



**BOARD MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

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

**DATE APPROVED: [DATE]**

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

The Wright County Board met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Husom, Vetsch, Daleiden, Wetter and Kaczmarek present.

**COUNTY BOARD MINUTES 9-7-21 MEETING**

Vetsch moved to approve the minutes from 9-7-21. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

**AGENDA**

County Administrator Lee Kelly requested to remove Item A1 (Administration) from the Consent Agenda and refer it to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion.

Vetsch moved to approve the Agenda with the removal of Item A1 from the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Kaczmarek requested to pull Item D1 (Planning & Zoning) from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Husom moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Item D1 (Planning & Zoning) for discussion. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

**A. \*ADMINISTRATION**

1. Approval of Revisions to Sections 300 and 400 of the Wright County Personnel Handbook

**B. \*ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE**

1. Acknowledge Warrants Issued between September 1, 2021 and September 14, 2021 (*See Below, Item X. Warrants Issued*)
2. Approve Tobacco License for JCGH, LLC DBA Napa Valley Liquors (Otsego) for the period September 21, 2021 through December 31, 2021
3. Motion to Approve the Reimbursement of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds as follow:  
County ARP Funds:  
Approval of County Reimbursement of \$5,073.84 from 01-099-493.6910 Transfer Out into 01-100-493.5910 Transfer In as follow:  
\$5,073.84 for Administrative Expenses-Staff Costs  
Approval for Use of ARP Funds from 01-099-493.6261  
\$8,755 7.1 Consultant Support

**C. \*HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

1. Position replacement
  - A. Social Worker .5FT

**D. \*PLANNING & ZONING**

1. Approval to Fill Vacated Solid Waste Administrator Position
2. Accept the Findings and Recommendations of The Planning Commission for the following Requests to Rezone:
  - A. MAURICE E. CARLIN – (Silver Creek Township) – The Planning Commission Unanimously Recommends Rezoning approximately three Acres from A/R Agricultural-Residential & S-2 Residential-Recreational Shorelands to AG General Agriculture & S-2
  - B. CURT WEIERS – (Maple Lake Township) – On a 4/2 Vote, The Planning Commission Recommends Rezoning 36.6 Acres from AG General Agriculture to A/R Agricultural-Residential

- C. THOMAS McDERMOTT – (Corinna Township) – On a 5/1 (1 Abstained) Vote, The Planning Commission Recommends Rezoning Approximately 78 Acres from AG General Agriculture & Part S-2 Residential-Recreational Shorelands to A/R Agricultural-Residential & Part S-2

## **ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA TO BE DISCUSSED**

### **D. PLANNING & ZONING**

1. Approval to Fill Vacated Solid Waste Administrator Position

Kaczmarek suggested holding off hiring someone for the Solid Waste Administrator position due to the status of the Compost Facility being “up in the air”. The operations or job position could change depending on what happens with the Compost Facility.

Husom asked if the position is funded by Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funds. Kelly said the county does receive SCORE funds for the administration of the county’s Solid Waste Plan which this particular position is very heavily involved with.

Daleiden said part of this position is maintaining the county’s Solid Waste Plan and, as of right now, the county is behind. Vetsch wanted to know who would take care of this job if the county doesn’t hire anyone for the position? Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is the conduit between the county and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Environmental Quality Board. If this position isn’t hired the county could lose out on Solid Waste Planning Initiatives. Kryzer said from a legal perspective he believes this position is needed and necessary, even if there are changes made to the Compost Facility.

Daleiden said the state wants Wright County to develop a Solid Waste Management Plan and license garbage haulers. Kryzer said as part of the 10-year Solid Waste Plan the county adopted; all haulers must be licensed by the summer of 2022.

Vetsch asked Kaczmarek for clarification on if he wants the position eliminated altogether or if he just wants to wait until there is some direction for the Compost Facility? Kaczmarek said he didn’t believe it was fair to fill the spot when there is so much up in the air and job descriptions may need to be changed.

Human Resources Manager Schawn Johnson said the position requires a bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science, Biology, Public Health or a related field with three years of experience in Environmental Health or Solid Waste. Johnson said this is a challenging position to fill because of the special requirements. The person would need specific certifications which others in the department do not have. Vetsch and Kaczmarek asked how much of the job description is management of the Compost Facility and how much is the environmental aspect of the job? Johnson said he would need to do a little research from when Baker Tilly did the job classifications.

Kelly said the position was posted the previous week. There is no closing date, it’s listed as continuous. After there are a few applications a first review date will be set.

Kaczmarek moved to approve Item D1 under the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

## **TIMED AGENDA ITEMS**

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT, VIRGIL HAWKINS**

Accept The 2020 Highway Department’s Annual Report Which Was Distributed to The County Board Members for Review at the August 31, 2021 Meeting

Hawkins said there was a feature article in the Annandale Advocate highlighting the annual report. Husom said the annual report was very thorough. Hawkins credited the Highway Department’s Accountant Patsy Waytashek for the great job.

Vetsch moved to accept the 2020 Highway Department’s Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

**SURVEYOR, STEVE JOBE**Request Signature for LIDAR Funding Partners

Jobe said the first stage in the acquisition of Light Detection and Ranging Equipment (LIDAR) is to apply for federal grant funding. Approving the signatures for the LIDAR Funding Program would allow the state to apply for the federal funds. The county will get an elevation model of the county. The last time it was done was in 2008 which the county paid for at a cost of over \$200,000. Jobe said with the partnership the county has with the state; it will systematically go through the state along with 40 percent grant matching from the federal government, 30 percent from the counties, and 30 percent from local entities and partners, which means the mechanism will only cost the county \$58,000 for its share.

Jobe said the LIDAR elevation model will also be utilized by the Highway Department, Planning and Zoning, ditches and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The plan is to use it in the spring of 2022 which is contingent on whether the grant makes it through the federal application process. The more partners and counties that come together and commit the higher chance the county will have on the national level. The funding will come from the Recorder's funds, and it is in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Vetsch moved to authorize signature for LIDAR Funding Partners. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

**PARKS & RECREATION, MARC MATTICE**Accept Bid and Authorize Signatures on an Agreement Between Wright County Parks & Recreation and Minnesota Native Landscapes for the Stream-Bank Stabilization, Restoration and Management Project at Otsego County Park

Mattice said the project has been in the CIP for the last few years. All the permits have been received through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The funding will be \$50,000 CIP funds, a \$50,000 grant, American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, and project dollars from SWCD.

Mattice said the bids were received on September 7, 2021. The bids were right around \$106,000. There was about \$206 difference from the lowest bidder to the highest bidder.

Daleiden asked for before-and-after pictures from the project so the Commissioners can see the difference. Wetter asked who will maintain the project and if the project will be done this year? Mattice said the project will be done this year including the seeding. The maintenance will be taken care of for the next two years by the contractor.

Husom moved to accept the bid and authorize signatures on an Agreement between Wright County Parks & Recreation and Minnesota Native Landscapes for the Stream-Bank Stabilization, Restoration and Management Project at Otsego County Park. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

Update on Appraisal and Landowner Communications Related to Potential 10 Acre Acquisition in French Lake Township Adjacent to an Existing Regional Park Reserve

Mattice said he received the appraisal which came back at \$48,000. The grant deadline was the end of July 2021 which a hypothetical number, based off an acquisition done years prior, was submitted at the time. The grant request was able to be modified. The appraisal does not include a building entitlement. Mattice is hoping to have an update on the grant status by November 2021. The land is on the east side of the south unit. It will be used for trailhead parking.

Kaczmarek asked what type of land it is? Mattice said it's mostly tillable land.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION****COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES****COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/3/21**

Husom moved to accept the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes and recommendations from 9-3-21. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/3/21 (CONT.)*****I. COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) Discussion***

*Commissioner Darek Vetsch wanted clarification for persons present and online whether this meeting is regarding Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) or working remotely from home. Vetsch said the survey had a lot of discussion regarding the work from home policy but that wasn't the intent of the meeting. Commissioner Mark Daleiden and Commissioner Christine Husom said the work from home policy does relate to the EPSL.*

*Vetsch said that the Personnel Committee meeting was not about working from home. Originally, it was only about the EPSL. Vetsch said the minutes from the Personnel Committee reflected that the discussion was regarding EPSL, not working from home.*

*Husom said her issue is that it's not fair that some employees can work from home, but most staff do not have the option to work from home. Therefore, it poses the question, what do we do as a county if those that cannot work from home end up testing positive with COVID?*

*Husom said with the Delta variant there are not the same lengthy restrictions when you test positive for COVID. There is also over the counter test kits that can be purchased.*

*Human Resources Director Schawn Johnson said based upon the conversation that was had at the Personnel Committee meeting, a different approach was taken with this policy. Johnson contacted neighboring counties and cities and the EPSL is more the direction that those Johnson contacted are taking. Rather than offering to have employees work remotely from home, this is another option. If an employee is in a situation where said employee has exhausted all accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) the county can help bridge the gap for the two-week period to keep the employee compensated. There are six parameters identified that the employee must fall under to use the EPSL.*

*Risk Manager Tim Dahl said essentially when an employee tests positive for COVID the guidelines keep the employee out of the workplace for 10 days. Currently, the employee cannot work from home for those 10 days and instead must use accrued PTO. A letter will be provided to employees explaining that the Families First COVID Response Act which provided paid time off from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 has expired. Employees must use personal banks for leave of absences which exceed three days and would require Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy.*

*Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek asked whether employees that have catastrophic time off would have to exhaust all PTO? Johnson stated the employee would need to exhaust all catastrophic time off before the EPSL would start.*

*Daleiden said he would hate to see employees have to use all their accrued PTO for something that is not the employees' fault and would rather have it where employees would only have to use half of their PTO. Veteran Services Officer Greg Pickard asked how COVID is different from any other illness? Husom agreed and said the county has generous employees that have donated PTO to other employees that have been ill.*

*Dahl stated employees do have other benefit products to cover wage loss due to extended time off such as Short-Term Disability and Long-Term Disability but those would not cover COVID. Dahl said the county does not want to set a precedent when it comes to donating PTO to other employees due to COVID.*

*Husom said the county made a lot of concessions last year to help the employees during COVID. Dahl said last year when COVID was new, the county was governed by the Governor's Emergency Executive Orders that required staff to work from home if possible. Now public and private business are trying to figure out how to encompass potential staff being out due to COVID. Dahl said it comes down to two possibilities, staff that are unvaccinated that test positive for COVID and staff that have children that are unvaccinated and test positive for COVID which narrows down the at-risk population, whereas before all staff were at high risk.*

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/3/21 (CONT.)**

*Johnson said in the Telework Policy which covers the mobile worker, one of the items states teleworking is not to be used in lieu of childcare. Employees who are teleworking from the home as the alternate work location must determine adequate arrangements for child or dependent care to maintain a professional and optimal working environment.*

*Husom said whatever the board decides needs to be fair and equitable. Daleiden said he is unsure it can be fair. Husom then said it needs to be equitable, whether someone deems it fair or not it, it needs to be the same for everyone. Vetsch said it's a matter of getting the work done at the value that's responsible to the taxpayers but also workplace friendly to attract and retain employees.*

*County Administrator Lee Kelly said based on the discussion and the thoughts of the members at the Personnel Committee meeting, what was initially proposed didn't seem to fit where the county wanted to go, which is why there is a revised policy. Based on the surveys the thoughts and opinions of staff were all over the board. Kelly said there is not a right answer, and the challenge is finding what fits for Wright County.*

*Husom asked if an employee receives the 10 days of EPSL, will that employee need to pay it back? Johnson said that is not the intent of this policy because it can be covered under the grant funds as an acceptable expense. Johnson recommends the window of eligibility September 5, 2021 through December 31, 2021, that way the block of time is minimal to the county.*

*Husom asked what if the same employee needs time away more than once? Vetsch and Johnson said each employee will only get 10 days of EPSL and once it's gone, it's gone. Kaczmarek asked where the money came from last year to cover the 80 hours employees could receive? Vetsch said the 80 hours last year came from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The 10 days this time will come from the American Rescue Plan (ARP).*

*Vetsch said he is okay with having the EPSL policy in place after employees exhaust all PTO but not before. That way it's more equitable for staff and the taxpayers. Johnson said he has concern regarding newly hired staff who haven't been able to accrue much PTO. Vetsch said he agrees with what Johnson said as long as it's a specific period and then the EPSL expires.*

*Commissioner Mary Wetter asked how many employees are new to the county? Johnson said the typical turnover rate is about 8 to 10 percent a year.*

*Kaczmarek wanted to make sure the EPSL fits within the ground rules for ARP. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux said she has a meeting with Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels scheduled for Tuesday, September 7, 2021 to discuss this.*

*Human Resources Representative Barb Petersen said since employees did work remotely for a year and a half, if an employee has a temporary situation it could help with business continuity by working remotely.*

*Karels said the ARP rules do allow for expenses providing paid sick and paid family medical leave for public employees and does comply with the COVID public health precautions.*

*Husom said there are 207 employees with children under the age of 12 years old. Husom said she is comfortable with this policy because it applies to everyone across the board.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***The committee recommendation is to start this policy on September 7, 2021 and change the end date for this policy from December 31, 2021 to January 31, 2022. This policy will be brought to the county board on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 for approval.***

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/3/21 (CONT.)**

*It's the committee's recommendation for Human Resources staff to contact other counties and cities to find out how they are handling employees working remotely.*

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PARTIAL ABANDONMENT OF COUNTY DITCH #14**

Kryzer said the purpose of the meeting is to gather evidence as to whether a part of the drainage system sought to be abandoned serves a substantially useful purpose or substantial public benefit and utility. This is an evidentiary proceeding and is being recorded to preserve the record. The order of business will be as follows:

1. The Drainage Supervisor will present an overview of County Ditch #14 and the petition for partial abandonment
2. The petitioners will be permitted to present any evidence and at the request to the board
3. The matter will then be open to the public for comment

Daleiden said to ensure all persons wanting to comment on the partial abandonment of County Ditch #14, the time may be limited to three minutes for any single speaker.

Agricultural & Drainage Supervisor Matt Detjen said the petition was submitted by Sherilyn & Andrew Burgdorf. There was a previous petition for full abandonment on this ditch system. This partial abandonment is pursuant to Minnesota State Statute §103E.806.

Detjen said he spoke with the local Wetland Conservation Act Supervisor and the DNR because there are public waters on this ditch system and public water wetlands. In speaking with the supervisor and the DNR regarding the extent of the repairs that would need to be done to the County Ditch #14, the repairs would be substantial.

Vetsch asked if there are any control structures on that part of the lake or if it is just natural flow? Detjen said the control structure is the culvert under the road which is why the petitioner opted to leave it in at the same size and elevation as Lake Mary.

Wetter asked Detjen to confirm that the Wetland Conservation Act Supervisor and the DNR did not have any issues with County Ditch #14 being abandoned. Detjen said they were in favor of the partial abandonment due to the response and the work that would be involved. Wetter said the owners of the land across the road had issues with water in their backyard. Wetter asked Detjen if abandoning County Ditch #14 would help or hurt them? Detjen said the petition for a partial abandonment of County Ditch #14, the county would remove all jurisdiction to repair any of the areas that are being abandoned. So, the county would not do any maintenance. In the future any repairs or maintenance would have to go through the appropriate regulatory authority.

**PUBLIC HEARING OPEN****Dr. Andrew Burgdorf (Petitioner), 1812 Highway 25 S, Buffalo, MN 55313**

Burgdorf explained that Zion Lutheran Church came to him wondering how the church was benefiting from the agricultural wetlands. Burgdorf said he realized he owed half of the church's bill which is how the discussion came about. In 1911, this agricultural ditch was created to drain Lake Mary to have pastureland and at this point that no longer is the purpose. The petition is to abandon the area north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street which is all under water because it's not forming the function of a ditch. Also, to partially abandon the section south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street because it's all wetlands, which is not benefiting anyone. It's also under the jurisdiction of the DNR.

Daleiden asked Burgdorf if he owned the property? Burgdorf said no, but he was one of the residents that benefited from the county ditch before.

**PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

Kryzer said the Drainage and Agricultural Supervisor sent a proposed resolution which the board can adopt if its ready.

Vetsch moved to direct staff to prepare an order granting the partial abandonment of County Ditch #14 consistent with the records on file, and the comments and evidence received during the public hearing as well as the guidance from the board. On Tuesday, September 28, 2021 the board will continue the matter for the purpose of considering and adopting the order. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION (CONT.)

### ADMINISTRATION

#### Adopt Resolution Setting the 2022 Preliminary Levy

Kelly said as part of the annual budget process the board is required to adopt a preliminary levy and it must be done prior to September 30, 2021. The preliminary levy is \$87,959,318. The next step would be to set a Truth In Taxation meeting.

Vetsch said some of the numbers are substantially different and suggested moving this item to the board meeting on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 to be able to review the numbers again. Vetsch also requested setting a Committee of the Whole meeting to review the numbers again.

Vetsch moved to set a Committee of the Whole meeting at 10:00 a.m. Monday, September 27, 2021. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

#### Set a Special Board Meeting to Discuss 2022 Budget and Levy

Kelly said it would be better to hold off setting a special board meeting.

## COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

### COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21

Kaczmarek moved to accept the County Board Workshop meeting minutes and amended recommendations from 9-14-21. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

Vetsch said he would be inclined to have Facilities Service Director Alan Wilczek as Interim Management for the Compost Facility because the open position has yet to be filled. Wilczek said he is happy to step in and do what needs to be done, but he would like all the Commissioner's to tour the Compost Facility. At that point, Wilczek can have a clear understanding of what the role will look like.

Vetsch asked how much traffic the Compost Facility generates and if Wilczek is comfortable with the condition it's in to continue operations at the site? Wilczek said he had almost no involvement prior to the turnover. Wilczek said staff logging residents coming in to drop things off would be the best way to get the information, which he said he will look into.

