

VILAS COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF

August 26, 2020 1:00 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, County Board members and members of the public were invited to join this meeting via Webex phone conferencing. County Board members and members of the public may attend in person however, social distancing protocols will be enforced.

Present: Nick Scholtes – Vilas County Highway Commissioner, Randy Wiessinger – WisDOT/BOTS Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL), Tony Kemnitz – WisDOT Northcentral Region, Willy Otterpohl – Vilas County Board Representative, Patrick Schmidt – Vilas County Sheriff's Department, Kathy Ray – Vilas County Highway Department and Ken Anderson – Media. Laurel Dreger – Vilas County Public Health Director and Dave Bohnen – Northland Pines School District joined the meeting via Webex phone conferencing.

Members Absent: Joe Fath, Sheriff – Vilas County, Gerald Ritter, Captain – Vilas County Sheriff's Department, Christine Dobbs, Chief of Police – City of Eagle River, Michael Panosh – WI Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) Rep, Bryan Wrycha – Wisconsin State Patrol, Susan Richmond – Vilas County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Director, Jack Albert – Vilas County Corporation Counsel.

Call to order - Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Nick Scholtes. The meeting was held at the Vilas County Courthouse in Conference Room B. Roll Call and Establishment of a quorum.

Welcome and Introductions – Nick Scholtes introduced Willy Otterpohl as the newest member replacing Todd Achterberg. Willy is currently the Highway Committee Chairman. Introductions continued around the room.

Approve minutes – Motion by Dave Bohnen, second by Willy Otterpohl to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2020 meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Crash history and data – Patrick Schmidt stated there has been 1 fatality since our meeting in March. It happened in Lac du Flambeau on STH 47 and the Lac du Flambeau Police Department handled this accident. Road conditions appeared to be the factor. It was snowing at the time.

Law Enforcement Report – Schmidt stated that they are always looking for better ways to control traffic. He suggested using advanced LED warning signs for rural areas. Solar powered, wireless signage which could state “cross roads approaching”. Schmidt stated this method is being used in Minnesota and it is helping considerably in reducing crashes.

Tony Kemnitz stated this is usually used in high speed, multiple lane areas. Nick thought maybe this would be a good method on CTH H at the USH 51 intersection. Schmidt stated it should be on USH 51 alerting the traffic to a cross road ahead.

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State Patrol Report – None.

WISDOT construction update – Tony Kemnitz stated there are 4 projects in Vilas County consisting of concrete repair, bridge resurface, culvert replacement and guardrail updates, totaling approximately \$6.7 million.

Carry over projects – The island by Associated Bank needs to be extended. This will happen this Fall 2020. Rummels Road project. This will require a detour using STH and CTH roads. Completion will be October 2020.

New projects – STH 70 resurface from CTH O to CTH H, 7 miles. They will mill and fill, replace culverts and update guardrail. August – October 2020. Also, STH 70 resurface from USH 51 to STH 155, 10 ½ miles. This will be a mill and fill, replace culverts and update guardrail. Fall 2020.

Bureau of Transportation Safety Report – Randy Wiessinger stated the statistics are similar to last year. There was one fatality vs 3 last year. There was a total of 201 crashes vs 259 last year. Speed related crashes has increase; 40 crashes vs 38 last year. Alcohol/drug related crashes also increased from 28 vs. 19 last year. Randy stated the one fatality on STH 47 north of Lac du Flambeau was at 6:07 p.m. and was due to road conditions, not impaired. Randy stated the Dive Sober campaign is going on right now from August 21 – September 7. Another campaign will run from December 17 – January 1.

Nick mentioned he was up inspecting the completed CTH B project and noticed traffic moving much faster now that there is new blacktop. Nick asked Patrick Schmidt if he could send more patrolman just for a while. Schmidt stated he would.

Public Comments – Ken Anderson stated when traveling south on CTH W towards Manitowish Waters at the intersection with Tower Road by the gas station the stop sign is set so far back that you can't see anything. The stop sign needs to be moved closer to the intersection. Ken stated on Townline Road in the Town of Washington at the intersection with STH 70 E, on the north side of 70, there is only one stop sign where there should be two. One last comment from Ken involved brushing at intersections for better visibility. Ken stated it should start with brushing the stop signs on Town roads where the intersect with State and County roads. Then County roads that intersect with State highways. Ken was talking mainly about those roads in the Town of Cloverland and Town of Lincoln.

Letters and Communications – None

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ray, Secretary

Minutes reflect the recorder's notations and are subject to future revision and approval by the Vilas County Board.