

County of Door Highway & Airport

Title: Highway Commissioner	Division:
Reports To: County Administrator	Pay Grade: P
Prepared By: Ken Pabich	Reviewed By: Christina Baudhuin
Employee Group: General Municipal Employee (GME)	FLSA Status: Exempt
Date Created: 12/31/2015	Date Revised: 03/17/2026
Date Approved: 03/17/2026	EEO Code: 01 – Officials and Administrators

Job Summary

The Highway Commissioner provides executive leadership and operational direction for the County's highway functions. This role is responsible for ensuring the safe, efficient, and compliant delivery of highway infrastructure services, overseeing the planning, administration, and operations of the County Highway Department, including maintenance, construction, equipment management, and compliance with safety and environmental regulations. This position ensures effective delivery of public works services through strategic planning, budget oversight, personnel management, and interdepartmental coordination. Serving as Department Head, the Commissioner advises County leadership on public works strategy. The role requires on-call availability and active participation in emergency response operations.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

1. Plans, prioritizes, directs, and evaluates the overall operations of the Highway Department to ensure safe and effective delivery of public infrastructure services including county road construction, resurfacing, and maintenance activities in coordination with the Highway Superintendent, staff, contractors, and consultants.
2. Develops and administers the department's annual budget, grant programs, and capital improvement plans in collaboration with division heads and the Airport Maintenance Superintendent. Monitors expenditures and ensures fiscal accountability.
3. Oversees the planning and execution of highway construction, resurfacing, rehabilitation, and maintenance projects; ensures alignment with long-range asset management strategies.
4. Manages equipment and fleet, facilities, and material operations including procurement, inventory control, and asset replacement planning, making recommendations for purchases, rental, and repairs to maintain operational readiness and cost efficiency.
5. Establishes and updates departmental goals, policies, procedures, and administrative practices to ensure compliance with county priorities, applicable laws, statutory requirements, and efficient operations.

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6. Supervises staff across multiple divisions, including recruitment and hiring, training and staff development, scheduling, labor relations, performance management, and safety practices in accordance with County policies.
7. Oversees risk management and safety compliance efforts related to highway operations, aligning with federal, state, and county safety regulations.
8. Ensures compliance with safety regulations and environmental standards and laws, including emissions reporting, air quality, hazardous materials, water protection, and wetland preservation, especially in the context of highway and bridge projects.
9. Assists the Emergency Management Director and/or Sheriff in a leadership capacity during County emergency operations, contributing to public works logistics, resource coordination, and damage assessment when needed.
10. Coordinates property acquisitions, including rights-of-way, for transportation infrastructure projects in consultation with legal and administrative staff.
11. Serves as the primary representative of the department to the County Board, committees, and regulatory agencies, and responds to public inquiries and at public meetings with community stakeholders to communicate plans, services, and departmental initiatives effectively.
12. Represents the department at public meetings and with community stakeholders to communicate plans, services, and departmental initiatives effectively.
13. Maintains accurate and transparent verbal and written communications, including reports to the Facilities and Highway Committee and to the County Board.

Key Competencies & Skills

- **Leadership & Supervision:** Builds accountability, develops staff, and ensures safe, efficient operations.
- **Strategic & Project Planning:** Leads long-range infrastructure planning and multi-phase project delivery aligned with budget and schedule goals.
- **Fiscal Oversight:** Manages complex budgets, controls costs, and secures grants to support capital and operational priorities.
- **Technical & Regulatory Expertise:** Applies engineering standards and legal requirements to highway, bridge, and environmental operations.
- **Communication & Public Engagement:** Clearly conveys technical information, facilitates transparency, and builds trust with officials, agencies, and the public.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Partners with local, state, and consulting entities to advance transportation initiatives.
- **Compliance & Environmental Stewardship:** Ensures workplace safety and adherence to environmental and regulatory standards.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Supports County resiliency through infrastructure-focused emergency planning and response.

Required Education & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Public Administration, Business Administration, Construction Management, or a related field.
- At least five (5) years of progressively responsible supervisory or management experience in highway operations or a public works environment.

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- Experience managing and interpreting overall business financials.
- Experience interpreting engineering plans or managing infrastructure construction projects, contracts, and budgets.
- Valid driver's license.
- Experience using Microsoft Office and ability to learn operational software systems.
- Equivalent combinations of education, training, and experience may be considered.

Preferred Education & Experience

- Registered Professional Engineer (P.E.) in Wisconsin.
- At least seven (7) years of leadership experience in highway or public works administration.
- Prior experience working with public boards or committees and presenting technical issues in public forums.
- Familiarity with airport and bridge operations.

Physical & Work Environment Requirements

This role combines office duties, field inspections, and emergency response. Office work involves regular use of computers, phones, software and task management systems. Field duties require travel to sites across the County, walking on uneven surfaces, and exposure to weather, noise, heavy equipment, traffic zones, and hazardous materials. Personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required. The role may involve lifting up to 50 pounds, climbing, or extended periods of standing or walking. The Commissioner must be available 24/7 during emergencies and may assist with logistics and damage assessment in coordination with Emergency Management.

Emergency Response Statement

In an effort to provide for continuity of County government and to cope with the problems of the emergency, you may be required to work during a proclaimed state of emergency, consistent with Sec. 323.14, Wis. Stats. and County emergency management plans and programs.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Door County is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome and encourage applications from all qualified individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

Disclaimer

The above is intended to describe the general content of the requirements for the performance of this job. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities or requirements. They may be subject to change at any time due to reasonable accommodation or other reasons.