

The Wright County Board met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Husom, Sawatzke, Daleiden, Potter and Borrell present.

Daleiden moved to approve the 4-01-14 County Board Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Potter and carried 5-0.

Daleiden moved to approve the Agenda as presented, seconded by Potter. The motion carried unanimously.

On a motion by Borrell, second by Daleiden, all voted to approve the Consent Agenda:

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Change Date Of County Auction To 9-13-14 @ 10:00 A.M., Public Works Building (Previously Scheduled For 6-14-14).
2. Authorize Weight Watchers Program For County Employees.

B. HUMAN SERVICES

1. Position Replacements:
 - A. Collection Officer Position.
 - B. Public Health Nurse.

C. PARKS

1. Parks Department 2013 Annual Report.

D. SHERIFF

1. Authorize Signatures Of County Board Chair & County Coordinator On 2014 MN DNR Boat & Water Safety Grant, \$25,408, 1-01-14 To 6-30-15.

Advisory Committee/Advisory Board Updates

1. Crime Lab. Husom said she and Lt. Sean Deringer of the Sheriff's Office attended a recent Crime Lab Meeting. The Lab is working toward being DNA fully accredited and hooked into the CODIS (Combined DNA Index System). A year ago, the Crime Lab was backlogged by 300 cases with an average turnaround of 100 days. That is now a 10 case backlog with a 7 day turnaround. The Lab was assessed on over 400 standards and only cited for four violations. Two of those were questionable so will be appealed. They must abide by the standards guidelines for two months to continue on the accreditation process. It is anticipated that it will be 5-6 months before the Lab is fully accredited. Husom said the Lab always comes in under budget. This past year, a computer upgrade was required so they met budget.

Sawatzke said the County sent a letter to the Crime Lab on the funding formula a couple of months ago. This relates to Wright County paying substantially more to fund the Lab than is received in services. Sawatzke said the letter requests a response prior to the end of the Joint Powers Agreement in April, 2015. He stated the Board approved of an Amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement with the thought that funding would be discussed prior to April, 2015. Sawatzke said the Sheriff's Office is happy with the services of the Crime Lab. However, when the funding of the Crime Lab was discussed previously by the County Board, a member of the Sheriff's Office they agreed Wright County may be paying more than they should. Borrell said the BCA is no longer behind and the services are free. Sawatzke said review of the usage figures indicate that Wright County is paying at least twice as much as services that are being used.

Daleiden asked about how often DNA services are used. Sheriff Joe Hagerty said he can provide that data to the Board if desired. More cases now involve DNA, including touch DNA. The turnaround time at the BCA is long if the material is even accepted, and there is a backlog. He said the BCA has been fantastic on turnaround when the case involves a homicide or serious assault. Husom said the point is that the BCA does not accept all cases.

Sawatzke referenced the stats from November, 2013 (one month random sampling). Wright County utilized 11.1% in services but paid 23% of the costs by virtue of population. Sherburne County used 13.3% in services and paid 16%. Anoka County used 75.6% of services and paid 61%. Sawatzke said Wright County is subsidizing and he did not know how long the County could continue to do that. He said the letter sent by Lee Kelly, County Coordinator, on behalf of the Board indicated that discussion is needed on funding. Daleiden thought the idea was to wait until the Lab became DNA accredited, as the Sheriff's Office feels they may use the Lab more with DNA accreditation. Sawatzke said DNA is another crime investigation tool. He anticipated that usage would also increase in the other counties as well. Anoka County may use this more than Wright County because of the number of crimes in their County.

Kelly stated that the letter was sent to Anoka County. Subsequently, Sheriff James Stuart and Crime Lab Director Erchal Springer contacted him indicating that they hope to finalize the accreditation process and revisit this subject in 2015. Sawatzke said if discussions on funding are postponed until 2015, Wright County will be looking at two more years of subsidizing as the budget will have already been set for 2016. There is an opt out clause in the Agreement. Sawatzke noted that the services provided by the Crime Lab are outstanding but he desires equity in funding. Sheriff Hagerty said in prior years, there was a meeting held and attended by representatives of the member Counties (County Coordinators/Administrators, Board designees, and Sheriff's). That would be an alternative again this year.

Sheriff Hagerty said they want to be a partner in the Crime Lab rather than a user. Quarterly reports reflect not as much usage by Wright County but the Sheriff also does not want to see an increase in crime. He stated that Sherburne County sends more of their controlled substances to the Lab; Wright County does not unless there is a trial and a field test is required. Hagerty referenced the track the Lab is on with DNA accreditation. He said the Lab has very experienced personnel and that is why the accreditation process went as well as it did. He said the goal is to get into accreditation so they can access CODIS. This will assist with solving crimes, even cold cases. Sawatzke appreciates the fact that Wright County has not taken the philosophy of just sending the Crime Lab more things to process. That will drive up costs for the whole system. If other counties are doing that they should be funding more.

(End of Advisory Committee/Advisory Board Report)

Sheriff Joe Hagerty recognized and presented a plaque to Deputy Louis Beauchane for receiving the United States Attorney's Office Justice Award for 2014. Beauchane was part of the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force from 2009-2011 and is being recognized for his part in Operation Starburst. Hagerty said that is a relatively small unit that began in the early 2000's. There have been three deputies attached to that unit when funding was adequate through the Legislature. Since funding is down to \$300,000/year, Wright County pulled out. This was about the time Beauchane was finishing up a very extensive \$50 million bank fraud/identity scam. Beauchane and a core group of people were recognized at the Federal Building in Minneapolis for their work on Operation Starburst. Sheriff Hagerty said at some point, it is hoped there will be a Minnesota financial crimes unit that is self sufficient and able to solve more of these crimes. Beauchane said that in 2009, three people (himself, an Edina police officer, and a secret service agent) investigated separate counterfeit check cases. They merged together and made a few arrests. This resulted in the identification of bank insiders who were giving out personal information to commit bank fraud and residents from other States being flown in to commit fraud in Minnesota. Arrests were made in New York, Georgia, and California. One of the main people involved from New York was brought to Minnesota and prosecuted. The main suspect was located in California and had a storage locker with fake identification equipment and thousands of stolen identities from all over the U.S. (from doctors' offices, credit card companies, and large national banks). The first wave included prosecution in the amount of \$50 million. They are starting to prosecute another associated case. Borrell asked about the Wright County victims. Beauchane said that with the first case prosecuted, the first wave involved an estimated \$50 million. He is unsure of the number of Wright County victims involved but knew there were Wright County victims as he handled the cases. There are also Wright County cases involved with the second wave of prosecution.

