



COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

April 29, 2021

DATE APPROVED: [DATE]

Members Present: Husom, Vetsch, Daleiden, Wetter, Kaczmarek

Others Present: Lee Kelly, Matt Fomby, Tim Dahl, Bob Hiivala, Marc Mattice, Todd Hoffman; **Attending Remotely:** Alan Wilczek, John Holler, Lindsey Meyer, Lori Pawelk, Schawn Johnson, Steve Jobe, Steve Meyer, Sue Vergin, Virgil Hawkins

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

I. Snow Removal and Lawn Care

Facilities Services Director, Alan Wilczek said a Request for Proposal (RFP) was sent out in 2017 for snow removal and ultimately Laumann's Outdoors was given the contract. The County has since used Laumann's Outdoors and there have been minimal issues with liability and risk claims.

Wilczek said RFPs for lawn and landscape care were sent out and Hellman's Outdoor Services was given the contract. Hellman's Outdoor Services takes care of all the mowing, irrigation, monthly checks and inspections, spring startups, fall blowouts, weed control, fertilizer applications, weed whipping, etc.

County Administrator Lee Kelly went over the cost of the contracted lawn service for the past four years. Daleiden asked if that included all the lawn service including all the services discussed earlier; Kelly stated that it did include all the services mentioned by Wilczek. Wilczek said due to the timing of the invoices being paid there is a variance in cost from year to year.

Kaczmarek asked if the seasonal employees at Parks & Recreation could be used to do the lawn care and maintenance instead of contracting it out. Daleiden explained that the seasonal employees are mostly college students so they wouldn't be able to start until mid-May and would be done by mid-August. Vetsch interjected that the last few weeks of August, all of September and the first couple weeks of October would then need to be covered for lawn care and maintenance. Vetsch said it's already hard to find seasonal employees at \$13 per hour because other businesses offer more money.

Parks & Recreation Director, Marc Mattice said there are a couple seasonal employees that work at the campgrounds and parks, due to their age they cannot drive county vehicles. There are two seasonal employees that are hired at the Buffalo Shop, to mow.

Sheriff's Department, Captain Todd Hoffman said there is quite a bit of lawn at the Tactical Training Center and Hellman's Outdoor Service had been out roughly six times last year. This year there will be even more lawn because it's more established than last year. Hoffman said on occasion he has come in on his own time and taken care up some of the upkeep. There is a need for a vendor/contractor to take care of the lawn maintenance this year.

Kaczmarek said in the last three years, \$90,000 was spent on lawn care and maintenance. Vetsch broke it down, if lawn care and maintenance was taken care of from in-house employees which came out to be one full-time and one part-time employee, along with equipment it would cost the county roughly

\$94,000. Wilczek added that the county essentially has zero risk when this is contracted out. If there is any damage done to county property during lawn care and snow removal by a contracted company, there is zero risk to the county.

Kaczmarek said in the last seven years of snowplowing expenses cost the county \$297,000. Kaczmarek said he has spoken with the public and he believes the priority would be county facility plowing instead of parks and trails. Daleiden reminded Kaczmarek that bigger equipment would need to be purchased if this was done in-house. Husom said the county would have to hire more people to do snowplowing especially if it snows all day. Mattice stated when he spoke to Kaczmarek regarding the parks and trails, he asked if the public that Kaczmarek spoke to uses the parks and trails, and Kaczmarek said no. Mattice said the Parks & Recreation department has a great reputation with the citizens and park users because of the quality and maintenance the parks have. If the county takes away those services, it will be years before the Parks & Recreation department will get that reputation back. Mattice explained to the Board all the plowing that his department already does to help but there is not the appropriate equipment to do it all.

Kaczmarek said he wanted to know the potential litigation having Hoffman running equipment and taking care of the lawn. He also asked if there is a safety program that is needed to be done to use the heavy equipment. Daleiden asked if Kaczmarek wanted a Sheriff's staff member to do lawn care, Kaczmarek said no, but Hoffman already is and he has reports, showing that he is doing it. Hoffman told Kaczmarek if he would like to discuss the operation of the training center, he would be more than happy to later. Hoffman said most of the work that he has done has just been touch up work regarding lawn maintenance and snow plowing which he does on his time off. Hoffman said he is a salaried employee, so nothing is paid beyond his 40-hours of work. Hoffman has taken the OSHA course for the skid steer. He reminded the Board that the training center does not have full time maintenance staff. He told Kaczmarek if he has an issue with the amount of work he does, he would be happy to discuss it.

Risk Manager, Tim Dahl said if these jobs are outsourced, the risk is transferred to the vendor/contractor. If the county owns the equipment, then the county must insure it and maintain it which the cost would have be factored in. When the cost analysis was done, outsourcing was the most cost-effective option.

Wilczek said the county is not currently under contract. The past two years the Board has done a contract amendment extending the term for one year.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board recommends leaving the snow removal and lawn maintenance as is until all departments are at the new campus. The Board will reevaluate in 2022 the most cost-effective option for snow removal and lawn maintenance. Wilczek will request the contractors provide the county with how many hours their staff are on site working. The Board will do a one-year renewal for 2021 lawn maintenance, irrigation and snow removal.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 A.M.

Minutes submitted by Angie Fisher, Administrative Specialist