

**LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PLANNING MEETING  
PROCEEDINGS; MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011**

The La Crosse County Board of Supervisors Planning Meeting was held on Monday, July 11, 2011 in the Administrative Center, Room B410. The County Clerk, Ginny Dankmeyer, took attendance. 27 supervisors were present when Chair Steven Doyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and those otherwise present, excused or absent are noted in the roll call detail:

<b>District Name</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
1 Richmond, Andrea	Excused
2 Geary, Ralph	Present
3 Feehan, Bill	Excused
4 Johnson, Jai	Excused
5 Johnson, Karin	Excused
6 Billings, Jill	Present
7 Plesha, Roger	Present
8 Freedland, Maureen	Present
9 Hampson, Sharon	Present
10 Wood, Margaret	Present
11 Kader, Audrey	Present
12 Flood, Bridget	Present
13 Brockmiller, Bill	Present
14 Medinger, John	Present, Excused at 07:39 PM
15 Mach, Beverly	Present
16 Sebranek, Gerald	Present
17 Meyer, Donald	Present
18 Johnson, Tara	Present
19 Keil, Robert	Excused
20 Bina, Donald	Present
21 Manthei, Dennis	Excused
22 Ebert, Ray	Present, Excused at 07:25 PM
23 Gamroth, Tammy	Present
24 Pfaff, Leon	Present, Excused at 07:27 PM
25 Schroeder, Jeffrey	Present
26 Burke, Vicki	Present
27 Pedretti, Marilyn	Present
28 Doyle, Steve	Present
29 Kruse, Monica	Present
30 Spiker, Charles	Present
31 Ferries, Dan	Present
32 Benrud, Arlene	Present
33 Berns, Jim	Present at 06:06 PM
34 Wehrs, Tina	Absent
35 Bilskemper, Joe	Present

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

#### County Board Chair Report - Steven Doyle

- Supervisor Conference Reports
  - Supervisor Flood attended an education seminar on June 27 put on by the WCA called Community Corrections of Jail Re-Entry. Rock County presented its work enter program. This is a program they use because they were losing so much money on people just sitting off their fines. People from at home detention come in 2 days a week to work and get \$50 off their fine per day. They do community service work for nonprofit groups. Bayfield County also uses a re-entry initiative. They received a grant from the State DOC and use an online course for prisoners who are there 30 days or more to learn to accept personal responsibility, discovering self motivation, mastering self management, employing interdependence, gaining self awareness, adapting lifelong learning, and believing in yourself. This education and encouraging further education will help people re-enter.
  - Supervisor Benrud attended WCHA meeting in Wausau last week and will be having a meeting with Secretary of Transportation in a week.
  - Supervisor Bina reminded supervisors that the fair starts on Wednesday of this week with a little over 11,000 entries from kids to exhibitors all over the county and surrounding counties.
  - Supervisor Billings was appointed to the WCA audit committee. They reviewed the financial statements for WCA and she has that information if you are interested. They decided it was prudent to advise to not increase dues for WCA this year and talk of a possible dividend that counties will receive.
  - Supervisor Wood had a meeting of the WI Association of Local Health Departments and Boards where they were brought up to speed on Wisconsin application or non application for federal dollars. The state's position on federal grant funding is they are not going to be submitting letters of support. Other places would then apply for the grants. 80% of our State Division of Public Health is federally funded. When the state does not support, Wisconsin is no longer in the running. Funding issues for public health will be coming down the pipe.
  - Supervisor Burke mentioned we had a visit from the Urban Institute, the National Institute of Corrections on July 28 and 29 on our transition from jail to community. Supervisor Burke wrote a small article on it that will be linked on our county website under "What's New".

### CHAIR CHANGE

Vice Chair T. Johnson took the chair.