Bob Hiivala, Auditor/Treasurer, requested Board approval of a private tax forfeiture sale. This involves Parcel ID #118-038-000011. The City of Otsego notified the County that the parcel involves right-of-way and has asked that

the sale be limited to a private sale. Brian Asleson, Chief Deputy Attorney, explained this involves a parcel frontage road along CSAH 39 near downtown Otsego. The main parcel, north of the identified parcel, went through foreclosure and this parcel was included. The main parcel has no access to CSAH 39. The city does not want to maintain the frontage road. The Tax Forfeiture Committee met previously and deemed this Parcel should go to a public sale. Asleson suggested the County set a condition that the Parcel is jointly owned by those parcels that need access to the highway. If approved for private sale, the three property owners would be notified. This would return this Parcel to the tax rolls. Daleiden made a motion to approve a private sale for Parcel ID #118-038-000011. The motion carried 5-0 on a second by Potter.

On a motion by Daleiden, second by Borrell, all voted to approve the renewal of a seasonal liquor license for Whispering Pines Golf Club.

Potter made a motion to schedule a Budget Committee Of The Whole Meeting on 5-08-14 at 6:00 P.M. for the purpose of reviewing the 2013 budget. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried unanimously.

Daleiden moved to approve the claims as listed in the abstract, subject to audit, for a total of \$438,262.66 with 256 vendors and 416 transactions. The motion was seconded by Borrell and carried 5-0.

Marc Mattice, Parks Administrator, requested the Board schedule a Public Hearing for 5-13-14 at 9:30 A.M. to review revisions to the Wright County Parks Ordinance. The proposed revisions have been reviewed by the Parks Commission and Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Council. Daleiden moved to set the Public Hearing for 5-13-14 at 9:30 A.M. The motion was seconded by Sawatzke and carried unanimously.

Mattice requested the Board authorize Chair Husom to sign a letter of support to Pheasants Forever on a proposed land acquisition/addition to the State Wildlife Management Area System (PID #210-100-213100). This parcel is adjacent to Robert Ney Regional Park. On 1-01-14, the County Board authorized Mattice to work with Pheasants Forever on a possible acquisition of the parcel. Since that time, a partnership has developed between Pheasants Forever, the MN DNR, and Wright County. The letter reflects that the acquisition would be for 160+/- acres in Maple Lake Township. The addition of the parcel as a State Wildlife Management Area will continue to support the efforts to create a large complex of habitat as well as areas for public outdoor recreational opportunities. Wright County understands that the MN DNR will eventually own and maintain this property as a State Wildlife Management Area, which is open to all season public hunting. Mattice said the only cost to Wright County will be his time. Discussion led to PILT payments (Payment In Lieu of Taxes). Sawatzke thought the DNR would be required to make PILT payments and generally those payments exceed the tax revenues. Mattice did not have information on PILT payments or the current tax payment. Daleiden moved to table discussion for one week to allow Mattice to obtain more information. The motion was seconded by Sawatzke. Tom McGregor, resident, said Wright County has 5,200 acres of Wildlife Management Area and he did not feel this is necessary. It will remove the land from the tax rolls and that cost is then transferred from a private taxpayer to all State taxpayers. He questioned when the County will have enough land, which he said is a question he has brought forward before. The motion to lay this item over carried 5-0.

Dan Nadeau and Kerry Saxton of the SWCD brought forth discussion on the Wright County Weed Program. Nadeau is the SWCD Conservation Specialist. As part of his duties, he works to obtain grants for noxious weed eradication. Nadeau identified Wild Parsnip as a noxious weed that is growing in many areas. In 2008, treatment was started on Wild Parsnip with a grant from BWSR for \$15,000. Since then, grants have been received every other year. The County contributed \$10,000 toward this effort in 2012. A cooperative weed management program has been started with participation from the DNR, MnDOT, County Board, Highway, and Parks. They are working together to coordinate efforts to get rid of Wild Parsnip.

Nadeau said efforts have been successful in treating Wild Parsnip. They would like the recently hired County Ag Inspector, Erik Heuring, to join the efforts. Meeker County has also expressed an interest in working together. Information was provided on the 2014 Noxious and Invasive Weed Program and the Local Weed Inspector's Guide for Enforcement of the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law (both documents from the MN Department of Agriculture).

Also provided was a map reflecting the identified Wild Parsnip locations in Wright County. Nadeau said there has been success in treating Wild Parsnip in some areas of the County. A sprayer has been purchased for a pickup and they have hired the MN Conservation Corp (identifying and marking the locations). They have also done monitoring and spraying.

Nadeau said the Townships, Parks Department, and Highway Department can receive 100% reimbursement for herbicide costs. They have learned this is one of MnDOT's lower priorities. Nadeau explained further that they would like to educate people on Wild Parsnip and provide them with a timetable to treat it. It is critical that the plant be treated before it flowers and seeds. He referenced the map and identified areas that they are seeing Wild Parsnip, including along highways and train tracks. They are working with the railroad, although the contact person is responsible for half of North America and all of Canada.

Nadeau said that they would like the County Board to work with the Ag Inspector on efforts after the education piece has been met. There are landowners who may need to be educated and are unaware of their responsibilities. If the landowner does not take steps in a specified time frame, then the Ag Inspector could issue a ticket. They would like the County Board to back the Ag Inspector on this enforcement. Wild Parsnip is affecting wildlife, agricultural, and parks areas. Nadeau said they want to protect the eastern part of the County from Wild Parsnip so it does not spread as it has in the western part of the County.

Daleiden stated that Wild Parsnip is not just a noxious weed. It causes blisters. Nadeau said that if a person comes in contact with the plant when it is sunny, blisters will develop. It can cause serious and uncomfortable symptoms. Nadeau said Wild Parsnip is prevalent in the southern part of the State. Animals can also be affected from the plant. The plant can go dormant so it is difficult to treat. Efforts are needed to educate the public.

