

JANUARY 13, 2009 SESSION
OF THE
WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Walworth County Board Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Grant at 5:03 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Walworth County Government Center, 100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Vice-Chair Grant conducted the meeting due to Chair Russell's surgery/absence.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted and all Supervisors were present except Chair Russell.

Round table discussion with local legislators concerning current state issues affecting counties

Legislators attending the January 13, 2009 County Board Committee of the Whole meeting were:

State Senator Neal Kedzie, District 11
State Senator Mary Lazich, District 28 (arrived late)
Representative Tom Lothian, District 32

Representative Tom Lothian introduced himself and said that he has been assigned to three committees this time: Ways and Means, Consumer Protection Committee, Rural Affairs and Alternate Energy. Representative Lothian said that the Governor's State of the State meeting would be coming up and they will get the budget early in February. He said that it would be a very different experience for him as the three terms he has served, Republicans have been the majority and being in the minority is a new role he is going to have to learn.

Senator Neal Kedzie said that the Legislators have a very challenging time ahead of them just as elected officials here in the County. He said this is his 13th year in the Legislature and his 7th year in the State Senate, previously spending six years in the State Assembly. Senator Kedzie said that Wisconsin is looking at a deficit at the State level anywhere from \$3 billion to \$5.4 billion dollars. He said as Republicans, both in the Senate and Assembly, we are in the minority and we have been told that the first thing on the agenda will be raising the minimum wage and working on the health care program. He said that we have no details on the economic stimulus package. This stimulus package will be used for infrastructure rebuilding, roads, etc. Revenues for the State have been down. Income tax is down 4% as well as corporate tax and sales tax. Senator Kedzie said we don't have money coming into the State to fulfill our obligations at this time. He went on to include a number of proposals to increase State revenues this year and also named a number of Bills that have been or will be introduced for new expenses. Senator Kedzie said there is a little over 5% unemployment in the State right now. He said there will be more need than ever for a bipartisan resolution to address these problems. He said the budget should

come out in February and Legislators have a deadline of the end of July with a potential signing sometime in August.

Vice-Chair Grant thanked the Legislators from coming and asked if Supervisors had questions.

Supervisor Weber expressed concerns about businesses moving out of Wisconsin and new businesses not moving into Wisconsin because of the all the regulations and high taxes.

Supervisor Bromley asked if the concept of imposing a tax on professional services was still being considered. Representative Lothian said it was making some progress.

Senator Mary Lazich arrived at 5:21 p.m. She thanked the Board for inviting them and explained that she, too, is a Republican and the control of the Legislature has changed and said that things are going to be very different.

Supervisor Van Dreser said his biggest concern is that jobs are leaving everyday and moving to Mexico but he wanted to talk about drunk drivers. He asked what they thought could be done in the next two years to reduce the number of drunk drivers on the road and the number of repeat offenders. Senator Kedzie said that they all have concerns and his office has been working with the Walworth County Sheriff's department and District Attorney and also with Waukesha and Jefferson counties. He said that the major problem is how to handle the repeat offenders. He has a few pieces of legislation that he has been working on for a year and a half. The toughest issue has been AODA treatment and costs. Supervisor Bromley said that he thinks the punishment should be stronger for a first offender.

Senator Lazich said she has been participating in sessions regarding repeat offenders. She said the question is how to legislate behavior. Representative Lothian said that he also introduced a bill in the last session regarding this problem. He said there are Bills to change the Constitution to expand the use of alcohol as a temporary insanity and he wants to eliminate that concept.

Supervisor Kilkenny said that he thinks they would get more support if the punishment had varying degrees for varying degrees of drunk driving. Senator Kedzie said there has been discussion regarding support of this idea.

Supervisor Ingersoll said she appreciates Senator Kedzie's articles in the paper and the information he gives to the public. She asked what he thought that we as citizens could do to promote the issues and get the word out more as to what is actually going on in Wisconsin? Senator Kedzie said that there is a cable company, the Wisconsin Eye, which comes out of Madison, which shows committee sessions as they are being held. He said the easiest way for the general public to send Legislators information is by email. He said hand written letters and phone calls still work but not form letters. He said that the majority of the Bills we write come from citizens.

Senator Lazich said she knows that people are very busy with dual working families, etc. and it is hard for them to be informed. She puts a lot of information on her website. Senator Kedzie said that he thinks that Walworth County is good at communicating with him. Representative

Lothian said he has an insert in the community papers twice a year to tell citizens what is going on with constituents' concerns. He said he tries to make himself available to constituents via phone calls and by attending community events.

Sheriff Graves said that he would appreciate their support of HR 218, which the Attorney General crafted. Captain Jay Maritz said he is working with groups proposing language for legislation for Technology Neutral 911. He said he is looking for assistance in this area and for information to keep up with the technology that kids are buying and he would appreciate their support to get something done in this area.

Vice-Chair Grant thanked the Legislators for coming and invited them to stick around to talk to more people. He said that if there is a more convenient time to hold these sessions, they should please let us know.

On motion by Supervisor Schaefer, seconded by Supervisor Van Dreser, the Committee of the Whole adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Kimberly S. Bushey
County Clerk

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
)SS
COUNTY OF WALWORTH)

I, Kimberly S. Bushey, County Clerk in and for the County aforesaid, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings of the County Board of Supervisors Committee of the Whole for the January 13, 2009 meeting.