



BOARD MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MAY 31, 2022

DATE APPROVED: JUNE 7, 2022

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

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

COUNTY BOARD MINUTES 05-17-2022

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek pointed out on page eight of the County Board minutes that the BKV representative's name was misheard and needed to be changed from Bruce Kimmel to Bruce Schwartzman.

Commissioner Mark Daleiden moved to approve the County Board minutes from Tuesday, May 17, 2022, to include the name correction. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

AGENDA

Daleiden moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Darek Vetsch and carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Kaczmarek requested to pull Item F1 (Health and Human Services) for further discussion. Commissioner Mary Wetter requested to pull Items B5 and B6 (Administration – Finance) for further discussion.

Daleiden moved to approve the Consent Agenda except for Items F1, B5, and B6 being pulled for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

*Items removed for further discussion.

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Assign Bob Hiivala To Conduct Outlined Work And Research Pertaining To The Wright County Fair Board.

B. ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE

1. Motion To Approve The Reimbursement Of The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Funds As Follows:
2. Approval Of Use Of ARP Funds From 01-099-493-8416- 6814.
3. \$9,792.00 2.10 Aid To Nonprofit 4-H
4. Approve LG 220 Application For Exempt Permit For Charitable Gambling Application
5. * Approve Renewal Of Annual Club On-Sale Liquor License For Cokato Town & Country Club For The License Period July 1, 2022 To June 30, 2023.
6. * Motion To Close The Dig Once County Road 37 Project And Approve The Budget Amendment Below To Move The Funds To Unallocated.
34-150-031-8437-6261 -\$20,268.60
34-150-031-8437-6602 -\$70,000.00
34-150-000-8000-6602 \$90,268.60

Review Monthly Finance Report For March And April 2022.

Motion To Approve The Reimbursement Of The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Funds As Follows:

C. ADMINISTRATION - HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Approval Of Revisions To Section 602 (Personnel Leave) Of The Wright County Personnel Handbook.

D. ADMINISTRATION - PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

1. Approve The Following Grant Applications:
 - i. CTC-001 Cokato Charitable Trust - Replace Furniture (\$50,000) CITY-007 City Of Buffalo Water/Sewer Grant (\$597,057)

E. ATTORNEY

1. Approval Of Agreement To Resolve Pending Litigation Related To Condemnation Proceedings On County State Aid Highway 19 In St. Michael.

F. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

1. * Approve Grant-Funded Out-Of-State Travel For Sarah Grosshuesch, Kelsey Collier And Greg Wise, 2022 National Association Of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) Conference, 2022 July 19-21, Atlanta, GA.

G. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. Request For County Board To Approve The Attached 5-Year Motorola ARMER Dispatch Service Agreement From 6/1/2022- 5/31/2027, \$181,972.38.

ITEMS REMOVED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Regarding Items B5 and B6, Wetter's question was regarding the monthly finance report for March and April 2022. She asked if the county would have to spend down all the funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant before the county could get access to the second half of funding. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux confirmed that the county does not have to spend this down first, it was a matter of requesting the second allocation. Lemieux added that this would take a few weeks after the request for the second allocation for funding to be made available.