- Final thoughts from outgoing Chair Doyle – This will be the last meeting Chair Doyle will be chairing in full. The election for the new board chair will be next week. When he was first elected in 2002, he had a discussion with department heads that things needed to change in La Crosse County and wanted to get away from micro managing. There was little confidence that he would last the 10 years that he has. It has been an enjoyable decade for him. What he is most proud of over the last decade, some he has had a lot of involvement with, some a little, and some none at all is: household hazardous material program, Lakeview Business Park, justice sanctions, drug court, OWI court, veterans court, family care program, Mississippi Valley Health Services which is something that has never been done anywhere in state of WI, jail expansion project passed on unanimous vote because of the board working together. And two things he is most proud of: La Crosse County has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest per capita tax in county in state of WI and we have the highest percentage of female supervisors on the county board in the state. La Crosse County has excellent people and staff here, starting with our administrator. He wanted to wait until after

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the contract for the administrator was renewed before he stepped down as chair. He also mentioned the very big shoes we will have to fill when Bill Shepherd and Gary Ingvalson retire. We have great people working at the county and we have done well at bringing great people on board. We also have really good board members on this board. Each and everyone are very valuable on this board, both past and present. Chairman Doyle wants to thank each and everyone for the great experience this has been. He has worked with quality people and got out of their way to let them do the great job that they have done.

#### **CHAIR CHANGE**

Chair Doyle resumed the chair.

#### **Deputy County Administrator Report – Gary Ingvalson PROCLAMATION RE: JULY 2011 - NURSING HOME MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, La Crosse County residents or members of their family are provided affordable, quality nursing care services in a family-like environment, including those whose care may be difficult or those without financial support; and, **WHEREAS**, staff is committed to excellence in providing care and rehabilitation to all with respect for the dignity and rights of individuals including those who have special physical, developmental, and mental health needs; and **WHEREAS**, La Crosse County operates two nursing homes – Hillview Health Care Center and Lakeview Health Center. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the La Crosse County Board does hereby proclaim the month of July as La Crosse County Nursing Home Month and urges all residents to join in recognizing the valuable contribution of persons dedicated to ensuring quality care to our residents in need.

Motion by B. Brockmiller/G. Sebranek to approve passed on a unanimous voice vote with 28 ayes, 1 absent - T. Wehrs, 6 excused - B. Feehan, K. Johnson, J. Johnson, R. Keil, D. Manthei and A. Richmond.

- Update on Assessment Reform Committee
  - Zoning, Planning & Land Information Director Jeff Bluske wanted to thank all the committee members. The goal of this committee was to help the local municipalities, not so much the county. It was an eye opener to the committee members to hear what the towns are confronted with during their assessment process. The State of Wisconsin is working in conjunction at the same time this committee was working on enhancements. One problem the committee found right away was the lack of uniform contracts, advanced assessor training, and continuing education was lacking. The committee has identified that substantial modifications and uniformity are needed to raise the standards and practices of the assessment process. Modifications to the Wisconsin Assessment Manual, electronic record keeping and higher continuing education requirements will raise the quality of assessment services. If there is not a fair assessment, they will not pay a fair portion of tax. Many local units of government have indicated they want no part of a county-wide consortium. Local control comes with great responsibility to participate by meeting state statutes and to make these advancements happen for consistency and accuracy. The committee has indicated there should be annual evaluations of the assessors and any staff. Any information that Jeff Bluske gets will be passed on to the municipalities for their continuing education. Town of Onalaska Chairman Rolly Bogart and Board Member Sandy Thompson talked about how this helped them significantly when they had to find an assessor rather quickly. They used the template from the committee to work with. The work of this committee has made it very easy for them. For their request for proposal, they took the report and only had to make a few changes. They lost their assessor on June 1, sent out proposal on June 20 and had six responses. They can now take this document and all its language and can create a new contract. Board Member

Thompson indicated how well educated and informed she was through attending the Assessment Reform Committee meetings. She stated they do not know where they would be tonight if they did not have this tool. She wanted to thank everyone at the County that was involved with this.

