

Outagamie County Board member says transphobic comments during meetings

Sophia Voight

Appleton Post-Crescent
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

APPLETON – Outagamie County Board member Timothy Hermes made transphobic comments during an equity, diversity and inclusion discussion at Tuesday’s County Board meeting, stating he finds transgender people and their use of bathrooms that aligns with their gender “disgusting.”

The comments were brought up after Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Major Cooper gave a presentation to the board on the importance of equity in the workplace and appreciating the diversity of coworkers.

Trans-inclusive bathrooms were not brought up in Cooper’s presentation, but afterward, when board members were allowed to ask questions, Hermes asked Cooper how he can justify “that any man can be a woman?”

Additionally, Hermes claimed without evidence that men are dressing up as women so they can go into bathrooms or changing rooms with young girls.

“I find it disgusting,” Hermes said.

The claim that transgender people dress a certain way to get into opposite-gendered bathrooms, rather than people who present themselves in a way that aligns with their gender identity, is one argument in a national discussion surrounding anti-trans bills that asserts that trans people do not exist, but that they are people with predatory schemes.

But the claim that faux trans people are using bathrooms to watch children is unfounded. The National Center for Transgender Equality, the Human Rights



The Outagamie County Government Center on March 10, 2022, in Appleton.
WILLIAM GLASHEEN, /USA TODAY NETWORK-WIS

inclusion consultant for the Appleton Public Library because he worried the person would push for pronoun use and gender equity.

“What I notice with a lot of people that are into diversity and inclusion, they are also the people that want to push pronoun and gender ideology, which I think is the sexualization of our children,” Hermes said during the meeting.

Transgender individuals are three times more likely than other groups to feel they don’t belong in the Fox Cities and LGBTQ people are 2.6 times more likely to feel they don’t belong, according to 2021 data released from Imagine Fox Cities.

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Campaign and the American Civil Liberties Union say there is no statistical evidence that people are dressing as the opposite gender to sneak into bathrooms.

In response to Hermes’ comments, Cooper said he can understand that transgender issues may be new to Hermes, but that trans people deserve dignity and respect and that he has to acknowledge individuals’ gender identities.

“These are people that are in our county and we want to make sure we’re respecting them,” Cooper told Hermes at the meeting.

In response to Tuesday’s comments, Hermes told The Post-Crescent, “I made no hateful comment. I asked questions to see where Major stood on the subjects.”

Hermes was elected to the board in 2022 to represent District 14, which covers the western half of Little Chute.

This isn’t the first time Hermes has

expressed anti-gender and transphobic ideas at a board meeting.

At a Feb. 28 meeting, Hermes said he was against appointing a diversity and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Investing in Brewers baseball is good for Wisconsin

I’m a lifelong fan of the Milwaukee Brewers and I believe that Gov. Tony Evers’ proposal to give American Family Field \$290 million for renovations is in the best interest of both the Milwaukee Brewers and the state of Wisconsin.

The main benefits to the Brewers are that they would be able to remain at the stadium through 2043 and they also would be able to get repairs and renovations completed.

The economic impact the Brewers have on Wisconsin is one of the biggest reasons we would benefit from them staying. According to wpr.org, “the Brewers have created an estimated \$2.5 billion in statewide economic impact since the opening of Miller Park in 2001.”

It seems safe to say that there could be a similar impact over the next 20 years, especially since more fans will consider watching or going to games now that there are new rules, like the pitch clock, that have been making games shorter than in previous years.

This proposal would be a major benefit to both fans of the Brewers and fans of baseball throughout Wisconsin. I, like thousands of other Brewers fans throughout the state, have many memories of watching and going to games and I think it would be a shame to see the Brewers leave.

Evan Phalin,
Appleton

Learning about mental health can remove stigma

Mental Health Awareness Month is a time to learn solutions to deter us from stressing ourselves with moods of anxiety and depression, which only messes with our minds and hearts.

Success in our future is supported by self-awareness, self-assessment and self-empowerment.

One of the best ways to know where we stand is by attending a presentation on what it’s like to live with a mental illness by a person diagnosed with it.

Unfortunately, excessive alcohol and drug abuse complicate progress toward successful mental health and needs specific and intense treatment by professionals. I’m not an alcoholic nor on abusive drugs, but because my father was an alcoholic, I still picked up his behavior patterns.

Mental illness still has a stigma but it’s no different than having cancer or a heart condition.

So give yourself a treat by learning

about mental health.

Greg Pekarske-Siers,
Appleton

Accepting federal help with BadgerCare would boost state

BadgerCare is a plan that provides health insurance for children and working adults in Wisconsin with incomes at or below 100% of poverty. It’s an effective program that provides preventative health care and helps people avoid costly critical care in emergency rooms. The state pays about 40% of this cost and the federal government provides about 60%.

Wisconsin legislators have refused to accept federal money that would boost the federal share from 60% to 95%. Forty states have accepted the full amount of federal money. In these states, the additional money funds other state services.

In the upcoming biennial budget, if we were to take the 95% match from the federal government, we would add \$1.6 billion to our state’s funds. This money could help pay for our public schools, roads, technical schools and/or fund a tax reduction for working families. It makes financial sense, doesn’t it?

Here’s the best part: We could help an additional 90,000 people in Wisconsin gain access to affordable health insurance. Ask your legislator to support the expansion of Badger Care health insurance and the higher match. If they don’t support it, ask them why they’re wasting your state income-tax money.

Sally Huntington,
Appleton

Letting 14-year-olds serve alcohol is irresponsible

This world has enough bad things going on, but really, who are the geniuses behind the bill that would allow 14-year-olds to be able to serve alcohol in Wisconsin restaurants?

That’s just opening the door for more trouble. It’s totally irresponsible and I can’t even believe our state would even consider it. I don’t care if the customer is just seated at a table or not — they’re 14, not 18 and not 21. What in the world are they even thinking?

I would hope this is given much more consideration. Is our state not better than that?

Nancy Ermer,
Kimberly

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