



BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

October 10, 2023

DATE APPROVED: October 17, 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:	Alan Wilczek, Heather Lemieux, Jolene Foss, Clay Wilfahrt, Jim O'Dell, Sara Buermann, Lindsey Meyer, Elizabeth Karels, Virgil Hawkins, Greg Kryzer, Matt Fomby, Lee Kelly, Marc Mattice, Caitlin Chovan, Jami Goodrum, Sarah Grosshuesch, Schawn Johnson

Commissioner Darek Vetsch opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m.

I. Schedule Meetings as Needed

A. Committee of the Whole – Legislative Review

Scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 7, 2023

B. Committee of the Whole – Commissioner Mileage

Scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Monday, October 16, 2023

C. Committee of the Whole – Labor Negotiations, Closed Session

Scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Commissioner Darek Vetsch petitioned two additional meeting topics onto the agenda. Cokato has requested to discuss the Sheriff's contract in further detail. The board collectively decided that that is not interested in further discussing the Sheriff's contract with Cokato.

Restore Minnesota Group has requested to make a presentation to the board. The board would be open to receiving an invitation to attend a presentation by the group but is not interested in hosting them at a formal meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.

II. Advisory Committee/Advisory Board Updates

There were no advisory committee or advisory board updates given.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only

III. Initiative Foundation Presentation

Don Hickman, interim president Initiative Foundation, gave a brief introduction and history of the Initiative Foundation and presented the Region 7W Federal Designation. During the pandemic the Initiative Foundation has distributed more than \$12 million in aid and federal dollars for COVID relief annually, administering \$4 million in main street economic revitalization as well as money to help school districts. The Initiative Foundation gave an opportunity to Wright County Community Action (WCCA) giving it \$5,000 dollars to support strategic planning and then when completed, \$15,000 dollars to implement their strategic plan.

Hickman referenced Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) giving out free money and Commissioner Tina Diedrick asked what that meant. Hickman said that the U.S. Treasury gives the Initiative Foundation money at no interest in which it lends. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said that there is a lot of good information and said that it would be helpful if they had city-specific information. Hickman said that he will pass that along to the development team. Vetsch asked Hickman if they are looking to get the interest of the board in wanting to participate in the 7W in the possible formation of Economic Development Districts (EDD) with the four counties Wright, Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns. This was tried back in 2016 and had several challenges. Hickman said there is potential to miss a lot of federal funding opportunities due to lack of EDD. Sherburne County has said that it is interested if Wright County is interested.

Commissioner Nadine Schoen asked if this would be something that Wright County would have to do with the four suggested counties, or can this be something that can be in line with Wright County and Sherburne County. Vetsch said that it is possible in any capacity ultimately, there is a footprint in place with the 7W and template in place for assets. There is a lot of differences in the 7W group and there has not been success, largely the greater St. Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) and Wright County not being a good match to the organization and Vetsch is very cautious to participate and is declining.

The group discussed the potential if Sherburne County would like to partner with Wright County. They have similar assets and a similar population. Trying to take on St. Cloud APO will not be successful. Vetsch said that he would rather start a whole new process in creating assets locally between Sherburne and Wright counties then to try and use the template. Diedrick disagreed with the partnership stating that she represents Wright County businesses and residents, which would be in direct competition recruiting businesses with Sherburne County. Wright County Economic Development Partnership Executive Director Jolene Foss encouraged commissioners that a conversation should still be considered regarding an EDD.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only. There is no interest from the board to pursue anything further at this time.

IV. Fee Schedule Review

Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice presented the revised fee schedule. In the spring of 2023, conversation was had about fee schedules and having every department review its fees. The revised fee schedule is color-coded to indicate changes made. Mattice said that he is looking to schedule a public hearing for Tuesday, November 21, 2023.

Vetsch said that this is the most robust analysis that he has seen on the fee schedule, and it is very justifiable. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer pointed out one revision to be made within the Finance and Taxpayer Services fee schedule. Kaczmarek asked about a Sheriff's fee for staffing the Training Center and discussion was had about Training Center usage by police departments within Wright County. Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt is going to work with local offices to submit a formal request for usage. Health and Human Services (HHS) Director Jami Goodrum mentioned they have the ability to waive fees in HHS, based on partnerships. Schoen agreed with Goodrum about working on policy with the ability to waive the fee.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only

V. Process for Appointment to Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Board and Other Committees

Currently, the process used to appoint board and/or committee positions has been for the member of the county board who sits on the specific board and their alternate to meet with staff to review applications and interview candidates. There is a request to post the available positions publicly, and the board agreed that it would be in favor of publicly posting open board and committee positions. The recommendation would then come to a county board meeting to be approved. Diedrick requested sending notification to the cities as well.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to use the same application and interview process. Post all open board and committee seats publicly.

VI. 3rd Floor Government Center

Mattice said that Administration has been looking at different configurations with the increase of staff numbers. Facilities Director Alan Wilczek presented a floor plan option that is the most cost-effective. Wilfahrt said that centralization of Finance has put more people on the 3rd floor than what was initially planned. Commissioner Jeanne Holland suggested an option of shared cubicles/space for those who do work from home. Kaczmarek said that he would like to see a study done for those who are working from home and looking for another floor plan option that should include shared workspace. Schoen was in favor of utilizing space already available on the 1st floor.

Wilfahrt said that Wright County's population is growing 3 to 5 percent per year and the spacing situation will need to be addressed eventually. He is looking for direction from the board on how it would like to address the space issue. Vetsch would like to know roughly the cost to build out the shelled space on 3rd floor. Diedrick is in favor of using the bond funds to finish out the shelled space as it was intended to be built out. Vetsch said the other alternative is to use the remaining bond funds towards debt service.

RECOMMENDATION: There is no consensus from the board to move forward with any remodel or construction projects at this time.

VII. Phone System Analysis

Information Technology Director Matt Fomby said that Spy Glass, which professionally audits phone systems, is willing to an audit of the county's phone system again. Fomby recommended having the Project Administration team do an inside analysis of the phone needs instead of using Spy Glass. Vetsch said that there is more potential savings by keeping it in-house. Wilfahrt said that there is no major rush. He expects it can get done within the next three months.

RECOMMENDATION: The Phone System Analysis will be reviewed by the Project Administration team.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

County Board Workshop Minutes submitted by Jenn Eggersgluss, Administrative Specialist