

ROCK COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes October 21, 2020 – 9:00 a.m. Online Zoom Meeting

The 2020 3rd quarter meeting of the Rock County Traffic Safety Commission was held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 as an online Zoom meeting and was hosted by Captain Mark Thompson of the Rock County Sheriff's Office.

In Attendance: Mark Thompson, Diane Kowal, Ahnaray Bizjak, Charlene Schmid, Dennis Ryan, Jason Dupuis, Madelyn Glaeden, Randy Gordon, Randy Wiessinger, Ronald Bomkamp, Terrence Sheridan, Terri Carlson and Tom Boguszewski.

Absent: Troy Knudson, Craig Strouse, Jude Maurer, Barry Irmey, Lisa Wallenkamp, Brian Donohue, Bridget Laurent, Duane Jorgenson, Phil Witkiewicz, John Olsen, Kim Peerenboom, Marilyn Bondehagen, Rick Olig, and Shena Kohler.

Captain Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Introductions

Not necessary

Approval of Minutes

Captain Thompson explained that we do not have County Board approval of new members as of yet, so approval of minutes cannot take place.

Fatal Crash Review

Captain Thompson explained that we reached out to the Medical Examiner's office for representation at this meeting, but they were not able to provide a medical examiner to attend. Therefore, we do not have lab results and related facts for these fatalities.

- **July 13, 2020:** 2 vehicles/1 deceased pedestrian, age 44. I43 and Schroeder Road. Video reviewed. This accident was handled by Wisconsin State Patrol. Driver 1 struck a guard rail and was ejected, landing on the right shoulder. Lights for unit 1 were disabled. Driver 2 did not see unit 1 and was unable to avoid contact, hitting unit 1 in the road and Driver 1 on the shoulder. It is unknown if Driver 1 died from injuries sustained from the first or second crash. Sgt. Randy Gordon of Wisconsin State Patrol stated toxicology results were not in yet; however, open alcohol containers were found, and deceased had not worn a seatbelt.
- **July 25, 2020:** 2 vehicles/1 deceased, age 31. STH 104 NB and CTHB. Video reviewed. Inattentive driving. Unit 3 (no-contact vehicle) was stopped on STH 104, waiting to turn left onto a private drive, with left turn signal on. Unit 2 either slowed or came to a complete stop behind Unit 3. While Unit 3 turned left, Unit 1 approached Unit 2 without attempting

to brake or slow down, striking unit 2. Driver of Unit 1 was distracted by an auction on the left/west side of STH 104. Backseat passenger of Unit 2 died later of injuries sustained from the crash. Inattentive driving with higher volume of traffic.

- **August 15, 2020:** 1 motorcycle/1 deceased, age 50. CTH WC WB and STH 11, a T-intersection. Video reviewed. The Harley Davidson motorcycle drove through the intersection and ended up in a cornfield. Alcohol/drugs possible contributing factor, but no toxicology results yet. Driver deceased, and female passenger transported to hospital via ambulance. Sgt. Gordon stated there have been several accidents at that intersection over the years, but most of them have been going northbound. Captain Thompson agreed. Randy Wiessinger stated alcohol was a factor for the driver, and neither driver nor passenger wore helmets. Captain Thompson stated intersection is not lit and pointed out the stop sign from the other direction is lit.
- **August 30, 2020:** 1 motorcycle/1 deceased, age 31. Carvers Rock Road and Larsen Road. Video reviewed. No witness; deputy came upon the motorcycle and found the driver a short distance away. Unknown contributing factors. It was dark with curves in the road, but the curves were marked with signs. The deceased was local so presumed to be familiar with the area.
- **September 9, 2020:** 2 vehicles (both semis)/1 deceased, age 29. I39 near Newville Road. This accident was handled by Wisconsin State Patrol. Video reviewed, and discussion turned over to Sgt. Gordon of State Patrol. The Freightliner Semi was traveling southbound on I39 through the construction project that has been ongoing for four years. The driver was inattentive and went off the roadway onto the west shoulder. The operator then steered left and rolled over, ending up on the Jersey barrier, protruding into the northbound lane. A northbound International semi crashed into the protruding freightliner. Driver of International Semi died of injuries sustained in the crash. Toxicology results still pending. Captain Thompson said that section of the interstate was shut down for most of the day, with the purple route activated.
- **September 19, 2020:** 2 vehicles/1 deceased, age 32. Riverside Drive (Hwy 51) near Baldwin Woods Road. Handled by Town of Beloit. Video reviewed. Unit 1 was southbound on Riverside Drive. Unit 2 was southbound on Riverside Drive at a high rate of speed. Unit 2 struck Unit 1. Unit 2 lost control and struck a guard rail on the west side of Riverside. Driver of Unit 2 sustained fatal injuries. Sgt. Gordon stated the accident was at an intersection, Unit 2 was going too fast, no seatbelt was used, and the driver was intoxicated. Charlene Schmid made note that Riverside Drive used to have a suicide lane there but now has a TWLTL lane. While not a factor in this crash, there is talk that drivers in general appear to confuse the use of the TWLTL lane with how the old suicide lane was used. Cpt. Thompson stated that with the amount of skid mark present, Unit 2 was probably traveling at a high rate of speed. He agreed that with the change in traffic pattern, it would be a good idea to meet with Town of Beloit to enforce proper use of that lane.
- **September 20, 2020:** 2 vehicles/2 deceased, ages 68 and 90. Cth N WB near Vogel Road. Video reviewed. Unit 1 was traveling westbound on CTH N. Unit 2 was traveling eastbound on CTHN. Unit 1 crossed the center line and made head-on contact with unit

