

Portage County Traffic Safety Commission Meeting Minutes

10:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Law Enforcement Center Conference Room, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Members Present: Lt. Michael Morgan, Traffic Safety Commission President
Don Jankowski, Portage County Safety Officer
Tony Kemnitz, Dept. of Transportation (DOT) Rep – Highways
Lt. Ryan Fox, Plover Police Department
Bob Bott, Central Regional Program Manager, DOT BOTS
Sgt. Gina Boettcher, Portage County Sheriff's Office
Rhae Stertz, Dept. of Transportation Rep – Law Enforcement
Lacey Coonen, Interim Corporation Counsel
Patty Dreier, County Executive

Members Absent: Jeffrey Schuler, Director, Portage County Planning & Zoning
Assistant Chief Thomas Zenner, Stevens Point Police Dept.
Nathan Check, County Highway Commissioner

Members Excused: Lt. Stephen Retzki, Portage County Sheriff's Office
Chief Deputy Daniel Kontos, County Highway Safety Coordinator
Mark Krutza, County Executive Appointment – Education
O. Philip Idsvoog, County Board Chairperson
Scott Rifleman, Portage County Coroner
Joe Brandt, Emergency Management Director
Joe Gemza, Assistant Chief of EMS, SPFD

Others Present: Bob Kussow, Stevens Point Police Department
Todd Makuski, Portage County Highway Department
Dan Bowers, Portage County Planning & Zoning 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.

Quorum Call: Introductions as Needed

A quorum of the Traffic Safety Commission was present.

Approval of December 6, 2016, Meeting Minutes

Motion/Second by Jankowski/Boettcher to approve the minutes of December 6, 2016, Traffic Safety Commission Meeting. 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 active projects under construction in Portage County at this time. However, several will be starting up between now and next meeting in June.
- **County P (Old US10), Auburndale** – This project involves construction/reconstruction of local road system in Auburndale. Per DOT's 511 website, the project will start April 25, 2017 and will run through mid-November. County P (old US 10) will be detoured via County Highways K, H and M. Local traffic access will be maintained to greatest possible, however, access may be closed at times to accommodate concrete curing. DOT's 511 website can be accessed to view progress and available current information on DOT projects.
- **I39/US51** – Several bridges will be repainted with asphalt overlay from County Hwy O to State Hwy 54 on the northbound lanes. A new culvert will be installed at the southbound off ramp to County Hwy D.

Portage County Highway Department Projects: (Todd Makuski)

- The first project started this year will be County Hwy SS from Hwy 161 to County Road Q, then County Road J from US Hwy 10 to State Hwy 66. This Fall project will start for County Road P around Junction City from County Road G north to County Road G south and will extend to point where it was completed last Fall. County Road J and County Road SS will both be closed to through traffic for local residents only.
- There will be two chip seal projects this year: one on Hwy 49 N from Hwy 66 to the Marathon County line and another from Hwy 161 to County Hwy ZZ and Hwy 10. Both

projects will have planned detoured traffic and will have road closure for two days, be resealed and then be reopened.

Municipal Projects: No one present to report.

County Traffic Safety Coordinator Report

Chief Deputy Kontos is excused from today's meeting, therefore no report.

Crash Spot Map/Law Enforcement Agency Report

- **Portage County Sheriff's Office:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 10/01/16 thru 12/31/2016.* Sgt. Boettcher reported there were 275 reportable accidents, 57 accidents involving personal injury, 88 accidents with property damage, 71 people injured, 4 accidents involving alcohol, and 1 fatality that occurred in Town of Buena Vista. The fatality was a T-Bone, intersection related crash that involved failing to stop at a stop sign and no alcohol. More on fatal by Lt. Morgan under "Locations of Interest...."
- **Stevens Point Police Department:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 10/01/16 thru 12/31/2016.* Sgt. Bob Kussow reported there were 163 reportable accidents, 28 personal injury accidents, 29 hit and run accidents, 32 people injured, 6 accidents involving alcohol, and no fatalities. However, during first quarter for 2017, there was a fatal that appears to have been alcohol related involving a small vehicle and a pick-up truck. This will be discussed more at next meeting in June.
- **Village of Plover Police Department:** *Traffic Accident Summary Report for 10/01/16 thru 12/31/2016.* Lt. Fox reported there were 59 reportable accidents, 17 accidents involving personal injury, 3 hit and runs, 25 people injured, 1 accident involving alcohol, and no fatalities.

Locations of Interest and Possible Countermeasures to Enhance Safety:

Mike Morgan showed photos and discussed the fatal T-bone crash in the Town of Buena Vista that took place at County Hwy J and County Hwy N in late November. A visibility and site survey was done by Lt. Morgan and Sgt. Boettcher. Investigation is still ongoing. The "Stop" and "Stop-Ahead" signs were visible and there were no significant visual impairments, as well as no environmental factors were found.

Signage and engineering at this intersection was found to be satisfactory and in conformity with manual uniform traffic control devices, as applied to installation of those devices when put in place. Upon recommendation, "Stop" sign size was increased from 30" (standard size for this intersection) to 36" only for bettering of intersection, not due to fault with sign. Crash history of intersection didn't show many crashes. Makuski stated that rumble strips will be installed on both sides of intersection this summer.

Miscellaneous Traffic Hazards and Recommended Improvements

None.

