



BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUNE 11, 2024

DATE APPROVED: JUNE 18, 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: Lee Kelly, Greg Kryzer, Heather Lemieux, Marc Mattice, Lindsey Meyer, Clay Wilfahrt, Shawna Athman, Ryan Ferguson, Barry Rhineberger, Kate Dahl, Ryan Kotila, Marisa Campanaro, Sally Stevens, Geoff Welles

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

1. Historical Society Performance Measurement Presentation and Appropriation

Historical Society staff presented a PowerPoint that included current updates to exhibits, the push for digital collections, social media outreach, and programming, mid-year achievements, and donation/membership/fundraiser initiatives. Business Manager Sally Stevens said that gaining interest from the public in order to increase income has been the biggest challenge. Finding interest in business memberships and public participation has been difficult since COVID-19, but new fundraisers, increased growth in the gift shop, and the increase in use of the Historical Society facility are all initiatives in place to continue the growth and success of the Wright County Historical Society.

RECOMMENDATION: *Provide the second 2024 funding allocation to the Wright County Historical Society.*

2. FBI Training Center Agreement

Commissioner Jeanne Holland said that she would like to have an external professional service review the contract between Wright County and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for usage of the Wright County Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) as she believes that the current contract is not clear on several items and that the intent would be to leverage the FBI for more funds that were not accurately estimated at the time the contract was signed. Commissioner Tina Diedrick asked why an external service is being requested and said that there are a lot of unconsidered topics in discussion such as free training provided and not utilizing all of the contracted days that are a give and take for both Wright County and the FBI. Diedrick requested to have the conversation at a different meeting when Sheriff Sean Deringer could be present.

Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt said after conducting research on the agreement, there are several items that are unclear in the agreement and the way that it is being administered, on both the county and FBI side. The scope is larger than anticipated and there could be a larger discrepancy than originally thought. Wilfahrt confirmed it could be beneficial to obtain legal advice.

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said that he is in favor of the recommendation to have an outside professional service review the contract and would like to determine a dollar amount that the board would be asking for from the FBI. Kaczmarek said going into budget season, the potential impact could be significant and he would like to address the topic beforehand.

Vetsch said that the FBI has contributed above and beyond what was required by contract such as maintenance equipment, layout improvements to the second level, and mats for the mat room that the county has also benefited from. Vetsch wants to make sure that the route taken does not jeopardize the county's relationship with the FBI and wants to be cautious about spending funds on outside attorney fees. Kaczmarek confirmed that any improvements and equipment usage that Vetsch referenced are unsubstantiated.

Discussion was had weighing the pros and cons of seeking an outside professional service, the benefit of the partnership with the FBI and the option to terminate the contract. Consensus was that the current agreement is lacking detail and warrants review and research.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff to work on a cost analysis for FBI utilization of the training facility over the amortization of the contract, taking into consideration lead mitigation, excess utility costs as well as other potential factors.

3. Wellness Program Overview

Wilfahrt said that there are two wellness programs for discussion, countywide and sheriff-specific and asked if there is interest in the sheriff-specific conversation to be moved to a later date when the sheriff is present. Diedrick requested to move the conversation to a later date and Commissioner Nadine Schoen said that she would like to at least hear the information on both programs.

Wilfahrt provided an overview of the countywide program that included being administered by the health insurance provider and being popular with staff, with more than 50 percent of eligible members earning a wellness day in 2023. Wilfahrt said that the estimated cost of the wellness day, based on wages of participants earning one day of PTO, equaled approximately \$141,000 annually. Wilfahrt advised that removing the wellness day likely would not allow for a reduction in the budget as it cannot relate dollar for dollar to reduce a full-time position and cautioned if changes are made, it could have an impact on employee morale.

Kaczmarek said that he requested the topic to be discussed to review the two programs, the cost and what else is offered for wellness. The county campus offers a gym, medical clinic, dental clinic, work from home and new county campus buildings. The approximately 3,600 wellness hours earned equals out to 1.5 full-time employee hours and with health usage up 132 percent in the last year, Kaczmarek said that he cannot support the continuation of this

program. Holland agreed and said that Wright County is not a for-profit company. The dollar amount associated with the wellness day is alarming and she would rather see the healthcare plan offer a gym membership.

