



BOARD MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2022

DATE APPROVED: DECEMBER 13, 2022

Christine Husom	District 1
Darek Vetsch	District 2
Mark Daleiden	District 3
Mary Wetter	District 4
Michael Kaczmarek	District 5

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

COUNTY BOARD MINUTES 11/15/2022

Commissioner Christine Husom said that under her update, on the third line, “Safe Schools of Wright County” should be “Safe Communities of Wright County.” Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek said on Page 5 of 6 on the third line from the top, starting with “and,” the line says “frustrated” which was not accurate. Take out “and” through “investment,” replace with, “Kaczmarek noted that we have spent years of time and spent millions of dollars and that office and department heads in 2021 asked for and were granted staff because of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Kaczmarek is waiting to see positive results from the county’s investment.” Commissioner Mary Wetter requested the last line under her update should identify Maple Lake as the body of water.

Kaczmarek moved to approve the County Board minutes with the changes from Tuesday, November 15, 2022. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA

Commissioner Darek Vetsch moved to approve the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mark Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Kaczmarek requested to remove Agenda item A2 for further discussion.

Daleiden moved to approve the Consent Agenda with Item A2 removed. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek. The motion carried 5-0.

*Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for further discussion

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Confirm Appointment of Chris Uecker to the Board of Managers For the Clearwater River Watershed District.
2. *Reappoint Steve Jobe as Wright County Surveyor for a Four-Year Term Commencing January 1, 2023.
3. Approve the Program Request for Water Quality Improvement Grant Program (\$2,000,000).
4. Deny the Grant Application and Cancel the Allocation for Customer Relationship Management System (\$500,000).
5. Reduce the Allocation for Broadband Improvements From \$8,895,000 to \$7,395,000

B. Administration - Finance

1. Requesting County Board Approval, Board Chairperson Signature, And Authorization for Finance Director to Sign the 2022 Audit Engagement Letter.
2. Acknowledge the Attached Budget Adjustment for the Month of November.
3. Approval of Use of ARP Funds From 01-099-493.
\$903,332.50 1.1 Community Violence Interventions – Public Safety Radios
4. Motion to Approve the Reimbursement of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Funds As Follows:
 - I. County ARP Funds:
 - a. Approval of County Reimbursement Of \$401.12 From 01-099-493.6910 Transfer Out into 01-100-493.5910 Transfer in as Follows: \$401.12 For Administrative Expenses – Staff Costs
 - b. Approval of Use of ARP Funds from 01-099-493.
\$731.55 2.34 Aid to Nonprofit Organizations – 4-H

\$17,760.54 2.34 Aid to Nonprofit Organizations – Cokato Charitable Trust

C. Health & Human Services

1. Accept Child & Teen Check-Up (C&TC) Grant Amendment (\$204,818): Increased From \$155,210 To \$204,818 For Period 2023-01-01 To 2023-12-31.
2. Approve Two-Year Contract Renewal: Consumer Support Program (CSP) For Period 2023-01-01 To 2024-12-31: No Changes.
3. Approve Contract Renewal: Central MN Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS) To Provide MFID/DWP Services For Period 2023-01-01 To 2023-12-31: No Changes.

D. Recorder

1. Request For Approval Of The Following Plats Approved By Greg Kryzer:
 - I. Englund Shores Located In Rockford Township
 - II. North Lake Acres Located In Monticello Township

ITEMS PULLED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

A. ADMINISTRATION

2. Reappoint Steve Jobe as Wright County Surveyor for a Four-Year Term Commencing January 1, 2023.

Kaczmarek asked the board if any more information on the request to reappoint Steve Jobe was provided beside the Request for Board Action (RFBA). Husom said the reappointment was a formality. Vetsch said that in the past, when new board members had been present, the Surveyor had come before the board and discussed services rendered over the last four years, this had not happened in 2022. Vetsch said the point of the statute in appointing the employee is to have the surveyor report the work being done so the board may reaffirm its desire to have the employee continue their job. He said an effort should be made to have Jobe come before the board prior to the end of the year to make a report of the last four years. Husom said a certain amount of reporting is received during the budget process. Kaczmarek said he was not protesting the reappointment, but as a highly paid employee, Jobe should be prepared to defend his request for four more years. The RFBA was light on details as to what had been accomplished and why the board should approve Jobe's reappointment. Kaczmarek requested in the future to be given eight weeks notification prior to the reappointment vote on the four employees who rely on the board for their continued employment. He said the Tuesday, November 29 meeting was the last meeting of the year where this reappointment could be discussed.

Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said this vote is a formality of the Statute. The Surveyor and the other appointed positions are employees of Wright County who cannot be terminated because his or her term is up. He said this was a formality the board has to approve. Vetsch said the board could appoint someone different for whatever reason it deemed. He said this is not being argued, but Kaczmarek was requesting due diligence be done. Kaczmarek asked if this was a formality why was the board a part of the process.

Kaczmarek moved to reappoint Steve Jobe as Wright County Surveyor for a four-year term commencing January 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

TIMED AGENDA ITEMS

ALICIA O'HARE, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Approval Of The Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Resolution.

Wright County Soil & Water Conservation District's (SWCD) Alicia O'Hare said it was time for the annual Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention aid allocation. She said the state allocates \$10 million among the counties based on number of lake accesses and parking spaces at those accesses. She said the allocation in Wright County for 2023 is \$239,122. She said there is an estimated roll over from last year of about \$12,000. She asked for the resolution to be passed and money sent to SWCD. Husom said she appreciated the funds as they are very helpful.

Vetsch asked if there was a specific AIS species the SWCD plans to go after more than others in 2023. O'Hare said there are two lakes with Starry Stonewort which have been treated aggressively by the Lake Associations and will be treated first to ensure the AIS does not get exported. The more common Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed are next to be treated. O'Hare said the Lake Associations reported they had spent nearly \$200,000 in treatment of AIS species in Wright County. Treatment is always underfunded. The biggest increase in next year's budget would be in the decontamination area

where the price was going up to pay appropriate wages.

Daleiden moved to approve the Aquatic Invasive Species prevention aid resolution. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The roll call vote was unanimous. The motion carried 5-0.

BARRY RHINEBERGER, PLANNING AND ZONING

Approval Of Ordinance Amendment 22-4.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Barry Rhineberger introduced Ordinance Amendment 22-4. The amendment has clarified some language with the duties and responsibilities in the duties of the Zoning Administrator as recommended by the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) counsel and the Wright County counsel. There is a clarification where the definition of “impervious surface” changed in 2007 but it was not referenced back to an area under Access and Driveways. He said it was fixing something that had been missed when adopting the solar ordinance. Each zoning district has a reference to solar energy systems or solar energy farms according to size. The definition was changed in the solar portion of the ordinance without referencing it back to the individual zoning districts. He gave an example of how this change affected the language. Vetsch said as these changes in the ordinances occur he appreciated the work the staff did in due diligence to change details. Kaczmarek asked if the issue was caught prior to something coming up. Rhineberger confirmed it was caught prior to becoming an issue.

Vetsch moved the approval of Ordinance Amendment 22-4. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

Adoption Of A Resolution Approving Summary Language For Publication Amending The Wright County Code Of Ordinances Title XV: Land Use And Zoning, Chapter 155: Zoning.

Daleiden moved to approve the adoption of a resolution approving summary language for publication amending the Wright County Code of Ordinances Title XV: Land Use and Zoning, Chapter 155: Zoning. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The roll call vote was unanimous and the motion carried 5-0.

CHAD HAUSMANN, HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Approve Resolution Prioritizing Deficient Bridges In Wright County.

Assistant Highway Engineer Chad Hausmann introduced a resolution updating the county’s bridge priority list. In addition to the six bridges previously on the list, the resolution would add Eastwood Avenue bridge from Franklin Township. In order to be eligible for state and federal funding, bridges must be on a priority list approved by the county board and below 60 on the local planning index, which is a summary of all the bridge analysis criteria bridge inspectors look at. Eastwood Avenue is south of Delano where County State Aid Highways (CSAH) 16 and 17 crosses. The state aid office requests this be updated periodically, and this was last done in 2021.

Kaczmarek said there was one bridge that scored a 53 on the local planning index and was scheduled to be replaced in 2023 or 2024 and another bridge which scored a 42 on the local planning index is scheduled to be replaced in 2025. He asked Hausmann to explain the logic for constituents on why some bridges are scheduled before others with lower scores. Hausmann said federal money was awarded for one bridge which is a 41 on the scale. The money does not come until 2024. There are six bridges the Highway Department wants to replace which will be one a year for the next six years. The bridge being replaced in 2023 is on the Stearns County line and is a joint project and is reliant on the availability of Stearns County. The bridge with the score of 53 is a township bridge and not funded by the county, but by the township. The safety difference between bridge with the score of 48 and the bridge with the score of 53 is minimal. The bridges are in the same condition except for minor issues that will affect the score, but not the safety to the public. He said if there was a safety element with the bridge the department will post weight limitations before the bridge or, in rare cases, close the bridge as warranted.

