



### COLUMBIA COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES Columbia County Law Enforcement Center Law Enforcement Training Room November 12, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

**MOVING FORWARD WITH SAFETY**

#### MEMBERS

Jerry Blystone  
Roger Brandner  
Michael Brouette  
James Foley  
Trace Frost  
Chris Hardy  
Richard Hoege  
Todd Horn  
Kenneth Hutler  
Kathy Johnson  
Penny Kiefer  
Avis Link  
Chuck Miller  
Barry Pufahl  
Joseph Ruf  
Charlene Schmid  
Wayne Smith  
Josh Sween  
JoAnn Wingers

#### MISSION

Columbia County strives to make our roads the safest they can be.....

**Commission Members Present:** Josh Sween, Chris Hardy, Chuck Miller, JoAnn Wingers, Ken Hutler, Avis Link, James Foley, Trace Frost, Susan Fisher, Todd Horn, Wayne Smith, Richard Hoege, Kathy Johnson, Jeremiah Johnson, Charlene Schmid via zoom, Penny Kiefer via zoom

**Commission Members Absent with notice:** Jerry Blystone, Roger Brandner

**Commission Members Absent without notice:** Michael Brouette

**The meeting of the Columbia County Traffic Safety Commission was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Chairman Todd Horn. Introductions were made by all present. An attendance sheet was distributed.**

Several public citizens were present to listen and/or speak.

***Motion by Hutler to approve the agenda as presented and that the meeting was properly noticed. Seconded by Hardy. Motion carried.***

***Motion by Smith to approve the August 13, 2021 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Foley. Motion carried.***

***Membership Update: (1) Received a resignation from State Patrol Mike Vasquez on August 13, 2021. (2) Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson has been named the new Columbia County State Patrol Representative. A motion was made by Foley to nominate Sgt. Johnson to the Traffic Safety Commission. Seconded by Hutler. Motion carried. A letter of approval will be submitted to the Clerk's Office/County Board Chair Gove for full county board approval.***

***Horn suggested to move Item #4 (ATV/UTV Routes on the County Road System) of Old Business to first on the agenda because of the number of public citizens present for the item. No objection.***

## OLD BUSINESS:

**4. ATV / UTV Routes on the County Road System.** Assistant Corporation Counsel, Susan Fisher, contacted the insurance company, AGIS, and has had no response from them. Horn gave some brief answers to questions that have been posed to the Traffic Safety Commission regarding this item. Ellen Pulver, Secretary/Treasurer from the ATV/UTV Enthusiasts Club, presented and distributed a slide show, along with a map and list of Columbia County roads being requested. See attached. A 35 mph speed limit, safety requirements of head and tail lights, helmet required if under 18, possibly adding 16 with a valid driver's license and if not valid if lost license to DUI or any other loss of license are all items being recommended in the ordinance. It was reported that only fatal crashes are required to be reported and all other injury/accidents are self-reporting only and are not followed up by law enforcement. Public comment began. President of the club, April Stroemer, advised that she bought her machine in Columbia County and would like to spend her money in Columbia County, not have to trailer to another county to ride. Alderman Marshall, City of Wisconsin Dells, stated that Sauk County has routes that border the City of Wisconsin Dells. Everything has been very positive with no incidents, and is suggesting that Columbia County open the roads for routes. Wisconsin Dells Officer, Brent Brown, stated that there have only been two issues, one after hours riding and the one under age driver. No complaints for the most part except three or four issues with boundaries. Greg Johnson, Johnson Sales in Arlington, stated that Columbia County is missing the boat and that all units purchased there are registered out of county. As far as tire wear, less aggressive tires would make the units safer on the roads. It was stated that Jefferson County opened it up to all roads within the county with very few issues. Jefferson County has some large communities within it and are not seeing any issues. Columbia County should consider all county roads and if a road/area becomes an issue, come back and begin restricting certain areas. Green County has also opened up all roads for riding. Horn inquired to Hardy about signage cost? Hardy stated that signs would be \$190.00 each, but has not looked at the number of signs that would be needed around the county. Kim Bauer suggested that the county open all the roads and then restrict if needed. Even though cities, villages, and towns may all have their own ordinances written, he feels that if the county were to write an ordinance and open everything up, all the municipalities would be in favor of uniformity throughout the county on an ordinance. It was stated that Sauk County is possibly looking at opening all roads to the recreational vehicles by December 1, 2021. Horn explained that there are many situations including curves, hills, traffic, etc. that need to be considered before opening up roads for use. Ryan Smedema stated that he thinks there will be limited groups riding, not huge numbers like snowmobiles groups. Portage Police Department, Richard Hoege, stated that Columbia County currently has no off-road trails because of the large amount of marsh land and water. Only roads are being considered. There was a statement brought up that there are areas with incorrect signage. Ellen Pulver stated that if this is taking place, she would like to know who it is so they can address it. Hardy stated that all municipalities have been made aware that signage is needed because of being on roads. Horn to send list of roads open currently for ATV/UTV riding. Marquette County has maps with the routes which also includes "Preferred Routes" which are preferred but not mandatory. They have put this into their ordinance. The counties around us that are using all or most roads are Dodge, Marquette, Green Lake, and Sauk soon. There was discussion whether an ordinance could be written stricter than the current state statute. Hardy stated that a draft ordinance was written back in 2017 and is 90% complete. He also stated what the steps would be for this project: 1) Traffic Safety Commission would review the ordinance that is proposed; 2) ordinance would then go to the Highway Commission for review; 3) ordinance would then go to the DNR for review; 4) the Highway Commission would send the ordinance back to the Traffic Safety Commission for review with any changes/recommendations; 5) the ordinance would then go back to the Highway Commission for final approval; 6) if approved, the Highway Commission would then send the ordinance to the full County Board for approval. He stated that this is not a quick process. Lodi Chief Smith inquired if an ordinance will be more restrictive than State Statute 23.33 and include the extra items that have been discussed? He only recommends the ordinance if more restrictions can be added by the county. Hardy stated that Jefferson

