



**BOARD MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**OCTOBER 26, 2021**

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Christine Husom   | District 1 |
| Derek Vetsch      | District 2 |
| Mark Daleiden     | District 3 |
| Mary Wetter       | District 4 |
| Michael Kaczmarek | District 5 |

**DATE APPROVED: NOVEMBER 2, 2021**

The Wright County Board met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Husom, Vetsch, Daleiden, Wetter and Kaczmarek present.

**COUNTY BOARD MINUTES 10-19-21 MEETING**

Husom moved to approve the minutes from 10-19-21. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

**AGENDA**

Vetsch moved to approve the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Kaczmarek requested to pull Item B1 (Administration – Finance) for further discussion. Wetter requested to pull Item D1 (Highway) for clarification.

Vetsch moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Item B1 (Administration – Finance) and Item D1 (Highway) for further discussion and clarification. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

\* Items removed B1 and D1

**A. ADMINISTRATION**

1. Request Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49ers and Wright County for Ten-Hour Workdays for the Highway Engineering Division

**B. \*ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE**

1. Acknowledge Warrants Issued between October 13, 2021 and October 19, 2021 (*See Below, Item IX. Warrants Issued*)
2. Approve Renewal of 2021 Tobacco Licenses for:
  - A. Marohn's Cokato Marketplace, Inc. DBA The Marketplace (Cokato)
  - B. Jack's of French Lake, Inc. (French Lake Township)
  - C. Jack's of Cokato, Inc. (Cokato)
  - D. Broadway Kwik Stop, LLC DBA Broadway Kwik Stop (Monticello)
  - E. JonWall, Inc. DBA The Original Tom Thumb (Hanover)
  - F. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Marketplace #2008 (Clearwater)
  - G. Coborn's Inc. DBA Little Dukes (Clearwater)
  - H. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Liquor #6034 (Clearwater)
  - I. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's #2028 (Delano)
  - J. Coborn's Inc. DBA Holiday Stationstore #4073 (Delano)
  - K. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Marketplace #2029 (Albertville)
  - L. Coborn's Inc. DBA Little Dukes #2029 (Albertville)
  - M. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Liquor #6038 (Albertville)
  - N. Coborn's Inc. DBA Cash Wise Liquor #7043 (St. Michael)
  - O. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Marketplace #2047 (Otsego)
  - P. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's #2047 Gas Station (Otsego)
  - Q. Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Marketplace #2047 (Otsego)
3. Motion to Approve the Reimbursement of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Funds as follows:  
County ARP Funds:

Approval of County Reimbursement of \$5,965.18 from 01-099-493.6910 Transfer Out Into 01-100-493.5910 Transfer In as follows:

\$2,191.17 for Administrative Expenses – Staff Costs

\$3,774.01 for 1.8 Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses – Emergency Paid Sick Leave

Approval of Use of ARP Funds from 01-099-493.6801

\$3,950.65 7.1 Administrative – Consultant Support

\$866.78 1.5 PPE and Other Supplies

C. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

1. Refer to Personnel Committee – Discuss Health & Human Services Accounting Clerk positions
2. Approve Request to combine two vacant .5 FTE Social Worker positions into 1.0 FTE Social Worker position
3. Position Replacement
  - A. Eligibility Specialist
  - B. Social Worker

D. \*HIGHWAY

1. In Accordance with the Wright County Financial Policies & Procedures, due to the dollar amount, the Highway Department is requesting authorization of the County Administrator to approve the purchase of gravel for the Highway Department Operations

E. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1. Approve the Contract for Law Enforcement Coverage with the City of Otsego for 2022-2023
2. Position Backfill: One Corrections FTE

**ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA TO BE DISCUSSED**

B. ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE

1. Acknowledge Warrants Issued between October 13, 2021 and October 19, 2021 (*See Below, Item IX. Warrants Issued*)

Kaczmarek said there is a payment in the amount of \$9,925 to Design Nine Inc. for a Broadband Study. Kaczmarek said after checking with the Finance Department, it hasn't been decided if the payment to Design Nine Inc. will be covered by American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux said it's just a timing issue and the ARP funds will be used to cover the payment to Design Nine Inc. Procedures must be followed, and the request must go through the ARP Committee for approval. Once the ARP Committee approves it the Finance Department will make the correction. Vetsch added that this was vetted before the study was commissioned as an ARP approvable expense.

