



BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES
BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AUGUST 13, 2024

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

DATE APPROVED: AUGUST 20, 2024

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

Others Present: Matthew Fomby, Jami Goodrum, Elizabeth Karels, Greg Kryzer, Heather Lemieux, Marc Mattice, Lindsey Meyer, James O'Dell, Clay Wilfahrt, Karen Pundsack (GRRL), Amy Anderson (GRRL), Ryan Miles (Ehlers), Matt Tourville (Ehlers), Jill Pooler, Tony Rasmuson, Keith Triplett, Matt Fomby

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

1. Great River Regional Library Update and 2025 Allocation Request

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Executive Director Karen Pundsack and Associate Director of Accounting Amy Anderson presented the 2025 update. Anderson said that a majority of the capital funding comes from the counties served. The three largest expense categories are personnel, service contracts and operating equipment, and library materials and databases. The requested Wright County contribution for 2025 is \$2,354,754, which is an increase of \$23,457 or 1.006 percent over 2024. The total GRRL budget for 2025 is \$10,530,544, which is an increase of 3.26 percent over 2024. The 2025 budget includes reserves totaling \$233,744 and surplus carryover from 2023 of \$389,000. Library dollars per capita in Wright County are \$15.62, compared to \$43.56 statewide.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only

2. Ehlers Quarterly Report and Economic Forecast

Ehlers representatives Ryan Miles and Matt Tourville presented the current economic overview and the quarterly portfolio summary for Wright County. Tourville summarized the current economic indicators and the sector insights stating that the reduction of interest rates will impact short-term investing. The market is indicating anticipation of a Federal Funds Rate cut in the fall, likely .25 percent.

Miles reviewed the portfolio summary, recapping the weighted averages and allocations. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek asked the difference in allocations compared to last year, looking for confirmation that investments were not on autopilot. Miles confirmed that as investments are maturing, they are being reinvested in options with peak yields, which will vary based on the market at time of maturity. Miles said that the accrued interest this quarter is \$578,823 and the predicted income for the year is \$2 million, not including reinvestments. There are a significant number of investments set to mature in the next few months and as decisions on reinvestments are made, Ehlers is looking to better understand the cash cycle and income flow of the county.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only**3. MnCHOICES Update**

Health and Human Services (HHS) Director Jami Goodrum, Social Services Manager Jill Pooler and Business Manager Jim O'Dell presented an update on the MnCHOICES and waiver case management programs, processes, and setbacks. Pooler explained the interplay between initial assessments, reassessments and case management, the demographic impacts, and the current status in Wright County. In the four-step assessment process, the county is currently on a two-month waiting period, which is out of compliance with the state. Staff is at capacity in both social and financial services, lending to the long wait time and burnout. The assessment process typically takes 10 to 14 hours and 90 percent of assessments turn into waivers, which need to be reassessed annually. Currently, Wright County has more than 1,000 waiver cases that take eight to 10 hours to reassess each year.

Pooler said that the senior population will increase by 26 percent between 2020 and 2040. The overall result is requests for MnCHOICES and waiver services will continue to increase and Wright County cannot meet the current demand for assessments or case management. This results in poor service to the most vulnerable residents and Contracted Case Management agencies are not taking new cases to help alleviate the caseload.

Pooler said that the increase in demand due to the aging population, MnCHOICES reassessments, MnCHOICES revised tool launch, and staffing have all contributed to the current status. Social Services has continued to put forth proactive efforts to ease the burden including job-specific training guides, a pilot project with the State of Minnesota, legislative proposals, participating in county and state workgroups, and working with contracts case management agencies when available.

Pooler said that HHS will be looking for board direction on overflow in the future. The current outlook would require five additional MnCHOICES staff and seven additional waiver staff by 2027.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only**4. Appraiser Contract Discussion for 2026**

County Assessor Tony Rasmuson and Assistant County Assessor Keith Triplett said that the Assessor's Department is looking to discuss the current and future assessment contracts with Wright County cities and townships. Rasmuson said that the current contract is a two-year contract, charging \$15 per assessment. The county assesses 32 of the 35 jurisdictions, which equals approximately 82 percent of parcels in the county. This number has doubled over the last 10 years.

Rasmuson said that he is looking for guidance on the 2026 contract renewal and offered several options to consider. Commissioner Tina Diedrick said that she was in favor of the presented option offering a five-year contract, reducing the rate each year from \$15 to \$3 per parcel, ending with a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) at the end of five years, ceasing contracts and charges altogether. Commissioner Nadine Schoen said that she has a difference in opinion, with St. Michael being one of the three jurisdictions assessing in-house, and would like them to remain to have that ability. Vetsch said that he would prefer to get to the point of having all assessing done in-house naturally through retirements as with other jurisdictions. Kaczmarek agreed, stating that he does not want this decision to have a negative impact on the levy.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus is to continue the two-year contract for 2026 and 2027 with a fee of \$15 per parcel and discuss this topic again in the fourth quarter of 2026.

5. Website Domain Change

Information Technology (IT) Director Matt Fomby said due to Wright County processing voting information for elections, the county is now required to have a .gov website domain. Fomby suggested wrightcountymn.gov.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus is to reserve the website domain wrightcountymn.gov.

6. Dental Clinic Use Agreement

Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt provided a memo stating as part of the Community Dental Use Agreement, the county needs to establish an annual payment amount based on the premises upkeep cost. Wilfahrt said that staff has been working with an outside professional service to determine the Government Center premises upkeep costs and staff recommendation is to continue negotiating an agreement with Community Dental that recoups the operating costs of the dental clinic.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus is to direct staff to continue negotiating an agreement with Community Dental that recoups the operating costs of the dental clinic.

7. Employee Engagement Survey

Wilfahrt provided the results of the employee engagement survey and said there were 361 responses that were narrowed down into eight focus groups that helped shape 10 action steps. Wilfahrt summarized the action steps as articulated in the survey results document. The commissioners thanked staff for their efforts put into the survey, and the employees for their participation. Wilfahrt said the general sentiment from the focus group participants who reviewed the survey document before it was released was that the report conveyed honest data.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only**8. Schedule Meetings as Needed**

Diedrick asked if there was consensus to allow her to remotely attend the scheduled budget retreats and committees of the whole. Consensus was to allow a Teams meeting for Diedrick to listen to the meeting virtually.

Schoen asked to schedule two additional budget retreats for 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 3 and 11:00 a.m. Monday, September 9 to discuss the recommendation of the budget team. The previously scheduled Wednesday, September 4 Committee of the Whole agenda will be amended to Fee Schedule Review.

RECOMMENDATION: Consensus is to allow Diedrick to listen to budget meetings remotely, schedule two additional budget retreats on September 3 and September 9, and amend the agenda for the September 4 Committee of the Whole to review the fee schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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