



BOARD MINUTES
BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

DATE APPROVED: October 15, 2024

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

The Wright County Board met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Diedrick, Vetsch, Holland, Schoen, and Kaczmarek present.

Present and responding to roll call were the following:

Board of Commissioners:	Tina Diedrick
	Jeanne Holland
	Michael Kaczmarek
	Nadine Schoen
	Darek Vetsch

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES - DISPENSE WITH READING, APPROVE AS WRITTEN/REVISED

Motion to approve minutes collectively with the modifications listed below made by Diedrick and seconded by Kaczmarek

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

A. Approve Minutes from the County Board Meeting (9-25-2024)

Interim County Administrator Greg Kryzer asked to place a strike-through on Item for Consideration D1, approve Meridian Behavioral Health's request for letter of support to expand its treatment program in Howard Lake, to show that it was pulled from the agenda.

Kaczmarek made a clarification to the statement made by Diedrick under Items for Consideration A1, approve the 2025 budget and adopt resolution. "In Diedrick's statement, she said that Kaczmarek agreed to the proposed reduction." Kaczmarek clarified that he was not present at the meeting to agree or disagree.

Kaczmarek said a point for discussion is at the September 24 county board meeting, there were Sheriff's Office employees present who did not comment and it did not seem like a good use of time and taxpayer money. There were several reductions made to other departments and appropriations and those staff members were not present at the board meeting. Diedrick said that there were additional funds cut from the Sheriff's budget at a separate meeting when the Sheriff's Office was not present. The office originally had \$500,000 cut, and then an additional \$195,000.

B. Approve Minutes from the Revisors Committee (9-23-2024)**REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Schoen asked to add salary action on commissioners to Items for Consideration. Kryzer clarified if Schoen is looking to schedule a meeting or discuss. Schoen said that she would like to discuss today. The item was added to Items for Consideration B1.

Motion to approve agenda with addition made by Holland and seconded by Schoen

Aye: 4; Nay: 1; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

Names:

For: Holland, Kaczmarek, Schoen, Vetsch

Against: Diedrick

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Kaczmarek and seconded by Holland

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

A. FINANCE & TAXPAYER SERVICES

1. **Motion to Approve the Reimbursement of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Funds as Follows:
Approval of Use of ARP funds from 01-099-493-000
\$124,088.58 5.6 Clean Water: Stormwater- City of Cokato
\$511.51 Aid to Nonprofit Organizations- 4-H**
2. **Acknowledge Warrants Issued Between September 18 thru September 24, 2024.**

B. HIGHWAY

1. **Approve Authorization for Additional Services with Stantec Consulting services.**

C. PARKS & RECREATION

1. **Approve Contract with Vada Contracting LLC for Repairs on County Ditch #33 Branch #4 for \$85,568.**

TIMED AGENDA ITEMS**A. 9:05 AM- SETH WALLS & KELLY STREI, EXTENSION**

1. Adopt Resolution Declaring October 6-12, 2024 as National 4-H Week in Wright County.

4-H representative Sophie Salmela detailed the benefits and features of 4-H and presented a resolution to the board declaring October 6-12 as National 4-H Week in Wright County.

Motion by Diedrick and seconded by Holland

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

B. 9:15 AM- HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

1. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Diedrick and seconded by Holland

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

- i. Approve HHS Advisory Committee (HHSAC) Two-Year Term Reappointment:
Jeremy Tyler, District 2 - Sixth Term Ends 12-10-2024**
- ii. Approve Friday, October 4 Child Protection Team (1 & 2) Retreat, Ney Park, Maple Lake.**

2. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES TIMED AGENDA

- i. Adopt Resolution HHS 24-11 to Accept September 2024 Donation.**

Social Services Manager Jill Pooler said the donation was a staff donation to the Health & Human Services (HHS) donation closet.

Motion by Diedrick and seconded by Holland

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

- ii. Approve Meridian Behavioral Health's Request for Letter of Support to Expand Its Treatment Program in Howard Lake**

Pooler said Meridian Behavioral Health is an established service provider in the area. The letter of support is for a step-down program for adult males in Howard Lake who have completed residential treatment and are transitioning into everyday life. The program will offer therapy, relapse prevention, life skills, and transitioning skills to be successful in transition. Patients will likely be living in Wright County communities after transitioning and it is in the best interest of the community to have access to skills for success. The Minnesota Department of Public Health will make the final decision and Wright County, by statute, is not required to provide a letter. Kaczmarek asked what the current program is doing

now if they are looking to transition into helping up to 14 males at a time. Pooler said as she understands, the women's location is no longer licensed, so they would be offering a new service by creating the transition program for males. Kaczmarek said that he asked for a call for service report. Pooler said that she was able to speak to the Howard Lake Police Department and there were 10 calls for service in 2024, which the department did not indicate was an overly high number. Vetsch said that this is a conversation that to board needs to have as more requests are received, to look at quality as well as need. The state will put a certain amount of weight on a letter of recommendation from the board.

Motion by Kaczmarek and seconded by Schoen

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

- iii. **HHS Director's Comments:**
- 1. Recognize "Financial Workers & Case Aide Day" in October**
 - 2. Performance Management Child Safety & Permanency and Self Support Index Report**
 - 3. Family Resource Center Legislation**

Pooler said HHS would like to recognize Financial Workers & Case Aide Day in October. The proclamation is not currently ready but will be brought forward when it is.

