BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FEBRUARY 13, 2024

DATE APPROVED: FEBRUARY 20, 2024

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

Members Present: Tina Diedrick, Jeanne Holland, Michael Kaczmarek, Nadine Schoen, Darek Vetsch

Others Present: Shawna Athman, Marissa Campanero, Matt Detjen, Teri Dickenson, Jolene Foss, Jami Goodrum, Schawn Johnson, Jim O'Dell, Elizabeth Karels, Lee Kelly, Greg Kryzer, Heather Lemieux, Lee Martie, Marc Mattice, Lindsey Meyer, Sally Stevens, Larkin Walter, Geoff Welles, Alan Wilczek, Clay Wilfahrt

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Commissioner Darek Vetsch began the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

1. Schedule Meetings as Needed

Vetsch shared that additional questions had been raised since the Committee of the Whole (COTW) met February 12, 2024 to discuss a Sheriff's Office conference room. Vetsch proposed scheduling another meeting. Commissioner Tina Diedrick asked if the focus of another meeting would be on the scope and design of the project. Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice noted that the COTW packet shared with the board prior to the February 12 included the Capital Improvement Plan and the Sheriff Conference Room budget that to date had expensed funds approved on architecture fees. Facilities Services Director Alan Wilczek shared that additional information was going to be received on February 13 and would be included with a Request for Board Action for the county board meeting February 20. Wilczek asked for clarity from the board on what design changes should be considered when communicating with the contractor. The board suggestions included eliminating offices from the design and constructing a flush wall. The board agreed to delay approval of the COTW February 12 meeting minutes and recommendations until the March 5 county board meeting. The board agreed to schedule another COTW to further discuss the construction scope and design of a Sherriff's Office Conference Room.

The board set a meeting for 10:30 a.m. February 20, 2024 for a Closed Session- Labor Negotiations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The consensus of the board was to

- ***Delay approval of the Committee of the Whole February 12 minutes and recommendations until the county board meeting March 5, 2024.***
- ***Set a date at the county board meeting on February 20 for a Committee of the Whole meeting to further discuss construction scope and design of a Sheriff's Office conference room.***
- ***Set a Closed Session- Labor Negotiations meeting for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, February 20, 2024.***

2. Commissioner Updates

Diedrick shared that she attended a workshop the previous week that discussed Xcel Energy's proposal of Time of Use Rates. Diedrick stated that Xcel's Energy Time of Use Rates would increase electricity costs. Diedrick shared information on the Right of First Refusal and how it could lead to open bidding and increase competition for utilities. Diedrick requested board support in submitting comments on the impact Xcel Energy's proposal of Time of Use Rates would have on electricity costs for Wright County, residents, organizations, and businesses if implemented to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Vetsch stated that additional information would be needed to better understand the information shared by Diedrick and suggested getting assistance from Flaherty & Hood to move forward with submitting comments to the PUC.

Legislative Updates

Discussion was had on the proposed new state flag and seal and the budgetary impact to the county. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek asked for clarity on the proposed legislation including deadlines, state versus county application of the bill, and penalties. County Administrator Lee Kelly shared that the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) guidance was that a deadline of December 31, 2024 to update state flags and seals was specifically for courtrooms and the State Capitol. Kelly noted that it was only the second day of the legislative session and many changes to the bill could occur that may include county language. Kaczmarek asked if the courts have a budget to cover the costs of replacing the proposed new state flags and seals. Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer stated that courts do have a budget that could cover the flag and seal replacement costs and that Wright County does not have a budget to replace flags and seals with the new design in the Justice Center. The board agreed that the county should not spend funds on the new flag or seals at this time as it is a bill that is subject to many changes in the legislative process and is not required by statute at this time.

Discussion was had on the North STAR Act and the McLeod County Board of Commissioners special meeting held Saturday, February 10 in which it passed a resolution opposing the North STAR Act. Diedrick stated that the McLeod County resolution was solid in identifying the fiscal impact on counties if the bill was passed. Kaczmarek shared that he had been contacted by his constituents that stated they were in favor of McLeod County's resolution. Diedrick proposed sending a letter to Wright County's state legislators opposing the North STAR Act. Vetsch supported Deidrick's proposal of a letter.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The consensus of the board was

- ***To utilize Flaherty & Hood to gather relevant data and information for Wright County on the impact of Xcel Energy's rate increase proposal on the county, residents, organizations, and businesses to craft comments for submission to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.***
- ***Wright County is not to spend funds on purchasing state seals and state flags with the new design as it is not mandated by state statute.***
- ***To craft and letter and send to Wright County legislators opposing the North STAR Act.***
- ***To utilize Flaherty & Hood to track bills relevant to the new state flag/seal and North STAR Act in the Minnesota House and Senate and communicate bill status changes in the Minnesota House and Senate to the county board.***

3. Historical Society Performance Measurement Presentation And First Quarter Payment

Wright County Historical Society (WCHS) Business Manager Sally Stevens, Outreach & Education Coordinator Geoff Welles, and Archivist Marissa Campanero presented WCHS performance measures. An overview of WCHS's operations was explained. WCHS shared a rubric with performance measures, metrics, and current evaluation of volunteering, historical collections, visitors, research requests, program participation, media, and revenue generation. WCHS shared goals in each of the evaluation categories for the year. Vetsch stated that the WCHS has done a great job in the past six months to quantify the work and value the organization brings to the county. Discussion was had on the appropriated amount and consensus of the board was to issue one-third of the appropriated amount with the remaining amounts to be appropriated following additional presentations from the WCHS before the end of the year. Kaczmarek proposed funding for operation of the three business days which would be a reduction of the current appropriate amount. There was no support for Kaczmarek's proposal.