- The assessment process is so important because of the increase of new construction, can be used as increase in budget. If assessor does not pick that up, you don't have that base to work with. The ability to make improvements is based on the value and insurance companies come in to get this information all the time from Zoning. There was an example of a home in the Town of Hamilton that was valued at \$270,000 but the insurance policy was for \$1.3 million. Chair of the committee, Ralph Geary wanted to add that Karl Green also did a great job and every municipality knows more about the assessment process and what's coming down from the state. The ultimate goal of the State of Wisconsin is for everyone to use the same software.
- Report by Xcel Energy on French Island Plant
  - Xcel Energy is the biggest part of the Solid Waste disposal system. They represent 62% of their revenue associated with disposal. A commitment was made back in the 80's and La Crosse is only one of two counties that have gone beyond disposal in the State of Wisconsin with waste to energy. It's a unique system that we have here.
  - Xcel Energy is in 8 states, 4<sup>th</sup> largest combined utility in the U.S. In Wisconsin they are located from Viroqua all the way up to Ashland and serving 222 communities. It employs about 1,000 people in Wisconsin, mostly in Eau Claire area. In La Crosse they have 31 employees at the French Island plant and 70 at the service center. They are also the #1 wind utility in the U.S which is located mostly in Minnesota, North and South Dakota. The #5 solar utility in the U.S located in Colorado and Texas. Xcel is doing a lot of good things environmentally and yet to serve the electric and gas needs of over 1 million customers. Two boilers on the French Island plant operated a combined 10,000 hours last year. The plant runs Monday thru Friday and shuts down for the weekends. The plant generated 81,000 megawatt hours, enough energy to supply 10,000 homes. The plant is not large enough to supply the entire County or City.
  - The plant on French Island burns garbage, refuse-derived fuel (RFD). The garbage comes in and is separated into burnable materials and is mixed with wood waste. A lot of the wood waste is railroad ties. Currently they are burning a 50/50 mix of RDF and wood with their permit. Last year they did not exceed any permits and were in complete compliance with all their permits for the entire year. They are a highly regulated industry. They are working with the DNR to allow them to burn 100% RDF. Data shows they should be able to burn more RDF when they need to in order to get the pile down and for other operation issues. Xcel is hoping to get the revised permit and public comments back this fall.
  - In 2010, early 2011, Xcel installed an aluminum recycle process at the plant. This process pulls out aluminum and sends it up to a processing plant. After they send that out, the County gets 1/3 of that revenue.
  - All ash from combustion of RDF and wood is sent to the County landfill and put in separate cell there. Ash costs here are higher than any other plants in the system due to a clause in the contract. They are looking at that issue, not only for the cost part, but also in 5 years the cell where they put that ash will be full.
  - Xcel is doing a community conservation program in the City of La Crosse. They are offering incentives, double rebates, and very reduced costs on home energy audits and business energy audits. Next year it will be expanded to the County of La Crosse. Xcel really enjoys the positive working

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relationship they have with La Crosse County. Xcel Energy representatives responded to questions from the board.

- Report on Solid Waste Tipping Fees History – Hank Koch
  - Four reasons why Solid Waste Director Hank Koch is here tonight. A lot has happened in the last three years with Solid Waste. The County Board has approved those fee changes. He wants to keep you up to date on what is going on and some misinformation that is going on with tipping fees, and to get ready for 2012 budget. When it all fits together, how will it impact other things? The Policy Board, Public Works & Infrastructure, and County Board have approved several recommendations over the year and want to give you feedback on how well these things are working out. Solid Waste is branded as Responsible Resource: economically stable, environmentally sound, and community supported – good neighbor. Those three things together achieve sustainability. The WI DNR saw this and awarded them Green Tier status. They are the landfill and La Crosse County is the first municipal entity in the Green Tier program.
  - Current tipping fees: Current rates on the website are approved each year; The three big ones are; construction demolition materials are \$59/ton municipal solid waste is \$59/ton, if you take refuse to Xcel where they can process that into energy, that is \$61/ton. The reason for the rates is that garbage is not trash and is not refuse. It is all very different. Looking at tonnage, Xcel is biggest of tonnage - 52% of tonnage; municipal solid waste is 10%; construction and demolition is 7%; and ash that comes back Xcel is 7%. Focusing on these four waste types; that accounts for 78% of their tonnage. Revenue from Xcel is 60%, municipal solid waste is 13%, C & D is 7%, and ash is 6%. That accounts for 89% of their revenue. These four wastes are where they need to focus on. Total tonnage from the landfill is 141,423 tons with revenue of \$7,363,977.
  - History of tipping fees: Of the four major groups, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Xcel, C&D and ash, ash is the only one affected by CPI. Ash has increased from \$30 to approaching \$50 over a 21 year period. The other three have remained flat. That is a concern for Xcel. Xcel and MSW are extremely flat with no rate changes. In the last couple of years there has been an increase in C&D. Reason being, the old site of C&D was closed, so it had to go into the new site. Since C&D takes up same space, they came up with a blended rate. The price at the landfill for MSW is \$1/ton less than 20 years ago.
  - CPI Impacts: Average increase of 2.7%/year for a 21 year period. The slope of the line increases as compared to cost. WI DNR fees in 1990 were less than \$1, today they are \$13. This was reflected in our fees but not as much as you would think. The County absorbed much of the bump in blending fees. Xcel cost has gone up, but very slowly. The cost to run the plant is increasing but not as fast of CPI but faster than our rate we charge customers. This can't last forever. St. Joe's increase has been much less than the CPI increase. In contract with St. Joe's, we restricted them to 80% of CPI. The difference between what St. Joe's charge us and what we charge Xcel is that we are paying for the liners and capital cost. Xcel is paying all their capital cost.
  - Rebate impact to costs: What is the difference between rebate and volume based pricing? Volume based pricing, if you are a big customer, you get a discount based on volume. One garbage truck gets the same rebate as multiple trucks. The public solid waste system subscribes to the rebate theory because it provides better competition among local haulers. This keeps larger haulers from taking out local hauler. Three rebates in system: First rebate is for municipal, which is 1% rebate if you bring all waste to county. A business gets 5% with all waste directed to our system and the