Nadeau said they would like the County Board to support the efforts of the Ag Inspector for enforcement if needed. Borrell asked whether a person can be hired to take care of noxious weeds on a property, and the landowner is then billed for the cost versus issuing a ticket. Nadeau said that is a possibility if it is deemed more suitable. Borrell referenced clean up of blighted land. In that case, a crew is hired and the property owner is billed. Husom said the County Attorney's Office will need to provide an opinion with regard to property rights and violations.

Saxton serves on a Noxious Weed Advisory Committee. There is the power to take action on a property and bill the landowner. Costs associated with spraying will be dependent on the amount of noxious weeds involved. This will be the first wave of educating and involving the public. It will need to be decided how to fund this and future efforts. To eradicate Wild Parsnip will take a large buy in from the public and a lot of work. He said this cannot be done just with staff from the SWCD. If the Board does not want to support this effort, the plan would be to treat areas in Franklin and Rockford Townships aggressively; they will not spend much additional time in French Lake Township anymore. Additional discussion followed on efforts in areas outside of Wright County. Saxton said there are areas in southern Minnesota that have given up the effort because of the abundance of the plant. Saxton said Wild Parsnip is a biennial plant. The first year it does not flower; the second year it flowers and shoots up stalks. The plant will never be totally eradicated. Nadeau added that the intent is to place informational articles in the newspapers.

Daleiden made a motion to support the efforts of the Ag Inspector in enforcing noxious weed laws. The motion was seconded by Borrell. Sawatzke asked whether Wild Parsnip is on the noxious weed list. Nadeau confirmed it is. Sawatzke said it is assumed that the Ag Inspector will work on all items on the noxious weed list. Nadeau said that is correct. Saxton referenced Canada Thistle which is on the noxious weed list. Efforts to eradicate this weed could be done 24/7. He does not support enforcement efforts for Canada Thistle. Borrell said the chemical used for Wild Parsnip can be used on Canada Thistle as well. Saxton said staff would like the Board to know that this effort will not be easy and there will be some landowners who will be unhappy. Borrell requested that a report on the effort be provided this summer. Daleiden said education is key. The motion carried 5-0.

Diane Sander, Coordinator for the C.R.O.W., was present to discuss the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) application for the One Watershed, One Plan approach. In 2012, Legislation was passed allowing BWSR to move forward with this approach. Last year, BWSR developed a pilot program that the C.R.O.W. and stakeholders in the North Fork of the Crow Watershed are planning to apply to. Maps were provided on the suggested boundaries for the One Watershed, One Plan Project and on the North Fork Crow Partners' Boundaries. The reason that Legislators want to move forward is because there are over 200 different water plans in the State. A more streamlined approach is desired. Many of the plans have the same priorities and concerns so it is the goal to reduce those plans to one document. In February, the C.R.O.W. met with stakeholders in the North Fork of the Crow River to see if this was a viable pilot project, and the stakeholders agreed it is. The North Fork is a unique area to the Watershed because of two Watershed Districts and eight SWCD's and Counties.

The pilot program will take the Watershed Districts Water Management Plans and County Water Plans and create one document with different priorities from each of the Counties and Watershed Districts. The goal is a more efficient and streamlined process. Sander outlined on the map the North Fork Crow Partners and their boundaries. Commissioner Borrell is a representative on the C.R.O.W. That group has been looking at this application since January and has moved to the application process. BWSR's grant application process requests letters of support from stakeholders in the Watershed. C.R.O.W. is requesting a letter of support from Wright County. A draft letter was provided. Sander said the application will be submitted next week. BWSR will then review the application and develop a short list of projects. More information will be provided in the second round of the application process. Sander said BWSR will provide the funding to go through this process. There is no required match for the application. There will be some additional work for the stakeholders. Borrell moved to authorize pursuit of the grant, seconded by Daleiden, carried 5-0. The motion includes authorizing signature on the letter of support from Wright County.

Bill Swing, Information Technology Director, requested a Technology Committee Meeting to discuss the following items:

1. Funding of Technology
2. Brief Update on Major Technology Projects
 - A. Web Site Redesign
 - B. Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)
 - C. Sheriff CAD/RMS
 - D. Human Services Voice (Phone) Upgrade
 - E. Auditor/Treasurer E-Invoice & Plat Worksheet
 - F. Property Tax and CAMA
3. 800 MHz Radio Agency Fee for 2015.
4. Technology Services Agreement with Corinna Township.

Swing originally requested a Meeting on 4-24-14 at 1:30 P.M. but changed his request to 4-30-14 at 1:30 P.M. due to scheduling conflicts. Sawatzke moved to schedule the Technology Committee Meeting for 4-30-14 at 1:30 P.M. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried unanimously.

Swing requested approval of revisions to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Agreement and for the Board to approve BYOD as an option for all County Departments. The BYOD Agreement, adopted by the Board on 11-26-13, was restricted to the Departments of Highway, Parks and Surveyor. Further revisions were approved on 2-18-14. A BYOD Project Team Meeting occurred on 3-04-14 and some recommended changes are being presented today. Those changes were presented to the Leadership Team. Swing said one change relates to leaves of absence. Payroll and Human Resources have requested no change in an employee's BYOD status unless they have been on leave for four consecutive weeks. The BYOD Agreement will reflect that Mobile Device Management (MDM) software will be purchased by the department and installed by the IT Department on an employee's device. This is for protection of private data. The Agreement language was strengthened with regard to device use in vehicles. Employees will be required to commit to the terms of the agreement for a minimum of six months. Stipends for part-time employees will be prorated, based on the number of hours worked. Swing said the recommendation is to offer the BYOD Program to all County Departments. Sawatzke extended appreciation to the BYOD Committee for their work. Sawatzke said at a previous meeting on this topic, Court Services Director Mike MacMillan initiated

discussion on costs associated with stipends. Swing said MacMillan's concern was addressed through providing more options on plans (data or voice/data). Daleiden moved to approve the BYOD Agreement, seconded by Potter, carried 5-0.

Swing said the launch of the new Wright County Public Facing Website may be moved back to mid June. This was provided as an informational update.

The meeting recessed at 10:16 A.M. and reconvened at 10:25 A.M.