2. Driver and passenger of Unit 1 died as a result of the crash. Driver of Unit 2 is suspected of alcohol use; toxicology results pending. There is a question as to a possible medical event with the driver of Unit 1; however, the autopsy was external only so may not get any further results. Cpt. Thompson saw nothing on the roadway needing to be changed.

In looking over the Comparison of Fatal Accidents, 2019 vs 2020, Cpt. Thompson noted we are in the same ballpark with the amount year-to-date accidents, even with COVID-19. A lot of construction projects will be wrapping up shortly. Hwy 14 is now open, and CTH F will soon be open.

At this point in the meeting, Randy Wiessinger displayed and discussed his Rock County Traffic Safety Commission Quarterly Informational Slides. He highlighted some of the year-to-date crash statistics. As of September 30, 2020, there have been 19 deceased, and the five-year average is 22. We are 15% lower for the number of crashes, but high speed as a factor is up. There have been 75 motorcycle accidents this year compared to 50 last year, and there are more passengers involved in these crashes. He also briefly went through his Predictive Analytics, stating 85%-90% of the accidents are a result of behavioral issues. It would be beneficial to target education and outreach, especially motorcycle safety. Randy listed three Traffic Safety Messaging Resources: Wisconsin www.zeroinwisconsin.gov, NHTSA www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov, and National Safety Council www.nsc.org.

Randy Wiessinger then went over Questions to consider:

- What is the impact of COVID on traffic safety? Is it short term or long term?
- If we have all of this data, predictive analytics, and resources, what do we do with it?
- If law enforcement and engineering are doing all they can do, what is left?
- Why do we do what we are doing?
- Who isn't involve that should be?

He ended with a slide offering his help and how to reach him: rpw@wiessinger.com 608-516-6767.

Charlene mentioned that Janesville has approved TWLTL lanes on Crosby, Arch and Pearl Streets.

Charlene also had a question regarding STH81 and CTH N. Cpt. Thompson said that intersection is not in Rock County. Charlene also asked about crashes at STH81 and CTH T. Cpt. Thompson did not know if that area was used as a detour in the past. He stated speed has been a factor, and we have had extra patrol on 81. CTH T is a dark intersection, but unaware of problems. Randy Wiessinger said it is on the county line between Rock and Green counties.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

No new business.

Public Input

No public input

Set Next Meeting Date

The 2020 4th Quarter Traffic Safety Commission meeting is set for January 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. It is yet to be decided if that meeting will be held in person or via Zoom. Coordinating with Randy Wiessinger of WisDOT, the meetings for 2021 are set for April 21, 2021; July 21, 2021; and October 20, 2021.