Regarding Item F1, Kaczmarek asked what the plan was and intention for the travel request. He asked if it would be an annual conference or a conference that was new to the county. Health and Human Services (HHS) Director Jami Goodrum confirmed that HHS staff had been part of National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for a while and the conference was one that had been attended by county staff in the past. She added that the cost indicated would cover staff's travel costs, meals, lodging, and expenses incurred while attending. This would reimburse her staffs' salary while away from the office, which was not covered by the grants. The staff attending included Public Health Director Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Supervisor Kelsey Collier, and Public Health Promotion Coordinator Gregory Wise. Kaczmarek asked when the Dental Clinic would be officially open and questioned if it was a good idea to send representatives to talk about the clinic before it had an opportunity to be put into action. He thought waiting until the clinic was open would give a better opportunity to provide and share feedback. Goodrum understood that the plan was to open late in Summer 2022. She explained that Wise would be giving a presentation on the Dental Clinic that could be used as a reference point for representatives from other counties to use going with their own projects especially when utilizing the bonding process. NACCHO encourages sharing best practices at the conference and the bonding process has only been used twice before in Minnesota and is a topic of interest to other counties across the nation. Goodrum added that it would be a good time to attend the conference as the Dental Clinic project was ongoing and Blue Cross and Blue Shield representatives would be attending and eager to hear how their donated funds are being used. Vetsch thought it would be good to get people educated on funding gaps and how often emergency room visits do not fix problems. He thought it good to share with others the processes behind a project of this size. Grosshuesch agreed and added that it would be good to share with others the problem-solving process when talking about public health issues in the community. Daleiden thought it would be a great program to present. He noted that by the time staff attend the conference the Dental Clinic will be close to the official opening date. Commissioner Christine Husom agreed and said it would be a good way to showcase what the county had accomplished.

Daleiden moved to approve the out of state travel. Seconded by Wetter and carried 4-1, Kaczmarek being opposed.

TIMED AGENDA ITEMS

VIRGIL HAWKINS, HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Award Contract No. 2204, HSIP Turnlanes Project (Subject To Authorization Of Award By The MnDOT Civil Rights Office). We Recommend Award Of Contract No. 22-04 To Knife River Corporation Of Sauk Rapids, MN In The Amount Of \$1,527,418.12.

Wetter was concerned that the bids were around 32 percent higher than initially expected and asked if this was to be expected. Chad Hausmann from Highway Department said this was correct. He said the estimates should have been updated as the project timeframe progressed. Hausmann added that the quantities being discussed were spread over three locations and this should have been considered when estimates were updated as it had an impact on the cost. His recommendation was to proceed with the project.

Vetsch moved to approve Award Contract No. 2204, HSIP Turnlanes Project. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0.

Distribution Of The 2021 Highway Department Annual Report. The 2021 Highway Department Annual Report Is Being Distributed To Allow For Review By The County Board Members. Acceptance Of The 2021 Highway Department Annual Report Will Be Scheduled For A Future County Board Meeting.

Hausmann explained that this was just a distribution of the Annual Report for review. He added that there would be another meeting to approve the report at a later date. Kaczmarek had received concerns from his constituents about the rate of turnover of county plow trucks. He wanted to know considerations come into play when purchasing new vehicles for the county. Hausmann explained that wear and tear, amount of maintenance and downtime, mileage, and age of vehicle are all things that are taken into consideration when replacing these county vehicles.

ROSS DEMANT, PARKS & RECREATION

Approve Recommendations From May 9, 2022, Parks Commission Meeting.

Daleiden moved to approve the recommendations from May 9, 2022, Parks Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

Approve The Cancellation And Refund Policy For Campground And Shelter Reservations.

Parks and Rec Director Ross Demant explained the recommendation addressed new timeframes associated with a breakdown of fees. This policy also addressed the cancellation and refund changes.

Daleiden moved to approve the Cancellation and Refund Policy for Campground and Shelter Reservations. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

Request To Accept Donation In The Amount Of \$1,250.00 From Hanover Lions Club For A Memorial Bench At Riverside County Park In Memory Of Willis Kiphuth.

Kaczmarek pointed out that the county was considering making a change to the county bench donation policy and asked if that potential change would affect this request. Demant said it would not affect this request. Kaczmarek asked what the process was for maintenance costs on the benches after the 10-year mark. Parks and Recreation Supervisor Brad Harrington explained that it would be replaced with a Parks Department bench if it was in poor repair after 10 years. If it was in good repair after 10 years, the bench would be kept in place.

Daleiden moved to approve the request to accept donation in the amount of \$1,250.00 from Hanover Lions Club for a memorial bench at Riverside County Park in memory of Willis Kiphuth. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

MATTHEW DETJEN, AG & DRAINAGE

Approve The Findings And Resolution To Make Minor Alterations To County Ditch #10 Pursuant To Minnesota Statute 163.17.