Vetsch asked if on a joint project with a second county that county had to have the bridge prioritized similarly to Wright. He asked if another county did not prioritize a bridge the same as Wright County, how does the county handle the scheduling. Hausmann said if the bridge is on the other county’s list there are no concerns. He said it would come down to prioritizing the budget. If the bridge is below 60 on the local planning index, then the department wants to replace it within five years. Wright County does not have many deficient bridges. Hausmann said one bridge has been replaced in the 10 years he has been working for the county. The bridges were described as old timber style bridges with a bituminous deck on them which are no longer made, cheaper to make but prone to rapid deterioration.

Hausmann wants to get Franklin Township on board as it is important to secure the state bridge bonding. The town bridge account is capped at \$700,000. Unless the township does a project it will stay \$700,000. Eastwood Avenue bridge qualifies as such, but with the estimate going more than \$700,000 the department will have to go after state bridge bonds, which the legislators would need to be a part of. He said the township's share would be \$20,000 if it qualifies for state bridge bonding. Vetsch asked who set the \$700,000 limit. Hausmann was not sure but was looking into it. He said a lot of township bridges are 10-foot box culverts which are well under \$700,000 to replace, unfortunately the Franklin Township bridge is not. A township crossing over a major creek would probably be more than \$1 million. Vetsch noted that inflationary costs would not go far. Kaczmarek asked to define "deficient." Hausmann said as far as urgency or safety went "deficient" did not mean anything. It means that a bridge does not meet certain standards, such as a bridge that is required to be 30 feet wide is only 24 feet wide.

Daleiden moved to approve the resolution prioritizing deficient bridges in Wright County. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. Roll call vote was unanimous and the motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearing For Crawford Lake Improvement District.

Kelly said this public hearing was a continuation of the October 4 public hearing. Husom opened the public hearing to the Crawford Lake Improvement District (LID). She welcomed the public and stated the reason for this public hearing was to determine if the County Board should establish the LID. Husom introduced the order of the hearing and stated the rules of the Public Hearing.

Assistant County Attorney John Bowen said this is a public hearing on the petition for establishment of the Crawford LID that is pursuant to Minnesota statutes 103B.521 and concerning a lake in Rockford Township. Notice has been given pursuant to statute to the required parties. Minnesota rule 6115.0971, when filing for a petition for establishment of an LID the petitioners must provide a statement of the lake's problems and objectives, the proposed types of water and related land resource management programs to be undertaken including a detailed statement of intended studies, management programs, remedial actions, and construction projects. A statement of how the programs will be financed, a map showing the boundaries of the proposed LID, the number of directors proposed for the district, and copies of any local ordinances which might regulate the use of the lake or public access. He said any information indicating the degree of local interest and commitment to the management would be helpful. In addition, the DNR required the identification of any lands and waters which may be adversely affected by the implementation of the district and a preliminary assessment of those adverse effects; a statement outlining the adequacy and ownership of public accesses including public lands and beaches, and an estimate of the total equalized value of the property within the district as well as any other information pursuant to rule or statute.

Bowen said he would be presenting the position of the Minnesota Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He said he had provided a copy of the report from the DNR, in the form of an email, to the board and the petitioners. At the conclusion of the public comment portion of the meeting no sooner than 10 days and no later than 30 days the board would need to convene to approve or disapprove the petition for the LID. Bowen selected 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 13 for the vote. Husom requested the report be read. Bowen said the report is written in an email to himself. The letter is as follows:

Dear Mr. Bowen,

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not be providing an advisory report on the proposed Crawford LID at this time because the DNR has not received a complete LID proposal containing all of the elements listed in [Minnesota Rules 6115.0970 Subpart 1](#). Currently, the DNR has only received some general statements about the goals of the LID and has seen the list of signatures in support of the petition.

The elements listed in Minnesota Rules 6115.0970 Subpart 1 are regulatory requirements, and formation of the LID cannot proceed without them. The lack of information concerning the lake's problems, and the projects and programs intended to alleviate these problems, means that the DNR cannot evaluate the intended actions of the LID for technical feasibility, or offer expert advice in our advisory report. The lack of a map of the proposed LID, coupled with an absence of detailed discussion about the proposed projects and

programs, also means that the DNR cannot properly evaluate the adequacy of the proposed LID's boundaries, as required by [Minnesota Rules 6115.0920 Subpart 5](#).

I understand that the petitioners are working with James Bedell, DNR Are [sic] Hydrologist, to gain a greater understanding of their lake, its problems, and feasible approaches to ameliorate these problems. We look forward to receiving a complete LID proposal when this work has been completed.