A Committee Of The Whole Meeting was held on 3-27-14. At today's County Board Meeting, the following changes were made to the minutes:

- Page 1, 1st paragraph, last two sentences should read, "Wright County contracted with Sherburne County to provide transit services to St. Michael and some other cities in the County. Sawatzke said ridership eventually grew strongest in Buffalo and Cokato." (Sawatzke)
- Page 1, 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence, change from "In 2000...." to "Around 2000...." (Sawatzke)
- Page 1, 2nd paragraph, last sentence should read, "Recently, River Rider began providing more service to St. Michael, Otsego, Albertville and Hanover area." (Sawatzke)
- Page 1, 5th paragraph, last sentence should read, "Borrell said Chad at River Rider is working to increase ridership on a new schedule in Hanover, St. Michael, Otsego and Albertville." (Borrell)
- Page 1, 6th paragraph, last sentence should read, "Borrell said River Rider has three office staff, while Trailblazer employs 10 to 12." (Sawatzke)
- Page 2, 6th paragraph, 3rd sentence, change to "Bob Fix" (Husom)
- Page 4, 7th paragraph, 1st sentence should read, "Kevin Yonak from Monticello Township suggested that the County contract with a private entity to provide public transportation and skip MnDOT altogether." (Sawatzke)

Sawatzke asked that the Committee Of The Whole Minutes be amended to reflect that Gary Ludwig from Trailblazer said there is a menu of services available to Wright County, and that menu of services did not have to be exactly what was reflected in the document provided at that meeting. It was understood that Wright County could choose from those items. Borrell said the minutes should reflect that the costs to the County are on the right side of that document under the Smart Ride area. Sawatzke said that minutes should be changed to show that at the Committee Of The Whole Meeting, Ludwig stated that the items listed on the left side of the document (Trailblazer Transit) are funded by the State and the ridership, and the items listed on the right (Smart Ride) don't pay for themselves and are subsidized by Sibley and McLeod Counties. Sawatzke asked that the Service Design document be added as an Exhibit to the Meeting Minutes to further support the references made to it. It was the consensus that approval of the Minutes would need to be done after the corrections are made to the Minutes. Sawatzke made a motion to lay the Committee Minutes over for one week, seconded by Daleiden, carried 5-0.

Discussion moved to a draft resolution relating to partnering with the Trailblazer Joint Powers Board. Daleiden said prior Board action was for Sawatzke and Potter to negotiate with Trailblazer on transit in Wright County. Today, Daleiden said the Board did not provide Sawatzke and Potter direction on the items to be negotiated. In an effort to aid in these negotiations, he asked individual Board Members to indicate what they saw as problems or areas of concern and any solutions or options. Daleiden made a chart listing "Problem" and "Solution or Option."

Daleiden identified River Rider as the first item on the list, with Trailblazer being the solution or option. This was identified at the 3-27-14 Committee Of The Whole Meeting based on input from cities and townships. The cost is a factor including the buy in and the local share.

Borrell identified annual operation costs as an area of concern. He said it is important to communicate with cities as that is where that operating share is going to come from. He did not feel the County can agree to a number without involving cities. Husom said that is her main concern as well. She asked whether Wright County will upfront costs and whether there will be a cost to the County. Husom said it will need to be determined whether rides will be offered to constituents located in townships. Both Borrell and Husom referenced transit

reimbursement costs available through Human Services programs and whether the County will save money through Trailblazer versus private transportation. Borrell said the County will have some savings in Human Services. The total transportation budget in Human Services is roughly \$500,000. There is no cost to the County directly for \$400,000 of that amount (billed to the County but reimbursed by State or Federal funding). Borrell said it will be a percentage of the \$100,000 remainder that will be saved. He did not estimate this to be much over \$30,000. He thought that the County should pass along any savings to make Trailblazer more affordable. Daleiden said more savings could be realized through a reduction in ride cost currently provided by private transportation moving to Trailblazer (rides at \$28/ride may reduce to \$12/ride). Trailblazer would also get that money instead of the private organizations.

Sawatzke said a concern of his is obviously the cost. Numerous city officials have indicated to him that if ridership doesn't cover the 15% cost, cities understand they would make up that difference. He asked city representatives that were present for the Board Meeting if anyone disagreed with that philosophy. Those present did not voice disagreement. Sawatzke said that means cities will be financial players in this game, and the County needs to have resolution with Trailblazer that gives cities the indication of how much this may cost them. He stated that Wright County cannot agree to a cost with the cities participation. He did not feel cities can decide if the amount is reasonable until they know what bus service will be in their communities, and they have not reached that point yet. These are things that need to be discussed over a period of months, not days. Daleiden clarified that the problem being identified is that the cities don't know what their costs will be. Sawatzke asked city representatives present if any of them know what the cost of bus service will be in their city through Trailblazer.

Daleiden said there are two figures that have been given. The buy in has been identified at \$210,000 and that represents two months of operating reserves. Sawatzke said Trailblazer had a few proposals, with \$210,000 being one of them. Sawatzke referenced the couple hundred thousand dollar reserve at River Rider and the possible use of that. Daleiden stated it is unknown whether there will be any unemployment claims by River Rider employees. The reserve will need to cover those claims. Sawatzke said some of the River Rider drivers have experience that expands well over a decade. He has concerns with what is seen as their value to this new organization. He thought consideration should be given to the River Rider drivers just as Wright County will value the Trailblazer drivers. Another concern relates to wages for drivers. There are River Rider drivers that are making close to \$20/hour because of longevity. Trailblazer starts drivers at \$15.50/hour. Daleiden said the list will include employees as an area of concern. That will have a direct effect on the River Rider funding and unemployment costs. Sawatzke said when they met with Trailblazer, he asked the Commissioners from the other two counties about drivers. The question was deferred to Gary Ludwig who said the drivers were promised an interview. Sawatzke said if this is going to be a partnership and negotiation, there needs to be more discussion about River Rider employees and their salary and benefits. Potter said timing is an issue and does not believe every detail can be worked out prior to June 30th.

