

WISCONSIN COUNTIES UTILITY TAX ASSOCIATION
Two East Mifflin Street, Suite 600, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
Phone: (608) 255-8891

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD

May 31, 2013

DeWitt Ross & Stevens S.C.

Madison, Wisconsin

2013-2014 Officers

President

JOHN H. TRAMBURG
(920) 484-3534
Columbia County

Vice President

LAWRENCE WILLKOM
(715) 723-5804
Chippewa County

Secretary

WILLIAM GOEHRING
(920) 994-4749
Sheboygan County

Treasurer

LINDA SINKULA
(920) 388-3251
Kewaunee County

Executive Director

ALICE O'CONNOR
Direct(608) 252-9391
aoc@dewittross.com

The following members were present:

Doug Johnson

Kaye Shillin

Linda Sinkula

John Tramburg

Lawrence Willkom

Sharon Hampson

William Goehring

Richard Ott

Herb Tennis

Larry Wolf

Amy Rinard

Chuck Hoffman

Washington County

Kewaunee County

Kewaunee County

Columbia County

Chippewa County

LaCrosse County

Sheboygan County

Rock County

Washington County

Grant County

Jefferson County

Manitowoc County

Guest: Former Supervisor Jan Roou

Via Phone: **None**

Staff: Alice O'Connor, WCUTA
 Kyle Christianson, WCA
 Dan Bahr, WCA

Excused: Herbert Cornell, Edward Dorner, Steve O'Malley, Don Pazynski, John Tramburg and Del Twidt

Member Counties

ASHLAND
BUFFALO
CHIPPEWA
COLUMBIA
DOUGLAS
DUNN
GRANT
JEFFERSON
KENOSHA
KEWAUNEE
LA CROSSE
MANITOWOC
MARATHON
MARINETTE
OZAUKEE
ROCK
SHEBOYGAN
VERNON
WASHINGTON

Call to Order

Larry Willkom called the meeting to order and everyone expressed condolences to the passing of John Tramburg's wife passing. Flowers were sent on behalf of the WCUTA Board, Larry Willkolm. A card was passed around and everyone signed it.

Introductions

Supervisor Willkom then had everyone introduce themselves. No one joined by phone.

Minutes

Minutes from the February 15, 2013 meeting were approved on a motion from Richard Ott and Supervisor Willkom.

President's report

Meeting Chair Supervisor Willkom acknowledged Ms. O'Connor for the quality of the letter she sent to the members of the Joint Finance Committee

regarding the utility tax formula and the 17 percent that counties actually receive from their payment in lieu of taxes from the state.

The final motion passed by the Joint Finance Committee calls for a study with a report back to the legislature by the end of this year. This was in lieu of a motion that would have instead made changes to the formula as a part of the budget process that would have benefited towns at the expense of counties. This was a win.

If the study ends up being part of the final budget, WCA and WCUTA should try to get someone on the Committee. The study committee needs to ensure balance for final recommendations.

Nominating Committee Report - Doug Johnson

Administrator Johnson presented the slate of officers for 2014 that will be unchanged from 2013. They are:

President	John Tramburg	Columbia County
Vice President	Lawrence Willkom	Chippewa County
Secretary	William Goehring	Sheboygan County
Treasurer	Linda Sinkula	Kewaunee Count

Supervisor Willkolm asked three times if there were any other nominations from the floor. Hearing none, the 2014 officers were approved on a unanimous ballot with a motion from Supervisor Herb Tennies; seconded by Supervisor Chuck Hoffman,

Treasurer's Report - Linda Sinkula

As of April 30, the checkbook balance is \$18,421.14. The Association assets (checking and CDs) through April 30, 2013 is \$81,737.40 with bills paid through April 2013.

Since last year, dues generated regular income of \$24,097.17 in a money market checking account.

