

Portage County Traffic Safety Commission Meeting Minutes

10:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Law Enforcement Center Conference Room, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Members Present: Lt. Michael Morgan, Traffic Safety Commission President
Chief Deputy Daniel Kontos, County Highway Safety Coordinator
O. Philip Idsvoog, County Board Chairman
Sgt Gina Boettcher, Traffic Safety Officer
Joe Gemza, Assistant Chief of EMS, SPFD
Lt. Stephen Retzki, Portage County Sheriff's Office
Mark Krutza, County Executive Appointment – Education
Nathan Check, Portage County Highway Department
Don Jankowski, Portage County Safety Officer
Tony Kemnitz, Dept of Transportation Rep – Highways
Michael J. McKenna, County Representative – Law
Assistant Chief Thomas Zenner, Stevens Point Police Department
Sgt Dan Wheeler, Stevens Point Police Department
Lt. Ryan Fox (for Seth Pionke, Plover Police Department)

Members Absent: Matt Dykstra, Emergency Management Director
Patty Dreier, County Executive
Scott Rifleman, Portage County Coroner
Jeffrey Schuler, Director, Portage County Planning & Zoning
Dan Gruebele, Dept of Transportation Rep – Law Enforcement

Members Excused: Bob Bott, Central Regional Program Manager, DOT BOTS

Others Present: Tom Barten

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Morgan at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call and Introductions

Approval of October 6, 2015, Meeting Minutes

Motion/second Check/Kontos to approve the minutes of October 6, 2015, Traffic Safety Commission meeting with changes. Motion carried.

Public Notice

President Michael Morgan declared members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their request at this time, with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Commission President as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

Correspondence: None.

Status of Highway Construction and Safety Projects/Repair Proposals

State Projects:

- **Business 51 (Post Road) between Green Drive and Springville Drive (Village of Plover) – March thru November 2016**

Business 51 has reached the end of its service life. Crews will reconstruct the roadway to provide wider lanes, a raised median, and designated turn lanes. Improvements also include new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and street lighting. Utility work began in late 2015. Some tree cutting was expected to begin as early as February 2016. Long-term lane closures and road reconstruction is scheduled to begin as early as March 2016. The road will remain open to one lane of traffic in each direction throughout the majority of construction.

- **I-39/Hwy 51 Bridge Project: April – October 2016**

Work will begin on bridges from Wisconsin Central Railroad overpass to Stanley Street. This work will consist of milling and placing concrete overlay on six bridges on I-39 near Stevens Point, along with necessary work on the approaches to the bridges. Bridges include the north and southbound I-39 bridges over the Little Plover River, Wisconsin Central Railroad and Stanley Street on WIS 66. Work on this project will run from April – October 2016.

- **I-39/Hwy 51 Bridge CTHD to Birch Drive, April – May 31**

This is also a bridge project. This is in Southern Portage County from CTH D to Birch drive. It involves a rehabilitation of 13 bridges along the interstate—eight bridges carry interstate traffic and five bridges are overpasses. The bridges will be milled and have concrete overlays placed. The CTH D and CTH W bridges will have temporary traffic control signals to allow traffic to pass over a single lane on the bridge while the other side is being worked on. Work will run from April through September 2016. Work on the interstate proper below those structures will have work begin April through May 31st so that work can be completed before the holiday rush.

- **Hwy 66 Deer Lane to East of CTH Y (3 ½ miles): June through August 2016**

This project is a three and one-half mile project that runs from Deer Lane to the East junction of CTH Y. We are constructing a pavement rehabilitation on this section of Hwy 66. It will be milled and the roadway repaved. Shoulders are currently three feet; at the end of the project, they will be widening these out to five feet. Pavement work will primarily take place between June and August; however, there will be some tree clearing and tree removal in March 2016.

- **Hwy 49 from Cedar Road to Lakeview Road.**

This project is located east of Rosholt to the County line. This is basically a high level maintenance project. The contractor will route and seal any roadway surface cracks and then place a chip seal over the entire roadway surface in July after the Iola Car Show is completed. The project will be completed in its entirety before September.