Husom moved to set a Committee of the Whole regarding the Compost Facility at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, September 28, 2021. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

#### ***I. Schedule meetings as needed***

*County Administrator Lee Kelly said a meeting needed to be scheduled regarding the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and suggested 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2021, after the county board meeting. There were scheduling conflicts amongst the board members.*

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- ***Set a Committee of The Whole meeting at 12:30 p.m. Monday, September 20, 2021.***
- ***There is a Broadband Committee meeting set for 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 22, 2021.***

#### ***II. Great River Regional Library (GRRL)***

*Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Executive Director Karen Pundsack provided an overview of GRRL. There are 32 libraries throughout six counties, with nine libraries located in Wright County. Some programs and services offered by GRRL include: Wi-Fi 2 Go, Creativebug, NoveList, and Lucky Day.*

**COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21 (CONT.)**

*There is one budget across the six-county region, with at least one person from each county sitting on the GRRL board. The seats assigned to the board are based on budget share. Wright County has four seats on the board which include Commissioner Kaczmarek. Currently Stearns County has the most seats on the board because it funds the largest portion of the budget. The formula could change in the next couple years which would give Wright County one more seat and Stearns County one less seat on the board. An increased tax capacity and continued population growth in Wright County would cause the formula to change.*

*Pundsack introduced GRRL's new Accounting Coordinator Amy Anderson. Anderson presented the 2022 budget for GRRL. GRRL receives the majority of operating and capital funds from the six counties it serves. Signatory contributions are calculated using a share factor table that considers each county's population, the number of registered users and the net tax capacity. GRRL's budgeting cycle begins in February with the approval of its process guidelines and ends with the final adoption of its budget in July. Wright County will contribute \$2,173,964 in 2022 which is an increase of approximately \$29,000 from 2021.*

*GRRL's board adopted the 2022 budget on July 20, 202. Goals set by the trustees as part of the process are:*

- *Keeping county shares as flat as possible*
- *The use of reserves in the overall 2022 budget*

*The 2022 budget supports the library's Fines Free Initiatives which was started in 2019 with the elimination of juvenile materials late fees. This initiative helps reduce the financial barriers that may prevent patrons from accessing library materials and to increase the amount of time library staff can spend assisting library users in a positive way. Patrons are still responsible for replacing items that are not returned.*

*Commissioner Daleiden asked how much is left in reserves. Pundsack said the reserves are calculated by month. When the auditor visited at the beginning of the year, GRRL had 5.74 months totaling over \$2 million in reserves. There is a surplus for 2021 which will be rolled into the 2023 budget.*

**III. Central Mississippi River Regional Planning Partnership (CMRP)**

*The Central Mississippi River Regional Planning Partnership (CMRP) was started more than a decade ago and was known as the Highway 25 Coalition. The Highway 25 Coalition was started to help improve traffic flow on Highway 25 and to work toward a new river crossing in the corridor.*

*After a long period of time and a great deal of conflict CMRP has come to the conclusion that the group will never establish a location for a bridge crossing. This is because the two counties were not taking into consideration what the other county was doing on its side. The land use for the counties needs to meet the partnering jurisdiction's land use to avoid conflict.*

*As CMRP was working on the Framework 2030 initiative, it did a lot of public outreach to develop goals and strategies moving forward.*

*Commissioner Vetsch explained the handouts regarding the CMRP, such as the development process and technical analysis. Kelly said for the Round One Engagement there were four surveys completed by various stakeholders. There were more than 7,000 responses.*

*Vetsch stated as an entity of CMRP collecting more data regionally will help market the area for industrial and economic growth by marketing it regionally. There was data collected regarding commercial and industrial growth in the region.*



**COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21 (CONT.)**

*Vetsch said the Round Two Engagement was the most difficult piece. Wright County and Sherburne County need to brand its area. Using a marketing firm to help brand the region will help leverage economic development.*

*Commissioner Kaczmarek asked if the two counties are any closer to figuring out a timeframe or location for the new river crossing. Vetsch said historically in the United States there are two to three new river crossings a year. For counties that have a defined location for a river crossing and are putting infrastructure in place for it to happen are far more likely to receive funding for the project.*

*The four Land Use Strategies:*

- *Leverage the region's unique parks and natural resources*
- *Promote lifecycle housing*
- *Invest in placemaking*
- *Pursue a coordinated approach to land planning and management*

*The four Economic Development Strategies:*

- *Expand quality and diversity of employment opportunities*
- *Increase the pool of skilled labor in the region*
- *Network the response to economic disruptions*
- *Measure impacts of action locally and regionally*

*The four Interconnections Strategies:*

- *Create a clear regional identity to advance collaborative work*
- *Enhance regional connections*
- *Share talent, time, and information*
- *Continually address regional vulnerabilities*

**IV. Compost Facility Structural Assessment**

*Kaczmarek asked if any of the structural issues have been addressed and if there are any potential issues with operating the building. Risk Manager Tim Dahl said regarding the safety audit, the recommended items are underway. Some of the safety issues can be rectified but it won't resolve all the issues because it's a multi-use site with many activities occurring at the same time.*

*Dahl said if the Hangar Building is enclosed then some of the operations would have to be moved to a different location. Which the county would possibly have to look at heating and other infrastructure aspects to make it conducive for the Household Hazardous Waste Program. Giving staff direction for the long-term use of that operation at that site would be helpful.*

*Kaczmarek questioned if some areas should have "out of service" signs now that the assessment is complete. Kaczmarek said the county shouldn't cut corners to make it status quo if the building is going to be open for normal business hours.*

*Facilities Services Director Alan Wilczek said Planning and Zoning has operated that site in its entirety and the Facilities Department has had zero operations at that site. Facilities takes care of the fire extinguisher checks, eye wash cleaning checks and cleaning the bathrooms. None of the electrical or safety concerns at the site have been addressed.*

*Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said the Hazardous Waste Dropoff is a government service to the residents of the county that is free of charge. Disposing of hazardous waste is paid with Select Committee on*

**COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21 (CONT.)**

*Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funds through the state. The county could look at a solid waste management tax/fee which could be imposed countywide.*

*Daleiden asked Kryzer if the county is mandated by the state to offer hazardous waste options. Vetsch suggested holding off the conversation about waste management. Having more information regarding what the county must do for waste management and hazardous material disposal would be beneficial before having the conversation.*

*Vetsch suggested staff do some research for different options the county can look at for waste management, recycling and hazardous materials.*

*Wilczek said if his department is going to take over the management of the Compost Facility site, then there needs to be a clear expectation for the Facilities Services Department going forward to make sure the site is safe. Vetsch said the county will have to spend some money for the Compost Facility site to be compliant.*

*Kryzer said the county needs to follow its Solid Waste Plan. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has two major components that the county needs to get done quickly. The first item is licensing haulers needs to be done, most likely by the end of next year. That means the ordinance needs to be updated and a process needs to be established to license the haulers. The second item is MPCA is looking for Wright County to centrally locate the recycling operations. All the townships within Wright County handle their own recycling which means there are 19 contracts each having its own administrative fees. After those two pieces are taken care of then the county can start looking at hazardous waste contracts.*

*Kryzer suggested scheduling a workshop to discuss this in more depth. It would also be beneficial to invite the Rural Director for MPCA to attend the workshop to help answer any questions.*

*Wilczek asked which line item to charge for the items that need to be fixed. Kelly said SCORE funds has been used in the past for the basic maintenance that has been done at the site. Kryzer said the SCORE funds can be used for safety updates at the Compost Facility.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- *Wilczek and the Facilities Department will take over as management of the Compost Facility*
- *Wilczek will have the Compost Facility re-keyed and control who has access*
- *Daleiden will check into the records being stored in the Administration Building*
- *Commissioners who are interested in taking a tour of the site will set up a time*
- *Set a Committee of the Whole Meeting at 10:00 a.m. Monday, September 27, 2021*

**V. Allina Clinic Memorial Monument**

*Husom said she didn't have much more information than she had before. Kelly spoke with Casting Creations regarding the size of the monument. Casting Creations wanted to confirm the monument would have approximately a five-foot wingspan. The base is not typically provided. However, a concrete company should be able to provide that service. Due to the weight, it may need some footings for support.*

*Kelly said the location still has not been determined. However, there has been discussion to place it between the Law Enforcement Center and the Justice Center. Wilczek said there has been discussion of putting a Veteran's Memorial and Employee Memorial in front of the new Government Center. Wilczek asked what the county's guidelines are for placing a memorial at the new campus.*

*Vetsch suggested placing the memorial at a park within the City of Buffalo. Otherwise, the county could end up housing memorials at the new campus for everything that happens in the county.*

**COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21 (CONT.)**

*Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux wanted to clarify that county dollars cannot be spent on a monument. Husom said she was not aware that the county would be unable to contribute to the memorial. Vetsch said he was under the impression the county was asked to provide a location not a monetary donation.*

*Kaczmarek has spoken with his constituents regarding the memorial. The consensus has been that the memorial should be located at the Allina Clinic location and no county tax dollars should be spent on it.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- ***Schedule a Ways and Means Committee Meeting to continue discussion regarding the Allina Clinic Memorial Monument***

**BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21**

Vetsch moved to accept the Broadband Committee meeting minutes and recommendations from 9-14-21. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

**I. Feasibility Study Update**

*Andrew Cohill, President and CEO of Design Nine, stated the residential and business surveys concluded approximately 10 days ago. 5,659 households responded to the residential survey and 99 businesses responded to the business survey. Design Nine is currently analyzing the data received and is expected to have a report of the results ready by Wednesday, Sept. 22. Additionally, Design Nine completed a service provider analysis to determine speeds offered and pricing. Existing tower structures and fiber routes in the county have been mapped.*

*Jack Maytum, Senior Business Analyst for Design Nine, stated several interviews with providers and stakeholders have been held the past few weeks. Maytum will be in-person at the Broadband Informational Meeting that is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. The survey response indicates a great interest in broadband throughout the county.*

