



COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
PERSONNEL/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Christine Husom District 1
Darek Vetsch District 2
Mark Daleiden District 3
Mary Wetter District 4
Michael Kaczmarek District 5

JULY 27, 2022

DATE APPROVED: []

Members Present: Darek Vetsch, Mark Daleiden, Schawn Johnson

Others Present: Lee Kelly, Marc Mattice, Lori Pawelk, Lindsey Meyer, Tony Rasmuson, ConnieMae Cooper, Tanya West, Greg Kryzer

(Remote Attendees): Lindsay Salo, Tyler Webster, Trinity Nathe, Kelly Day, Clay Wilfahrt, Steve Jobe, Patsy Waytashek, Brian Lutes, Elizabeth Karels, Heather Lemieux, Keith Triplett, Tracy Janikula, Alan Wilczek, Jennifer Rasset, Philip Hodges

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORMAT AND REQUIRE APPROVAL BY THE COUNTY BOARD

I. Taxpayer Services And Election Organization Future

Assistant County Administrator Mark Mattice said that Information Technology Solutions Architect ConnieMae Cooper facilitated the conversation with Taxpayer Services, Assessor's Office, Recorder's Office, and Finance. With Assistant Finance Director Tammi Vaith resigning, it was thought this was a good time to look at functions, roles and responsibilities to see where processes were viewed as broken. Cooper said this gave her an opportunity to start mapping and talking about how different departments interact with business strategies, growth opportunities, gaining the understanding of process, workflows, roles and responsibilities. She looked at ways to build efficiencies and to see how the county worked to empower staff. Cooper also wanted to see if there was advancement within the organization. Some weaknesses in the current structure were communication, workflow processes, decision-making, advancement opportunities and the knowledge loss when individuals leave the county. Mattice said employees have commitment to excellence and provide great service to customers. When looking at a variety of different options of distributing functions, these items were considered. Distribution of functions, decision-making authority, building geography, reporting structure, workflow and processes, efficiencies, staff vs tasks, relationships between functions and seeing the county as "One County." Mattice said the goal was not to review the structure of Taxpayer Services but to look through a wider lens. Reviewing and looking to improve functions of one does not show the entire landscape. Many aspects of Wright County are heavily interconnected; this was the case between Recorder, Taxpayer Service, Assessor, Finance, Surveyor, and Elections. What impacts one department will have effects on another.

Cooper said she wanted to look at this as a holistic approach. This was not just a reassignment of people or supervisors, it was really about what would make the most sense for true efficiency. During her meeting with Taxpayer Services, Assessor's Office, Recorder's Office, and Finance they talked about where employees physically sit, who they report to, and whether it had to remain that way. Currently there are a lot of processes that are not directly related to taxation like elections, License Bureau, and receptionist. There were a lot of variables that had come into play on what the end solution would be. Mattice said so far there were three options and the Personnel Committee needed to decide which one best met the strategic direction of the County. Options were shown on a chart by color, pink, blue or orange. Pink kept responsibilities more equal and alleviated the workflow which fell under the election and taxation managers. This would be Elections Manager Tyler Webster and Finance Director Lindsey Meyer. The Taxation Manager would be a new role. In either situation, under pink or blue this could be an advancement opportunity for an existing employee or it could be a new position.

Commissioner Darek Vetsch said he was guessing this would be graded as 14 or 15 in the positional point system but this had not been approved or discussed yet. There was discussion on how the role would be applied. Mattice said the orange model showed more task efficiency. Taxpayer Services would move into the Recorder's office and the biggest

conflict would be the Office Technician II with how they report and the functionality together. Their relationship with land records and Taxpayer Services is very relevant. Elections would stay under Meyer in Finance.

Vetsch asked County Recorder Tanya West, Meyer, and County Assessor Tony Rasmuson which of the three options they saw having the best long-term efficiencies. Rasmuson said orange, because no matter what the county was looking at whether it be a restructure or land recorder, land records and taxation makes sense together. Switchboard and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) make more sense under centralized services. Meyer said her comment to this was that the statutory responsibilities of taxation and elections were under the Auditor/ Treasurer together and currently that is her role. She said she wasn't sure if it mattered if the county separated those. She said her situation currently was that 14 members had covid issues, if it continued this way, she was going to have to use permanent staffing to support the election. She thought the last time the county used departmental staff sharing was in 2020. Meyer said if the county was to do this again it would need rules in place to know who she could use, and could it be union employees intermixed with non-union employees. Human Resources (HR) Assistant Director Lori Pawelk suggested cross training within departments. HR Director Schawn Johnson said he would agree with Vetsch that this position would most likely be 14 or 15 on the point scale for the Property Tax Administrator Position. HR would first need to draft a job description and then get reclassification before the Personnel Committee could make a recommendation to the board.

Vetsch said he wanted to see more information to understand and articulate taxpayer impact. Previously for budgeting and forecasting there were discrepancies. Whichever model of these would better help the county get best information to taxpayers with the impacts he was in favor of. There was discussion about the new systems that were being put in place to help the communication between divisions to create more accurate information. West said she would like to see this position filled as soon as possible and that there was room for flexibility. Her division was not sure yet how daily tasks and functions would change at this time but said the county needs to be able to change as it moves forward. Meyer said splitting Taxpayer Services would be a concern for Webster because he oversees switchboard, mail, liquor and tobacco licenses and elections. His ability to do this during elections without OT II staff would make it difficult for him to do his job well because tax season needed to be his focus. Johnson said thankfully this was all one union, making this less complex. Vetsch said pink would be a headache. He felt that orange solves headaches. The blue looked to accomplish the same as pink but maintained the office efficiency. Commissioner Mark Daleiden said he needed more information. Once new technology is implemented this will change again. Meyer said what the county needed was a highly skilled property tax person from Minnesota. Cooper said it would be really hard to have someone train that wasn't fully vested in this process, you would have to have someone train that was committed to the process.

Meyer did not fully agree with the plan of orange. She understood why orange was the preferred route but wanted to point out that having staff reporting to two different directors in the same office would be difficult. Vetsch suggested waiting till after tax season and Meyer pointed out that that would not be best practice because the workload was not over when tax season ended, during and after elections there were taxpayer name and address changes throughout the year and letters to be sent related to taxes, which is done by Taxpayer Process Specialists (TPS) team and the OT II team. West said she received three staff members, only one was an OT II. Everyone was the same and did the same work. Others were being cross trained on daily processes and transfers with the goal being to have everyone doing everything from start to finish. Meyer said as of today, blue or pink make more sense purely because she knows the details and intricacies and workload done by each. West said tax and elections together looked to be problematic during tax season because the focus goes towards tax. Meyer said the Property Tax Administrator would report through West, which meant all of the underlying staff would also report through West. She said it would be best to have a permanent person to fill this position as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop the position for Property Tax Administrator and put together details on roles and functions of taxpayer elections.