Pooler said Wright County met all of the State of Minnesota's thresholds in the performance management child safety and permanency and self-support index report, including being in the top three in the region for children placed in relative care.

Pooler said there is Family Resource Center legislation, Strengthening Families Act Title 4B, which has been reauthorized for five years. Title 4B supports early intervention services and HHS is excited to have this extended because of current work being done in Wright County. Social Services Manager Michelle Miller said that Wright County Community Action (WCCA) is continuing to develop Family Resource Centers in Wright County. Grant applications have been submitted and the plan is to open the first Family Resource Center in Howard Lake. Through the development grant, WCCA would be able to hire a coordinator and then continue to work on opening second and third locations in Monticello and Maple Lake/Annandale.

Holland requested HHS to highlight Community Connection. Social Services Supervisor Diane Erkens said Community Connection is a partnership with Sherburne County Area United Way that will host more than 35 vendors, targeted at homeless individuals. The event will take place at the Big Lake Middle School from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. Thursday, October 17.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Approve and Adopt Recommendations from the Revisors Committee (9-23-2024)**

Kryzer confirmed the recommendation is regarding the zoning ordinance regulating interim use permits in townships, not licensing. Kaczmarek asked if anyone would be available to speak on this topic at the upcoming township quarterly meeting and Vetsch confirmed that he would be able to speak.

Motion by Kaczmarek and seconded by Schoen

For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

B1. Discuss Commissioner Salary

Schoen said she would like to make a statement in light of this year's budget. So much appreciation goes out to the department leadership and staff. All of the sacrifices and hard work getting Wright County to the 2025 budget. Schoen said because of this, she would like to make a motion to adopt a resolution not to increase the commissioners' salary for 2025, showing that the commissioners are dedicated to a trim budget for this upcoming year. Vetsch said that if the motion passes, he recommends any funds left in the budget be transferred to fund balance. Schoen said she is ok with that and feels like it shows solidarity that the commissioners are also willing to do what is necessary and make sacrifices. Holland seconded the motion.

Diedrick said that this is a discussion that is typically had at a committee of the whole and she objects. She still has the same pressures, inflation and increased property tax and is affected the same way as everyone else. She is not asking for anything above and beyond what the employees will be receiving and would prefer to look at expenses or other ways that the commissioners can cut the budget. A wage is something that you live on and she opposes making the decision abruptly without in-depth discussion.

Holland said she feels the board has had a lot of discussions and its something to show the staff that the board is serious and respects that they took some big cuts and to show solidarity. Diedrick said that she is not sure how it shows solidarity in the sense that if you want to look at the whole budget, but wages are what someone needs to live off of and to not receive even a cost of living adjustment (COLA), that is a significant decision. Diedrick said that she is already working for the people of the county and the employees, that is why she fought so hard for funding to be maintained. Diedrick said if you wanted to show solidarity, then you should have considered that when vetting the budget itself. This is more for show than actual impact and so she opposes it.

Holland said that a COLA increase of 6.5 percent, which was the original discussion, is drastic. Commissioners are here to serve the people and the forefathers didn't intend this to be a money-making venture. She feels that a 0 percent increase is what she has wanted the whole time with the challenging times that we are in.

Vetsch said he can support the request as a working member of the community. Being one of them as well as a representative of them, he can understand the challenges. The solidarity of many people not seeing any wage increases at all, and it is a good posture and position to be as a board. Diedrick questioned no one getting increases, saying the board has supported county employees with wage increases so she isn't sure what solidarity is being discussed. Vetsch said

externally, as a representative of the entire county citizenship. Internally, the compensation of those within the organization is largely contractual and in many cases the county board has little latitude but the bigger, greater temperature that the board has is of the citizenship of the county. Gauging the economic climate and the struggles of the citizens of the county is what the board needs to embrace first and foremost. Wright County does want to have good employees and to retain them, but that is secondary to the needs of the citizenship of Wright County.

Vetsch confirmed with Kryzer if a resolution was needed. Kryzer said the prior resolution from November 2024 indicates the salary will remain in effect until the resolution is amended or modified and given the language, adopting a new resolution is not necessary. Staff can do additional research and bring forward a resolution later if necessary. Vetsch said if a vote is necessary, it will be a vote stating a committee meeting will not be set or a resolution will not be drafted to change the current resolution. Vetsch clarified the motion made is to move forward with not scheduling a Committee of the Whole for commissioner salaries and to continue forward with the current resolution that is in place for 2025, making no change and not to adopt a resolution to increase commissioner salaries.

Motion to move forward with not scheduling a Committee of the Whole for commissioner salaries and to continue forward with the current resolution that is in place for 2025, making no change and not to adopt a resolution to increase commissioner salaries made by Schoen and seconded by Holland

Aye: 4; Nay: 1; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0; Recused: 0

Names:

For: Holland, Kaczmarek, Schoen, Vetsch

Against: Diedrick

ADVISORY COMMITTEE / ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

WARRANTS ISSUED

A. Warrants Issued

Wright County Board Meeting minutes submitted by Caitlin Chovan,
Administration Office Manager