Kaczmarek asked if there had been any landowner feedback received. Agriculture and Drainage Coordinator Matthew Detjen explained that the affected landowner is a school. Detjen had been working with the school on a preliminary purchase easement and added that the school is a willing partner in the realignment. Detjen explained that there would be a public hearing to give the landowners and neighbors an opportunity to bring forward concerns. Kaczmarek wanted to know why this repair was not done before while the county had the workers and equipment available. Detjen said this project would use a different contractor and the repairs had been discussed during the repair process. At the time the county decided to do the repairs, the county wanted to wait and see if there would be an ongoing issue. When it was discovered that there would be an ongoing issue, it was decided that these repairs should not be assessed to the landowner.

Daleiden moved to approve the findings and resolution to make minor alterations to County Ditch # 10 pursuant to Minnesota Statute 163.17. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

Schedule A Public Hearing For Petition To Make Minor Alterations To County Ditch #10 Pursuant To Minnesota Statute 163.17.

Detjen presented the staff recommendation that the public hearing be set for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 28 as the hearing needed to be set a minimum of three weeks in advance. Daleiden requested the meeting time be moved to 9:30 on Tuesday, June 28.

Kaczmarek moved to approve the public hearing for the petition to make minor alterations to County Ditch #10 pursuant to Minnesota Statute 163.17 for 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 28. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0.

Approve The Resolution Of Acceptance And Execution Of The Joint Powers Agreement Between Wright County And The State Of Minnesota For Treatment Of Nonnative Phragmite

Detjen explained that no grant money was received to address this issue like they had received in 2021. This would allow Detjen to hire outside contractors who use specialized equipment to address the nonnative phragmite issue. Wetter asked if this was a major issue in the county. Detjen explained that there were 91 sites in Wright County and the goal was eradication. He added that all the sites had been located and now a matter of addressing the issue.

Vetsch moved to approve the Resolution of Acceptance and Execution of the Joint Powers Agreement between Wright County and the State of Minnesota for treatment of nonnative phragmite. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR EMERGENCY INTERIM ZONING ORDINANCE

Proposed Emergency Interim Zoning Ordinance Instituting An Emergency Moratorium On Mining And Extraction.

Husom opened the floor for discussion at 9:30 a.m. Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer explained that staff had published a notice of intent and provided 10-day notice and done its due diligence in accordance with the legal requirements. This public hearing is to address the proposed emergency moratorium on mining and extraction pursuant to Minnesota Statute 394.34 for mining and extraction uses as codified in Ordinances Section 155.100.

Vetsch explained that this issue had been brought up by multiple townships looking at enacting stricter ordinances of their own to address mining and extraction. Vetsch understood that the length of time since the ordinance had been reviewed was lengthy and added that there needed to be an update in order to be aligned with peer counties. Husom had also received several written comments from the public and noted that those complaints had been recorded as part of the public record.

Wright County resident Kevin Tierney explained that he resides along CR-113 near where the MBE, INC. gravel mine operation was being proposed. Tierney noted that he was speaking on behalf of citizens in Buffalo and Silver Creek Townships. He explained that he had been impacted by the application and as a result he familiarized himself with the process. Tierney said he and others had brought their issues to their Township Boards and as a result a moratorium was enacted. He explained that some of the inadequacies included the fact that the present ordinance does not reflect the current plan. The site that MBE proposes to mine gravel is zoned agriculture, while other places were zoned commercial. He emphasized the need to align with the long-term plan. One reason for a moratorium would be to allow the county to do a study of what other counties have adopted. He explained that other counties around Wright County had already gone through these issues, and that it would be beneficial to learn from their discoveries and processes. Tierney worried about the environmental hazards that could have an effect on the community. He also brought up the issue of reclamation and wondered if the cost the county has set aside is enough to address the number of pits the county has. Tierney thought it was important to also take into consideration the massive growth the county had experienced and examine the effects it could have on the citizens. He stated that there were 515 single-family residences within one mile of the MBE, INC. gravel mine and noted that all these households would be affected by the mining operations. At the time of the ordinance adoption, that land was agricultural and currently it is very much residential and would directly affect these households. Tierney ended by saying that it was time to address the mining and extraction ordinance as it had been 43 years since its institution and thanked the board for its time.