Kaczmarek asked how much the entire study cost the county, as this expense was the third payment to Design Nine Inc. County Administrator Lee Kelly said the cost of the study was broken into five payments with a total amount of just over \$49,000.

Kaczmarek suggested if there are any future payments that are pending ARP Committee approval to put a notation by it, so the board members know. Lemieux said the Finance Department tries to hold them until approved by the ARP Committee but sometimes one slips through. Lemieux said they are trying to refine the process.

D. HIGHWAY

1. In Accordance with the Wright County Financial Policies & Procedures, due to the dollar amount, the Highway Department is requesting authorization of the County Administrator to approve the purchase of gravel for the Highway Department Operations

Wetter asked who pays the gravel tax and how much the gravel tax is? Highway Engineer Virgil Hawkins said the gravel tax is 21½ cents per yard, and it's paid by the gravel suppliers in the county.

Kaczmarek moved to approve Item B1 (Administration – Finance) and Item D1 (Highway) under the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

## **TIMED AGENDA ITEMS**

### **BRIAN LUTES, ATTORNEY**

#### Present Brian Asleson his Retirement Plaque

Lutes said it's with mixed emotions being at the board meeting to celebrate Brian Asleson's retirement after 37 years of working for Wright County Attorney's Office. Lutes said it's a loss to not only the Attorney's Office but the county as a whole. Lutes described Asleson as a brilliant attorney and the "go to" person because of his knowledge and expertise. Lutes presented Asleson with his Wright County Plaque recognizing 37 years of service to the county.

Asleson said he was very humbled by the presentation of his plaque, and thanked Lutes for the kind words. Asleson said when he came back to the county in 1988 after leaving for a year, he basically was the Civil Department, which gave him the opportunity to do a variety of different things. He thanked Lutes and former County Attorney Tom Kelly for making it easy to work for them. Asleson thanked everyone he has worked with the past 37 years.

The Commissioners and Kelly thanked Asleson for his commitment and years of service to Wright County.

### **VIRGIL HAWKINS, HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

#### Recognition of Wright County receiving an Asphalt Paving Merit Award for County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 8 Pavement Preservation Project that was constructed in 2020

Hawkins said Wright County received an Asphalt Paving Merit Award for County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 8 Pavement Preservation Project constructed in 2020. This 2020 merit award is for the outstanding work performed on the 9.74 miles of CSAH 8 between Maple Lake and Hasty. This Pavement Preservation Project was judged as the best in the state in the Rural State Aid Resurface category.

Hawkins credited the Highway Department staff including Engineering Technician Bryan Hendricks who worked with Knife River daily on this project. Sign Technician Stephen Boisclair made sure all the pavement markings were in the correct places. Construction Engineer Kevin Johnson and Highway Design Technician Andrew Lechelt were each very involved with the project. Hawkins said Knife River was unable to attend the meeting this morning.

Associate Director of the Minnesota Asphalt Pavement Association Brandon Brever was at the meeting to present the award for the exceptional construction of CSAH 8. Brever said while many businesses were shutting down at the peak of the pandemic, the road construction industry continued to provide essential services. Knife River was the contractor for this project and has been a pillar in the community for many years. Brever said the category the county won the award for is a very competitive and a lot of counties throughout Minnesota submit for this award.

## **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

## **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES (10-21-21)**

Kaczmarek moved to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes and recommendations from 10-21-21. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

#### **I. Review Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment Number 21-5**

*Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said there was a moratorium instituted on January 26, 2021, regarding new applications of Solar Energy Farms which is the reason for Solar Ordinance Amendment 21-5. There have been numerous meetings with Commissioner Vetsch, Commissioner Kaczmarek, townships, solar energy companies, and other interested parties.*

*Kryzer explained to the Commissioners that if there are no changes and the board is okay with the proposed amendment, it will then be sent to the townships for review. The townships will have one month to review the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission will then hold a public hearing regarding the proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment in December 2021. Then the board will be given a recommendation from the Planning Commission in January 2022, hopefully before the January 26, 2022, deadline for the moratorium to be lifted.*

