

Vernon County Highway Safety Committee Meeting

October 2nd, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.

Members Attending: Luke Yahn – Wisconsin State Patrol, Brad Byom – La Crosse WI DOT, Dan Kontos – WI DOT BOTS, Dr. Kehl Arnsen – Viroqua Area Schools, David Eggen – Vernon County Board, Sheriff John Spears – Vernon County Sheriff’s Office, Dave Robinson – Media, Brandon Larson – Vernon Co Emergency Management, Justin Running- Vernon County Board, Todd Simonson – Assistant Chief Viroqua Police, Tom Skala- Vernon County Highway, Roy Torgerson- Vernon County Sheriff, David Rynes-Ontario Police

Members Absent: Cary Joholski – Vernon County Board (excused), Dan Nelson- Vernon Memorial Hospital (excused)

Guests: Danny Helgerson- Westby Mayor, Tanje Bjerke- Viroqua Resident, Sarah Grainger- Viroqua Public Works Director

Highway Safety Committee meeting was called to order by David Eggen at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 2nd, 2019 at the Vernon County Sheriff’s Office.

Affirmed proper public notice was made. David Eggen asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Justin Running made a motion to approve the minutes of the July meeting. Luke Yahn seconded the motion. All voted Aye.

Audience to Visitors: Tanje Bjerke- discussed concerns about the crosswalk at Main Street and West Decker. Witnessed a child almost get hit by a vehicle turning. The crosswalk is out of view from traffic turning South onto Main. Brad Byom stated he would talk with engineers and traffic signal staff to try and come up with a solution.

Sheriff John Spears – The quarterly report was handed out. Sheriff Spears reported, compared to last year, total crashes are down. Non reportable accidents and injury accidents are up though. Stated there were some issues on County road SS with resident stating vehicles were driving too fast. Residents had put up their own 45mph sign. Spears stated he talked with residents and told them they could not do that and the Sheriff’s department radar trailer was deployed to monitor speeds. The results were that during the time all vehicles were driving within the correct speeds.

Deputy Roy Torgerson showed a dash cam video from a private citizen of a close call of a car passing a farm tractor in a double yellow and the dangers of the particular area. The area is State highway 27 near Monument Rock. The farmer requested that some type of farm tractor sign be put up on either side of the danger area. Brad Byom stated he would check with signage staff to see if something could be done.

Dave Rynes discussed the speed zone coming into the Village of Ontario where it goes from 55mph into a 25mph residential area. Also thanked the Highway department for their efforts during the flooding.

Luke Yahn – Nothing to Report

Interim Chief Todd Simonson – Stated the same as Bjerke of the close calls at Main and Decker crosswalk. Simonson also stated the East and West light signal cycle is not long enough, about 4 cars can make it through the light before it changes to yellow. Sarah Grainger mentioned the possibility of moving the North crosswalk at Main and Decker back to the original location. Byom stated he would check to see if that is possible.

Tom Skala – Nothing to Report

Brad Byom – Stated the Highway 27 and County P left turn lanes will be going in. A roundabout for Highway 14/27/T intersection is in design for years out, no date set yet. Highway 35 will be resurfaced from Genoa to Stoddard. Mayor Danny Helgeson stated he is happy a roundabout is coming to Westby in 2022.

Dan Kontos – Discussed that all crashes and fatalities are down in 2019 compared to 2018. There have been 37 pedestrian fatalities in the State this year. 412 Fatal Statewide in 2019 compared to 443 in 2018 year to date. Discussed Community Maps and the different features that will be offered through it. The 2020 Governors Conference on Highway Safety will be Aug 19 & 20, 2020. National Move Over Day is October 19, 2019. School Bus Safety week is October 21-25, 2019. National Incident Response week is November 10-16, 2019. Kontos also stated seatbelt usage Statewide is at 90%, up from 89.6% Nationwide.

Dan Nelson - Absent

Dr. Kehl Arnson – Dr. Kehl Arnson stated they had some complaints about parent drop off and are looking at solutions. Have had no issues with busing. Planning their first safety meeting in October.

Brandon Larson- Discussed the flooding and had very few issues. Also stated a drone is available for accidents if needed.

Dave Robinson – Nothing to Report, Eggen stated it would be good if Robinson could help get the word out about Highway Safety.

Next meeting Wednesday January 8th, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. at the Vernon County Sheriff's Office.

Adjourn. Motion made by Robinson, and seconded by Rynes. All voted Aye. Time: 2:20 pm.