*Cohill provided highlights from the residential survey. 96 percent of respondents stated internet access to their households was either important or very important. 41 percent of respondents stated dissatisfaction with the speed of their current internet service. 43 percent of respondents stated access to high-speed internet influences where they choose to live. Based on previous Design Nine survey results, this number is typically around 25-30 percent. Finally, 88 percent agreed that county government should facilitate better, more affordable broadband services. A full analysis of survey results will be prepared for the Sept. 22 informational meeting.*

*Commissioner Mark Daleiden questioned if there is fiber located in the county that existing providers are not utilizing. Cohill responded there is some fiber that passes through the county that is not utilized by providers. The owners of the fiber are not in the retail business.*

*Commissioner Darek Vetsch asked if information regarding provider pricing was gathered as part of the feasibility study. Cohill stated the service provider analysis provides detail of what each provider offers, such as speed, data caps, and cost. All the information will be included in the report.*

*Maytum stated the county should consider installing fiber conduit in the roadway for future road construction projects. Typically, the cost of to install conduit in an existing construction project is approximately \$2-7 per foot. The cost to install conduit only without a project is approximately \$25-30 per foot.*

*Daleiden questioned what Design Nine will be presenting at the Broadband Informational Meeting. Maytum stated the project will be introduced, the process of the broadband study will be explained, the process of recommending various management options for county consideration will be explained, and attendees will be allowed to ask questions.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.**

**BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 9/14/21 (CONT.)****II. Updates from Flaherty & Hood**

*Vetsch stated several townships are running into issues with franchise agreements and right-of-way agreements for fiber. Flaherty & Hood Senior Attorney/Lobbyist for Flaherty & Hood, Shane Zahrt stated Flaherty & Hood has attorneys that have worked on franchise agreements but not in this context. The next step may be working toward a list of recommendations that townships can be directed to. Daleiden stated he would like Flaherty & Hood to work with Michael Couri and Robert Ruppe, as the attorneys work with townships.*

*Zahrt reported \$70 million went into the State's Border-to-Border Broadband Grant program at the last meeting. To clarify, the State received the authorization to use \$70 million of Capital Projects funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for Border-to-Border Broadband grants. Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels previously asked if the county could use ARP funds as a match for a potential Border-to-Border Grant. At this time, Zahrt is still waiting on a definitive answer, but the county will likely not be eligible to do so. However, there could be additional guidance released by the federal government which would change this.*

*Information Technology Director Matthew Fomby stated the county is required to provide certain speeds to the end user. Fomby questioned if the State's ARP funding has the same requirement. Zahrt responded that it is a realistic fear. The State did some tweaking in the process of funding the upcoming Border-to-Border Grant, adding language stating the State could modify requirements or provisions to match the Federal requirements.*

*Zahrt explained the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) is a federal broadband development effort. The federal government identified a number of zones or regions nationwide, largely based on speed or access. A Request for Proposal (RPF) was issued asking providers to place bids to develop in the zones. Winning bidders gained the right to develop in the areas. LTD Broadband won the bid covering a large portion of Minnesota, including parts of Wright County. Previously RDOF areas were not allowed to receive funding through Border-to-Border Grants. The details and timeframe on the RDOF projects are still uncertain. Additionally, the winning bidders for RDOF zones essentially gained the exclusive right to submit a long-form proposal. The long-form proposals have been submitted and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently reviewing proposals. If the county wanted to fund a project in one of the RDOF zones, there could be potential conflict. Karels stated the committee needs to determine how far to take the county program before having further information. Zahrt stated there is no guarantee on a timeline for more information.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.**

**IV. Action Items/Agenda for Next Meeting**

*The next meeting will be scheduled the third week of October. The Feasibility Study Report will be complete, and Zahrt may have additional updates to provide.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/16/21-9/13/21**

Vetsch moved to accept the Budget Committee of the Whole meeting minutes and recommendations from 8/16/21-9/13/21. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/16/21****I. OVERVIEW OF DRAFT 2022 BUDGET; REVIEW OF POSITION REQUEST; REVIEW OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; REVIEW OF APPROPRIATION REQUESTS**

*Commissioner Daleiden explained there are 23 new position requests with additional reclassifications, and it is guaranteed that not all of them will be approved, adding the committee needs to think about where to make cuts. The preliminary levy is currently a little over 11 percent so there will need to be discussion on cuts. Commissioner Vetsch stated the growth has been about 6.8 percent and expressed a need for the levy to be 6.1 percent or below which means cutting \$4.2 million to \$4.3 million.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/16/21 (CONT.)**

County Administrator Lee Kelly informed the Board the levy is currently at 11.98 percent and expressed a need to cut \$4-5 million. Kelly explained the budget review process is slightly different because of two new board members. Kelly outlined key things to be aware of: the county's health insurance increase is set at an 8 percent cap if the county is to pick up the full increase for employees; consideration of the use of fund balance; the need to be careful of on-time things such as how American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds factor into the budget; and currently there is nothing in the budget to supplement the Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Kelly explained there are 23 new position requests and six reclassifications over 10 departments. The personnel in County Attorney's Office were approved for hire in 2021 and are included in the 2022 budget. The budget includes \$2.1 million in position requests, with the expenditures including wages, expense, and revenues. Personnel costs were verified by Finance team.

Kelly explained that there is a new format for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP reflects earlier Board discussion based on set amounts and set buckets for each department and the County does not want to levy any more than \$3,375,000.

Commissioner Husom stated she appreciated the clear layout of the CIP. Husom stated that she would like to work within the budget for projects and thanked staff for developing the format.

Kelly informed the Board that his intent is to adopt the preliminary budget at the Tuesday, September 21, 2021 County Board meeting. Kelly went on to explain that the Wright County Fair Board and Great River Regional Library (GRRL) are not scheduled for a presentation in front of the Board. The Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) has a \$130,000 request. Discussion is pending on addition of an additional \$10,000 to supplement its building space rent. University of Minnesota Extension has an increase due to a tri-county position request. Commissioner Daleiden stated the position would work with McLeod and Meeker Counties.

Discussion was had regarding presentations to the Board. It was the consensus that WCEDP, GRRL, Wright County Fair Board and U of M Extension would be invited to present to the Board of Commissioners as part of the budget process. Kelly informed the Board that the Wright County Historical Society has requested an additional \$6,000, and the Initiative Foundation request was \$7,400 – the Board has typically allocated \$7,000 annually.

Discussion took place concerning debt service. Daleiden provided an explanation on the 105 percent levied for debt service which is a slight increase over 2021. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer stated that the 5 percent is a statutory requirement to be sure to cover all the debt service because it is never the case that 100 percent of levy is collected.

Commissioner Vetsch discussed budget 100 outlining the membership/dues are for things like: The National Association of Counties, The Association of Minnesota Counties, the Highway 55 Coalition, Tri-County Forensic Crime Lab, the Wright County Historical Society, The Wright County Fair Board, WCEDP, Initiative Foundation, Central Mississippi River Regional Planning Partnership, etc. There are not specific lines for specific things, noting the county's Enterprise Resource Planning delineated them by a sub-account code. Vetsch requested all fees listed for Budget 100.

Discussion on liquidation of old furniture in county facilities was discussed. It was the consensus that no revenue from sale of furniture be included in the budget.

Kelly reviewed the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) allocations. Vetsch stated that if there was a reconciliation of the CIP to get to \$3.75 million, fund balance would need to be used. The county has \$1.8 million in projects in excess of the \$3.75 million budget.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/16/21 (CONT.)**

*Daleiden announced that Health & Human Services would start its budget review at 10:15 a.m. rather than 1 p.m.*

*Daleiden requested a six-month burn rate for the 2021 budget to be sent to all Commissioners via email*

**II. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

*HHS Director Jami Goodrum Schwartz began the presentation by indicating they were requesting two additional staff. Goodrum Schwartz highlighted the narrative provided in the budget books. She questioned the moratorium of reclassification and would like to reclassify certain positions but keep the same number of FTE (Full-Time Employees). Daleiden responded there is currently no moratorium on reclassifications. The reference to the moratorium was related to additional reclassifications as part of the classification/compensation study completed in 2019.*

*Goodrum Schwartz explained the staff requests are for a Social Worker for MnCHOICES Reassessments and one for MnCHOICES Foster Care. Overall, HHS has a levy increase of 12.8 percent. However, only a 5.6 percent overall increase excluding cost of staff increases. Most of the increase is in technology and rent. There is a total \$1.7 million increase for 2022.*

*HHS Business Manager Christine Partlow talked through some of the historical trends in the budget, explaining that there is one vacancy in child support that is still in budget.*

*Discussion followed on the Financial Services Fraud contract. Goodrum Schwartz informed the Board the cost of the contract is \$150,000. This could also cover the cost of additional staff. No decision was made. Pooler gave an overview to the Board on the fraud process.*

*Goodrum Schwartz stated there should be future consideration given to adding a Social Services Supervisor due to the increased waiver revenue. Reassessments cannot be contracted out. Currently comp time and overtime are needed for the reassessments. Pooler explained that teleworkers have higher caseloads. Case Aides and Office Techs have been used for reassessment. The reassessments must be completed or effect on residents.*

*Michelle Miller discussed with the Board Relative Foster Care services and discussion took place dealing with two vehicle requests.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***The consensus was to remove one vehicle request from budget line 11-480-895-0020-6333 for a reduction of \$27,500.***

*Discussion took place on the Detox program. There is an expected increase in costs.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***The consensus was to reduce line 11-430-730-3710-6030 to \$75,000***

*Discussion on treatment center. Historically this line item has been budgeted high. HHS does not have any control of costs.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***Consensus was to reduce line 11-430-740-4721-6030 to \$320,000.***

*Discussion took place on Target Case Management which includes all social services.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***Consensus was to reduce line 11-430-750-5660-6030 to \$160,000.***

Director Goodrum Schwartz emphasized to the Board that by cutting areas within the budget she measured the risk in doing so. She stated that HHS has a fund balance but would rather not use it.

