

## **Portage County Traffic Safety Commission Meeting Minutes**

10:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 6, 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  
Nathan Check, County Highway Commissioner  
Mark Krutza, County Executive Appointment – Education  
Don Jankowski, Portage County Safety Officer  
Tony Kemnitz, Dept of Transportation Rep – Highways  
Lt. Ryan Fox, Plover Police Department  
Bob Bott, Central Regional Program Manager, DOT BOTS  
Lt. Steve Retzki, Portage County Sheriff's Office  
O. Philip Idsvoog, County Board Chairperson  
Sgt. Gina Boettcher, Portage County Sheriff's Office  
Joe Brandt, Emergency Management Director

Members Absent: Patty Dreier, County Executive  
Jeffrey Schuler, Director, Portage County Planning & Zoning  
Scott Rifleman, Portage County Coroner  
Michael J. McKenna, County Representative – Law  
Assistant Chief Thomas Zenner, Stevens Point Police Dept.

Members Excused: Dan Gruebele, Dept of Transportation Rep – Law Enforcement  
Joe Gemza, Assistant Chief of EMS, SPFD

Others Present: Mike Rottier, Stevens Point Police Department  
Kim Delikowski, Portage County Sheriff's Office

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Lt. Mike Morgan, President, at 10:00 a.m. Joe Brandt was officially introduced as Portage County's new Emergency Management/EMS Director.

### **Quorum Call: Introductions as Needed**

A quorum of the Traffic Safety Commission was present.

### **Approval of September 6, 2016, Meeting Minutes**

Correction noted regarding Tony Kemnitz's last name, paragraph 3 on Page 7. Motion/Second by Check/Kontos to approve the minutes of September 6, 2016, Traffic Safety Commission Meeting with correction. 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:*** (Kemnitz)

- WisDOT has no projects under construction in Portage County at this time.
- **Business 51, Post Road:** Reconstruction project from Green Dr to Springville Dr has been completed. A project ceremony was held to recognize project partners on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The roadway has been rebuilt to provide turn lanes to reduce traffic crashes along the corridor. In the 5 years prior to construction, a total of 55 crashes occurred along this roadway (2008-12), of these, 19 crashes involved injuries. All but one occurred at intersection. Roadway crash rate was 294 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles of travel compared to statewide average of 233 for similar roadways.

Reconstruction of a roadway to provide median with turn lanes has been shown in National studies to reduce total crashes between 29% and 37%.

There will be a follow-up project scheduled for next year that will go to the north, from Springville Dr to Minnesota.

### ***Portage County Highway Department Projects:*** (Nate Check)

- Construction projects are completed for the year, now just focusing on routine maintenance.

***Municipal Projects:*** No one present to report.

## **County Traffic Safety Coordinator Report**

Chief Deputy Kontos advised nothing to report.

## **Crash Spot Map/Law Enforcement Agency Report**

- **Portage County Sheriff's Office:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 07/01/16 thru 09/30/2016.* Sgt. Boettcher reported there were 147 reportable accidents, 46

accidents involving personal injury, 60 people injured, 4 accidents involving alcohol and no fatalities.

- **Stevens Point Police Department:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 07/01/16 thru 09/30/2016.* Sgt. Rottier reported there were 137 reportable accidents, 39 personal injury accidents, 50 people injured, 3 accidents involving alcohol, and no fatalities.
- **Village of Plover Police Department:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 07/01/16 thru 09/30/2016.* Lt. Fox reported there were 52 reportable accidents, 6 accidents involving personal injury, 9 people injured, 2 accidents involving alcohol, and no fatalities.

### **Locations of Interest and Possible Countermeasures to Enhance Safety**

None.

### **Miscellaneous Traffic Hazards and Recommended Improvements**

None.

### **WisDOT Traffic Safety Engineers Report** (Kemnitz)

Kemnitz requested this to be recurring item added to agendas for all future meetings to provide reporting opportunity on requested investigations into speed zoning and/or operational issues brought forward via the Committee.

- **WIS 54 and CTH U J-turn:** A video was shared developed by Office of Public Affairs to assist all motorists with understanding proper way to use J-turn intersection and its new design. This video can also be found on DOT's website.

The J-turn intersection at WIS 54 and County U was a federally funded safety project. The net cost to construct the intersection was \$1.5 million. The cost of J-Turn is substantially lower than constructing a new interchange, which can be well over \$12 million, as well as provide additional safety benefits. The first J-turn in WI was constructed in 2011 on US 53 at County B near Hawthorne. Photos of completed J-Turn were shown. Other intersections throughout state are being looked at for possible J-Turn construction projects in the future.

- **Town of Hull Speed limit task force I 39 West:** Kemnitz attended a meeting of the I-39 west area speed zone Task Force lead by John Holdridge, Town of Hull Chairman. DOT attended in a role to help guide group on steps necessary to create a modified speed limit per State law in the area between WI River, US 10 West, I 39 and Stevens Point.

Larry Koy, an area resident, presented a petition from 62 residents in the I39 west area to have the town road speed limits changed to 35 mph. The speed limits vary throughout the area in question. After much discussion the Town decided to

solicit a traffic engineering firm to complete a study per the June 2009 Speed Management guidelines. Upon completion, a State-Municipal agreement for Local Speed zone will be submitted to DOT for approval.

