



BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

DATE APPROVED: September 19, 2023

Tina Diedrick	District 1
Darek Vetsch	District 2
Jeanne Holland	District 3
Nadine Schoen	District 4
Michael Kaczmarek	District 5

Members Present:	Darek Vetsch, Jeanne Holland, Nadine Schoen, Michael Kaczmarek, Tina Diedrick
Others Present:	Lee Kelly, Clay Wilfahrt, Marc Mattice, Heather Lemieux, Jim O'Dell, Greg Kryzer, Virgil Hawkins, Tim Dahl, Lindsey Meyer, Kate Dahl, Matt Fomby, Jami Goodrum, Tyler Webster, Sara Buermann, Jacob Wagaman, Barry Rhineberger, Adam Backes, Alan Wilczek, Sean Deringer, Matt Treichler, Brian Lutes

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

I. Schedule Meetings as Needed

No meetings were scheduled.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.

II. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP 2024 Budget (RSVP Program Director Jennifer Wucherer & RSVP Program Coordinator Carole McNaughton-Commers)

RSVP Program Director Jennifer Wucherer and RSVP Program Coordinator Carole McNaughton-Commers presented the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP 2024 budget to the board. Wucherer gave an overview of the program and detailed the benefits of the program to both the volunteers and recipients. In 2022, RSVP had 971 active volunteers, totaling 95,007 service hours and 136 organizations served.

Commissioner Jeanne Holland said that Central Minnesota Jobs and Training (CMJT) is struggling for volunteers due to anything over a 14-cent mileage reimbursement being taxable. Wucherer said that since AmeriCorps is a federal program, their mileage reimbursement is non-taxable and averages between 25 to 30 cents per mile.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only

III. Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Systemwide Budget Update (GRRL Executive Director Karen Pundsack and GRRL Board Member Wayne Bauernschmitt)

Executive Director Karen Pundsack and Board Member Wayne Bauernschmitt presented the GRRL systemwide budget update to the board. Pundsack gave a brief overview of the six-county library system and detailed that Wright County has approximately one-third of the libraries in the system, including the two largest libraries, Buffalo and Saint Michael.

Pundsack said that the primary source of funding for the 2024 budget is the six benefited counties. Other sources of funding include state aid, reserves use, and city agreements. The library dollars provided per capita in Wright County are \$16.08. The total 2024 budget is \$10,198,376, with an increase from 2023 of 1.60 percent. Wright County's contribution is \$2,331,300, with a decrease from 2023 of -0.594 percent.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only

IV. Compost/Household Hazardous Waste Updates

i. Release of RFP

Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice said that a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been released for the design options of the Compost/Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility and will be closing October 6, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.

ii. Compost Usage Without Loader

Environmental Health Supervisor Jacob Wagaman said that the loader has not been used for public compost loading since May 9, 2023. In total, nine members of the public have used shovels to load compost. Typically, there are two to three compost piles that would go into winter, currently there are five to six. The excess could be contributed to draught and not necessarily the loader. Wagaman said that waiting until May 2024, after planting season, would be an accurate timeframe to address if the loader is affecting the excess of compost.

RECOMMENDATION: Revisit compost usage without loader at the June 2024 workshop.

iii. City and Township Brush Acceptance Hauling and Grinding Expectations and Fees

Wagaman said that the City of Cokato approached Wright County about transferring its brush pile to the compost facility, approximately 2,000 cubic yards. Currently, the townships of Monticello, Maple Lake, and Chatham do not have their own compost sites and along with the Monticello School District, utilize the HHW compost facility to dispose of brush. The remaining cities and townships have their own facilities and receive SCORE funds.

RECOMMENDATION: Research options regarding the feasibility, timing, and perception of burning brush and stumps at the Compost/HHW facility to help determine if accepting brush from other cities and townships is of interest. Recommendation included having staff discuss alternatives with Townships currently using the Wright County Compost Site for brush disposal.

V. Highway Event Permits

County Engineer Virgil Hawkins said that highway event permits are used for events within the highway right-of-way. Wright County typically receives between 14 to 23 applications per year. The application is generally submitted to the Highway Department online and highway works with the Sheriff's Office to determine officer needs.

Kaczmarek said that he requested this item to be on the agenda because of the Tour de Tonka that traveled on County Road 30 (CSAH 30) this summer. CSAH 30 had additional traffic on the roadway this summer due to the closure of Highway 25. Kaczmarek asked how much research was done before approving an event permit and said that he would like for Highway Event Permits to come to the board on the consent agenda for approval. Hawkins said that the race only used CSAH 30 because of construction, and that the annual race will not use this same route again after construction is complete.

