



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026**

A. Call to Order

Chairman Farrey called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: 11 – Steven Binder, Andy Buck, Howard Miller, Karen Powers, Morris Cox, Donald Nussbaum, Chuck Farrey, Larry Lautenschlager, Frank Frassetto (via TEAMS), Douglas Nelson and Thomas Snider.

Note: Supervisor Andy Buck is the vice-chair of the Facilities & Property Management Committee, filling in for Chairman John Hinz.

Absent: 5 – Tom Egan, Maribeth Gabert, Jim Wise, Tom Swan and Ralph Harrison.

Also Present at the Meeting:

Cassie Smith-Gregor, Chief Deputy Clerk

Tori Kinderman, Deputy Clerk

Gordon Hintz, County Executive

Kristin Dassler-Alfheim, State Senator, 18th District

Lori Palmeri, State Representative, 54th Assembly District

County Board Supervisor Conley Hanson, District 26

County Board Supervisor Brenda Pluchinsky, District 23 (via TEAMS)

Julie Barthels, County Clerk (via TEAMS)

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comments

Conley Hanson, County Board Supervisor, District 26, thanked Chairman Farrey for all his years of dedicated service to the county.

Conley Hanson, County Board Supervisor, District 26, voiced his thoughts and support for the following resolutions: Wood County Resolution # 26-2-13: To request the Wisconsin Counties Association to lobby the State Legislature and Governor on Legislation for Greater Local Control for Wisconsin Counties in regulating large scale wind and solar projects in the best interest of their communities AND Green Lake County Resolution No. 04-2026: Requesting Wisconsin Counties Association Lobby State Legislature and Governor on Legislation for Greater Local Control for Wisconsin Counties in regulating large scale wind and solar projects in the best interest of their communities.

D. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Supervisor Binder, seconded by Supervisor Powers, to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2026, meeting. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. (Abstain: 2 — Buck and Nelson)

E. Committee Chair's Report

Chairman Farrey mentioned that it has been a pleasure to serve on this committee and on the county board. He was honored to serve as chairman of this committee and thanked everyone for allowing him to do that.

F. Update from State Legislators

State Senator Kristin Dassler-Alfheim - 18th District

Ms. Dassler-Alfheim commented and updated the committee on the following items:

- *SB480 — Creating Residential Tax Incremental Districts (TIDs). Allows for municipalities to designate residential TIDS*
- *AB130/AB131 — \$125 million in state funds was approved for cleanup of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) water contamination, which included grants to municipalities for PFAS testing, disposal and other PFAS related costs.*
- *Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Program*
- *SB476 — Workforce home loan program*
- *SB225 — this act relates to the regulation of amusement rides located at campgrounds, specifically exempting them from Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) regulation if they are installed according to manufacturer standards.*
- *SB485 — will allow group home shelter care facilities and child care welfare agencies to operate residential child care centers using video surveillance.*
- *SB658 — creates a tax credit for insurers investing in community development specifically in low-income areas.*
- *Changes to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, which is promoting low-income housing projects in rural communities.*
- *AB217 — increases the competitive bidding project threshold for municipal public works projects*
- *AB445 — updates the statutes that govern the duty of the county register of deeds for clarification and modernization impacts*

Senator Dassler-Alfheim then took questions from the committee members.

State Representative Lori Palmeri - Assembly District 54

Ms. Palmeri commented and updated the committee on the following items:

- *Postpartum Medicaid expansion/Gail's Law*
- *Battery recycling — battery collection sites will start operating in Wisconsin*
- *Unfinished business which includes property tax bill transparency and PFAS notifications.*

There was discussion between members and the legislators regarding wakeboats. The impairment is phosphorus. Winnebago County has spent millions of dollars to correct that phosphorus issue, not to eliminate it but to maintain it so it doesn't get any worse. Wakeboats are extremely counterproductive. Allowing somebody to have that recreation is fine, but when it impairs the public good, it should not be allowed anymore. Give Winnebago County and other counties, especially those with these impaired lakes, the authority to regulate them. That is what Winnebago County is looking for. Committee members urged the legislators, when they go back into session, to try and give power to the locals/county because they're the ones that manage their waters. Senator Dassler-Alfheim appreciated all the feedback on this topic. She encouraged individuals and/or the county to voice their opinion on paper as to why these boats are causing harm and cost to the taxpayers in Winnebago County. This would help her in these conversations at the state level.

The Governor is calling a special session on April 14, 2026, to address redistricting independent maps.

Representative Palmeri then took questions from the committee members.

Chairman Farrey thanked both legislators for attending and the committee appreciated their updates and thoughts.

G. Update from Federal Legislators

There were no federal representatives present.

H. Communications Shared by Committee Members

Supervisor Binder thanked Chairman Farrey and Supervisor Nussbaum for all they've done for the county during their time on the county board.

I. Updates from the County Executive

Gordon Hintz, County Executive, commented and provided updates on the following topics:

- *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding*
- *A Bill that was introduced to allow County Boards to have separate legal counsel died last week. Wisconsin Counties Association took a position against it. There have been efforts at the municipal level too.*
- *Foreign software — disallowing foreign-owned software companies from operating. This would have impacted everything from local schools on up to everyday operating systems. It was quite expansive.*
- *2027 budget — Executive Hintz asked departments heading into the budget to try and get an idea of what the impact for the 2027 budget might be with some of the changes and decisions made as part of the big beautiful bill last summer. Some of those decisions that impact the county will still be dependent on what the state decides to do given that a lot of the federal money has passed through the state.*
- *A siren went off and on for about 4 hours in the Town of Black Wolf at 12:30 am, on Sunday, March 22, 2026. The Emergency Management Director was called. There was no sign of activation and no ability to stop in remotely. The county does not have an on-call electrician with facilities, so a deputy was sent out there. They had to find an electrician to go out and disable the batteries. They're going to look into the situation.*

Executive Hintz then took questions from the board.

J. Business Items

1. **Wood County Resolution # 26-2-13: To request the Wisconsin Counties Association to lobby the State Legislature and Governor on Legislation for Greater Local Control for Wisconsin Counties in regulating large scale wind and solar projects in the best interest of their communities AND Green Lake County Resolution No. 04-2026: Requesting Wisconsin Counties Association Lobby State Legislature and Governor on Legislation for Greater Local Control for Wisconsin Counties in regulating large scale wind and solar projects in the best interest of their communities.**

Motion by Tom Snider, seconded by Supervisor Miller, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

K. Items for Next Agenda

Suggestions from committee members for items to be addressed on a future agenda

1. *Resolutions from other counties that were referred to the Legislative Committee from the County Board.*

L. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will take place on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the James P. Coughlin Center, Meeting Rooms A & B.

M. Adjourn

*Motion by Supervisor Cox, seconded by Supervisor Nussbaum, to adjourn. MOTION CARRIED.
The meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.*

Submitted by:

Cassie J. Smith-Gregor

Winnebago County Chief Deputy Clerk

The video portion of this meeting is available on the County website:

<https://winnebago.cowi.portal.civicclerk.com>