



Snowmobile Advisory Council Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 29th, 2023

Rib Mountain Conference Center & Dales Weston Lanes, Weston and via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Gary Hilgendorf - Chair, Bev Dittmar, Joel Enking, Bob Lang, Andy Malecki, Dale Mayo, Don Mrotek

Other Council Members Present: Lynsey Burzinski, Abby Haas, Mike Holden, Sam Landes, Sue Smedegard, Lee Van Zeeland, Erica Volker, Leon Wolfe

DNR staff attendance: Jillian Steffes, Cathy Burrow, Pat Anderson, Kurt Byfield, Jeremy Holtz, Jeff Pennucci

Public attendance: Dave Newman and other members of the public

1. Call to order after the Finance Committee adjourned

2. Agenda Repair - None

3. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve June 2023 minutes by Bev, 2nd by Andy. MOTION PASSED

4. Committee Chair Comments

- **Gary Hilgendorf** – Given the financial situation this year, we've got some tough decisions to make. We need to think about each item and how it affects the entire program.

5. Public Comments

- Dennis Johnson – Chippewa Valley. In June, it was noted that time spent going around swamps is not eligible. Going around swamps is an issue. One of them is 25 miles to go around. That's wear, tear and fuel expense on our equipment. Can we put that time into our non-grooming?
- Todd Bierman – RE: Snowmobile road crossings on highways. \$4,500 for new one, \$1,500-\$2,000 to repair. Any grant funding for that? ANSWER – No, DOT keeps half of the gas tax money, with the logic they would need it to cover road crossings and shared bridges. Contact DOT.

6. DNR Report

- HANDOUTS
 - Snowmobile Funding Report FY23, Available Funds FY24
 - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
 - Snowmobile Active Registrations
 - Snow Supplemental Prelim Requests 22-23
 - Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (past 10 years)
- Jillian Steffes at DNR recently circulated an email to clubs/counties instructing clubs to submit entries within 30 days of the activity occurring. The reason for this is some clubs have been very slow to get their entries in, and this is causing problems that could easily have been avoided.
 - DISCUSSION – 30 days may be a bit strict. Some counties have a variety of deadlines in place, such as fall activity must be submitted by a certain date to get an advance, spring activity submitted by a certain date, etc. Maybe a more nuanced schedule is appropriate? DNR will survey county coordinators and re-evaluate. AWSC will attempt to reach out to clubs to encourage them to enter info promptly, especially the first grooming events of the season to ensure geofence and GPS unit accuracy.
- DNR, in cooperation with AWSC, is hosting a County Trail Coordinators Workshop on Oct 5th in Wausau. The intended audience is county staff who manage the trails and/or the grant paperwork. A panel of county and non-county speakers will share their experiences on a variety of topics, and the workshop will be open for discussion and idea sharing. Club members are welcome to attend by Zoom, but in-person attendance is

ideally focused on county staff and the issues they encounter. A nominal registration fee is being collected by AWSC in order to purchase lunch for the in-person attendees.

7. Information: SNARS and Groomer Tracking Systems

- Regarding 'going around swamps' as part of grooming operation when they are not yet frozen down.

Motion to recommend to the full Council that we cover 50% of the grooming rate for time spent bypassing swamps on routes, as non-grooming. Similar to how we handle integral road routes. Motion by Dale and 2nd by Andy. MOTION PASSED

- Process to implement this... those 'bypassing swamp' routes will need to be identified in SNARS. Clubs should contact County to identify routes that are utilized routinely to go around swamps. County should FWD those on to DNR. DNR will evaluate and talk to Nathan.
- 691 GPS units currently installed in groomers.
- The \$200,000 set aside by Finance should be sufficient to cover the GPS unit lease/support, and SNARS database maintenance. That maintenance is \$10,000 a year, and had been previously paid out of the Community Financial Assistance – Supplies and Services budget. The last biennial budget allowed for us to pay this out of the Snowmobile Trail Aids funding.

8. Information & Action: Equipment Rates

- Equipment rates were raised last year. Given the current financial situation, no changes were recommended for the 23-24 season.

Motion to recommend to the full Council adopting the same rates for 23-24 as were utilized in 22-23. Motion by Andy and 2nd by Bev. MOTION PASSED

9. Information & Action: Bridge Estimates

- DNR and the Council have heard from a number of counties on the difficulty of getting two estimates/quotes for each bridge project. Would the Council consider adopting a generic 'price per linear foot' to stand-in for a 2nd estimate if two cannot be obtained? We need some sort of estimate in order to earmark dollars for a project in the application review process, so it is not feasible to wait until the project goes to bid to determine a dollar amount.
 - No action taken. Effort will be made to encourage counties to reach out to contractors earlier. A list of potential contractors can also be shared with all counties to give them more options.

10. Information & Action: Storm Damage Policy

- Historically, the April 15th application deadline as set in s. 23.09 (26) (b) has been strictly observed, except in the case of a state or federally declared emergency. The December 2022 storms were an anomaly, and the Council recommended accepting applications outside the normal funding cycle to address these. If these winter storms are to become more common, the program may want to consider adopting a more structured 'storm damage' program, such as perhaps something modeled after the Wisconsin Disaster Fund (WDF), which requires a formal series of forms, cost share, etc. Consensus of the discussion was that this may be premature, let's re-evaluate if we see a repeat of the December 2022 storms.

11. Club Rates vs. Contractor Rates.

- Per NR 50.09 (5) (h) through (k), clubs are supposed to use the Council/DNR adopted labor and equipment rates. Contractors can use rates as established by contract. There have been a number of incidents lately where club

members are operating as a contractor and charging a rate different than the adopted rates. This is acceptable, but we want to be sure that we are operating in a fair market, and that other contractors also have an opportunity to bid for these jobs. To that end, counties should make sure they are following fair bidding practices. If the club is the one hiring the contractor, is the county-to-club contract clear on when expenses should go out to bid? Jillian will be in discussion with DNR attorney for any other advice they may have. DNR is also advising that the club/county have a signed contract with the contractor, laying out terms conditions and pricing, in advance of any work being done, to help increase transparency.

Items Required on a Contractor Service Invoice

1. Invoice Number and Date
2. Address and/or Remit to Address
3. Date work performed
4. Location of work performed; (trail name or number)
5. Description of the work performed
6. Equipment used, and total hours of use, if appropriate

County should also have on file the written estimates/quotes that were obtained prior to the selection of a contractor, and a signed contract between the club/county and the contractor agreeing to the cost/rates and terms prior to work being implemented.

12. Committee member reports, comments and items

- Bob Lang
 - Monroe County recently posted photos of a very beautiful new snowmobile bridge on a golf course in Sparta. Already getting calls on if that was a cost effective bridge for the program. ANSWER – The county always intended to cost share it with other parties as it is a multi-use bridge. The bridge was ultimately funded with \$100k RTP, \$60k Snowmobile, and a considerable amount of donated labor for the aesthetic features.
 - Marathon County there is a trail that runs in the Cty Hwy X shoulder, but departs the shoulder long enough to run on a stand alone snowmobile bridge. If riding on the shoulder was acceptable here, why invest in a separate bridge? ANSWER – DNR will look up the history on the bridge and the original application to see what sort of reasoning was made at that time.
 - Ultimately, just want to be careful that the program is funding necessary and cost-effective projects, so that we spending funds wisely.

13. Items for next meeting

- TBD

14. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Andy, 2nd by Joel. MOTION PASSED