County Projects:

- CR T East of Amherst
Recondition, pulverize and re-ditch.
- CR HH Post Road and Hoover
Mill and fill. Plan to keep one lane of traffic open in each direction at all times.
- CR P (through Junction City)
Pulverize existing asphalt pavement, remove concrete, replace and repair deficient culvert pipes and catch basins, repair and replace curb, add gravel as needed, shape base, asphalt paving, gravel shouldering, sign replacements and pavement markings.
- Annual Maintenance
There are 70 miles of chip sealing planned.

Check indicated he has submitted a *Resolution Designating the week of April 11 through April 15, 2016, as "Work Zone Awareness" Week in Portage County* to the County Board for approval at their March 8, 2016, meeting.

Chief Deputy Kontos requested weekly updates from the County Highway Department to the Sheriff's Office, so extra patrols can be placed in construction work zones.

County Traffic Safety Coordinator Report:

Chief Deputy Kontos advised the commission the Highway Safety Coordinators Spring Conference has been cancelled, but may be rescheduled in the near future.

Crash Spot Map/Law Enforcement Agency Report

- **Portage County Sheriff's Office:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 10/01/2015 through 12/31/2015.* Sergeant Boettcher stated there were 190 reportable accidents during the fourth quarter of 2015. There were 38 personal injury accidents, 46 property damage accidents, and six hit and run accidents. There were no fatalities during this time, but there were seven crashes involving alcohol.
- **Stevens Point Police Department:** *Quarterly Crash Summary Fourth Quarter 2015.* Sergeant Wheeler included both fourth quarter 2015 and 2015 YTD totals. There were 161 accidents of which 36 were personal injury accidents, 32 were hit and run and there were no fatalities.
- **Village of Plover Police Department:** No information was available for Fourth quarter 2015.

Locations of Interest and Possible Countermeasures to Enhance Safety

- **Grant Ave & WIS 54 Near Industrial Park:** The DOT was contacted by Bonnie Lila of Plover who lives off of the Grant Ave area on November 3, 2016, expressing her concerns regarding the fatal crash on November 2, 2015. She has requested the DOT consider moving the speed limit where it transitions from 50 mph to 65 mph further west. She was also wondering about a stop light at that location. As a follow up to her call, DOT spoke with Plover's Police Chief and at that time he indicated the crash that prompted her call was possibly caused by a vision issue due to the sun's angle or driver error.

As a follow up to Ms. Lila's request, the DOT is taking a look at that intersection. A speed study is planned on the entire WIS 54 corridor from the roundabout through this intersection. She was advised DOT would be evaluating what those speed limits are coming into town and where the beginning and end points are; there may be some adjustments after the study is completed. The speed study cannot be conducted until the road pavement is dry which will probably be at the end of April.

The DOT did also receive a contact via Senator Lassa's office regarding this intersection, and they will be following up with her office regarding their findings.

- **Jackson & WIS 54:** Idsvoog asked to have this intersection looked at by the DOT because during certain times it is impossible to make a left turn due to the amount of traffic. This occurs when heading north on Jackson and wanting to make a left turn onto WIS 54 towards Wisconsin Rapids on Fridays and Saturdays before six or seven o'clock.

Miscellaneous Traffic Hazards and Recommended Improvements:

The CTH A and STH 66 intersection was revisited. It was the site of a crash this past summer where the driver blew through the stop sign causing a crash. The stop sign has a history of being bent by semis making right turns. DOT suggested the County install double stop aheads, affix yellow reflective tape on their posts and then also add orange metal safety flags above the stop ahead.

DOT could try putting curbing, flexible tubular markers or guard rails; however, they prefer not to put objects along the highway because they create additional problems.

The Portage County Highway Department will work on the DOT's recommended improvements.

Bureau of Transportation Safety Report

Year-to-date 2016 Traffic Fatalities have increased by 26.7% over this same time period in 2015. Fatal crashes have increased 24.5%.

Traffic Safety Legislation

Bott emailed the *Legislative Summary – 2015 Legislative Session dated February 19, 2016*. Chief Deputy Kontos pointed out the following legislation:

Enacted:

- **Act 19:** Increased the maximum speed on freeways to 70 mph. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has the authority to decide which freeways can have a posted speed limit of 70 mph.
- **Act 102:** Allows authorized emergency vehicles to stop, stand, or park in a restricted area without activating the vehicle's warning lights.
- **Act 136:** Allows vehicles at intersections with two right-turn lanes to make a right turn from either right-turn lane. The vehicle in the leftmost right-turn lane must make the turn into the second to the rightmost lane.