Callie Cruz, a Wright County resident living in the Eagle Ridge neighborhood of Monticello with her five children, wanted to voice her strong support for the moratorium and expressed her concern for this mining operation. She was most concerned about the effect it could have on her children and community. She explained that her children pass three gravel mining operations on their way to school. She noted that Wright County would continue to draw new residents from the Twin Cities who were wanting a clean community to live in. She was strongly in favor of the moratorium, and she expressed that she did not want her family to live next to a gravel pit.

Wright County resident Steve Garvin stood behind what Tierney and Cruz had proposed. He expressed his frustration with the outdated nature of the ordinance. He read a current Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) on the Wright County website that notes the only effects from mining dust being annoying and potentially cause some allergic reactions. The 2017 Minnesota Department of Health and The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have classified Respiratory Crystalline Silicosis Dust as carcinogenic, silicosis, lung cancer, COPD, and kidney disease. The setback of 30 feet from residences and 500 feet from processing in the current ordinance was outdated and dangerous. The current ordinance did not take into account the real effects that mining and extraction had been proven to produce. He implored the board to approve the moratorium and take the time to study the effects it could have on the community.

Wright County resident Lori Cassady explained that she lives close to the proposed gravel mining operation site. She was proud to say that she and her husband had lived there for 32 years. Cassady talked about the changes she has seen since she moved to include an increase in traffic which can be dangerous and become congested. She wanted to advocate for the people who chose to live in the area for its agricultural beauty and space like she had. Cassady thought the gravel pits were too sporadic and messy and wanted to see more consolidation and organization when choosing mining sites. She also thought it important to develop the corridors and entrances into these gravel pits for safety reasons.

Buffalo Township resident Colleen Ernesti would like to see a cap on the number of gravel pits in one township. She also wanted to see reclamation regulations addressed. She has seen sporadic digging at some sites and kids riding four-wheelers in the pits which she thought emphasized the need to have stricter reclamation regulations.

Silver Creek Township resident Kate Dedo was there to voice her support for the moratorium. She thought the ordinance was outdated and offered that the county should consider using interim use permits (IUP) instead of conditional use permits (CUP) which would provide more flexibility. She noted that she was there to represent the citizens of Silver Creek Township. Silver Creek Township enacted a moratorium in 2021 and the township then spent the year studying the effects the community could see from mining and extraction operations. She wanted to clarify that the citizens were not opposed to the gravel mining, but just would like more consideration when planning where these are put and asked for updates to be made to the distance-from-residences and distance-from-processing locations requirements.

Silver Creek Township Board Member Barry Heikinen thought the moratorium would allow the county to complete a health study in regard to the mining operations. He worried that mining companies will start to come to Wright County more because of the outdated ordinances. In regard to economic impact, he thought that in the Land Use Plan, these areas may be zoned as Agriculture Residential. He thought this could potentially take away from some planned use taxes. He reminded the board how much has changed in 43 years and asked that the board consider the moratorium.

Husom closed the public hearing at 9:55 a.m.

Vetsch distributed and referenced an interim ordinance that staff had come up with to address the moratorium and some concerns. Ordinance 22-1 would put all mining operations in Wright County on hold for one year except for permits that are already operating and in good standing. Daleiden also pointed out that there was a site with Planning and Zoning that has a site visit scheduled for the following week. Kryzer offered that Planning and Zoning Director Barry Rhineberger would need to be brought into the conversation if this new proposed ordinance was passed. Daleiden thought that the site check was going to be for a location that was away from residences in a rural area. Rhineberger explained that the pit they were going to do the site check on was technically a new pit. Wetter asked what Township this site was located in. Rhineberger stated that it was in Cokato Township. Rhineberger said that Buffalo Township's moratorium exempts out any application that was accepted and was pending by the township.

