



COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

JUNE 8, 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, Vetsch, Daleiden, Wetter, Kaczmarek

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Lee Kelly, Elizabeth Karels, Matthew Fomby, Jami Goodrum Schwartz, Lindsey Meyer, Heather Lemieux, Ryan Kotila, Bob Hiivala, Kimberly Johnson, Jolene Foss
Attending Remotely: Kate Dahl, Sarah Grosshuesch, Christine Treichler, Diane Erkens, John Holler, Michelle Miller, Greg Kryzer, Christine Partlow, Gregory Pickard, Peter Sorensen, Steve Jobe

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

I. Continuation of American Rescue Plan Discussion

Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels summarized the discussion that was held at the previous meeting. The committee was presented the remainder of a PowerPoint presentation from the June 1, 2021 meeting. Cities and townships are expected to receive their own allocation of funds through the state. Additionally, there are several federal- and state-administered programs available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) such as capital projects, housing, and small business assistance. Some things being proposed may be funded better through other sources.

Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux stated the first half of the American Rescue Plan Recovery Act funds (\$13,439,055) has been received. Internal reimbursements of funds spent will be transferred into Department 100. However, if funds are approved for Health & Human Services (HHS), the expenditures will be spent from a different account for grant reporting purposes. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) committee consists of several internal staff members. The committee will review expenditures and make recommendations to the County Board for approval via the consent agenda.

Commissioner Vetsch stated if funds are allocated to an internal department, such as HHS, the internal group would meet as a committee and make recommendations for the disbursement of funds. The recommendation would be sent to the County Board via the consent agenda for final approval and release of the funds. Each internal group receiving an allocation will create their own application process that must be approved by the ARPA committee. HHS Financial Services Manager Kimberly Johnson stated HHS already has a system in place to approve disbursement of funds to those in need. She suggested the County Crisis Plan be approved to release the funds. Waiting on committee approval may not be the most efficient way to release funds. Vetsch stated HHS could potentially use two different processes; some funds would be routed through the committee for approval, while others would follow the traditional process. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer stated there is concern funds being spent outside the guidelines of the grant and would like oversight in the process.

The group discussed the process for external applicants. Programs will be pre-approved and a formal application providing more detail will follow. All funds will be reimbursed after supporting documentation is received. The ARPA committee will conduct yearly check-ins to ensure the proposed programs are being fulfilled.

The committee was presented a summary of proposed uses for fund allocation. Proposed programs have been divided into categories. Commissioner Kaczmarek stated he felt things are being rushed. He would like to take more time to evaluate wants vs. needs. Vetsch said the group will not be able to approve all of the proposed programs and some programs take a long time to develop.

Education, Jobs, and Training: Commissioner Daleiden would like 4-H to be added to this category. Vetsch stated some programs, such as Career Exploration Camp and Consumer Outreach, could be a joint effort between Sherburne County and Wright County, lowering the amount of money that would need to be allocated.

Business and Economic Relief: Wright County Economic Development Partnership Executive Director Jolene Foss reached out to various agencies to develop program ideas. Some of the programs did not fit the criteria and were removed from the list.

Families: Kaczmarek would like funds allocated to Domestic Violence and Mental Health. Commissioner Husom suggested allocating funds to Rivers of Hope. The group discussed several issues relating to childcare retention and expansion. There have been an increased number of referrals to Safe Families throughout the pandemic. HHS would like to increase Safe Families staff time in the county with a focus on volunteer recruitment, training, and support.

Support to Schools: Vetsch clarified the afterschool program covers multiple school districts, not only Monticello. Numerous students have been truant due to remote learning. The proposed program funds teachers for an additional two hours per day and would facilitate rides for students. Additionally, there has been an increase in counseling needs due to the pandemic. The request would place an additional counselor in each district to help facilitate needs.

Internal County Expenses: HHS would like to purchase a programmable sign. Daleiden suggested purchasing two for the county. Kaczmarek raised concerns relating to the cost, maintenance, storage, and lifespan of programmable signs. Public Health Director Sarah Grosshuesch suggested purchasing one programmable sign that could be used by both Public Health and the Highway Department and another smaller, more portable sign. The Community Health Needs Assessment was approved in CARES funding and is mandated. It provides savings to the county and provides good information.

Mental Health Stabilization – Outreach and Crisis Expansion: HHS proposed an additional staff member to assist with mental health outreach. Social Services Manager Michelle Miller stated the idea is to integrate social workers and law enforcement. De-escalation training for county staff was discussed. Kaczmarek mentioned online training is available and there may be expertise within the Sheriff's Office that could assist. Diane Erkens provided information on withdrawal management/detox. Withdrawal management is a medically managed service. Currently detoxification services are not paid by medical programs, while withdrawal management are paid by limited providers. At this time, the county is responsible for detoxification services. HHS Director Jami Goodrum Schwartz would like funds allocated to support the new Behavioral Health Center. Wright County is far away from many services and would like to support something closer.

Transportation Infrastructure: Currently, officers and social workers are driving individuals to detox. HHS would like to develop transportation infrastructure for residents who otherwise have limited to no transportation resources.

Broadband, Water & Sewer Infrastructure: Vetsch would like to support city and township water and sewer infrastructure improvement projects via a grant program.

Commissioner Wetter stated the message should be clear to residents that these programs may only last four years. The county may not be able to afford to maintain programs in the future. Vetsch would like to pick some of the proposals and start moving forward as the need is currently there. Kaczmarek stated more information needs to come before the board for evaluation. Vetsch suggested the board could approve funding on a year-to-year basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Staff will document the process for approving proposed programs for the allocation of American Rescue Plan funds.**
- **Staff will determine which programs are eligible/ineligible.**
- **Staff will determine if better-suited funding sources are available for any of the proposed programs.**

- **Commissioners will identify the top three programs they would like to pursue.**
- **Contact Wright Technical Center Director Brian Koslofsky regarding the proposed work training program.**
- **A continuation of the meeting is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 16, 2021.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:49 P.M.

Minutes submitted by Elizabeth Clow, Office Manager

DRAFT