Borrell asked that communication be added to the list. He feels information from the one negotiation meeting should have been relayed to the County Board and to the cities for their feedback. Sawatzke noted that today's County Board Meeting is the first meeting since that time. Borrell said it would be beneficial to have them summarize their negotiations. Borrell wants teamwork from the negotiating team. Daleiden responded that the County Board told Sawatzke and Potter to negotiate with the Trailblazer Board but did not articulate the items to negotiate. Daleiden said the purpose of going through this exercise today, itemizing the areas of concern, is so the Board is on the same page moving forward.

Borrell referenced timing. The first thing he would suggest is for Sawatzke and Borrell to negotiate on services for the period of 7-01-14 through 12-31-14. He said Tom Gottfried, MnDOT's Transit Program Director, indicated that rides will be guaranteed during that period and at least to the current level of service. Borrell said the rush mentality needs to be removed from the negotiation process. Daleiden added existing service to the list of problems with the solution or option being MnDOT or contracting with Trailblazer for this time period. Borrell supports taking care of this issue first and then moving to other concerns.

Mike Schadauer, Director of MnDOT Transit, referenced the word "guaranteed" that Borrell used. Schadauer said he wrote a letter that MnDOT is committed to providing services on 7-01-14. That commitment must be done within the law. Statute reflects that they will work locally, but a commitment is needed from the County to assist MnDOT in meeting that commitment. Schadauer said he cannot call it a guarantee of service. MnDOT is committed because people need that level of service in Wright County. MnDOT is trying to work with Wright County and Trailblazer to make that happen. Borrell responded that Schadauer did not make the guarantee but Gottfried did. Borrell thinks negotiations can be worked on right away to get something in place by 7-01-14. Negotiations on a Joint Powers Agreement can come later. Schadauer said MnDOT's desire is for the service today to be in place for the remainder of the calendar year, and MnDOT feels Trailblazer is the best way to make that happen. Sawatzke said that could be accomplished with a contract for the rest of this year. Schadauer said it could, but a commitment is needed from Wright County. Sawatzke said that is what they are working on.

Sawatzke referenced the minutes of the Trailblazer Joint Powers Meeting on 3-20-14 in Glencoe which reflect:

"...motion carried unanimously to expand Trailblazer's service area to include Wright County on July 1, 2014, in order to allow time for Trailblazer to work out the details of a new joint powers agreement with Wright County by January 1, 2015."

Sawatzke said the Trailblazer Board took action to indicate it is okay to have a short term agreement (6 months) while a Joint Powers Agreement is negotiated. Sawatzke said Gary Ludwig, Trailblazer Executive Director, confirmed that at the 3-27-14 County Board meeting:

"Sawatzke asked Ludwig whether the Trailblazer JPB would consider allowing Wright County to contract for transit service with them for 18 months, and then consider a formal agreement. Ludwig said the Trailblazer JPB passed a motion last week to begin service with the operating authority and funding from MnDOT, along with any local share assistance they get, and operate until 1-01-15. Sawatzke said that would give the County more time to assess the system and gather information."

Sawatzke thought Potter's philosophy was that the County has to act now, but the Trailblazer Board has indicated that the Joint Powers Agreement can wait until 2015. Sawatzke agreed with Borrell that the County should work out small details so service is in place starting 7-01-14 and they will continue on with the larger picture of the Joint Powers Agreement. Sawatzke said a negotiations meeting was held with the Trailblazer Board on 4-04-14 and attended by himself, Commissioner Potter, and Lee Kelly, County Coordinator. It was a challenging meeting discussing the issues at hand. Many of the items being identified today were discussed at that meeting. At the end of that meeting, he left with the understanding there would be another meeting with the Trailblazer Board on 4-17-14. There were a number of items that both sides needed to gather information on. Sawatzke said he will provide Ludwig on the routes in Wright County prior to the next meeting. Ludwig was unable to answer some questions as he did not have this information. Daleiden said that relates to the communication problem identified today. Sawatzke said Ludwig also thinks Wright County needs new buses, which he questioned as several buses were purchased in the last few years. Sawatzke said documents reflect that Ludwig does not feel any of the buses from River Rider are roadworthy. Daleiden understood that MnDOT had told Ludwig that. Schadauer stated that Trailblazer and Ludwig have been informed that the River Rider buses are roadworthy and will be used. He said they may not all be in perfect condition, and Ludwig has been asked to evaluate them as to what might be needed in the future. Sawatzke said another item that was brought up at the 4-04-14 meeting with Trailblazer was a request by Potter for information on the River Rider budget, which has since been provided to him. Sawatzke said he asked for a copy of the Joint Powers Agreement and now has one.

Sawatzke said at the end of the 4-04-14 meeting with Trailblazer, a date of 4-17-14 was set as the date for the next negotiating meeting. He was surprised and confused last week when he received an email from the City of Cokato pleading with him to approve a resolution at today's Board Meeting to get the Joint Powers Agreement moving along. He contacted the County Coordinator and learned that a resolution was being placed on the 4-15-14 County Board Agenda based on direction by two Commissioners. He also learned there was a meeting held with Trailblazer on 4-09-14 and Commissioner Potter attended. Sawatzke recalled that Wright County Board members had a meeting conflict on 4-09-14 so there was not supposed to be a negotiating session at the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Board Meeting. His understanding was the Trailblazer Board was going to meet and discuss the issue on their side.

Sawatzke said he is a member of that negotiating team and was unaware that negotiations were taking place that day. He understood the meeting was taking place without Wright County officials.

Sawatzke read from the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Meeting Minutes:

“Mr. Gottfried commended the Trailblazer Board for offering two seats to Wright County on a new Trailblazer Board. He also said that such an action is unprecedented and that the Trailblazer Board has gone the extra mile to try to make a partnership with Wright County work.”

Sawatzke referenced the comment and found it surprising that they viewed offering two seats on the Joint Powers Board as unprecedented. He questioned whether Trailblazer thought Wright County wouldn't have any seats on that Board at all or possibly one, with Wright County being the largest County. Sawatzke referenced the meeting with the Trailblazer Board on 4-04-14. He asked Potter whether he thought Sawatzke brought forth legitimate concerns at that meeting. Potter said Sawatzke discussed employees and the local share. Following that, discussion went to the River Rider model (how their model is different than Trailblazer), the cafeteria plan, and the costs associated. Sawatzke said he pointed out at that meeting how funding from the cities is handled. Potter said he did not take it that way and did not believe the Trailblazer Board did either.

