



COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

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

DATE APPROVED: [DATE]

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

Others Present: Lee Kelly, Elizabeth Karels, Heather Lemieux, Ryan Kotila, Jami Goodrum, Lindsey Meyer, Holly Wilson, Greg Kryzer, Matthew Fomby; **Attending Remotely:** Marc Mattice, Matt Detjen, Patsy Waytashek, Schawn Johnson, Steve Meyer, Christine Partlow, John Holler, Michelle Miller, Steve Jobe

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

I. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Updates

A. Overview of approved programs and projects

Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels reviewed the requested programs and projects as well as the allocations that were previously set. There have been 36 requests, totaling \$30 million, submitted at the program level. The county has not been allocated enough to fund all the requests. Currently, 13 programs have been approved, with an allocation of more than \$22 million. Initially, \$10 million was allocated to broadband. Karels questioned if any adjustments need to be made to the allocations.

Vetsch questioned if the schools requested to retract, or revise requested amounts. Karels stated she reached out the contact for clarification but has not yet heard a response. For now, the amount has remained unchanged.

Husom said during the initial discussions of broadband she had requested \$80,000 for the City of South Haven, but it was never formally submitted as a request. Karels said there are not individual requests for broadband. The initial allocation of \$10 million would cover any broadband projects. Husom said South Haven is so small that the city never received any Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. When the City of South Haven did ask for aid because of loss of revenue, it was after the CARES Act funds had been expended.

Kaczmarek said he thought the board reduce \$3 million from broadband for a total of \$7 million. Husom stated it hasn't been decided yet. Vetsch said until the Feasibility Study is finished it's best not to do anything with broadband. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux said for now it will stay at \$10 million in broadband.

Karels said the way this process works is, the board must approve the high-level programs and then there will be smaller projects under each program which will come to the board in a grant application regardless if it's external or internal.

Karels said the requested amount for sewer and water is \$4 million based on population. Vetsch asked if the board will use population data from 2019 or 2020. Daleiden suggested using the 2020 numbers. Karels said the cities must apply for it. Vetsch said the cities must have matching funds. Lemieux agreed and added the cities must have projects. Karels said the projects also must be reviewed by the county's ARP consulting firm Baker Tilly to ensure eligibility.

Vetsch asked what percent match will the cities need to have. After some discussion it was decided that the cities would have to match 50 percent. Vetsch said it works out to roughly \$35 per person. If the cities can't match the 50 percent, then the money will be reallocated somewhere else. The deadline for cities is by the end of 2023.

B. Review and approve new proposed programs

Karels said there were five high-level program requests that came in. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said she received new information regarding loss revenue from Baker Tilly. Baker Tilly informed the county that according to the guidance for ARP as a reimbursement, it's excludable which changed the calculation from no lost revenue to \$1.6 million in lost revenue.

The calculation is based on guidance from the ARP which suggests that the county can use a federal Census report which is a way of massaging the financial data so it's consistent for all government entities. 2019 is the base year and then it's looked at going backwards. The reason it's looked at going backwards is to identify what the inflation rate is. The county's minimum inflation rate is 4.1 percent. When you look at the history of Wright County, the last three years have yielded the county 9.4 percent inflation rate which encompasses all revenue sources.

Karels said the ARP allows the county to take \$1.6 million of its allocation and spend it towards governmental services. Without this, the Outlying Maintenance Shop Plan – Otsego Expansion would be ineligible.

1. Outlying Maintenance Shop Plan – Otsego Expansion, would be categorized as loss revenue.
2. Customer Flow Management System is categorized as Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
3. Replace HVAC Controls and Historical Society is CIP.
4. Emergency Paid Sick Leave for County Staff
5. Park Maintenance and Upgrades is CIP.

Karels asked if there were any issues with the five high-level programs or if the projects could be moved on to the next phase. Kaczmarek asked for clarification that the end date for the Emergency Paid Sick Leave for County Staff is the end of January 2022. Kelly confirmed that Kaczmarek was correct.

C. Review and approve grant applications

Karels said that all of the high-level programs that the board has approved have now submitted a more detailed grant application.

Vetsch said WCAG-006 County Ditch #33 Wetland Restoration could potentially be a jurisdictional change to the City of Monticello. The city would want to have access to those funds to apply for a storm water grant. It will have to be applied as something different than a wetland restoration, it would have to be applied for as a Clean Water Act Project. Therefore, the funds may be earmarked for the city, but the City of Monticello would have to apply for it. Lemieux said County Ditch #33 will be put on hold until the plan is finalized.

Karels said there are five parks' projects submitted for the grant application. There was more detail that needed to be added to the application per Baker Tilly. All the projects are in areas that serve disproportionately impacted communities. With the help of Public Health, it was decided to use the Area Deprivation Index which takes into account socioeconomic factors, housing and education. There are portions of the county that have a higher Area Deprivation Index number so those areas have been targeted for the park's projects.

Kaczmarek asked if there were any studies done regarding park usage. Daleiden said the Parks and Recreation Department does use vehicle counts to monitor the usage, but it's not done every year. Director of Parks & Recreation Marc Mattice said the counts are usually done at the high-usage parks. There were not tubes for counting cars this year, however.

Karels asked if those projects can be approved, and the board said yes.

Karels said there are a few other applications in the works. The Safe Families and Expanding Emergency Assistance need to have the details gone through to make sure those projects are eligible and then those should be ready within a week or two.

Vetsch said the Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) Business Counseling and Technical Assistance did apply for a grant through Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) with the help of Flaherty and Hood consultants. The WCEDP can receive up to \$150,000 but there will be \$50,000 in matching funds that it will look to ARP for to get to \$150,000 if the county sponsors the \$50,000.

Kaczmarek said he would like to discuss the Programmable Sign through Health and Human Services for \$25,000. Daleiden said the Highway Department will own the sign to make things easier with maintenance because Health and Human Services does have a need for the sign all the time. Kaczmarek said he would like to have an administrative agreement with the Highway Department with the terms.

Kaczmarek said the program for Pandemic Unknowns was deemed ineligible, and then asked what if in the future employees need to be tested. Kaczmarek said he assumed the county would take that on. Karels said there was a project due to testing at the jail so it most likely would be able to be added into that project.

Karels said no one will be paid up front. It will have to be submitted for reimbursement. In the grant agreement, annual reports will have to be submitted so the board can review the performance of the program. That way if it's not meeting the expectations the board can stop funding.

Karels said there is a hold on the Economic Assistance for Community Dental Care. Community Dental has not provided a number at this point, but as soon as they do it will be brought to the board.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **Follow-up meeting at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 12, 2021**
- **When the cities applications start coming in to have the board look at those in chunks**
- **Have staff remove from the list any projects that Baker Tilly deems ineligible**
- **Karels will follow-up with the schools**
- **Ask Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) to attend a future meeting to go over the request, to clear up some confusion**