A recent change to the OWI law which allows for civil search warrants for OWI first offense. Portage County Sheriff's Office will do search warrants for OWI refusals first offense effective immediately.

Kemnitz advised §349.11, Wis. Stats., Authority to Modify Speed Restrictions, may be modified to allow local authorities to reduce local speed limits by 20 miles per hour rather than the 10 miles per hour currently allowed, but it will still require a traffic engineering investigation.

Emergency Medical Services Operations

Gemza reviewed his handout titled *10/1/15 to 2/29/16 SPFD Ambulance Request*. There were a total of 96 ambulance requests during this timeframe. Forty-four (44) of the Traffic/Transportation Accidents had patients transported to a hospital; fifty-two (52) had no patients transported. Gemza also advised there may be a change coming regarding where to transport major trauma cases. Due to Ministry – St. Josephs' break off from the Marshfield Clinic, this may change to transporting to Aspirus.

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Operations

The TIM team will be asking the DOT for advance signing of I-39 alternate routes in Portage County.

Kemnitz advised that the STOC Wisconsin DOT Communication Center in Milwaukee which puts info on the 5-1-1 traveler alert system real time had 54 contacts from the Portage County Communications Center in 2015 compared to 39 in 2014 and 46 in 2013. Of these 54 contacts, 28 contacts were made in regards to a traffic incident – a crash or fire or other incident -- which closes a State or US Highway for 30 minutes or more. Thirty-three of the contacts were signal or lighting related; an electrician is notified to address the issue. The remaining contacts were pavement blowouts, etc. The number of contacts in 2015 increased 38% over 2014. Kemnitz expressed the DOT's appreciation for Portage County's participation in keeping them informed.

Upcoming Traffic Safety Training Opportunities

- 2016 Governor's Conference on Highway Safety: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 through Thursday, August 25, 2016 at the KI Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin.
- FREE Vehicular Homicide Conference: September 7 – 9, 2016, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, at the Holiday Inn.

Public Education Programs and Opportunities: None.

Traffic Safety Grants Update

The Portage County Sheriff's Office is currently participating in a Distracted Driving grant which runs through the end of April in partnership with Stevens Point Police Department and the Waupaca County Sheriff's Department. Based on the work plan from the Bureau of Transportation Safety, two more deployments are scheduled in March and two more deployments are scheduled in April in order to comply with BOTS' work plan. The additional funds that will be available from that grant will be used to run an additional six or seven 8-hour day deployments. Some of these deployments will be dovetailed with the Work Zone Awareness week initiative.

Unfinished Business:

➤ **CTH Y North of Jordan Park:**

There were 12 car/deer accidents in this area—two southbound/10 northbound. Flexible marker posts will be installed by the Portage County Highway Department alerting drivers to a secondary curve in the road in this area.

New Business:

➤ **Traffic Concerns at PJ Jacobs Junior High School**

Motion by Kontos/Idsvoog to postpone this topic until the next meeting. Motion carried.

➤ **Community Maps**

Community Maps is a web-based conduit for the collection of crash data which is desired by the Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS). The Portage County Sheriff's Office is now ready to have their Records Division employees enter crash data into Community Maps for anything that is a fatality (type K) or incapacitating injury (type A). They have entered everything from January 1, 2016. Plover Police Department will also follow this protocol. Stevens Point Police Department will be training an employee to do this also. This data will be presented starting at the June 2016 meeting.

Kemnitz indicated they just changed their database to also pull non-incapacitating injuries (type B's) in because they all generate dollars to develop a safety project. Morgan indicated they would evaluate including type B's after they finish a quarter of implementing the program with Type A's and K's.

Adjournment

Motion by Jankowski/Idsvoog to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 a.m. Motion carried. The next meeting of the Traffic Safety Commission is Tuesday, June 7, 2016, at 10:00 AM in the Law Enforcement Center Training Room. There will be an election of officers at this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Karen M. Moran
Recording Secretary