- **WIS 66 Speed zone evaluation south of Gates Drive:** After a traffic stop by Sgt. Gruebele of WI State Patrol, it was brought to DOT's attention that the change point from 35 to 45 mph on WIS 66 near Stevens Point was missing a sign in the WB/SB direction. The DOT reviewed the speed declaration and had a 45 mph sign installed across from the 35 mph sign just south of the south connection of Gates Drive to WIS 66. After doing so, the DOT received a concern from the landowner with the driveway near the speed limit change point, who felt the new sign had increased traffic speeds. The landowner requested DOT to move the 35 mph zone further south. Due to a heavily brushy area being located on their property, the DOT directed them to clear the brush to allow better traffic visibility from their driveway. The DOT Maintenance Coordinator will work with Portage Co Hwy to clear ditch lines to assist with better visibility of approaching traffic. Lt. Morgan indicated he also met with property owner. Travel speeds were measured and found to be in compliance with 45 mph zone past resident's home. Location of speed limit and other signs will be looked at over winter and speed zone may be slightly adjusted based on required sign spacing and message clarity. However, speed check did not support major adjustment of location of 35-45 mph change point. Work is ongoing at this point.
- **2017 Traffic Mitigation Contracts:** The DOT reviews upcoming construction projects every fall regarding Interstate and other priority routes for need to contract with law enforcement for speed patrols, as part of traffic control plan. Recent construction worker fatalities have increased agency's efforts in addressing construction zone safety. The hiring of LE agencies is part of this effort and has been very effective. A project like this in Oneida County saw no crashes within the work zone and speeds were effectively managed. The cost for this effort is paid for by the construction project.

For 2017, two projects on the I-39 corridor in Portage County are to receive contracts:

- Bridge Painting and NB Lane resurfacing project on I-39 between County O and WIS 54
- Culvert Replacement project on I-39 north of County D

- **I-39 Emergency Alternate Route signing:** (Also addressed at TIM prior to this meeting). DOT field located the additional signs to be installed at the exits on I39, County D, BB, R, WIS 54 and 66. County crews have been installing the signs. Once complete, the pre-marked alternate routes will help Law enforcement re-direct interstate traffic in the event of a crash or other necessary emergency closure on Interstate.

- **I-39 and WIS 54 Interchange Study:** DOT has contracted design firm to develop future layouts for series of roundabouts at the interchange with a preliminary cost to assess viability of a fundable safety project. The Commission has gone on record with DOT in support of safety project at the interchange. DOT currently has paving project and bridge re-decking project planned and is now looking into possibility of larger scale project that will reconfigure ramp terminals and Harding Avenue. However funding details are still being worked out before project plan and timeline can be completed. DOT will share updates as more details available. Mike Morgan noted there have been increased traffic incidents due to increased traffic generated in and around new Kwik Trip. Kemnitz stated more information will be shared as it becomes available.

### **Bureau of Transportation Safety Report** (Bob Bott)

- Bott shared statewide report “Year-to-Date Traffic Deaths and Fatal Crashes as of 12/05/16.” Report shows totals up only 1.9% from last year which is dramatically less than when last looked at in May and June when totals were up almost 20%. Number of fatalities is still higher, up 5.8% with greatest increase being fatalities of passengers (up 33.7% over 2015) which is a concern.
- Drive Sober Mobilization starts December 15<sup>th</sup>. If not already done, access WISE system and activate.
- Round one of grants is completed and all targeted issues around state have been addressed. Round two is beginning with these requirements:
  - Must be task force.
  - Must be administered by one agency.
  - Each project submitted must be “stand alone” project before it hits application phase, judged on merits of proposal before being pushed through as grant project. This is different from prior years.
  - Can be OWI, speed, seat belts, distracted driving or other topic of concern, provided it falls within approved category where law enforcement would be successful countermeasure against it.
  - Let Bott know if agency is interested and he will forward those categories to you.
- Data Analysis for Portage County is not ready for presentation yet but will be added to next quarter’s Traffic Safety Committee agenda in March of 2017.

### **Traffic Safety Legislation**

None.

### **Emergency Medical Services Operations**

Joe Gemza was unable to attend, therefore no report.

### **Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Operations**

TIM meeting was prior to this meeting. Morgan stated highlights included debriefs on significant incidents and discussion regarding winter items, especially delayed towing and recovery operations.

### **Upcoming Traffic Safety Training Opportunities**

Morgan stated nothing local in immediate future until August when next Traffic Safety Conference will be held in Brookfield.

### **Public Education Programs and Opportunities**

None.

### **Traffic Safety Grants Update**

Morgan reported grants are all closed out. Refer to Bott's discussion above for upcoming statuses.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Delikowski discussed County Exec's request that minutes and agenda for TSM be posted to calendar area on newly designed Portage County website for easy accessibility. Minutes will also be available under "Government" tab, under "Boards, Commissions, And Committees," then under "Traffic Safety Commission." Currently, all of 2016 TSM minutes have been posted under this tab. "DRAFT" watermarked minutes will be posted in calendar area only until officially approved. Once approved, the "DRAFT" minutes will be replaced with "Approved" version of minutes and then also posted under "Government" tab as described above. Link to approved minutes is <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/government/traffic-safety-commission>. Link to calendar is <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/about-us/advanced-components/calendar-month-view>.

Posting minutes to website does not affect timeline for getting things submitted for meeting, but helps with accessibility. Motion/Second by Kontos/Jankowski to post agenda/minutes as noted above. Motion carried unanimously.

Morgan noted that November 30<sup>th</sup> marked Portage County's first traffic fatality. Preliminary investigation of crash that happened near County Road N and County Road J in Town of Buena Vista at 2:30 p.m. found no environmental factors were present as a contributing factor.

“t-bone” collision in the intersection. Investigation is still ongoing and possible charges are pending. Morgan will present additional information at next meeting.

**Adjournment**

Motion/Second by Kontos/Boettcher to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. Motion carried unanimously. The next meeting of the Traffic Safety Commission is Tuesday, March 7, 2017, at 10:00 AM in the Law Enforcement Center Training Room.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/

Kim Delikowski  
Recording Secretary