rebate only goes to the person who is paying the bill. And haulers get 7% if they signed up for one year, or if they signed up for 3 years, 9%.

Unintended consequence was some municipalities gave up rebate and allowed haulers to pay bill to get the 7% rebate and the haulers will share that with municipality. Municipality went from getting 1% rebate to 3.5%. We have picked up 5,000 tons of waste that Harter's is not taking out of County. Solid Waste has picked up almost \$300,000 with these rebates. We are giving back more money in rebates than in previous year because of this change in rebates.

- o Comparison to other facilities: In 2010, MSW was \$68/ton; C&D was \$48/ton. The total revenue generated from landfill for handling trash and divided by total landfill tonnage is average landfill rate/ton of \$42.11/ton before any rebate was applied. The overall average rate in WI is \$51.41. La Crosse's rate with the blended rate is \$59/ton. The average overall is 52.83. Compared to immediate surrounding counties, Adams is \$1 more, Vernon is almost the same for MSW and only less for C&D and only one with a split rate, Juneau is \$3 less, and Monroe County is \$10 less. We have positioned ourselves to be at or a little below where the trend is in the future. Average for waste to energy is \$74.41 with comparable size capacity. Our average rate is \$61. This appears that we are underpriced in waste to energy.
- o Conclusion: Tipping fees are supporting the landfill. Waste to energy is more expensive than landfill. It has a lot of benefits and one of those is it fuels more than 10,000 local home and businesses. We have a state of the art and environmentally sound landfill with green tier standing. 52% of waste is diverted away from landfill. This is a self sustaining program not on the general fund. The rebate program has enhanced competition and support of local haulers. La Crosse County tipping fees supports stakeholders. Private facility tipping fees support corporate stockholders usually in Delaware and Texas. The rebate program modifications have increased tonnage and revenue above expectations. Other landfill systems are suffering from the shrinking yard. Our landfill is growing. It is the same waste, just handling it better. Due to the storms in the area, expect to get 4,000 tons more from shingles which is \$100,000 more in revenue than budgeted for this year.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

- Supervisor Benrud asked that a sign-up sheet be passed around at the next board meeting for the annual picnic.
- Supervisor T. Johnson asked for clarification on the County Board Chair forum before the next meeting. It was decided to be held at 5:30 PM in Room B390 and will be an informal process of asking questions.

**ADJOURN**

Motion by G. Sebranek/B. Brockmiller to adjourn at 8:01 PM passed on a unanimous voice vote with 25 ayes, 1 absent - T. Wehrs, 9 excused - R. Ebert, B. Feehan, K. Johnson, J. Johnson, R. Keil, D. Manthei, J. Medinger, L. Pfaff and A. Richmond.

**STATE OF WISCONSIN )**

**COUNTY OF LA CROSSE )**

**I, Ginny Dankmeyer , La Crosse County Clerk, in and for the County of La Crosse, Wisconsin, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Journal of Proceedings of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors at the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors Planning Meeting held Monday, July 11, 2011 and that it is the whole thereof. IN WITNESS THEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND AND AFFIXED THE OFFICIAL SEAL THIS DAY 2 OF AUGUST 2011.**