

**Highway Committee Minutes  
June 3, 2009**

A meeting of the Highway Committee for the purpose of discussing the mandatory boat launch user fees was called to order by Chair, Orrin Helmer at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at the Courthouse Demonstration Room, Green Lake, WI. The requirements of the Open Meeting Law were certified as being met.

Present:	Orrin Helmer	Absent:	Dan Priske
	Alma Hedberg		Mark Podoll
	Eugene Henke		
	Bob Krause		

Others Present: Robert Podgorski, Highway Commissioner  
Becky Pence, Administrative Assistant  
Mike Wuest, Town of Brooklyn  
James Fox, Town of Green Lake  
Allan Weckwerth, Town of Princeton (4:30)  
Fred Krahn, WI Boating Enthusiast  
Joe & Marge Sadlon, Resident Town of Princeton  
Mark White, Resident Town of Brooklyn  
Larry Ehrenberg, Resident Town of Brooklyn  
Cletus Alsteen, Resident Town of Green Lake  
Pamela Schumacher, Berlin Journal Newspapers

**Agenda**

*Motion/second (Hedberg/Krause)* to approve the Agenda. Motion carried.

Orrin Helmer spoke on behalf of Dan Priske, who was unable to attend, explained the purpose of the meeting was to ask the officials of the Town of Brooklyn, Town of Green Lake, and Town of Princeton to discuss at their town meeting by July as to whether or not they would be in favor of enforcing the boat launch user fees. It will be the Townships responsibility to set up, maintain, and enforce the fees. The final decision for the County will be taken to The Green Lake County Board of Supervisors in October, 2009. Also noted was the Sheriff's Department would check for stickers at the County sites at their leisure.

**Public Comments**

Fred Krahn, member of the Wisconsin Boating Enthusiasts explained their group formed an alliance as a result of concerned boaters questioning the legalities of such fees claiming the fees are unconstitutional because of the right to free use of the waters of the state. They have researched implementing mandatory boat launch user fees with the aid of an attorney, and they will challenge the State Statute. Krahn also mentioned that the liability status changes as soon as you start charging a fee to access the sites.

Mark White, resident Town of Brooklyn is not a boater, but understands the costs involved, and said there are funds available from registrations and gas taxes. White also questioned the ATV's, and the

ice shacks in the winter time. Would these people have to pay the same fee is using the boat launch sites?

Marge Sadlon, resident Town of Princeton said she does not object to paying \$20.00/year to launch, but then you go to other counties and have to pay another fee. Sadlon felt a state wide fee would be one thing, but to pay for every county you launch at is not fair and is a bit excessive.

Larry Ehrenberg, resident Town of Brooklyn would like the county to do more with the grants indicating the mandatory fees are unequal, and is unfair.

Cletus Alsteen, resident Town of Green Lake questioned implementing the fees as being unconstitutional, and would like to see the county make more use of the grant money that could be available.

### **Appearances**

Mike Wuest, Town of Brooklyn said that the constable needs to have arresting authority, then you have to put that person on payroll, and feels that a legal situation would arise that could mushroom and get out of control. Wuest has spoken to several people whom will not pay the fee, and said he will recommend to the town board to not accept the resolution or support the boat launch fees.

James Fox, Town of Green Lake feels that the bigger boaters ruin the landings. Fox indicated their town is not in favor of the mandatory fees, unless you can prove the efficiency.

### **Committee Discussion**

Alma Hedberg is not in favor of the boat launch user fees because every boat owner who launches would not be paying the fee.

Robert Podgorski reported that on a 3 year average the county sustains a \$10,000 loss because the maintenance of the boat launches exceed the donated revenue that is taken in. According to the DNR the donations should be increased to \$4.00 because they want to see self sufficiency before they will consider even looking at a grant.

Eugene Henke expressed concerns regarding parking problems, and the start up costs that will be incurred on the towns that he doesn't feel it would be worth everybody's trouble.

Bob Krause prefers not to enforce the mandatory fee, but to stay with the voluntary donations. Krause also indicated the people using the boat launches should have concerns for the county as far as maintaining. The public should feel guilty if they don't at least contribute a little something. Writing the grant does not mean the county will get it.

Orrin Helmer commented that if the counties and towns didn't spend the money, the bigger boats never would be able to launch. It should be worth something for these people to contribute.

### **Future Agenda Items for Action** None

### **Adjournment**

*Motion/second (Krause/Henke)* to adjourn at 5:00 PM. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Becky Pence  
Administrative Assistant