Sawatzke read the following from the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Meeting Minutes:

Potter “said he is working on a resolution to present to the Wright County Board on Tuesday, April 15, proposing to enter into a joint powers agreement with Sibley and McLeod Counties to provide transit with the terms Trailblazer has already agreed to. Mr. Potter said he has already discussed the resolution with the Wright County Chairperson Christine Husom. He said he believes there are enough votes on the Wright County Board to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Sibley and McLeod Counties and to work toward a joint powers agreement.”

Sawatzke said this exact same topic was discussed at the 4-01-14 County Board Meeting and there were not three votes to support it. He asked Potter why he thought there would be three votes 1.5 weeks later when there hadn't been a meeting to discuss this issue.

Potter responded that the first meeting of the negotiating team and Trailblazer Board did not go as well as Sawatzke may have thought. Potter said the Trailblazer Board was not positive on whether some type of terms, conditions, or agreement will be reached. He said part of Trailblazer's 4-09-14 Meeting was to meet with MnDOT and they contemplated whether this effort is over. Sawatzke asked Potter whether the Trailblazer Board expressed that once at the meeting of 4-04-14. Potter responded that Sawatzke basically took over that meeting. Sawatzke again asked Potter why he felt on 4-09-14 there were three votes in Wright County to approve the Joint Powers Agreement when just 1.5 weeks earlier there were not three votes to approve the same thing. Daleiden said his view of the draft resolution is to work towards a Joint Powers Agreement. Borrell said the resolution reflects “will willingly provide an appropriate amount of working capital and local share to support appropriate levels of service.” Sawatzke said in the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Minutes, it is clear that the resolution is in reference to the formulas and dollar amounts that Trailblazer has already agreed to. Daleiden said minutes do not always provide all of the accurate information. Sawatzke said he asked Commissioner Potter and Potter did not say those Minutes were incorrect. Husom said the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Minutes reflect that “he believes there are enough votes...” Sawatzke said another point to bring out in those Minutes is that Potter said “that he is a conservative and not a big fan of transit, but now that there is transit in Wright County, he believes it should continue.” Sawatzke said Potter seems to be in support of it today and has a push to get it done immediately. Daleiden said he did not see that in the resolution.

Sawatzke said it bothers him that Commissioner Potter had a negotiation session with members of Sibley and McLeod Counties, when Sawatzke is a member of the negotiation team and had no knowledge of the meeting. He asked Daleiden whether he could defend that. Daleiden responded that he was not going to defend either Commissioner.

Sawatzke referenced the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Minutes which reflect:

“Mr. Potter thanked Trailblazer for all it has done, but said he feels there is a stall game being played by his fellow commissioners that isn’t doing anyone any good regarding creating a partnership with Trailblazer.”

Sawatzke said he did not feel answering those questions is a stall game. This is a \$3.6 million operation which provides services to Wright County. Discussion needs to occur on what services will be provided for \$3.6 million and how it will be funded.

Sawatzke referenced The Herald Journal newspaper that covered the 4-09-14 Trailblazer Joint Powers Board Meeting. The article reflects that Commissioner Potter’s comment on the proposed resolution was, “no more games.” He asked Potter who is playing games. Potter responded that it has taken six months to get to this point and just recently it was decided there is a sense of urgency. Sawatzke said that is not the case. He stated that Commissioner Daleiden made that clear a few weeks ago. Three weeks prior to that was when it was decided that Trailblazer was the only option. Sawatzke said if he is going to continue negotiations, and he expects to because of his experience with transit is more so than others by virtue of his service on the River Rider Board, he can’t have people negotiating behind his back and against him. He said there needs to be teamwork.

Sawatzke extended appreciation to Daleiden for his efforts at today’s Board Meeting on this topic. Daleiden said he wants to lay out what the Board’s problems and concerns are. In review of what was discussed today, he said the cost is a very contentious issue for operations, subsidies, and the buy in. When Wright County got involved in River Rider in past years, he assumed there was money from the County to get started. Sawatzke said the County originally put in a 20% share to cover buses. If operational dollars were involved, it was for a short period of time.

Husom identified another problem or concern as mixed messages. They are receiving mixed messages from what is coming out in the various minutes and from Gary Ludwig, and there is a need to clarify some of these things. She asked whether there is the urgency that has been referenced. Daleiden said these items relate to the communication issue that was identified earlier.

Daleiden referenced Smart Ride. He said the only reason he has a concern is that it is different than River Rider. It is unknown whether this service will work in Wright County. There were approximately 400 rides on Smart Ride last year in Sibley and McLeod Counties. He does not know actual costs but thinks this may be a service that can be negotiated where it is paid for by the users. Borrell does not have a concern with Smart Ride as Ludwig told him initially that is where all of the extra money is going. Later, it was learned that Ludwig misspoke and Ludwig said that Smart Ride funds itself. Smart Ride is made up of volunteer drivers who are dispatched through the Trailblazer dispatch system. Buses are a part of this. There is no 85% reimbursement associated with this. Daleiden said there were 433 Smart Rides in Sibley and McLeod last year. Daleiden said it is possible this may work for Wright County but he wanted to put it out there as it is a concern.

Daleiden asked whether the issues of concern have been identified. Husom, Potter and Borrell thought that was the case. Sawatzke asked whether this is a question relative to the Joint Powers Agreement or to the issue as a whole. Borrell said as relayed before, there needs to be unanimity on the negotiation committee. Daleiden said the purpose of the discussion today is to identify the issues and options for the negotiating committee. Borrell said even if the Board gives direction, the members appointed to negotiate must function as a team. Daleiden said the Board identified the concerns today. Those concerns had not previously been conveyed to the negotiating team.

Sawatzke said an issue which could be addressed once the Joint Powers Board is in place is the cost of the Trailblazer model. There are 39 rural transit providers in the State, according to the most recent report by MnDOT Transit. On an hourly rate, Trailblazer was the second most expensive in the State and 50% more expensive than the average cost for transit in the State by all 39 providers combined. Of the 39 providers combined, the average rate was \$50 per hour to run a bus rurally. It costs Trailblazer \$75.43 to run their bus. Sawatzke said this is not a negotiable item now. Once Wright County becomes a member of Trailblazer, he will have his sights on that. There is no reason this operation should be 50% more expensive than the average in the State. He referenced the model Ludwig showed on the amount of bureaucracy needed to add service to Wright County. Daleiden added model as

a problem, being the second most expensive in the State. Borrell said economies of scale has been discussed and how to improve efficiencies. He asked how many staff will be added. Sawatzke said three lead drivers for six routes. Sawatzke said the Trailblazer facility was paid for with federal stimulus dollars. Most transit systems have a lease payment.