Discussion took place on a Public Health grant of \$725,000 pandemic relief. There will need to be a budget amendment at end of 2022 for the grant to carry over. Goodrum Schwartz explained that there were many unknowns with the pandemic. HHS is planning a vaccine campaign which will add costs in 2022 for the vaccine booster.

Goodrum Schwartz informed the Board that the legislature reduced Child and Teen Checkup program funding by 40 percent.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Consensus of the Board is that all budget changes discussed be submitted to the Budget Team by Friday, September 3, 2021.**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/17/21**

**I. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Information Technology (IT) Director Matthew Fomby explained that the software and systems support line started at \$1 million due to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). There was a Board action in June 2021 to have ERP transferred out of IT budget and moved to Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Therefore \$2 million in budget funding went to \$915,000. Fomby explained that IT would like to put the budget line item and to budget for 2022 an increase from \$915,000 to \$1.6 million. The consensus is to amend to \$300,000 with a 20 percent increase versus a 26 percent increase. Commissioner Vetsch questioned why the County is currently paying ongoing licensing costs for ERP if it's not being used. IT Office Technician Jennifer Rasset stated that, despite not currently in use, the county owns the ERP software and technology.

Commissioner Daleiden questioned the software/systems support line item and what was included in it. Fomby explained each of the systems. Team Dynamix, a program management tool used to manage the help desk.

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to reduce the software/systems support line down by \$10,000 because the cost of Team Dynamix was less \$11,000 than planned. Fomby also explained that software systems for departments have been consolidated to IT budget.**

An increase in the IT overtime budget was discussed. Fomby informed the Board the increase in overtime is due to the implementation of ERP and is only temporary as well as the IT department being understaffed overall.

Discussion took place concerning the county's phone contract, membership dues, and professional services.

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to reduce professional Services line to \$590,000.**

The Board discussed position requests for IT. Fomby stated the County needs a Corporate Trainer. He requested it as part of the IT budget knowing it would not be approved but hopefully considered as an Administration position. County Administrator Lee Kelly stated he did not request the position because of the current proposed levy of around 12 percent.

Commissioner Husom stated there has been a 114 percent increase in staff requests countywide over the last five years. Daleiden added there was a 11 percent increase in population for Wright County.

Fomby explained to the Board that by limiting staff in his department they are limiting what can be done. Fomby informed the Board that his top two position requests are for a Senior Technical Support Specialist and an

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/17/21 (CONT.)**

*Infrastructure Supervisor as his goal was to extend infrastructure to every county asset and that the footprint of IT is expanding geographically.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus of the Board to approve 2 generic IT positions and if there is a need then positions could be requested during the year.***

*Commissioner Kaczmarek questioned why the county would need more IT staff if all buildings will be on one campus. Fomby responded that there is a need for a division of responsibility. Vetsch said he would like to see a centralization of IT services.*

**II. ATTORNEY**

*County Attorney Brian Lutes informed the Board that this is his first time as part of the budget process. The significant difference in his budget from previous years is overtime.*

*There was discussion about overtime within the County Attorney's Office. Overtime is now budgeted because the Legal Assistants have claimed OT in the last year. This was due to a staff vacancy. He stated there should become efficiency gained by moving to new software. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux stated that if there is excess OT, a fund balance transfer could be done.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus of the Board to eliminate overtime in the County Attorney's budget for a reduction of \$25,000 and, if it is needed throughout the year, the department should bring a request to the County Board.***

*New position requests for the County Attorney's Office were discussed. The additional positions approved in 2021 have been added to the 2022 budget. Husom commented that the Attorney's Office has been lean with only three positions added in the last five years.*

***RECOMMENDATION: There were no recommended changes to the proposed budget.***

**III. AUDITOR/TREASURER**

*Discussion was had on salary. There is no increase based on contract and the line item reflects 12 months of salary. There may be some subscription costs. It was stated that the photo copier will be eliminated.*

***RECOMMENDATION: A reduction of \$300 to the photocopying line item was agreed upon.***

*Conferences and meeting were outlined by Auditor-Treasurer Bob Hiivala, as well as discussion cornering office supplies. It was explained that there were limited expenses.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus of the Board to reduce the office supplies budget for Auditor/Treasurer to \$200.***

**IV. FINANCE AND TAXPAYER SERVICES/ELECTIONS**

*Staff reviewed overall budget with the Board. The Board was informed that there is work on the property tax system, implementation of ERP, Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting, the opening of a driver's exam area and a drive-through for the License Center in the new Government Center, voter equipment replacement, and online Election Judge training. The total increase in the budget does not include election equipment because the equipment is in the CIP.*

*Discussion was had on the tobacco license fee revenue. Vetsch suggested increasing the fee to \$240. Commissioner Wetter suggested \$300. Daleiden questioned what cities are charging for tobacco licenses. Kaczmarek stated that costs need quantified by time. Corissa Aronson of the Finance Department suggested a \$225 fee for a total increase to the tobacco license revenue of \$2,050. Commissioners agreed with the increase.*



**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/17/21 (CONT.)**

*Other fees collected were discussed. It was stated that filing fees are set statutorily and the budget is based on historical trends. Vetsch asked where the production tax for solar farms was in the budget. Vaith informed him it should be in Department 100 as part of current year taxes.*

*Finance Director Lindsey Meyer informed the Board there was an overall revenue increase in the budget of \$49,000. There is an expected revenue at the License Center based on \$10 fee that can be collected for every Class D driver's exam. However, if it is not opened, at the new Government Center then revenues will be removed from the budget. Meyer reviewed in detail the items included in software systems support and office supplies line item.*

*Discussion took place pertaining to position requests. Meyer explained the Lead License Center Specialist position request. The position would manage inventory, provide office administration, and review legislative actions. The Lead License Center Specialist was reviewed as a mid-year position. Vetsch suggested this not be included in the 2022 budget.*

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to review the request during later discussions.**

*Meyer reviewed other position requests, stating that Finance and Taxpayer Services are serving the entire county. Additional assistance is needed. Currently, her department is very reactive when it comes to hiring. She is requesting a Staff Accountant and a Senior Staff Accountant in addition to a reclassification request. Vetsch explained the need for back-end staff. Husom agreed with the reclassification request but not others. Vetsch stated he could support a Senior Staff Accountant as the position is used to do analysis.*

*Daleiden questioned if American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds could be used to offset the position requests. Vetsch stated it should not be used for ongoing expenses. Daleiden stated the county can't implement ERP without staff. Husom stated there have been no staff requests in Finance over the last five years. There needs to be additional people with ERP knowledge. Vetsch stated that the additional staff will bring benefits to the County.*

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to approve the Staff Accountant, Sr Staff Accountant, Lead License Center Specialist, and the Reclassification.**

**V. VETERAN SERVICES**

*Veteran Services Officer Greg Pickard reviewed the budget. There has been one staff member added in the last five years. Miscellaneous revenue increased to account for unexpected donations. There was also a change in office supplies due to coding changes. An increase in telephone costs due to the need to call veterans with a long distance number from the office in Buffalo. Phone calls have increased with COVID as well.*

*Vetsch asked for an explanation on what qualifies someone as a veteran. Pickard explained in detail the qualifications.*

**RECOMMENDATION: There were no budget changes recommended.**

**VI. PLANNING & ZONING**

*It was explained that there is an increased revenue of \$100,000 due to under projection in past. Vetsch asked if the fee schedule was up to date. Discussion occurred on the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process with fee schedule changes proposed.*

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to increase fees and services revenue an additional \$10,000.**

**VII. ADMINISTRATION**

*Kelly reviewed the budget in detail. It was noted the vacant part-time Administrative Specialist remained in the budget but is not intended to be filled immediately. Minor reductions were made based on historic trends; and an increase in computers due to 10 computers begin replaced as part of the regular replacement schedule.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/17/21 (CONT.)**

*Kaczmarek questioned the \$5,000 line item for temporary personnel. Kelly explained this was anticipated for an intern. Currently the Administration intern is being funded by ARP.*

*Discussion on Risk Management Specialist position request took place. Risk Manager Dahl explained the position responsibilities in detail.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to hold approval of the Risk Management Specialist position for further discussion as end of budget process.***

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/18/21****I. ROAD & BRIDGE**

*County Highway Engineer Virgil Hawkins gave a brief presentation concerning highway work/projects completed within the last year. Commissioner Daleiden asked for the cost per mile for the pavement preservation. The cost varies to include \$35,000-40,000 for a thin overlay; \$250,000-400,000 for full overlays; and \$1 million for a complete reconstruction project. Seal coating projects are part to the Maintenance Division budget.*

