



WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APRIL 13, 2021

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

DATE APPROVED: [DATE]

Members Present: Husom, Daleiden, Wetter, Kaczmarek (Vetsch absent)

Others Present: Lee Kelly, Sean Deringer, Matthew Fomby, Chris Pommerenke (Coordinator for Buffalo Library), Karen Pundsack (Great River Regional Library), Sara Koivisto (Coordinator for Cokato & Howard Lake Libraries); **Attending Remotely:** Bob Hiiivala, Brian Asleson, Brian Lutes, Elizabeth Clow, Elizabeth Karels, Frank Petitta, Greg Kryzer, Heather Lemieux, Jami Goodrum Schwartz, John Holler, Lindsey Meyer, Lori Pawelk, Marc Mattice, Mark Kellogg, Schawn Johnson, Steve Jobe, Sue Vergin

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

I. Schedule meetings as needed

Tour of the new Government Center to see the progress.

RECOMMENDATION:

Tour scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021 after the County Board Meeting.

II. Great River Regional Library (GRRL) presentation

Karen Pundsack, Great River Regional Library, said there are 15 members on the Great River Regional Library Board and four of those members are from Wright County. GRRL is a six-county, 32-city system that reaches from Staples to Delano. Last year there was an increase of 18 percent in digital library users. During the pandemic, all locations were operating curbside pick-up and drop-off by the middle of May 2020.

Sara Koivisto, Coordinator for Cokato and Howard Lake Libraries, said in April 2020 these two libraries started curbside only and during the process the staff spent a lot of time teaching patrons how to use different elements of the library. At this point, the libraries are open with limited space for gathering. When the libraries were unable to do in-person programming, a take-and-make system for crafts and story time kits was developed.

Chris Pommerenke, Coordinator for Buffalo Library, informed the Board that the Buffalo Library has been open for more than 30 years and remains a gathering space for people of all ages. All the employees at the Buffalo Library are residents of Wright County and have been working there for at least five years. Last year's events caused many changes. The library was closed, and curbside services began. For some residents, the library is the first place they call when they need help or have questions. The staff take the time to help them. The GRRL received a State Grant last year, allowing the ability to start placing WIFI hotspots in communities with broadband issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational only.

III. Sheriff's Office Department update

Sheriff Sean Deringer told the Board he received a phone call late Sunday, April 11, from Hennepin County Sheriff David Hutchinson. Sheriff Hutchinson asked for any available staff to help Hennepin County due to the

events that happened that day. Deringer put out an all call to his staff. Some were able to come into work early and they pulled some staff off the road. Within a short time there were 14 staff members sent to help in Hennepin County along with a 13-passenger transport van. Deringer told the Board how proud he is of his staff and their willingness to step up outside of their normal shifts because they truly care about what is happening in the community.

Deringer updated the Board with what has been happening in the jail. There have been 16 positive COVID tests in the jail. Some inmates who were being boarded at the Wright County Jail from other counties have been released back to those counties. The Sheriff's Office came up with a policy and procedure at the start of COVID regarding quarantine and isolation periods for every person that is brought into custody. Every positive COVID test at the jail has been from an inmate that been transferred from a different agency. In November 2020, the Sheriff's Office had 13 employees out with positive COVID tests from either themselves or someone in the home. However, since late December 2020, there have not been any staff out with positive COVID tests. There are about 70 Wright County inmates as of now and about 40 boarders.

Deringer gave an update of the Sheriff's Office Training Center. Last year, the training center wasn't utilized as much as the Sheriff's Office hoped but that was due to COVID. In just the first three months of 2021, there has been \$4,200 worth of free tuition because the Sheriff's Office was able to hold sessions at the training center. There was a peer support training that cost \$699 per person, but because it was held at the training center, three staff were able to attend at no cost. There is an outdoor range, an indoor range and a classroom. The FBI rated the training center as one of the top in the country.

Deringer told the Board, last year a Legacy Initiative had been started, and all retired staff from the Sheriff's Office were contacted via email or phone. The Sheriff's Office is going to start inviting retired staff to the training center to help keep up with their Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) permit. If the retired officer has a qualifying shoot, their permit to carry is good everywhere in the country.

The Wright County Sheriff's Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Minneapolis Police Department when help is needed. The Wright County staff has been assigned to the Hennepin County Government Center and Hennepin County Sheriff's Office for security. Wright County will get a 75 percent funding reimbursement.

**RECOMMENDATION:
Informational only.**

IV. American Rescue Plan

County Administrator Lee Kelly attended a webinar from Minnesota Management and Budget Friday, April 9. The timeline for U.S. Treasury distribution to states is unknown. County staff is waiting for guidance on local funds and capital projects. Any funds to townships and cities will be going through the state instead of federal. The League of Minnesota Cities is speculating about \$15 million will be allocated between the cities and the townships.

Kelly said there has been some action taken regarding broadband at the Township Officers meeting. A survey was sent out to residents with the hope of gathering information regarding the quality and service level of internet in their area.

IT Director Matt Fomby said there is about \$10 million available to spend on broadband but there is little guidance on how it can be spent. The Board was provided a map of county owned assets and information collected from townships and cities regarding the status of broadband. The county must determine how to spend the money in the most responsible manner. The board asked county staff to reach out to school districts to determine where "trouble spots" were located during the period of distance learning.

IT Technical Service Manager Mark Kellogg added that IT has been working with the state to obtain information on the maps regarding what kind of fiber is already buried in the ground. There is unused fiber along I-94 however, fiber is being utilized in the southern part of the county.

RECOMMENDATION:

Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels will send a copy of the questionnaire to the Commissioners to share with the townships and cities. The Commissioners will speak with the townships and cities at the meetings to help collect the information IT needs to make the best decisions when it comes to broadband.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 AM.

County Board Workshop Minutes submitted by Angie Fisher, Administrative Specialist

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