Thank you,

Kathy Metzker

Land Use Hydrologist, Department of Natural Resources-EWR

Bowen said he met with the petitioners Monday, November 28 at the SWCD office in Buffalo along with DNR Area Hydrologist James Bedell and O'Hare where they discussed the future of Crawford Lake. The meeting covered what projects could be undertaken and what resources are available, including grant funding and local businesses that can provide services to the property owners. The property owners/petitioners are aware the DNR does not support the formation of the LID at this time. The owners/petitioners understand that there are more studies to be done and information to be gathered to make this a successful LID. There are things that can be done prior to creating a LID to ameliorate these issues.

Husom opened up the public hearing for public comments at 9:40 a.m.

Husom closed the public hearing for public comments at 9:40 a.m.

Bowen requested the public hearing be reopened.

Husom reopened the public hearing at 9:41 a.m.

Bowen requested the email be entered into the public record. Husom asked if there were any written comments to be presented.

Husom closed the public hearing at 9:42 a.m.

Bowen asked County Administrator Lee Kelly if the proposed time and date worked for the county. Kelly said it did. Daleiden asked if the board can approve a LID prior to the DNR approving it. Bowen said, from a legal standpoint, the board does need DNR approval prior to approving the LID. Daleiden asked if there would be information available by the date of continuation. Bowen said the email was the state's opinion, the discussion on the Tuesday, December 13 would be to vote. There will be no further information submitted.

Vetsch moved to continue the public hearing to 9:30 a.m. Tuesday December 13, 2022. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting recessed until 10:00 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing For Proposed 2023 Fee Schedules.

Husom reconvened the meeting at 10:01a.m.

Husom opened the public hearing to discuss the proposed 2023 fee schedules at 10:01 a.m.

Kelly said a notice was placed in the official county newspaper as required per statutes. There had been no comments received from the general public in the Administration office regarding the fee changes. He noted that the county board workshop discussion around the special assessments was robust. Daleiden asked what department this would be under. Kelly said this would be under Finance and Taxpayer Services. Kaczmarek said he started getting comments in the spring, the

consensus of the comments received from the three or four townships was that they did not mind the fee if it was the true cost they were paying.

Husom opened the floor up for public comment at 10:03 a.m.

John Uecker

Albion Township

Vice Chair of the Albion Township Board John Uecker said this had been going on for years for the fire department. The new special assessment had been in place for one year at a cost of \$2.25 per parcel. While Albion Township paid it without issue the understanding is this is not what it cost the county and it is possible to have the special assessment for around 20 cents to 40 cents per parcel. He said if the township was forced to go to \$2.25 per parcel, it would be forced to put it on the levy. He said the way it was being done had worked well.

Husom said the special assessment is listed as 40 cents on the fee schedule. She thanked Uecker as this had provoked good discussion and research and analysis by the Finance Team.

Uecker said the rates probably don't change and when they do change the clerks send the changes in. He said when there is bare land it makes no sense to pay fire tax.

Bob Neumann

Albion Township

Chair of the Albion Township Board Bob Neumann said there is a minimal cost to the county on the fire assessments as most building sites do not change and the fire assessments do not change from year to year. He said the fire assessments are in the computer and don't need to be touched. The clerks would tell the county to place an assessment or remove it based on the information the township provides so there is no real information gathering. He said the only work the county had to do was to ensure that the assessment is on the proper tax statement which does not change. With computers once the assessment is entered nothing has to change so it is very minimal work.

Husom said some townships levy to avoid the special assessment. Daleiden requested Director of Finance Lindsey Meyer respond to the comments.

Lindsey Meyer

Director of Finance

Meyer said there is effort involved and back and forth communication between staff and the township clerks. She said in the current system her office has the ability to roll information forward though staff still has to touch every parcel in the system. Moving forward into the new Tyler tax system it is unknown what the process will be and therefore unknown what the cost to the county will be. Husom asked if, at the current time, 40 cents is a fair assessment amount. Meyer said the department could handle it at this time. Husom said going forward as more information is gathered it will become possible to analyze the real cost and make adjustments as needed. It is the desire of the board to charge what the cost to the county is.

Husom closed public comments at 10:09 a.m.

Kryzer pointed out there were three tobacco violation fees listed on the fee schedule which were already codified under Section 110.999 as administrative penalties. The administrative penalties are significantly higher than the listed fees. He recommended removing lines 63, 64 and 65 of the fee schedule under Finance and Taxpayer Services.