*Assistant County Highway Engineer Chad Hausmann discussed 2022 projects. There is about \$22 million total for construction projects.*

*The Highway Administration budget was discussed. Commissioner Kaczmarek asked about the Electronic Equipment line item. Waytashek explained this item is for software support for various programs. Kaczmarek also asked about the department's safety program. Waytashek informed the Board this line item was moved to the General Fund as the Risk Manager manages the program.*

*The Highway Engineering budget was discussed. Daleiden stated there was an increase in department charges of \$2,300. Daleiden questioned the additional \$45,000 listed under consultant fees and if the culvert cost was included. He questioned if the Ditch Fund should pay for part of the culvert crossing. Hausmann explained that ditch crossings are funded 100 percent by the road authority by state law.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to keep the consultant fees line item at \$280,000 with no changes.***

*The Engineering Technician vacancy was discussed. Hausmann expressed his concern that interviews cannot be conducted until after the prospective applicant graduates. Human Resources Director Schawn Johnson stated that interviews are conducted only after minimum qualifications are met.*

*The Highway Construction budget was discussed. Commissioner Vetsch requested a Public Hearing be held to add general ditch and culvert improvement projects to the fund created by the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST).*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus that no changes be made to the Highway Construction budget.***

*The Highway Department LOST budget was discussed. It was explained by the budget team that revenues and expenditures are zeroed out to completely expend the revenue taken in. Vetsch requested a Transfer line item be added to the budget.*

*The Highway Maintenance budget was discussed. Vetsch pointed out there was an overtime increase, stating the department has only gone over budget in this line item once in five years.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/18/21 (CONT.)**

*It was stated that miscellaneous contracts increased. The County has snow/ice control maintenance agreements with six cities. The budget is based on an average over the last three years.*

***RECOMMENDATION: There were no recommended changes to the Highway Maintenance budget.***

*Discussion took place dealing with the Highway Shop Maintenance budget. Kaczmarek questioned radio communication and batteries. It was explained the increases were due to two radios being replaced and the replacement of batteries on message boards respectively.*

*The Sign Department budget had an overall decrease. It was explained the overtime budget was due to new hybrid positions from last year. The hybrid positions do sign maintenance as well as plow snow. The bulk of overtime is due to winter weather that requires employees to do snow plowing until the county system is cleared. Kaczmarek asked about measures for anticipating snow. Highway Maintenance Supervisor Steve Meyer gave an overview of how plowing decisions are made.*

*Vetsch and Daleiden requested Meyer to produce a list of equipment purchases.*

***RECOMMENDATION: There were no recommended changes to the Highway Shop Maintenance budget.***

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/19/21****I. COURT ADMINISTRATION**

*Court Administrator Monica Tschumper stated there were no changes to the budget. If the department goes over budget, she will ask for an amendment from the Board. All the services in her department are mandated.*

*Commissioner Daleiden asked about Professional Services. Tschumper explained in detail the services provided. Professional Services includes court-appointed counsel. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer explained the request from Court Administration has been level over the previous five years, however the budget has consistently gone over. It requires spending fund balance or spending turnback dollars. Commissioner Daleiden requested cost be reflected accurately.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to increase the Court-Appointed Counsel line item by \$50,000.***

**II. SHERIFF**

*A review of the Sheriff's Office budget was conducted. It was noted that there is a \$340,000 revenue increase due to increased contracts and police aid. Commissioner Kaczmarek noted the patrol fines have not increased. Sheriff's Office Manager Shawna Athman explained that last year the line item came in under budget. The Sheriff's Office will continue to monitor the revenue based on city contract services.*

*The Personnel line item was discussed. It was noted that Boat and Water was adjusted to include a portion in the personnel line item and a portion in the boat and water line item. This will aid in getting Minnesota Department of Natural Resources grant monies.*

*Commissioner Vetsch discussed software systems and support. It was explained by the Sheriff's Office staff that an application to use American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for the Net Motion software was in place. Vetsch would like to keep the software costs in the budget because there will be an annual increase.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/19/21 (CONT.)**

*Athman explained that ammunition is included in office supplies. It is budgeted at \$35,000 per year and is projected to quadruple in the next four years. Sheriff Sean Deringer added that everything is on back order by two years. He currently has a \$150,000 of ammunition on order. Other expenses in office supplies were discussed.*

*Vetsch asked about vehicle purchases. Deringer explained the difficulty in purchasing vehicles and the needs of the department. The concept of purchasing electric vehicles was also discussed. Deringer explained that the technology of electric vehicles has to change to meet the needs of the Sheriff's Office.*

*The Conferences, Meeting, and Training line item was discussed. Athman noted that they estimate approximately \$1,000 per licensed officer in this line item. The Board discussed the use of the Sheriff's Office Training Center. It was explained that there is a benefit to hosting trainings through complimentary seats. Deringer explained there are no private trainers using the facility. Hoffman stated the Board needs to be cognizant that Wright County and the FBI get training priorities without conflicts.*

*Kaczmarek asked about the Wellness program. Staff described in detail the mentorship program at the Sheriff's Office. Last year the program was budget neutral. The average participation rate is 30 percent.*

*Athman explained there was no reason to increase fuel costs because they have not expended the full budget in previous years.*

***RECOMMENDATION: There were no recommended changes to the Sheriff budget.***

*The Corrections budget was discussed. It was explained that the jail has been empty due to COVID. The Court is backlogged by thousands of cases when in a normal environment there would be revenue of \$1.8-1.9 million. It was acknowledged that there has not been a COVID outbreak in the jail.*

*Professional Services were discussed. It was explained that it is a statutory mandate to provide prisoner guarding at hospital visits. Other professional services needs were described in detail.*

*Training for Corrections Officers is estimated at \$750 per person.*

*Position requests were discussed. Commissioner Husom provided a history of added positions within the last five years. Deringer outlined the challenge with the future ability to recruit and retain staff because of competition with other agencies providing incentives as well as fewer graduates from the police academy. He also explained there is a need to increase coverage in five cities in the county which will result in additional deputy requests. It was also stated that the Sheriff's Office will be losing senior staff within the next three years. Husom asked about the budget impact of the reclassification requests. Athman stated the Collection Officer position would be budget neutral. The Office Manager position would assist Athman with support and supervision. This position reclassification would be about a \$9,000 difference. Deringer stated they have been utilizing a temporary person to hold off on the request until the budget process. Vetsch and Daleiden suggested the Sheriff's Office meet with Human Resources to review the position and bring the request to the Personnel Committee. Vetsch stated if the need arises requests for addition staff should go back to the Personnel Committee.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to approve the Collection Officer reclassification and the hiring of a Civil Communications Officer.***

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/24/21****I. PARKS & RECREATION**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/24/21 (CONT.)**

*Parks & Recreation Director Marc Mattice presented a detailed summary of the Parks & Recreation Department projects and programs. Commissioner Vetsch recognized Mattice for incorporating the County value stream in his budget presentation.*

*Mattice requested the hiring of a Lead Mechanic position. This position would increase service to all departments and could be used in partnership with the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The County would be able to complete in-house Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) inspections. Commissioner Daleiden questioned the cost for a MnDOT inspection. Mattice informed him it is about \$300 per piece of equipment and there are approximately 16 vehicles inspected annually.*

*The additional miscellaneous revenue in the Parks & Recreation budget comes from campground usage and could potentially be increased more since a new campground at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park opened in 2021. Vetsch stated he would like to actualize the review due to increased use at Bertram Park.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to increase Miscellaneous Revenues by \$15,000.***

*Additional, program fees were discussed and those fees and service charges were similarly expected to rise as the result of additional parks usage with the opening of the Bertram campground.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to increase Fees and Service Charges by \$8,000.***

*The County Board and staff discussed in detail the overall budget. Vetsch discussed upcoming projects and asked what wouldn't get done if the budget was reduced to \$144,000. Mattice responded that security cameras and automated door locks would be eliminated. Additional discussion was had on the Dassel to Cokato Trail along State Highway 12. Mattice stated there is a signed agreement between the townships and cities. Daleiden added the trail benefits the two cities but is not a county issue.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to reduce the Site Improvements line item to \$145,000 and keep it level in the future.***

*Additional discussion was had on the request for a Lead Mechanic.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to revisit the position request at the end of budget discussions.***

*There was discussion on the use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) which could reduce the levy by a total of \$640,000.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to use ARP funds for replacement of CIP funds and keep the levy amount level.***

*Agricultural and Drainage Coordinator Matthew Detjen explained that Ag & Drainage is a mandated department/service. Detjen then provided an overview of the budget. Commissioner Wetter questioned why Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) funding is included. Daleiden responded it is to show grant money in versus expenses. And is also due to a mandate.*

*Equipment requests were discussed. Detjen explained the need for a mini-excavator and stated it could be used by multiple departments including Parks & Recreation and possibly SWCD. Commissioner Kaczmarek suggested billing the excavator use back to residents along the ditches.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/24/21 (CONT.)**

*The SWCD budget items were discussed which is in the Appropriations line-item A detailed list of the appropriations was outlined.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *It was the consensus to reduce the Appropriations line item by \$18,000 because of ARP projects.*