Daleiden asked for input from audience members.

A member of the audience asked what the cost per ride will be through Trailblazer for seniors and the handicapped. The response was \$2 to travel one way within a community or \$4 from community to community. A pass is also available. The person stated that is twice what is paid now and asked whether the County will pay for that pass. She said some people will not be able to afford the cost because of their income levels. Daleiden said sources may come from the stakeholders or through Human Services. He was unsure.

Daleiden said he is trying to lay things out so the County will decide whether to proceed with Trailblazer or whether to let the cities take over transit. Borrell thought the problems and concerns identified today would not change whether this is handled by the County or cities. Borrell said unemployment payments could potentially drain the funds left from River Rider. Daleiden said the location of Trailblazer is quite a few miles away and they can't make employees move. Sawatzke said that by mid-July, there will be a better indication of what that cost will be. Daleiden felt that information was needed prior to that time as it has a direct impact of how much will be funded from cities and the County. He said discussions have included that the buy in funding will come from the money left from River Rider. Daleiden said that the number is needed to know how much to budget. Sawatzke said it is unclear if the \$200,000 figure is even correct. That was a figure on one model, and there were numbers larger and smaller than that.

Borrell said that on the River Rider employees, a labor attorney was consulted. If the employees are offered a job and don't take it, they will lose their unemployment case. Daleiden said if a company closes and the headquarters is in a different location, the employee may not have to take the job depending on how far away it is.

Phil Kern, City Administrator-Delano, responded to Daleiden's request for input on problems. He referenced a comment made about the County stepping aside and leaving transit to the cities. An additional problem will be how to consistently deploy transit service to 16 cities and all of the townships who currently benefit from transportation. Daleiden agreed and said that would fall under the problem identified earlier that the cities don't know what the costs will be. He was unsure that a Joint Powers Agreement with all of the cities could deal with it. The audience member said it is an access issue as well as a cost issue.

Connie Holmes, Mayor-City of Waverly, said it is correct that the cities don't know what this will cost. She said cost to townships has been left out of the discussion. She did not think the cities would be covering the cost. Daleiden did not either. Holmes said the County Board has to consider that as there will be a cost. Daleiden agreed and said that is part of the operational local share. He said the Board will have to decide whether to open up services. He said that goes back to the model. The River Rider and Trailblazer models are very different.

Lori Johnson, City Administrator-Otsego, stated that many of the issues the cities have are listed. Timeliness is one. There are people who need transit by 7-01-14. It is important that the constituents are served and townships are a large part of this. She did not feel cities would be picking up the costs for townships nor did she feel it would be fair. Johnson said those in townships that need service would not have it if transit is the responsibility of cities. She thought transit would be better served at the County level and that it would be unfortunate if someone that needs the service did not get the service. Another concern is budgets which have been set for 2014. The discussion has been that the service would continue to the end of December. There would be time to readjust the budget at that time as necessary for 2015. She said there is a local share being paid by cities. County taxpayers are paying for transit at the city level. She believes Buffalo, Monticello, Delano, and the four cities in the northeast corner of the County all have commitments for the local share. She wanted the Board to be aware there are tax dollars that are going to fund that local share. The model is very different but perhaps is better because it provides more service. Although she is not familiar with funding through Human Services, she hopes there is some available

to put into this effort. Johnson said cities are not knowledgeable about how Human Services funding works. However, she felt the money being paid to a private transit system could be utilized for the public transit system. She said what they want is for transit needs to be met in Wright County. They hope Wright County will step up to the plate and do that so the residents in the townships are not left out. She restated the issues are timing, funding, and making sure service is provided to all. Johnson said that decision lies with the County Board. The cities will respond as they need to. Sawatzke said the ridership in some of the cities mentioned more than covers the local share. Johnson said she understands that some are paying for additional service, so it might not be the standard River Rider service. Johnson understands that somewhere between \$65,000-\$75,000 is coming from the cities. Sawatzke said he is unsure where that money is going to. For example, Delano is paying River Rider \$6,000/year and that was the only amount received in 2013. There were no requests for local shares to provide service in every other city in both Wright and Sherburne Counties. Borrell said the City of Buffalo contracts with Functional Industries for rides in the evening at a cost of about \$40,000. He anticipated they would continue to do so. River Rider put in a bid for that service but Functional Industries was cheaper. He was unsure how Trailblazer could provide rides at a lower cost. Daleiden said that could be through Smart Ride. Sawatzke said the cost of Smart Ride is substantial compared to the cost of a bus ride.

Tom McGregor questioned whether the Board knew what the costs of operational, subsidy, and local share. Daleiden said his understanding is that this is unknown. Part of the unknown is how much of the funds from River Rider will go into this effort. McGregor asked if the amount is known for the annual maintenance. Daleiden said at this point, no. There is speculation that a split between Sibley (15%), Wright (35%), and McLeod (45%). McGregor asked if that dollar amount is known. Daleiden said that would vary dependent on what Trailblazer decides. Sawatzke said the subsidy this year was about \$480,000 but an email was received indicating the State funded additionally so it will be lower. Borrell referenced Page 5 of the 3-27-14 Committee Of The Whole Minutes which reflect:

“If Trailblazer is fully employed with Wright County in 2016, then anticipate a \$3.6 million dollar cost budget. Ludwig expects roughly \$3 million per year between MnDOT subsidies and fare revenues. The remaining \$600,000 falls to the local share to split three ways annually.”

Borrell said it was indicated they may have come up with additional State money after that, but that was what was stated on 3-27-14.