*Vetsch said all the proposed ordinance amendments have been discussed and some were discussed at great length by the Solar Workgroup. A lot of the proposed ordinance amendments address co-locating which is several one-Megawatt units next to each other. However, because they are one-Megawatt units, they don't pay production tax or commercial property tax due to being under the one-Megawatt rule.*

*Vetsch said this proposal also addresses the land alteration. There have been water mitigation issues, so another layer has been added by needing Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to approve and sign off.*

*Vetsch said currently the landowner signs off on the agreement and then it goes to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The MPCA makes tweaks to the water plan, and it goes forward. This can cause issues if the landowner is not okay with the changes the MPCA makes. With the proposed amendment it will give the landowner one more opportunity to sign off on the agreement.*

*Vetsch said the county is predicted to receive \$130,000 in Solar Production Tax in 2022 based on the existing solar farms.*

*Kryzer said the definition of Solar Energy Farms and Solar Energy Systems are increasing the threshold limits. From zero to 10-Kilowatts was permitted, but 10-Kilowatts to 100-Kilowatts require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). It is being changed from zero to 40-Kilowatts is permitted and 40-Kilowatts to 100-Kilowatts requires a CUP. The reason for this change is because the solar panels are becoming more powerful and more efficient.*

*Kryzer briefly discussed the other proposed amendments with the board.*

*Wetter said she had concerns regarding the storage of broken or unused solar panels. Kryzer and Planner Stacy Marquardt explained that there are junk ordinances that deal with unkempt properties. Wetter said she would be more comfortable having it in this Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment. Kryzer suggested adding it in the ordinance after, the abatement of noxious weeds and ordinance violations*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Add “and ordinance violations” after the abatement of noxious weeds**
- **Refer the Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment to the Planning Commission for a public hearing**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE/ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES**

McLeod County. Kaczmarek said there was a meeting with the McLeod County Commissioners. There was discussion regarding a joint ditch proclamation for Joint Ditch #35 in the future. Daleiden said he received the paperwork from McLeod County which he signed and will be sending back. Kaczmarek was appointed Vice-Chair of the committee.

Planning Commission. Kaczmarek attended the Planning and Zoning meeting along with Township Officers. Planning and Zoning staff answered questions and explained the process of planning and zoning.

State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC). Husom attended the meeting. There is an uptick in COVID cases. There is a shortage in medical personnel due to staff leaving the medical field and mandates personnel do

not want to go along with. There have been longer wait times at Emergency Rooms.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Daleiden said he received a letter from the MPCA regarding the county's Solid Waste Management Plan. Daleiden said the MPCA has received phone calls from Wright County officials regarding canceling or disengaging the county's solid waste program. MPCA provided the Minnesota statutes that requires counties to prepare solid waste management plans for MPCA review and approval.

Wellness Committee. Daleiden said the Wellness Committee met the previous week and discussed the program on the Intranet called "Refresh Your Plate" which runs from Monday, October 18, 2021, through Friday, November 26, 2021.

The Health Fair will be held virtually this year. The Jingle All the Way program starts Monday, November 22, 2021, and runs through Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

The Poker Walk had 120 participants which is less participation than in years past.

I-94 Coalition. Vetsch said the I-94 Coalition had its "Virtual Fly In", due to COVID there was not a trip to Washington D.C. The group talked about a shortfall with funding.

Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC). Vetsch, Wetter, Kelly and Health and Human Services Director Jami Goodrum attended the AMC District 5 Meeting Monday, October 25, 2021. There was a presentation regarding the opioid crisis. The biggest topic of discussion was opioids.

Wetter went over the tax levy numbers with the other board members. The lowest tax levy is Morrison County at 2.06 percent, the highest is Mille Lacs County at 24.5 percent, and Wright County is the same as Chisago County at 5.75 percent.

Wetter said there were seven Legislators that attended the meeting to discuss broadband.

Kelly said Wright County will host the next AMC District 5 meeting in June 2022.

Wright County Historical Society. Wetter attended the Historical Society's meeting. Most of the discussion was based around the new website. There is a virtual meeting Tuesday, October 26, 2021, to vote on board members and raising membership fees \$5.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

County Board Minutes submitted by Angie Fisher, Administrative Specialist