Second by G. Malmstrom. Motion approved.
- 6. New Committee Member Orientation**
  - A. Introduction and Orientation. The Commissioner provided a comprehensive overview of the department, personnel, equipment, road inventory, and challenges. The Committee devoted particular attention to discussing road and bridge conditions, funding needed to maintain and improve roads and bridges, and how awarded funds are expensed among state, county, town, and tribal roads. The Commissioner discussed strategies that are employed to maintain budget compliance, which primarily concerns the level of service provided, waiting to replace equipment until it actually fails, and through reductions in the workforce due to budget constraints. The Commissioner also stated

that winter operations influence the entire year: a mild winter leaves us additional funding to gravel roads, do more patching or paving, or do more striping, but a bad winter leaves us expending more on salt, sand-salt, repairing plow trucks, and fuel, leaving us less to work with in the spring, summer and fall. The Commissioner also mentioned how many on gravel roads would like their roads paved and that they were led to believe such would happen in 20 years, yet the department doesn't have the funding to maintaining existing paved roads, much less, pave new roads. The Committee rounded out the discussion talking about equipment needs, particularly with the fleet of older dump trucks and pickup trucks.

- G. Malmstrom asked for clarification on operator routes – whether the operator retained those routes only during the winter or during the entire year. The Commissioner stated that the routes belong to the operators the entire year; however, operators may perform work (e.g., grading) on other routes depending upon staffing or scheduling needs. G. Malmstrom also commended operators for their snowplowing efforts and stated that the over-application of salt during winter operations can adversely affect the environment.
  - K. Tourtillott stated that his officers provide a helping hand on the roads by cutting up felled trees, limbs and branches.
  - E. Caldwell asked whether the department uses federal excess/federal surplus equipment or used equipment. The department has one federal surplus grader. P. Roberts stated that we do purchase used vehicles.
  - E. Caldwell and G. Malmstrom stated that we need to reach out to the Tribe to ask for an increase in the contract award—that \$300,000 over the last 10 years is not keeping pace with inflation. The Commissioner stated that he has asked for increases over the years and just recently learned that the BIA's appropriations and funding formula has not changed, leaving the Tribe's allocation of maintenance and construction funding relatively flat.
  - K. Tourtillott discussed some of the challenges we had with the storm damage cleanup from June of 2022.
- B. 2023 Budget. The Commissioner discussed the 2023 budget and a flowchart depicting the various awards and other revenues the department expects to receive in 2023.
- C. 2023 Workplan. The Commissioner discussed the 2023 workplan, which was formally approved by the Highway Committee in April. The workplan included the 5-year schedule of projects. The Committee devoted some time to discussing STH 47/55, and the State's plan to mill-and-overlay both highways in 2028, and how the mill-and-overlay will just reflect all of the cracks underneath in a matter of two to three years. The Committee also discussed how beneficial it is to clear trees further beyond the shoulders to help improve sightline for drivers and help with evaporation on the road surface.

### **7. Commissioner's Report**

The Commissioner's written report was presented. Notable topics discussed included the following:

## Menominee Co. Highway Meeting Minutes

---

- The Commissioner announced John Eggert's birthday on May 6th. There are no anniversaries for April.
- The Commissioner provided an overview of basic winter operation statistics: 79 snow plow outings overall compared to 69 this same time last year; an estimated 100.20" of snow (79.60" last year). All sand-salt and salt supplies remained in good shape, and all trucks are operational. Winter operations have concluded.
- The Commissioner briefly described outings associated with other routine maintenance activities (e.g., patching, shouldering, sweeping, grading, downed trees, sign repair, etc.).
- There were no isolations due to COVID-19 infections.
- The crew is continuing to patch various roads, but the bulk of our patching is completed.
- The Patrol Superintendent discussed some of the topics raised at the spring superintendent meeting. Of particular note was WisDOT's concerns about the status of the routine maintenance budget and how most counties went over budget in 2022, leaving less discretionary maintenance funding available to distribute in 2023.
- The Commissioner discussed his plans to meet with the Tribe's Community Development Department in the next few days. K. Tourtillott was particularly concerned with the Tribe's intention with the West Branch brush pit.
- The Commissioner discussed his request of the LLPOA to its brush pit. The LLPOA president stated he would support our request but that the board would have to formally approve it come up with a more suitable cost structure for us.
- The Commissioner and Patrol Superintendent discussed their meeting with WisDOT bridge engineers and the work that the department needed to perform this year.
- The Commissioner mentioned the planned retirement of one of our operators. G. Malmstrom suggested we begin recruiting now.
- The Commissioner discussed the Rural Partners Network meeting coming up May 18<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioner is preparing a proposal concept for the amount of funding we would need to replace county and town roads. Copies of that write-up will be shared with the Committee.
- The Commissioner described the department's plans to repave Trillium and Mip Anaq Road.
- The Commissioner stated that the entire department would be closed on May 16<sup>th</sup> for Safety Days training in Crandon.
- The Commissioner asked the Committee if they had any preferences on what they would like to see included in future reports. G. Malmstrom and K. Tourtillott stated that the report contents was fine and that it was not necessary to go over every point in future meetings.

**8. Establishing ATV Routes**

The Commissioner stated that we received a formal request from a resident to create ATV routes in Menominee County. G. Malmstrom described some of the discussions he and others have had over the past few years about the need to develop ATV routes and the damage ATVs and UTVs are causing to the ditches and utilities. E. Caldwell asked K. Tourtillott what types of problems ATVs are causing in the community. K. Tourtillott stated that there are difficulties in terms of enforcement, but that the Tribe's ATV ordinance was amended to allow ATVs to traverse roads but only to get from Point A to Point B—not as permanent route; UTVs were not included in the amendment, so this might be the source of some confusion on use of roads by ATVs. K. Tourtillott stated that he had hoped there would be an emphasis placed on registration requirements and equipment requirements (e.g., lights, turn signals).

Motion by G. Malmstrom to direct staff to look at five surrounding counties that have ATV/UTV requirements to determine: (1) what elements they require in their ordinances that may be over and beyond what the State requires; and (2) an understanding of where the problems, issues, and challenges in managing the program have been so we have a better idea as to what we are looking at. Second by E. Caldwell. Motion approved.

**9. Monthly Expenditures**

Included in the meeting packet was a memo from the Commissioner summarizing the April payables. The March 2023 payables consisted of 22 invoices totaling \$12,949.07.

Motion by G. Malmstrom to approve the April 2023 payables in the amount of \$12,949.07. Second by E. Caldwell. The motion carried.

**10. Financial Report**

The meeting packet included the financial report for March 2023. The financial report revealed year-to-date revenues of \$823,881.75, YTD expenses of \$557,726.59, YTD depreciation of \$68,653.74, and a YTD surplus of \$266,155.16.

Motion by E. Caldwell to approve the financial report. Second by G. Malmstrom. The motion carried.

**11. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

ATV Report

**12. Adjournment:** 11:11 a.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by J. Weso.