**II. RECORDER**

*Wright County Recorder Tanya West stated the department has added four staff members with the recent reorganization of Land Records. She is requesting one additional staff person. West informed the Board that revenues are up so far this year. She is unsure the effect of the expiring moratorium on mortgages. Daleiden stated she should come back to the board in October 2021 and increase the revenue projections.*

*Daleiden questioned the need for increased overtime. West stated overtime was authorized to get caught up with batches as well as the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system needs. Daleiden stated the additional staff will help reduce overtime. Daleiden stated the position request could be approved but re-evaluated upon retirements within the department.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *It was the consensus that the Deputy Recorder position request be tentatively approved.*

*Discussion was had regarding the Recorder Technology Fund and Compliance Fund.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *It was the consensus to reduce Software & Systems support line item to \$5844.*

**III. COURT SERVICES**

*Court Services Director Mike MacMillan provided an overview of the department budget. Commissioner Husom stated that Court Services has had the same number of staff over the last three years. MacMillan outlined the staff requests to include a Corrections Agent and an Office Technician II. MacMillan added that an agent position has not been added in 10 years as his department continues to find new ways to be creative and innovative. The priority is the Corrections Agent request. The position will be assigned to the pre-trial division. There is a backlog of cases waiting on pre-trial. Vetsch supported the position request. There is a revenue benefit to the position preventing defendants from getting re-incarcerated.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *It was the consensus to approve the Corrections Agent position.*

*Discussion was had regarding the Regional Juvenile Treatment Center. In 2022 there is a direct allocation to fund the project. It was the consensus to keep three beds under contract as the trend for usage is going up except during the period of COVID-19 when shelter in place executive orders were in place.*

*The three probation delivery systems were discussed by MacMillan. They have been reviewed in the past and will continue to be reviewed for a cost effectiveness comparison every few years.*

*Commissioner Daleiden requested Court Services discussion be assigned at a future Board meeting.*

**IV. ASSESSOR**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/24/21 (CONT.)**

*Wright County Assessor Tony Rasmuson reviewed the department budget. He explained that his department spends more than it brings in for revenue.*

*There was a lengthy discussion on staffing levels. It was stated that if the Assessor's Office takes on an additional district then he will need an additional staff member. The new employee would be proposed to begin in July 2022. Husom asked if there was a point where all assessors are county employees. Rasmuson stated that is the trend now in many parts of Minnesota and around the country.*

*Discussion of vehicle purchases took place. Rasmuson stated he was requesting to purchase two vehicles. Wright County Administrator Lee Kelly stated the County is in the process of conducting an analysis to centralize the motor pool.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to remove the vehicle requests until the analysis was complete.***

*Position requests were discussed. Rasmuson has requested two positions with one starting January 2022 and the other starting in July 2022. Daleiden asked if the position had been reviewed and scored. Rasmuson responded stating he had it drafted and anticipated a salary, but it had not been scored.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to approve the Workflow and Systems Manager position and to work with Human Resources for a title and grade for the position. It was also agreed to refer the additional two appraiser positions to the Personnel Committee when needed.***

**V. SURVEYOR**

*County Surveyor Steve Jobe reviewed his budget. He stated that overall, the total budget is down with what he can control – those things that exclude personnel costs. Revenue has significantly increased due to the increase in plats and lots that have been submitted to the Recorder's Office. He budgeted the revenue from plat reviews low because it is hard to anticipate an exact figure.*

*Discussion regarding aerial photography took place. Jobe recommended aerial photography should be updated every two years versus every three years, which is the current standard. Daleiden suggested coordinating the aerial with other counties as there could be a cost savings.*

*Vetsch inquired about the Administrative Specialist position. Jobe stated it is still vacant because there has not been interest. He requested it be left in the budget for 2022. There was discussion about the work scope of the position.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to keep the full-time Administrative Specialist position in the Surveyor budget.***

**VI. COUNTY BOARD**

*Kelly stated it should be the default for all Commissioners to be issued county phones. The largest reduction in the budget was the Small Equipment line item because there was nothing scheduled for replacement. Daleiden inquired about the issuance of computers. Kelly stated nothing has been issued yet. He will follow up with Daleiden and Husom. The wage increase in the budget is based on the same Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) as employees.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to invite University of Minnesota Extension, the Wright County Fair Board, and the Initiative Foundation to a meeting on August 31, 2021 to discuss their respective budgets.***

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/31/21****I. WRIGHT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (WCEDP)**

*WCEDP Executive Director Jolene Foss reviewed the budget stating it is the same request as in 2021 and includes \$5000 for rent in 2022.*

*Commissioner Kaczmarek asked for an explanation on the Reserve Fund. Foss explained that the reserve fund policy was just approved by WCEDP Board. The fund contains approximately 60 percent of operating costs annually. It is part of the policy to transfer \$147,000 to the fund.*

*Discussion was had on the memberships of the EDP.*

*A lengthy discussion took place regarding the difference between an Economic Development Authority (EDA) and an Economic Development Partnership (EDP) and how they are each separate and unique. The request for allocation from the County to the WCEDP is \$130,000. Commissioner Vetsch provided a detailed summary of the roles and goals of both the EDA and the EDP.*

*There was discussion regarding the rental rate. Currently the rate is set at \$15.10 per square foot.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to set the Wright County Economic Development Partnership allocation at \$140,000 which would include \$10,000 to offset rent charges.***

**II. BUILDING CARE**

*Facilities Services Director Alan Wilczek reviewed the department budget with the Board. The major expenses include personnel, utilities, professional services, and repairs/maintenance. Wilczek explained the biggest unknown within the budget is the utilities because the county doesn't know how long the Government Center and Health & Human Services Center will require upkeep after county employees move into the new Government Center. He uses 50 percent consumption over eight months for the current Government Center building. Vetsch stated the Health & Human Services Center will close in the first quarter of 2022, so budgeting for 1.5 months of utilities there is appropriate. The budget currently assumes utility costs of \$100,000 for the Government Center and \$24,000 for Health & Human Services Center.*

*The number of staff were reviewed with the Board. There are 13 ADM (the company that provides cleaning service) staff and 16 facilities personnel. Wilczek stated the building doesn't have a lot of plumbing needs so there would be no need to share staff with Parks & Recreation.*

*Commissioner Kaczmarek questioned if county staff could decommission buildings. Wilczek stated the HHS building could be done by facilities staff; however, the Government Center building is more complicated.*

**II. BUDGET 100**

*County Administrator Lee Kelly informed the Board that Budget 100 includes miscellaneous items. The 10 percent increase is due to the County Program Aid (CPA) allocation. Discussion was had on the disposition of office furniture.*

***RECOMMENDATION: The consensus was to increase the Auction proceeds revenue line item to \$20,000.***

*Finance Director Lindsey Meyer informed the Board that \$1.2 million of fund balance was used in 2021. There will need to be a discussion on use of fund balance for 2022.*



**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/31/21 (CONT.)**

*It was explained that the unallocated personnel services line item is for new hire positions that are negotiated to start at a higher starting pay and for filling positions mid-year.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to reduce the unallocated personnel services to \$360,000.***

*There was some discussion on memberships/dues/professional services.*

***RECOMMENDATION: The consensus was to remove membership in the Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) in the amount of \$33,200 from Memberships and Dues and to reduce the Professional Services line item by \$20,000.***

*There was discussion on the 800MHz emergency radio system and how to allocate costs. It was stated that the radios are heavily subsidized by the County. There was discussion among all Board members regarding charging out additional fees to other agencies for radio usage.*

*Kelly detailed the training budget line item and what trainings are included.*

*The Initiative Foundation had requested funding of \$7,400 – similar to what has been requested in previous years. In 2020, the Board reduced that amount to \$7,000.*

***RECOMMENDATION: The consensus was to allocate to \$7,000 to the Initiative Fund as previously done.***

**III. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION**

*University of Minnesota Extension Regional Director Lori Vicich presented the Extension budget. She explained that the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase was negotiated at the state level. There is a three-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that expires at the end of 2021. The COLA rate for 2022 and is negotiated at 2.25 percent for 2023 and for 2.5 percent in 2024.*

*Vicich discussed the Tri-County relationship requesting to try something different in which all three counties save money. The three counties included are McLeod, Meeker, and Wright counties. Overall, the ask is for \$16,000 between the three counties, which would increase the 2022 budget by \$5,404. It would be a change from one ag educator to sharing three educators which include a crops expert, livestock expert and a horticulture educator.*

***RECOMMENDATION: The consensus was agreement with the proposed Tri-County position and the budget adjustment that would come with it.***

*Vicich explained that 4-H has the biggest budget increase for 2022. Staffing for 4-H hasn't increased in a long time even though the County is growing. Wright County saw an increase in membership even during the COVID-19 pandemic when all meetings had to be conducted virtually. Kaczmarek made the observation that there was a shortage of kids to work the food stand at the Wright County Fair.*

***RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus to discuss the 4-H position request at the final budget meeting.***

**IV. WRIGHT COUNTY FAIR BOARD**

*The County Board was informed that Fair Board elections will take place in November. There are 20 members on the Board covering five zones with four members for each zone.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8/31/21 (CONT.)**

*Vetsch asked for feedback regarding the impacts of free admission for youth. There was about a \$5,000 decrease in revenue and that the free admission will continue in the future. Daleiden asked about other revenue increases. It was stated that revenues for attendance and parking increased. Overall, Wright County Fair revenues looked favorable for 2021.*