WisDOT Traffic Safety Engineers Report (Kemnitz)

- **Town of Hull Speed limit task force I 39 West:** Received engineering report from Gremmer and will be reviewing request to lower speed limit to 35 mph on Casimir and Granite Ridge Road. Initially, measured travel speed supports 45mph; however, because of secondary considerations such as site distance on hills, narrowness of road, and special uses of individuals in area for running or walking path, more consideration is needed and a final determination will be issued at a later date.
- **WIS 66 Speed zone Evaluation South of Gates Drive:** Area has been brushed to increase sight distance along roadway. Measured vehicle speeds did not support speed reduction. Hopefully increased visibility will help concerns of area residents. If speeding does occur, residents will contact law enforcement.
- **2017 Traffic Mitigation Contracts:** Contracts have been signed and Wisconsin State Patrol has been authorized to work speed enforcement in work zones this year. For 2017, two projects have been identified on the I-39 corridor in Portage County to receive contracts:
 - Bridge painting and northbound lane resurfacing project on I-39 between County O and WIS 54.
 - Culvert replacement project on I-39 north of County D.
- **I-39 and WIS 54 Interchange Study:** The engineering study is ongoing. Purpose of study is to investigate feasibility of installing roundabouts or realigning ramps from I39 at WIS 54 to provide increased site distance. Study was developed in response to concerns voiced by Traffic Safety Committee and Portage County Traffic Incident Management. Re-decking of bridge and re-pavement of approaches is planned. However, because of crash issue, more investigation is being done including cost analysis. More detailed information is anticipated and will be shared at the next meeting in June, 2017.

Bureau of Transportation Safety Report (Bob Bott) – (Presentation)

Last year's (2016) fatalities were up to 590, compared to prior year's (2015) total of 555. This has increased since 2014 which was under 500. This year is 20% below last year, both in number of crashes and fatalities, however still even with five-year average. Hoping numbers will start to decrease.

- Bott presented data from “Anatomy of Traffic Safety – Portage County, Bureau of Transportation Safety” presentation which was included in meeting packet. This report done for all counties in

State. Eventually all reports will be able to be found on Community Maps website under “TSC Resources.” (Presentation included with minutes.) A couple of highlights are:

- Overabundance of trucks being registered, which indicate higher incidents of nonconformance with seat belt usage after 6pm, according to National data. Recommendation is to have seatbelt enforcement 50 % during day and 50% after 6PM.
- Portage County is at an injury to death ratio of 67.4, which means for every fatality there is another 67 injuries. Wood County is at 52.2, showing that Portage County has a higher number of people surviving crashes. La Crosse is 154.6 due to higher amount of trauma centers, more first responders, helicopters, etc., though still high compared to Dane County which is 102. This means that compared to surrounding counties, Portage County fairs well.
- Emergency Medical Technician numbers are lower at 3/1000 people in Portage County, compared to statewide where it is 4/1000. A decrease in EMT’s being seen across state, due to loss of volunteers, money or both.
- Most workers that come from out-of-county are from Wood County.
- Population data shows that 13.7 % of residents are 65 or greater; lower than other counties in WI, which helps economy, however, younger ages have higher crash rates.
- Some stats regarding financial impact are listed in report. End of March is when stats are declared to be completed.
- Number of speed related fatal crashes is high at 37 to all fatal crashes; whereas statewide is 28.
- Inattentive driving accounts for 20% of crashes in county which is increasing throughout the state.
- Most individuals involved in Portage County crashes are from local area, compared to Buffalo County, which has majority of crashes caused by nonlocals visiting area for hunting and other purposes. Benefits to more local is any education done through media or social media releases will have higher impact. Buffalo County has to use different strategies such as billboards, pamphlets, or more expensive ways to reach population.
- Delikowski will email Bott’s presentation to committee members and will also include in minutes.
- Bott encouraged everyone to let DOT know if there are any other stats that counties would like to see to help with crash data and lowering crash statistics.

Traffic Safety Legislation

None.

Emergency Medical Services Operations

No one present to report.

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Operations

TIM did not meet prior to this meeting. For fourth quarter of 2016, there is nothing of significance to report. Due to winter weather, however, more incidents reported this first quarter of 2017 and will

create more discussion next meeting. Deputies have been practicing good techniques and safety while handling traffic incident management areas.

Upcoming Traffic Safety Training Opportunities

- Governor’s Highway Traffic Safety Conference will be in Appleton at the Paper Valley Hotel in August, 2017. Venue has been changed.
- Regional Traffic Highway Safety Coordinators meeting is during week of May 22, 2017. There will be four around state, Green Bay, Baraboo area and Milwaukee area. Currently no area for northwest known, but Wausau or Eau Claire are possibilities. A notification of meeting will be sent out soon.

Public Education Programs and Opportunities

None.

Traffic Safety Grants Update

Portage County is not targeted for any grants at this time. Lt. Morgan praised Portage County Sheriff’s Office for their Facebook page which has been very active with community outreach messages.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

None

Adjournment

Motion/Second by Bowers/Boettcher to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m. Motion carried unanimously. The next meeting of the Traffic Safety Commission is Tuesday, June 6, 2017, at 10:00 AM in the Law Enforcement Center Training Room.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/

Kim Delikowski
Recording Secretary