A one year CD matured on May 18, 2012 in the amount of \$10,045.81, (interest is the \$45.81) and it was rolled over earlier this year. Its next maturity date is March 18, 2014. (Park Bank account number 7381806)

A six month CD (Park Bank #7379279) in the amount of \$40,192.58 has continuously rolled over since the initial \$40,000 was invested October 13, 2011. It was last renewed January 1, 2013 and was rolled over with its next maturity date July 31, 2013.

An agenda item was to discuss possibly reducing dues in 2014, dues would remain the same in 2014 as in 2013.

There was concern that some dues like Kewaunee County will drop significantly in a few years because they will only be reimbursed for dry cask storage. There was also concern that once the balance gets too low, it maybe be difficult to obtain county funding again in the future, consensus was it is better to keep level of funding stable.

Supervisor Wolf said the same is true for Grant County with WE energy pulling out of any expansion in Grant County. There is not enough natural gas in area so WE Energy will close its plant in 2015.

After discussion, it was agreed on a motion from Supervisor Tennes seconded by Supervisor Larry Wolf, the motion was approved to keep dues at .0015 for 2014.

Audit Committee Report – Linda Sinkula.

The audit committee report was accepted on a motion by Supervisor William Goehring and seconded by Supervisor Amy Rinard.

Executive Director Report – Alice O'Connor

Alice O'Connor reported Rep. Dale Kooyenga's tax package is moving forward. Kyle Christianson reported counties are working on voucher and general fund taxes. Most controversial items will be an omnibus motion at the end of the budget deliberation. Concerns remain about possible changes to utility tax formula as a part of a final budget roll up motion.

Letter to Joint Finance Committee

Alice said the letter to the Joint Finance Committee explaining the history of the utility tax formula and why it should not be changed, was effective. Alice commented that one third of the legislature is new and staff don't know about the ongoing history trying to change the formula. They now have historical knowledge of what we went through to obtain our utility tax formula change. They don't understand that receiving less than one third means the state is still skimming 83 percent of payment in lieu of taxes.

WCA Report – Kyle Christianson and Dan Bahr

Legislature likes local control but the minority party wants to preempt local authority and add cell towers for Towns. Wind battles (SB 71) ahead. SB 71 WCA supports. WCA has bigger issues. Towns say they have property - decline. Rep. Honadel agrees with us.

Towns

Counties under tax rate limit from 1992 if declining property value. Rock County if you are at your rate, you actually lose money.

AB 197 could be in budget they have not adhered to this. Kyle and Alice met with Rep. Paul Tittl and Rep Honadel. Urge lawmakers not to insert a budget

WCA told members of Finance there is no acknowledgement of loss of funds due to decommissioned plants. Everyone hopes these plants will get back on tax rolls but there is no guarantees.

AB 189 – WCA discussed towns eating away at revenue.

SB 167 - if you get sick, you can sue the utility. Town or county permitted so we should not have to pay you. This would eliminate defense. They want utility to stop permitting.

Kyle reported other county issues include foster care, local road increases drug courts, funding for towns and counties, mass transit operations include \$1 million biennium county land conservation issues.

DATCP has money for conservation for programs but no county staff. Cost sharing practices.

Tax rate limit Governor's proposed to repeal. Don't veto own item.

Negative debt adjustment. Shift from debt to operating levy.

SB 71 concerns about allowing local government to be more strict than PSC. Local people wanted expansion of wind towers and others didn't. We have proposed to put up 60 windmills. Retired people build new homes windmill expansion. If each township can set own rules we are sitting in Cassville with huge transmission lines into Iowa what will people work. Transmission lines will pick up transmission jobs and high paying jobs.

Matt said utilities up in arms over 15 percent renewable energy standards. "We are dying, counties want local control."

Next meeting suggested speakers are: invite PSC next speaker or Bob Welch to discuss wind mill proponents.

Rep. LeMahieu - Utilities going to bat for retired generating plants.

The next meeting was set for September 27, 2013 at 10 30 a.m. at Dewitt.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. on a motion from Supervisor Herb Tennis, seconded by Supervisor Sharon Hampson.