County limits access to no closer than ½ mile near the interstate. Some examples were given like CTH CS & CTH CX in Columbia County. Richard Hoege stated that the Traffic Safety Commission deals with families after fatal crashes. We are a safety commission. He had question whether we can restrict the ordinance more than State Statute 23.33. Sue Long inquired if this needed to go to the Columbia County Public Safety Committee for review? Hardy stated that it is not necessary, but the Columbia County Highway Commission could recommend Public Safety to take a look at it.

*A motion was made by Lodi Chief Wayne Smith to send a letter to the Highway Commission recommending to open all roads in Columbia County to ATV/UTC usage if the restrictions can be added to the ordinance and if issues arise, Columbia County Highway Commission has the right to close any section if needed. Seconded by Hutler. Motion passed, but not unanimously, with one no vote.*

**1. Update on options for passing lanes on STH 33 eastbound at CTH F/CTH EE.** Charlene Schmid, Wisconsin DOT, still waiting to hear on funding for this project, inquired how we wanted to move forward and if there is any other funding. Hardy stated that there may possibly be some grant funding but the project is going to have to include real estate buyouts as well. Miller explained that there have been two similar accidents (with injury) in the last month in this area. He stated that the need is there so how do we move forward?

*A motion was made by Hoege to move this item forward to the Columbia County Highway Commission to find alternative options for the STH 33/CTH F/CTH EE area. Seconded by Sween. Motion carried.*

**2. Review speed limit on HWY 16 from Boeck Road to Klappstein Road (John Simonson).** DOT gave speed study results which was average 61 mph. Hardy discussed the speed study results. See study results attached. There was discussion regarding lowering the speed limit. Wisconsin DOT stated that they would not support lowering the speed limit. Hoege inquired to Charlene Schmid, Wisconsin DOT, as to why there is a 45 mph speed limit on STH 51/16 out to Murray Road south of Portage? She could not answer that but stated she would look into it. There was discussion regarding transition zones, not just 55 mph down to 25 mph. Charlene Schmid stated that there is not always a transition zone. She proposed that a dynamic speed sign could be purchased through the state but very costly and everyone didn't think that was a good solution.

*A motion was made by Hoege to lower the speed limit to 45 mph on STH 16 from Boeck Road to Industrial Road. Seconded by Smith. Motion carried.*

**3. Review speed limit on HWY 33 and Caledonia Street.** Charlene from DOT gave speed study results of an average of 54.2 mph. The issue is near the Blystones Towing & Radiator business in the 55 mph zone. Hardy stated that on average there are 9100 cars travel that daily and discussed the speed study. Discussion took place of the area. See study results attached.

*A motion was made by Hoege to lower the speed limit to 45 mph on STH 33 west of the Wisconsin River Bridge out to I-39. Seconded by Smith. Motion carried.*

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Speed concerns and request to lower speed limit from 35 to 25 on CTH V near Rory Road.** A map of the area of concern was displayed along with the speed study by the Columbia County Highway Department. See study results attached. Citizen, Chris Dupont, explained that this is a very congested area

where several roads come together, people are walking, site seers, and a lot of traffic. A petition was circulated in the area with 26 signatures agreeing that the speed limit should be reduced and more traffic

control measures. They also explained that there is no shoulder on the road and people walking have to step into the ditch for traffic and there have been many close calls. They would like to see the speed limit lowered to 25 mph, speed bumps, additional stop signs, or any other safety measures. Photos and a map of the area of concern were distributed. Hardy gave an overview of the speed study that was completed. The average speed in this area is 45 mph. He also explained that this is the reason for subdivisions off the county trunk highways. Education, enforcement, and signage would help. Horn suggested that they take a video of the area and possible signage and bring the results back to the next Traffic Safety Meeting in February. Hardy explained what a project like this would encompass and cost. He also stated that we would need STP Funding. He explained funding shortages along with how roads are scheduled to be replaced, which is approximately every 10 years. Hoege explained that adding road markups could potentially help. This makes the illusion of a smaller roadway which in turn may slow traffic down. He gave an example of where it helped in Portage.