Daleiden said theoretically for 2016, it will be 35% of \$600,000. McGregor asked if that would be split between the cities and the County. It was felt that some would be funded by Human Services. McGregor said this has the potential to grow over time. This is about \$250,000/year. He suggested having the service be decentralized and leave it with the cities and townships. McGregor lives in Albion Township and is not aware that River Rider services that area. Different areas have different requirements. He felt the fair way would be to decentralize and to let cities and townships that need higher levels of service contract directly with Trailblazer. Borrell said there is not one township in his District that has expressed interest in paying toward transit. Daleiden thought Human Services may be taking care of those residents. However, if a bus goes to pick up someone they may as well pick up another person on the same trip. Discussion led to money that may be saved in rides provided through Human Services. Sawatzke added that there is the potential that the cost may be more in Buffalo as it costs more for a ride through Trailblazer than through River Rider or Functional Industries. He said details are needed on where ride service is provided before making a statement that a savings will be realized in Human Services. Daleiden suggested the negotiating team deal with this as the numbers are unknown.

State Representative Marion O'Neill said if they can save the State of Minnesota money, that will save the taxpayers money. Borrell said that is not going to happen. The County would have to pay for it for that to happen. Sawatzke said what Borrell is saying is that it is not fair if the State saves \$100,000 and Wright County uses \$100,000 of taxpayer money to subsidize the \$100,000. He said all other counties in the State are having those programs paid for with State money. He said that would result in Wright County paying for the service with County dollars and in addition, paying for everyone else's service in other counties through State dollars. Daleiden said those numbers are unknown so he did not feel it should be discussed at this time. Sawatzke said if the organization is running more efficiently, that will save everyone money. The State funds this at 85%, so he felt the State would want that number to be lower. Right now, Trailblazer is the second highest cost in the State. He can't

figure out why they are the group it is suggested Wright County partner with because of the cost. Sawatzke said his goal would be to improve those numbers once Wright County partners with them. Sawatzke said a couple of Commissioners from Sibley and McLeod Counties came to Wright County indicating their costs were too high and looking for ways to become more efficient.

Borrell feels the negotiating team should be given the direction to negotiate transit for the period of 7-01-14 through 12-31-14. He did not feel anything else should be done until that is accomplished. Sawatzke said that was his goal. He said everything indicates a six month agreement makes sense. Although he does not expect this to take a long time to negotiate (years), he felt there should at least be a few months to work on it. Sawatzke said if the County operates under a six month agreement until 1-01-15, the County would not have a seat on the Joint Powers Board until that time. Schadauer said that the scenario should be to make sure there is service on the street from 7-01-14 through 12-31-14. That will allow time for negotiations. He said he cannot speak on behalf of the Trailblazer Board but he was speaking on behalf of MnDOT.

Daleiden summarized the following as the rank of items the negotiating team should proceed with:

1. Make sure rides are available until 1-01-15.
2. Proceed with negotiations on a Joint Powers Agreement effective 1-01-15.
3. Model
4. Cost.

Schadauer said the commitment today should be to try to become partners. Borrell said that was done previously by the County Board by virtue of making a motion to enter into negotiations. Daleiden said that becoming a partner may come at a cost. He said some may want to change the model and improve on things. That may not work for those counties. Sawatzke said Bev Herfindahl of MnDOT was present when he suggested that the revenues should more than cover the shortage. Ludwig did not agree, but Sawatzke said Herfindahl said they absolutely should. Husom and Daleiden agreed with that. Borrell said he was taken back at Daleiden's statement. He said the County was in this to negotiate for the cities. He stated at the 3-27-14 Committee Of The Whole Meeting that he would ask cities if they are expecting something for nothing and whether they wanted the County to put money in. He said the response was no. They wanted the County to do the negotiations. Daleiden clarified that the buy in will cost the County money. That figure is unclear at this point. As far as operational expense, there may be a small amount as their model is different.

Sawatzke referenced the menu options that Ludwig referenced at the 3-27-14 Committee Of The Whole Meeting. He said if Wright County does not want to use one component and then not pay for it, for example Smart Ride, the question is whether that will create some hardship for the other two counties. He felt an explanation would be needed if the answer is yes. Sawatzke said the problem right now is that they have been given the Trailblazer model and he wanted to know whether there will be options to services.

Daleiden restated the priorities outlined by the Board:

1. That rides start on July 1st.
2. Proceed with negotiations on a Joint Powers Agreement effective 1-01-15.
3. Model
4. Cost.

Sawatzke said he feels there is room for a small amount of flexibility within the system. He asked Schadauer whether he feels there could be some flexibility within the system, from MnDOT's perspective. Schadauer said it is whatever the Joint Powers Board proposes to MnDOT. He did not see why there could not be flexibility from the MnDOT perspective. Schadauer said that flexibility comes at a cost and that is what Trailblazer's message has been. He said if different services are provided in different counties, it may not be as efficient. He said that is something the Joint Powers Board will have to take into consideration.

Daleiden asked if Trailblazer indicates the model will not change and Smart Ride will be in Wright County, and it costs Wright County money, what is going to happen. Borrell asked why Daleiden is asking questions on this now as the cities have agreed to pay. Borrell said Ludwig indicated he misspoke on the Smart Ride previously. He is now indicating it pays for itself. Sawatzke said if Trailblazer wants to put so many buses out there and it is not efficient, then the County will have to ask whether that is an efficient use of government resources. Daleiden said the County will need to decide what to do if that is the case. Borrell said another alternative would be to have Trailblazer be the entity to control transit and the County would work under them. A radio station and phone line could be put in and the County could dispatch buses. Potter said Trailblazer has a repeater on the tower on TH 25 south.

Sawatzke said Wright County has already taken action for the negotiating team to move forward. More direction has been given today. The next meeting with Trailblazer is scheduled for 4-17-14. It is the goal to work with Trailblazer to ensure rides through 12-31-14 and to start negotiations on a Joint Powers Agreement effective 1-01-15. It will be a goal to get a contract in place for those six months.

Potter made a motion to remove from consideration the draft resolution relating to Trailblazer. The motion was seconded by Sawatzke and carried 5-0.

At the request of Kelly, Potter made a motion to schedule a Committee Of The Whole Meeting for 4-29-14 at 10:30 A.M. to discuss the Assessor's Office staffing. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0.

Potter said he attended a MET Council Meeting yesterday and is the second to the last on the expansion of I-94 corridor. There were 111 responses in favor and no dissenters. The official meeting where the project goes through will be on 4-29-14.

The meeting adjourned at 12:19 P.M.