Vetsch said that insurance utilization rates aren't usually driven by the majority of participants, for example five employees with catastrophic claims could increase the overall rate by 20 percent. Civil Division Chief Greg Kryzer advised to move this topic to a closed session as it deals with labor negotiations and strategy. Diedrick said that she is disappointed that the board is considering removing the wellness program and believes it contributes health, retention, engagement, and morale.

Sheriff's Office Administrator Shawna Athman gave an overview of the sheriff-specific wellness program. By statute, the Sheriff's Office is mandated to provide a wellness program and the Wright County Sheriff's Office wellness program is designed under best practices for law enforcement agencies. Athman said the program is funded by managing overtime correctly and is forward-thinking, focusing on wellness, peer resiliency training, physical and mental health. Kaczmarek asked for more information on what is specifically mandated by state statute and Kryzer referred this conversation to the Personnel Committee. Wilfahrt confirmed that he would work with Athman to gather information for budget sessions.

RECOMMENDATION: Add the wellness programs as a topic to the Tuesday, June 18 closed session.

4. Building Inspector Position Request

Diedrick said that she requested to add this topic to the workshop to have the conversation of approving the over-comp position immediately instead of waiting until October due to the high volume that the Planning and Zoning Department continues to see. With a potential retirement, Diedrick does not want to see increased wait times for reviews and inspections. Vetsch asked Planning and Zoning Administrator Barry Rhineberger if this is his request and Rhineberger said that he was ok with the recommendation that came from the Personnel Committee, but there would be benefit to hiring now instead of waiting. Currently there is work that is being sacrificed in order to meet goals for permit turnaround and inspection lead time. The volume of work being processed warrants an additional position request in the 2025 budget. Schoen said that she would like to stick with the original recommendation and suggested that cities utilize a shared inspector and asked if that is an option for the county. Rhineberger confirmed that many city inspectors are contracted and in the past there have been concerns with the service and quality where a city has sought county services instead of contracted. Vetsch said that it is a good conversation to have, but would like to stick to the original recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the original recommendation of: "Committee consensus was to bring forward for board approval one over comp Building Inspector to be posted in October 2024." Also to include that a resignation letter must be received before the hiring process is started.

5. Procurement Analyst Position Request

Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said that the Finance Department would like to rehire the recently vacated Procurement Analyst position. If approved, the position would report to Accounting Manager Kate Dahl, who has extensive procurement experience, and the position duties would change based on the contracts database project that is currently in process. Multiple options were presented to the board in relation to the duties as assigned, but Meyer said that she would prefer the option to hire the position with the job description as-is. Kaczmarek said that he pulled this item due to several items that are in the job description, but were not being done. If approved, he wants guaranteed change with checks and balances in place. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux said that this position will work directly with the Accounts Payable team, initiating the review of questionable claims.

Wilfahrt said with the contracts repository in development, this position will play a central role in monitoring and processing contracts in a central location. With the new process, Legal, Risk, Finance and IT will all review necessary contracts, regardless of who owns it, which is not something that has been done in the past and will add a major accountability piece.

RECOMMENDATION: Move forward with posting of the Procurement Analyst position with the job description as-is. Approval for job to be posted as early as June 11, 2024.

6. Pass-Through Grants and Administrative Fees

Lemieux said that the Finance Department is looking for board direction if the county should withhold fees for pass-through grants. Kaczmarek said that he is in favor of withholding fees for the accounting and bookkeeping services performed. Vetsch agreed and said that taxpayers are paying for the staff time and he would rather have those funds covered by the grant and the specific organization that is benefiting from the funds. Vetsch confirmed that administrative fees will be charged for outside agencies only and internal grants administered by Wright County will not contain an accounting fee.

RECOMMENDATION: Going forward, pass-through grants that are received for signature will be reviewed for fee language and administrative fees will be removed accordingly based on the grant agreement and time associated to recoup costs. Grants that have already been signed will not be retroactively reviewed for administrative fees or payment.

7. Schedule Meetings as Necessary

Move the 9:30 a.m. Monday, June 17 Closed Session to 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 18.

Move the 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 18 Cannabis Workgroup to 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 25.

Schedule a Drainage Committee of the Whole for discussion on the current ditch project, 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 24.

RECOMMENDATION: Schedule/Reschedule the suggested meetings.

8. Commissioner and Legislative Updates

Vetsch said that Trailblazer Transit made a large market adjustment on wages. Trailblazer was down 35 employees, almost 50 percent of its workforce and were on a trajectory to close its doors if the adjustment was not made.

Trailblazer is currently receiving a record number of calls for service.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

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