Kaczmarek thanked everyone for their comments. He thought it was a possibility to just tweak the existing ordinance instead of coming up with a new ordinance. He thought feedback would be best if it came from townships and cities where the pits were located and going to be active. Vetsch explained that most of the resources were along the Mississippi River in the northern part of the county would not fall within Kaczmarek's district. Vetsch didn't think Kaczmarek needed to do a partial moratorium in his district because it may cause an issue with consistency and non-compliance within the county going forward. Wetter wanted to know more about Rockford Township's IUP because it had some nicely reclaimed pits. She asked about the difference between the IUP and the CUP. Vetsch explained the difference is in the burden to argue changed conditions in order to commence with reclamation and address conditional use permits. Wetter

asked if this would be handled through Planning and Zoning. Kryzer confirmed that was correct. Vetsch thought a CUP had more latitude to litigate and with the IUP would have a smaller window to litigate. Wetter thought that process was working for Rockford Township and thought it only allowed for a specific number of pits to be open at one time. She wondered why the other Townships were having these issues. She thought each township should work on their own ordinances during the moratorium. Vetsch explained that these townships do not have the resources to enforce their own ordinances and that was why the townships had come to the county board for enforcement and administration. The board did not want ten different ordinances addressing the same issues in slightly different ways because it makes it hard to enforce and difficult for Planning and Zoning to plan for future use. The board was attempting to make a modification to the county ordinances so they can be adopted as a holistic ordinance that would meet the needs of urban development and utilization of the resource.

Husom referenced the Land Use Plan, which was made for the entire county. The Land Use Plan was done holistically and was able to specify different things within the overarching plan that covered the county. If the county has an overall plan, it would be better for the county so there are not one offs. Wetter shared that she was seeing that the policing and reclamation was not happening and asked who was supposed to oversee this part of the process. Husom said this was something that needed clarified going forward. Vetsch thought that Rhineberger, during his short time in the position, had done a great job of enforcing established rules while addressing issues as they come up. There had been some issues in that past that had fallen through the cracks, but with the new leadership in Planning and Zoning he was confident these concerns would be addressed. Vetsch noted that Rhineberger's hands were tied in some instances because of the outdated nature of the ordinance and added that this was another reason to update the ordinance. Rhineberger expressed that he did not think the issue was strictly about reclamation, because several the pits mentioned were still active. It had historically been a toss-up between continuing with the mining or moving forward with reclamation. Wetter asked why her copy of the ordinance was dated 2018. Kryzer clarified that the date she was referring to was in reference to the general cleanup with minor typographical changes of the ordinance done in 2018. Vetsch thought the county had a good reclamation process and because most of the time it was in the best interest of the community to get the space reclaimed as soon as possible. Vetsch thought the moratorium would be a good opportunity for the county to do its due diligence regarding researching effects of mining and extraction operations. The county could then come forward with a new ordinance that could cover all townships, so each township was not burdened with having its own ordinance. Vetsch urged the board to adopt this moratorium.

Kaczmarek asked about the process and requested an update on the EAW. Kryzer explained that there was an EAW pending for the MBE pit in Buffalo Township that is currently being reviewed by staff who would give their response later in the week. Kaczmarek understood that his district does have less of an impact and thought that this decision should come from the townships who were most affected. He is not against the moratorium but how the representation is made up. Daleiden asked who the board thought should be on this new board addressing this issue. He thought it should be representatives from different parts of the county as it would affect the county as a whole. Vetsch wanted to be as inclusive as possible but thought that if the group got too large it might become difficult to manage. He suggests they defer to county staff for revisions and present the update at the next board meeting. Kaczmarek clarified that the chair and co-chair of the board be representatives from the most affected areas. He noted that there does need to be representation from across the county to keep it fair and manageable. Husom thought the recommendation should come from staff in order to keep the timeframe on track. Vetsch wanted discussions about the ordinances of their neighboring counties, reclamation and how it relates to the ordinance itself, IUP versus CUP, enforcement options, setbacks, and notification procedure regarding the ordinance update. He proposed that he come back to the board with a new ordinance for the next board meeting. Kaczmarek asked if Ordinance 22-1 would be the ordinance in effect during the moratorium. Vetsch explained that the handout would be more boilerplate, except for Section 2 which addressed the CUPs that are in good standing and Item 1 which addressed and enacts the moratorium itself. Daleiden requested further discussion about who would be on the committee. Vetsch's intention was to bring recommendations forward to the board to fill these spots. Kaczmarek asked Kryzer if the draft ordinance would need to be sent out to the public ahead of time. Kryzer confirmed there would need to be another public hearing after the draft was released to the public. Vetsch pointed out that he did want to have this draft out sooner but noted that it had taken longer than expected despite staff working hard on the draft.