Kaczmarek asked Meyer to explain why when it was discussed that 20 cents would cover the cost to the county, the fee was put on the schedule at 40 cents. Meyer discussed in great detail with Kaczmarek the fee and it was agreed that there would be one comprehensive fee of 50 cents for both setup and maintenance on each parcel. Kaczmarek said knowing it would have to go to a public hearing 50 cents was more than twice the recommended amount with a cushion for whatever variable could happen. He recommended changing the fee to 50 cents instead of leaving it unchanged and seeing what happens next year. 50 cents would be more palatable than the \$2.25 or \$2.15, but the townships had not paid anything for the last three years.

Husom asked about the \$1.75 one-time set up fee. Meyer said the \$1.75 is a set-up fee for many of the special assessments. Some properties have long-term special assessments where the initial setup is \$1.75 and 40 cents per year for every year the

assessment continues. A fire assessment is a one-time fee every year because the process starts over every year. She said with long-term assessments staff sets them up and has nothing more to do with it. The system maintains itself and deals with the assessment. Husom said staff still had to look at each parcel per year.

Vetsch said charging the current fee schedule would be hard to justify. Husom said she agreed with the one set-up fee. In the instance of the fire assessments, 50 cents a year would be more palatable. Daleiden said this is not just special assessments for the fire district as there are other assessments that occur. This is not just an easy fix. Meyer said in a perfect world there would be one fee for all assessments. Vetsch said regardless of if the assessment being for an LID, street, or fire district 50 cents for set-up and maintenance of a special assessment would accomplish the costs across the board, per year per assessment. Husom said if that would cover the cost then that change would be fair. Vetsch said a little is lost on the first year doing the set-up.

Daleiden moved to approve the fee schedule with Finance and Taxpayer Services lines 56 and 57 being switched to one special assessment, maintenance, and set-up fee of 50 cents and lines 63, 64, and 65 under tobacco compliance being removed. Kaczmarek seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

ADMINISTRATION

1. Schedule Elected Official Salary Meeting.

Kelly said that every year the salaries need to be set for elected officials per Statute 387.20 for the Sheriff, Statute 388.18 for the County Attorney, and Statute 375.055 for County Commissioners prior to the beginning of the year. He recommended 3:00 p.m. Monday, December 12. Kelly said the order will follow last year's agenda.

Daleiden moved to approve meeting for 3:00 p.m. Monday, December 12. Kaczmarek seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE / ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES

Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek

Kaczmarek had an Emergency Service Board/Fire Chiefs Board meeting. The question was raised as to what would be done with the old Sheriff's radios. He asked if there is a value to selling these used radios to local fire departments or if there was any need in-house for the Parks Department, Highway Department or Sheriff's backups. He asked if this could be talked about at the appropriate meeting.

Commissioner Mark Daleiden

Daleiden had been working with Vetsch and county attorneys on the union negotiations, which are going well. He met for the last time with Trailblazer Transit. There is a lot of potential growth, but the driver shortage is making things difficult.

Commissioner Darek Vetsch

Vetsch met with the Wright County Economic Development Partnership (EDP) prior to the Thanksgiving break. EDP is working on some video marketing initiatives that will be rolled out throughout the county. He met with Trailblazer Transit along with Daleiden, stating ridership is up, acquiring busses and finding employees is challenging.

Commissioner Mary Wetter

The Wright County Historical Society (WCHS) met. The back of the building facing the county campus was cleaned up and the Society painted patches on the barn as a barn quilt. The WCHS felt this was its contribution to the county campus. The Festival of Trees is starting Thursday, December 1 and runs through Friday, January 6. This year the competition is with the different historical societies in the county. It is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

The Water Management Taskforce met. The county water plan timeline has been extended due to One Watershed, One Plan. There was a workshop where the priorities and issues for county wetlands and lakes was discussed.

The Minnesota Rural Counties (MRC) met. It has a new executive director. Capitol Hill Associates will serve as the executive director. It has four staff members who will be leading. It should be an improvement on what has gone on before. Husom said the Festival of Trees is an amazing sight to see.

Commissioner Christine Husom

Husom attended the Annandale Safe Schools meeting and enjoyed hearing from the different schools, administrators, and departments. She visited Annandale, Albion Township, Corinna Township, and the City of Buffalo. She said her last four cities and townships will be visited in December.

County Administrator Lee Kelly

Kelly said the License Center is doing a REAL ID info session the evening of November 29, 2022. The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) conference was the week of December 5. The new commissioners were invited to attend. There are several end-of-year items still to wrap up including orientation with the new commissioners coming on board in January.

Vetsch and Daleiden have joined him in the ongoing labor negotiations. There had been a good discourse between the parties this year but there is still work to be done. The legislative meeting will be at 11:00 a.m. Monday, December 12. It had to be rescheduled due to a conflict with the Republican Caucus.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

County Board Minutes submitted by Philip Hodges, Administrative Specialist.