*A motion was made by Smith to increase enforcement, video the area, and bring the results back to the next meeting in February. Seconded by Wingers. Motion carried.*

**2. Safety concerns with Lodi Street and Water Street (STH 60) intersection in the City of Lodi. (Lodi PD Chief Smith).** A map of the area of concern was displayed. Chief Smith gave an overview of the situation with through traffic on Water Street and traffic on Lodi Street having to stop. It is not well marked and people get confused. They have installed double yellow lines on Water Street that go around the corner to help with the confusion. Smith also stated that the shrubs showing on the map are not nearly as big now as they show there and is not a real concern. Charlene Schmid from Wisconsin DOT stated that there are improvements in the works to this intersection/area and the double yellow lines were the first item. The long-term outlook for this area is for DOT to complete a study which may include placing additional stop signs or an intersection modification. This project may take 3-4 months after the DOT collects the needed data. Smith inquired about the 2 cameras that were in that area for only a couple of days. He did not see them placed or removed. DOT knew nothing about any cameras in that area. Smith also stated that there is discussion of potentially removing some parking spaces in the intersection on Lodi Street as well.

*A motion was made by Miller to send a letter to Charlene Schmid at Wisconsin DOT to place a 3-way stop in that intersection and remove the parking spots that are causing an issue. Seconded by Horn. Motion carried.*

**3. There was no item #3-** Hardy gave an overview of the speed study for the CTH V from Rapp Road to Cactus Acres Road area for information only. See study results attached.

**4. Jake braking concerns on HWY 51 near CTH DM in Township of Leeds. (Dave Spencer).** A map of the area of concern was displayed. Discussion regarding the area where the 45 mph and 55 mph speed limit signs took place. Dave Spencer lives in the area, explained the engine braking issue, and gave some recommendations. He would like to see a "No Jake/Engine Braking" sign be placed and the 55 mph speed limit sign (just past Johnson Sales) be moved approximately 275 feet farther south on STH 51. Charlene Schmid, Wisconsin DOT, stated that in order to make these changes, a speed study would be required. Horn stated that if the Town of Leeds were to make an ordinance for a "No Jake/Engine Braking" sign, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office could not enforce it unless the Town of Leeds enters into a contract with Sheriff's Office.

*A motion was made by Hoege to recommend the Wisconsin DOT complete a speed study of the area on STH 51 south of Leeds and to move the speed limit signs farther south on STH 51 from near the Adopt A Highway sign down to CTH K.*

**5. Review speed limit on Long Crossing Road from Domes Road to CTH A in Village of Doylestown. (Susanna Krakow, Village of Doylestown).** Susanna Krakow explained the issue, displayed a map of the area and would like the speed limit reduced from 55 mph to 35 mph in this area. She stated that they have taken the issue to the Village of Doylestown and the village has approved reducing the speed limit. Hardy presented state statues regarding village's rights to change speed limits on their own.

*A motion was made by Horn to move the issue back to the Village of Doylestown. Seconded by Foley. Motion carried.*

Horn discussed purchasing bike helmets and that he sent the information to NaDeanna Giuffre, Sheriff's Office Executive Secretary, to order the helmets to be distributed from the Traffic Safety Commission.

#### **FATAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

Horn gave a review of the one fatal motorcycle crash at STH 188/CTH V. Chief Smith was on scene of the accident as well. There were no road or signage issues. Speed and alcohol were factors in the crash. Frost stated that there were two additional fatal crashes that State Patrol wrote. They include: 1) City of Portage on East Cook Street (motorcycle vs. semi) in front of the Law Enforcement Center and there were no road issues, and 2) a Dodge Charger hit a dump truck in the construction zone on I-39 at a very high rate of speed and pathology tests are pending.

#### **TRANSPORTATION SAFETY REPORT AND HIGHWAY SAFETY INPUT**

Frost presented slides and gave the crash statistics. Columbia County has 13 fatal crashes for 2021 and the 5-year average is 12. He also gave the state statistics. Frost explained the brochure that was created and given to Columbia County to hand out and stated he will share the Legislative Summary.

The next "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign will be running December 17, 2021 – January 1, 2022. Horn stated that the Columbia County Sheriff's Office has taken over the Seatbelt Grant moving forward. Frost to notify Columbia County of dates for grants.

Horn thanked Kathy Johnson for her 30 years with Columbia County Emergency Management.

*Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Horn at 12:32 p.m.*

Next Meeting Date: February 11, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at the Columbia County Law Enforcement Center, 711 E. Cook St., Portage, Wisconsin.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathleen M. Johnson  
Secretary, Columbia County Traffic Safety Commission