Daleiden moved to approve the interim Ordinance 22-1 and to allow Planning and Zoning to move forward with their site check that is scheduled for the following week. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and passed 4-1, Wetter being opposed.

Wetter explained that she was not opposed to redoing the ordinance, but rather opposed to the moratorium in the interim thinking it was unnecessary. She pointed out that the areas of concern already had their own moratoriums in place.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

ADMINISTRATION

Discussion Regarding The Government Center Open House.

Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt said the Leadership Team was working on a date for the open house to be in the evening on either Tuesday, August 23 or Wednesday, August 24. Vetsch was concerned that there would be school open houses that week as well and the public may not be as available. Husom thought it would be a good idea to work with school calendars when scheduling the open house. Wetter offered that the open house should be on a weekend so more members of the public can come during the day. She also suggested there be additional night and weekend open house opportunities so as much of the public can attend as possible. Vetsch clarified that the open house spaces would be the same spaces the public would see if coming to the building on a regular operational day. Wetter asked if it was the whole campus involved in the open house or just the Government Center. Wilfahrt confirmed it was all buildings with the exception of the Sheriff's Office. Husom suggested that the board wait for Wilfahrt's recommendation and take into consideration school calendars before making a final decision.

Training Center Shooting Range.

BKV representative Bruce Schwartzman spoke about the indoor firing range at the Sheriff's Office Training Center. The issue was the angle of the diffuser in the back of the range which created turbulence causing issues with air flow. In Spring 2021, BKV worked on the flow, but it was not fixed in all lanes. BKV suggested full reconstruction of the back wall of the range in order to create a constant air flow from behind the shooter to avoid lead contamination proposed at \$9,400. The spiral diffuser was proposed as an alternate option at \$17,000. After meeting with individuals from the county, Schwartzman and his team went out and toured other county shooting ranges throughout the state. The group toured the Hero Center at Cottage Grove, and Minneapolis Precinct 4. They found that both facilities had implemented the spiral diffuser. Schwartzman discovered that the automated building system would allow the device to turn on at a certain time and date or manually from a computer. The other option was an automatic kick on that took into account the need for air flow automatically. There were safety protocols in place with this automated system as well. Schwartzman's suggestion would be the automated system for Wright County. Schwartzman had originally offered to pitch in \$14,000 for the project but was now offering \$19,000 to support this change.

Kaczmarek thanked Schwartzman for his time. He explained that he had inherited this project when he joined the board. He had questions about why this was not implemented originally when engineering and designing the range. He wanted to know if Schwartzman had could provide documentation of the approval process that took place between BKV and county staff for this particular item. Kaczmarek wanted to know why county staff had chosen one option over the other. Schwartzman remembered going through several different features and options when designing and building with the county. Originally, BKV was not able to correctly balance the airflow, and therefore offered the spiral duct as a solution. Kaczmarek asked Schwartzman if he remembered a test that was done in which Schwartzman approved the quality of the range stating that it met his company's standards. Schwartzman said that it did meet the standards, but it had not balanced the air quality of the range. He said when they rebalanced the system it did not fix all the lanes, and therefore he was offering to pay for the spiral duct. Kaczmarek wanted to know if he had any correspondence he could reference that relayed initial deadlines to the county. Schwartzman said he did not have anything to show previous correspondence with the county. Schwartzman said that the spiral duct was a necessity for using the range and the automated system was an added benefit but not necessary.