Hawkins offered to notify the board or the commissioner in the district when a permit is issued and Kaczmarek said that he wants the application to come to the board for approval before it is issued. Hawkins said that the permitting process follows county policy and has a dedicated employee who reviews the applications and works directly with the Sheriff's Office. Kaczmarek said that citizens want the board to be more involved and asked how he can justify the decision when he gets a call on a Saturday morning when the office is closed. Chief of Civil Greg Kryzer asked what the benefit would be to have the board approve or deny applications since anyone has the right to use the road with or without a permit. Sheriff Sean Deringer said that there is no authority as a commissioner or a sheriff to tell someone they can't use the road.

Bikes have permitted use on the highway, and they don't need to get approval for a race. Groups apply for a permit for safety and amenity. Kaczmarek asked if anyone is free to use the road, why is the permitting process set up this way. Kryzer said it is so the Highway Department and Sheriff's Office know what's going on, to have a certificate of insurance if necessary, proper porta potties and to ensure everything is set up correctly. Holland said that she likes the idea of being notified if an event is happening in their area. Commissioner Tina Diedrick said that she is happy with a notification that an event is happening and does not need to see approval come to the board.

Holland said that there was a disconnect and the county can be more forthright with information on what is happening, so citizens are not surprised. Commissioner Darek Vetsch said that he would be in favor of being notified as an information item.

RECOMMENDATION: Highway event permits are to be sent to commissioners in the district as an informational item.

VI. Café Space

Mattice said that the café construction cost are high, and the county will need to go out for sealed bids. Vetsch said that he is not in favor of continuing with the process at this time. A vendor in that space would need to have \$7,000 in revenue and he doesn't think that there is capacity. Schoen and Diedrick agreed. Facilities Director Alan Wilczek asked if there was interest in scaling back the project and doing something minimal. Vetsch said not at this time. The board would have to build the space with the intention of employee benefit and not a revenue stream.

RECOMMENDATION: Do not move forward with preparing sealed bids for the Café at this time.

VII. Large Group Assembly Permit Process

Elections Manager Tyler Webster said that currently in Wright County, a large event is considered a gathering with at least 250 attendees that is not a regularly scheduled event such as a football game, church service, etc. and that the county does not see a lot of requests for permits. Vetsch said that there are items in the ordinance and permit process that should be revisited, such as the size considered to be a large group assembly and what size event warrants ambulance service. Kaczmarek asked if the fee is accurate for the work and time. Webster said that Stearns County charges a higher fee for first-time applicants and a lesser fee for repeat applications. That could be something to consider as the process initially involves a lot of staff time. Kaczmarek asked how deputies are determined. Deringer said that the Sheriff's Office looks at history, event type, traffic needs, etc. Kaczmarek asked if the permit process could include a sheriff sign off and Vetsch agreed.

RECOMMENDATION: Direct staff to draft an ordinance amendment using 500 attendees as the necessary attendance number for a large group assembly permit and 1,500 attendees as the necessary attendance number for EMT service. Add a section to the permit process checklist for the Sheriff to sign off.

VIII. Policy for Written Contracts

The policy for written contracts currently states that anything over \$100,000 needs to be approved by the board. The Finance Department has requested to increase that amount due to inefficiencies. The board members discussed the dollar amount they would be comfortable amending the policy to and agreed on \$200,000.

RECOMMENDATION: Amend the policy for County Board approval of written contracts threshold to \$200,000

IX. Use of Fitness Center by Non-Wright County Employees

Mattice said that information was put together on non-county employees who are tenant partners that have access to the fitness center. There are 121 tenant partner employees that have access to the space. The number that use the fitness center is not able to be determined due to the location of the card readers. There is not a reader specifically on the fitness room door, only the corridor that leads to the fitness room and locker rooms. Discussion was had on the different groups, and that some are more similar to county employees rather than tenants. Schoen said that the fitness room is a benefit for employees and that she wants to ensure that capacity is not an issue. County Attorney Brian Lutes said that he is a daily user of the fitness area, and there has never been a time that he has not had access to equipment. Vetsch said that this could possibly be an issue to address in the future if space ever becomes an issue.

RECOMMENDATION: Do not change tenant access to the fitness room at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

County Board Workshop Minutes submitted by Caitlin Chovan, Administration Office Manager