

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**COMMITTEE:** Public Works  
**CHAIRPERSON:** Randy Jobgen  
**DATE/TIME:** August 28, 2014 7:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dittmar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heurman
<input type="checkbox"/> Hughes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jobgen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith

Others: Steve Keeffer, Dan Reimer, Brad Petersburg, Beth Baranski, John Hay

### MINUTES

#### 1. Minutes

Rick Dittmar made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 28, 2014 meeting, Merri Berlage seconded, and the motion carried.

#### 2. Citizens' Comments

Brad Petersburg updated the committee on the River Road trail. Another survey has been done that indicates that the BNSF does not own the underlying fee on the closed portion of River Road that Rice Township is considering vacating. He also indicated that he is not asking for a designated bike trail. Brad did offer to take anyone that is interested on a tour of the trail from Galena down to River Road.

#### 3. Highway Department

##### a. Old Business

##### 1. River Road/Bike Trail Discussion

State's Attorney John Hay advised the committee on his research regarding bike trails and liability. Current case law makes a distinction between intended and permitted users of the roadways. A bicycle is a permitted user if the road is not designated as an official bike trail. If there is signage or an official map that indicates a roadway is a bike trail, bicycles become intended users. Once a bicycle becomes an intended user of a roadway, the road has to be maintained for bicycle use and there is an increase in potential liability. There was concern that there may be maps distributed that could be construed

to show county and township roads as official bike trails. The committee consensus was that this is predominantly a Rice Township issue and to make sure the township is satisfied before taking official action.

#### **4. Noxious Weeds**

##### **a. Old Business**

##### **1. Appointment of a Weed Commissioner**

State's Attorney John Hay provided the committee with some insight regarding the appointment of a County Weed Commissioner. In short, the appointment has to be an individual, not an entity like the Soil and Water Conservation District. The committee asked Steve Keeffer to contact Mike Malon and see if he would be interested in serving as Weed Commissioner as an individual.

#### **5. Highway Department (Continued)**

##### **a. New Business**

##### **1. Letter of Support for Trout Unlimited Driftless Area NRCS RCPP Application**

Beth Baranski addressed the committee regarding a request for a letter of support for a regional request for Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funding. The funding program is the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the application is being submitted by Trout Unlimited. The RCPP funding could be used in conjunction with county and township funding on culvert projects. Beth Baranski contacted Steve Keeffer a couple of months ago to discuss potential benefits to the county and townships from this program. These funds have been used in north east Iowa on local road culvert projects with success. The culvert and road crossing are designed as a quasi retention basin, reducing peak flows downstream and decreasing flood related damages. The project design parameters would be changed but the end result will be the same and the additional funding will reduce the local share. These culvert projects are a small portion of the overall Trout Unlimited application. Randy Jobgen made a motion to provide a letter of support, Ron Smith seconded, and the motion carried.

**b. More Old Business**

**1. Project Schedule Update**

The list of ongoing projects was reviewed and discussed. Steve Keeffer informed the committee that more bridge problems are being discovered.

**2. Committee Goals and Objectives**

The committee goals and objectives were reviewed.

**3. County Board Retreat Items**

The committee reviewed the county board retreat items

**4. Rental Fees for County Highway Facilities**

The committee continued the discussion on what kind of 'rent' could be charged to other county departments that are storing items in County Highway Department Facilities. Last month the committee instructed Steve Keeffer to do some research and find out what commercial storage facilities charge. Steve Keeffer found that local storage facilities charge between 50 cents and 20 per square foot per month. The fees decrease as the size of the unit increases and it is dependent on the location of the facility. Another issue was the heating of the facility. The consensus was that if a tenant wants heated space, the tenant would have to pay the utility (natural gas) cost for heating the building. Merri Berlage made a motion to charge other county departments a rental fee of 20 cents per square foot per month for unheated storage, Rick Dittmar seconded, the motion carried. Ron Smith abstained.

**c. More New Business**

**1. Cost Share Request from Derinda Township**

The committee considered a request from Derinda Township for a 50/50 culvert replacement project on Heer Road at an estimated cost of \$4,000. Rick Dittmar made a motion to approve the request, Merri Berlage seconded and the motion carried.

## **6. Board Member Concerns**

Merri Berlage indicated that she had seen some facebook chatter about people not getting their dog tag notification postcards. Steve Keeffer indicated that the cards are being sent, but are getting lost in the mail.

## **7. Citizens Comments**

None

The meeting concluded at 9:12 P.M.