

**WCUTA AUGUST 19, 2016 BOARD MEETING MINUTES****PRESENT:**

Supervisors John Tramburg, Larry Willkolm, Linda Sinkula, Chuck Hoffman, William Goehring and Don Pazynski by phone; Bob Yeoman, Rock County, WCA staff, Kyle Christianson and Chelsea Filbert.

EXCUSED: Tom Wegner, Robert Keeney, Mark Klubertanz, Nick Osbourne

Staff: Alice O'Connor.

The meeting was called to order at 10:33 by Chairman Willkolm. It was noted Alice did not have the Audit Report ready so it will be an agenda item at the October meeting.

**President's Report – Supervisor Larry Willkolm**

He stated Excel Energy in his area is contracting with people about expanding solar, not wind energy projects. They are also contacting people in La Crosse and Eau Claire. Each project needs the equivalent of two football size fields and they want two in Chippewa Falls. They asked the Chippewa County Board for a \$200,000 contribution in exchange for 20 years of a tax credit. The Chippewa County Board is assessing would they be better off with a 10-year ROI or investing \$200,000 themselves. It was suggested Chippewa County should negotiate the number of kilowatts they are given over a five-year period. Larry said there is a coal problem. Taxation of solar will be a future issue because property taxes will be involved. The questions remain, what is a football field's worth? Rock County also just announced Alliant Energy is converting a local coal fired power plant. Bob Yeoman referenced the Legislative Fiscal Bureau 2015, Paper 18 on shared revenue, page 6, saying money to locals can be affected according to state statutes if you have an alternative energy source that fulfills your measurement or name plate capacity.

**MINUTES APPROVED** The minutes of the May 6, 2016 WCUTA board meeting were approved on a motion by Supervisor Tramburg, seconded by Supervisor Hoffman.

**WCA REPORT – Kyle Christianson included Chelsea Filbert and said she will be the new point person.**

He said there will be no money with 2017 budget so counties won't be asking for their typical \$1 million increase. Instead, they will be asking for more flexibility to enforce different programs. Also likely to see more local wheel or sales tax. Sheboygan County raised \$10 million with a 10% sales tax. Kyle said there are only four pots of money left. K-12 education, UW and they took a \$250 million hit last budget, Corrections (where the only way to save money is to do early releases) and local government/shared revenue spending. He said no bad news will come out before the election and the next economic forecast September 15<sup>th</sup> will be guarded.

He said, the Department of Transportation budget has proposed a variety of tax increases. Governor Walker has said he won't support. Something may be done on the Transportation budget before December, 2016. The Governor's budget bill and State of the State will be around February 2, 2017.

**Executive Director Report-Alice O'Connor**

Echoing what Kyle Christiansen said, she reiterated that any resolution with towns on their desired revenue increase, that does not take it from towns, will remain WCUTA's primary goal. A bigger

challenge will be to protect the estimated \$48 of the utility tax now dispersed to counties by the Dept. Of Revenue. Future efforts will be to prevent the Department of Revenue from keeping more. She said people seem to speculate Governor Walker won't run for re-election again if his approval numbers don't rise above the 30% range.

### **SPEAKERS were introduced by Alice.**

**Speaker Erv Selk who represents QUEST**, a group who wants useful energy in Wisconsin. He is the Founder and Chair for the Calumet Citizens for Responsible Energy. Their group wants responsible siting of wind turbines. He provided a variety of supporting documents and said Wisconsin need to acknowledge there are health effects for homeowners near a wind turbine. The reports he shared were:

- Wind Turbine Siting, Calumet County for Responsible Energy
- WI Citizens for Safe Wind Setting Guidelines with annotations
- Position of the National Institute of Public Health – National Institute of Hygiene on Wind Farms
- Open letter to members of the panel developing the World Health Organization (WHO) Environmental House Guidelines for the European Region

Wisconsin policy should allow set back provisions to be at least a mile from a home, he said.

**Speaker Rep. Thiesfeldt Chief of staff, Hariah Hutkowski.** He reported on AB490 from last session, which both WCUTA and the WCA had opposed because it proposed to change the current utility tax formula by reducing payments to counties and shifting revenue to counties with a lot of wind tower development. Under his bill, Fond du Lac County would have been the primary beneficiary.

Hariah said the Dept. of Revenue has been unable (or unwilling) to give them exact figures on what they collect in taxes from wind turbines. They could tell him they give counties \$2.7 million. He said his boss feels now that there is wind, the utility tax formula should be changed. A new approach he says for next session is to consider a 50/50 split between counties and towns but take it from the wind line item, not the utility tax line item. This would be a shift of \$245,000 and negatively impact 6 counties while benefitting towns.

He said if they could squeeze just \$500,000 out of the Dept. of Revenue, counties would be held harmless and towns would have money they need. There was additional discussion about drafting language so that all counties are held harmless or there is a phase approach to funding changes. Hariah said his boss right now is thinking he would do an even split of one-third to each for State, County and Towns. Under this formula, Fond du Lac would receive \$20,000 less, and Calumet County \$15,000 less. If the wind siting formula was more fair, there would be more wind sitings, he said.

WCA Kyle Christianson said a clause in any proposed legislation that state government adds "not withstanding" would allow the Dept. of Revenue to negatively impact counties.

### **Treasurer's Report – Supervisor Linda Sinkula**

She said Kenosha County has indicated they will finally be sending their check for 2015 dues in the amount of \$2,469.56. She said the balance in the WCUTA check books as of July, 2016 is \$72,813.74 This includes \$32,469.7 in the checkbook and a \$40,343.77 CD that was not renewed and will mature January

31, 2017. Expenses for May through July totaled \$6,020.18. This left a total balance of \$66,793.56 An audit of WCUTA books at the October meeting was accepted on a motion by Supervisor Tramburg, seconded by Supervisor Hoffman. In the same motion, the Treasurer's report was approved.

**Audit Committee Report** – will be at the October meeting. Those sitting on the audit committee will be Supervisors Sinkula and Tramburg, chaired by Supervisor Goehring.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting date was set for Oct. 21, 2016 AT 10:30 a.m. at the WCUTA office, 44 East Mifflin St., Suite 603, Madison. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 on a motion by Supervisor Goehring, seconded by Supervisor Hoffman.