RECOMMENDATION: The consensus of the board was to issue one-third of the appropriated amount budgeted for 2024 to the Wright County Historical Society.

4. 2025 Budget Schedule And Process

Kelly presented to the board the proposed 2025 budget schedule and process. Kelly explained the timeline, forecast and long-term planning, staffing budgets, and narrative came from feedback from the board and departments to improve the process for the next budget cycle. Diedrick shared that it would be helpful to have monthly budget summaries that articulate budgeted amounts and actual spending. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux shared that the Finance and Taxpayer Services Department is currently hiring a position that would be responsible for creating custom reports for the board to review budgeted amounts to actual amounts. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer stated that the custom budget reports will require time to establish and a significant amount of time to manipulate the data as it is not as simple as running a report. The board suggested changes to the proposed timeline to allow for meetings with each department to address proposed department budget questions. It was agreed that the meetings with departments would be best conducted through Committee of the Whole meetings to have all board members present to receive the information in a uniform manner. The board agreed to adjusting the August timeline to account for Committee of the Whole meetings with Property Services, Central Services, Sheriff's Office, Court Administration and Court Services followed by another round of meetings with department heads. An updated timeline would be provided to the commissioners.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only.

5. Front Desk Staffing/RSVP Update

Discussion was had on volunteer status with RSVP (AmeriCorps Senior Volunteer Program) to cover the Government Center front desk and hiring status of an Office Technician II position in the Finance and Taxpayer Services Department. Meyer shared that one volunteer from RSVP will start February 22 and provide three hours per week of front desk coverage. Commissioner Nadine Schoen was not in favor of hiring the OTII position at this time. Kaczmarek proposed moving the front desk position from Finance and Taxpayer Services to Administration Department. The board agreed that Finance and Taxpayer Services should continue hiring for the OTII position and provide front desk coverage from the department when volunteers are not available. Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt recommended that a Personnel Committee meeting be scheduled to discuss other staffing options in the future to cover the front desk.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus of the board was for the Finance and Taxpayer Services Department to continue with hiring of an Office Technician II position and staff the Government Center front desk when volunteers are not available.

6. Drainage Legislation

Kaczmarek explained the need for the proposed change to how viewers determine benefits under Minn. Stat. 103E.315 Kryzer stated that the proposed language needs to go through the appropriate work group to avoid being dead on arrival. Vetsch noted that not a lot of counties have this unique issue as they don't have the agricultural land surrounding lakes with ditches that flow into the lakes. Vetsch stated that counties like Anoka and Washington used to have this same issue but found a solution in creating watershed districts and abandoning their ditches. Ag and Drainage Coordinator Matt Detjen clarified that the proposed change is not on the taxable value of the home but focused on public waters and a stable lake level.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus of the board was to send proposed amendment to Minn. Stat. 103.E315 Subd. 5 to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Drainage Work Group.

7. Lobby Coffee Cart RFP Update

Mattice shared that one sealed proposal had been received. Mattice shared Department of Health requirements including submersible sinks. Mattice noted that plumbing and electrical work would need to be done. The board agreed to form a work group that would review the bids and bring back recommendations. The workgroup established was Commissioner Jeanne Holland, Diedrick, Kryzer, Mattice, Vetsch, and Wilczek.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus of the board was to form a workgroup tasked with bringing back recommendations to the board.

8. Engagement Survey

Wilfahrt provided an update to the Employee Engagement Survey based on board feedback. Wilfahrt shared that a survey could be conducted internally that would utilize software already available to the county with ArcGIS software that will collect the survey data. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator Larkin Walter explained the data can be sorted into categories and assembled into reports which will take staff time and will likely not be accessible for reports. Wilfahrt stated that the survey results would still create baseline data to begin conversations. Wilfahrt noted the collaboration with the County Attorney's Office about conducting a survey, creating multiple choice instead of open-ended questions, and maintaining anonymity of respondents. Wilfahrt asked for the board's consent to move forward with the engagement survey.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus of the board was to move forward with the engagement survey as written and utilize the free software available to the county.

Additional Discussion

Vetsch brought to the board's attention a Court Services reclassification that was approved with the previous budget. Vetsch noted that the meeting minutes did not specifically state a reclassification level for the Court Services Business Manager job classification. Vetsch explained that the position was budgeted as an open dollar amount as a level 16 but is classified as a level 14. The board agreed that the actual reclassification level of 14 was accurate and did not need to go through the Personnel Committee. Administration agreed with the board that a Personnel Committee meeting was not needed. Vetsch instructed Human Resources Director Schawn Johnson to inform Assistant Human Resources Director Lori Pawelk of the position's classification of at level 14.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus of the board is to classify the Court Services Business Manager position as a level 14.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

County board workshop minutes submitted by Kelly Kosloski, Administrative Specialist.