*Discussion was had regarding improvements at the Fair. There is a plan to expand grandstand seating by 600 seats with bleachers that were donated from the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District.*

*Discussion on mileage reimbursement took place. Board members are reimbursed for meetings at a rate of \$20 per committee meeting, \$40 per Fair Board meeting, and \$75 per day at the County Fair.*

*There was discussion about the guidebook and ways to cut costs but still promote the fair.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/2/21****I. REVIEW OF POSITION REQUESTS AND OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

*The Capital Improvement Project (CIP) fund is now at \$3.305 million after the transfer out of Parks & Recreation projects to the American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund.*

*County Administrator Lee Kelly reviewed staff requests.*

*Commissioner Daleiden would like to get the levy down to 6 percent*

*Commissioner Vetsch stated the growth is at 6.6 percent in the county.*

*Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux commented that the vehicle request was removed from the Assessor's budget requests but a vehicle remained in the Health & Human Services budget and there should be consistency throughout.*

*Information Technology (IT) Director Matthew Fomby stated he could eliminate \$75,000 from the IT Capital Improvement Project fund.*

*Vetsch stated that the \$130,000 production tax be moved to Department 100.*

*The CIP fund was reviewed as follows:*

*Highway \$350,000  
Health & Human Services \$250,000  
Sheriff's Office \$300,000  
Parks & Recreation \$255,000  
Building \$300,000  
Enterprise \$850,000  
Unallocated \$100,000  
Other \$300,000*

*Lemieux stated that the Highway Department levied projects could be reduced by \$500,000 and moved to the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) fund.*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/2/21 (CONT.)**

*Kelly stated there was a rate cap of 8 percent on the health insurance increase. Currently the full 8 percent increase is in the budget assuming the County is covering the full increase.*

*Lemieux stated \$140,000 could be removed from the budget due to position vacancies.*

*Recorder Tanya West stated the Beacon/Geographic Imaging System (GIS) (\$50,000) and tax system costs (\$10,000) could be paid for with the Recorder Technology Fund.*

*Position requests discussed included:*

*Recorder request is justifiable based on increased recordings.*

*Staff Accountant is eliminated.*

*Parks Mechanic is approved.*

*Lead License Center Specialist is pending state requirements and could be added later.*

*Social Worker Adult Services is approved.*

*Risk Management Specialist is approved with the removal of the part-time Administrative Specialist*

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 9/13/21****I. LEVY AND TAX CAPACITY REVIEW**

*Finance Director Lindsey Meyer informed the Board that the current levy is at 7.06 percent as presented without any modifications. Meyer stated she was comfortable taking \$463,000 amount from fund balance to reduce the levy by 0.5 percent. Discussion took place how the buy down of the levy with fund balance to be consistent with the 6.6% growth of the County. The Board reviewed the prepared property tax documents distributed by Assistant Finance Director-Property Tax Operations Tammi Vaith.*

*Commissioner Vetsch explained that the County needs the ability to call bonds for current county facilities in 2024 or 2027. Commissioner Husom stated the goal is to have a stagnant tax levy. Vetsch followed up by stating the Board would like to keep long-term sustainability and to keep the tax rate the same or flat each year.*

*Commissioner Daleiden suggested a 6.6 percent levy to match the growth. Meyer informed the Board that approximately \$380,000 of fund balance would be needed to get to a 6.6 percent levy increase.*

**II. REVIEW OF POSITION REQUESTS & OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

*Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux reviewed all the approved positions. Husom informed the Board there has been no decision on the University of Minnesota Extension position request and asked about the budget impact. It was the consensus of the Board to wait on the Extension position request and use the \$89,000 position budget to lower the buy down of the levy to stay at 6.6 percent.*

*Commissioner Kaczmarek asked for clarification on "Mechanic" versus "Lead Mechanic" position request. It was the consensus of the Board to proceed with the Lead Mechanic position request approval.*

*County Administrator Lee Kelly stated the Board will consider the adoption of the preliminary budget with a 6.6 percent levy rate increase at the Tuesday, September 21, 2021 Board meeting. Kelly informed the Board the levy can't be increased once approved. The proposed date for the annual Truth in Taxation meeting will be Thursday, December 9, 2021.*

*The Board discussed providing information to the public regarding the proposed increase.*

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE/ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES**

Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC). On Thursday, September 16, 2021 Kelly attended one day of the AMC Fall Policy Conference. Kelly was asked by AMC to be on a panel with Aaron Hurley from National Association of Counties (NACO) regarding the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

Stearns County gave a presentation regarding solar and what the county has experienced regarding the one-megawatt solar farms.

Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) provided an overview of the plans. There is a 911 Telecommunicators work group which has been formed. There could potentially be a move of 911 Telecommunicators from the PERA General Plan to the Correctional Plan.

Dental Clinic. Kelly said the county has been notified by the state that the pre-design plan has been deemed sufficient which means the county can move forward with completing the grant application with the deed for the dental clinic.

University of Minnesota Extension. Wetter and Daleiden attended the Extension meeting on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. There was an update regarding Tri-County. Extension is going to have a horticulture educator give a presentation.

4-H. Wetter said 4-H has 633 members and 19 clubs. It's one of three counties that grew during the pandemic. There is a master gardener sign-up which will be due Friday, October 1, 2021. 4-H will be hosting promotional open houses in September and October.

Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). Wetter attended the SWCD meeting on Monday, September 13, 2021. One of the main topics was the Water Quality Trading Pilot Program. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) wants Wright County to be the pilot. For cities that wastewater treatment plants are too expensive to update could buy credits from farmers that had already done projects and water quality to make it easier for them.

Mississippi St. Cloud and the South Fork Crow River One Watershed One Plan. Wetter said both groups have been approved to receive money for planning. The decontamination unit has developed a leak which will need to be repaired.

Wright County Community Action (WCCA). Wetter attended the WCCA meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2021. There was discussion regarding Head Start. There was a 4 percent increase of participation in Head Start which will up the food amount for Head Start. The WCCA received a letter of vaccination mandates, however, there has not been any guidance on it.

The food shelf had more than 30,000 frozen meals which the WCCA will disburse as quickly as possible because the meals are only kept for six months.

Historical Society. On Wednesday, September 15, 2021 Wetter attended the Historical Society meeting. The membership fees are possibly going to be raised because more money is needed to keep the operations going. The membership will vote on the fees at the annual meeting in October. The Historical Society will be hosting its Festival of Trees. The manager suggested that the five Commissioners would each decorate a tree. Then people can come through and vote which tree they think is the best.

Trailblazer Transit. On Thursday, September 9, 2021 Vetsch attended the Trailblazer meeting. There was a great deal of time spent discussing the difficult labor market. There are more than 20 open positions at Trailblazer. There is still a struggle with getting software that meets the needs of the organization.

Wright County Mayor's Association. Vetsch attended the Mayor's Association Dinner. There was a large amount of support for the Local Option sales Tax from the mayor's that were in attendance.

Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP). Vetsch said last week the WCEDP met. The WCEDP is working with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) on a grant for business counseling services. The WCEDP is also working on polling all the partner members regarding goal setting and deciding what initiatives from a high-level perspective the organization should tackle.

Bertram Chain of Lakes Park Advisory Board. The Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Board met on Friday, September 10, 2021. Monticello hosted the state soccer championships at Bertram. It went well and people were very happy with the facilities. There are waiting lists for the nature-based education program.

Parks Advisory Board. On Monday, September 13, 2021 Daleiden attended the Parks Advisory Board meeting. There was discussion regarding the construction sites, different improvements happening, and the Comprehensive System Master Plan. The campgrounds were open the entire 2021 season. The 2022 camping season dates were set including when the campgrounds will open and when online reservations will start. There was an overview of programs and events happening this winter such as cross-country skiing, hiking events, Valentine's dinner and dog sledding.

Public Works Labor Management Committee. On Thursday, September 9, 2021 Husom attended the Public Works Labor Management Committee meeting at the Highway Building. There were updates regarding the County Fair, which the committee said went very well. The committee will be hosting Silent Santa again this year. The survey crews have been out replacing markers that were taken out during the road construction. There is still a vacant Technician position. County Road 118 should be done in October with a big retaining wall. There was discussion about the Otsego Highway Department shop expansion.

Safe Communities of Wright County. Husom attended the Safe Communities of Wright County on Friday, September 10, 2021. Safe Communities of Wright County applied for a Towards Zero Death (TZD) grant and Monday, September 20, 2021 found out that it was received. There will be speed prevention and risk, impaired and distracted driving and risk, and expanding sober cab rides.

The four disciplines that were discussed are Emergency Medical Systems, engineering, education and enforcement. The crashed car was at the Prairie Festival in Otsego and Albertville Open Streets. The Driving While Impaired (DWI) campaign in Wright County ended in a lot of arrests. The next campaign will be September 19, 2021 through September 30, 2021 for seat belt and child restraints.

Central MN Jobs and Training Joint Powers Board. Husom attended the meeting on Friday, September 10, 2021. According to the statistics unemployment in Minnesota is at 3.4 percent. The Workforce Center office is open in Monticello, Hutchinson and Cambridge.

Wright County Fair Board. Kaczmarek attended the Fair Board meeting. A motion was made to continue having free admission into the County Fair for anyone 17 years old and under.

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

County Board Minutes submitted by Angie Fisher, Administrative Specialist