Kaczmarek wanted to address the issues because the range was in his district and his constituents were the ones coming to him with concerns about the noise at night and why the citizens were not allowed to use the range. He was also concerned about who should be paying for these new additions to the range, as \$8 million to \$9 million had already been spent on the range. He did not think the county should pay any extra for this necessary update to the range. Kaczmarek thought that the shipping should be just sent as regular shipping because there was no need for the expedited shipping now.

Vetsch expressed his frustration that there was another project being pitched from BKV for the county when the first project was not completed. He had tried to delineate what was considered additional work versus what should have been completed initially during construction of the range. Vetsch did not understand why the county would be responsible for paying for any part of this correction because the range was not able to be used without this spiral duct correction and therefore was not complete in his opinion. Schwartzman reiterated that he was proposing the spiral duct addition and the automated system was just an added bonus for the range if the county was interested in an upgrade to the facility. He added that he was simply recommending what was necessary and attempting to mitigate cost to the county. He said he would be glad to address any additional issues the board had at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting that he would be presenting at.

Kaczmarek wanted to know about the cost of the shipping and if there was an interest from the board to use the expedited shipping which was an additional \$1,400. Daleiden wanted to leave that decision up to purchasing and finance. Vetsch expressed his frustration with the delays and that the range could not be used for training until the fix was made. Vetsch thought it had turned out to be a messy process and was not happy about how things had turned out. Schwartzman thought he had been fair in dealing with the county and would like the opportunity to sit down and discuss with the county any issues the board members may have. Daleiden suggested the board pay the extra \$1,400 for expedited shipping in order to finish the project as it had gone on long enough. Sheriff Sean Deringer said the reason the expedited shipping was an option was an attempt to meet a deadline of April 2022 when contractors were available. Since this deadline was not met and the contractors were now unavailable, he did not think it necessary to use the expedited shipping option.

Daleiden moved to approve the upgrade presented by Schwartzman and accept BKV's offer to pay \$19,000 which cover the cost of the spiral duct and allow the range to be utilized. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 4-1, Kaczmarek being opposed.

Schedule Committee Of The Whole To Review Additional Services Request For Construction Administration.

Daleiden moved to have a Committee of the Whole Meeting scheduled to review additional services request for construction administration for 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 14. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

COTW COMMITTEE (5/17/022)

Wetter gave a short recap of the meeting saying the biggest portion of the meeting was the presentation from Midwest Swamp Watch regarding alleged voter fraud and a need for election integrity. She said that the Wright County website was looked at for a security assessment. Rick Weible, a South Dakota resident and director of Midwest Swamp Watch suggested that the county reevaluate its use of drop boxes. Weible requested more transparency regarding review of machine logs, routers, and other election equipment in order to ensure election integrity. He also had concerns about the use of electronic poll pads because of their alleged direct internet connection to the Secretary of State's Office. There are three voting devices used in Minnesota and Weible expressed his concern about the security of all three devices based on firsthand knowledge and use of the machines. Weible had other concerns that were documented during the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes.

Vetsch wanted to make some clarifications to some of the accusations brought up at the Committee of the Whole meeting and he invited Information Technology Director Matthew Fomby to address these accusations. Vetsch understood the need to have this conversation because of the ever-growing distrust of governmental processes from the public. It gave the county an opportunity to show transparency and build trust with the community. Fomby looked over the minutes as he was out of town when the meeting took place. He addressed the concern about processing credit card readers on the county website, this was untrue. There was a scan done of the front of the website and showed some weaknesses in security on the county website. He said that some of the county website features were industry standard security features while in other areas where additional security measures were needed, they were increased. Fomby also addressed the concern about iPad 5's not being compatible. He said that statement was untrue and they are indeed compatible. He assured the board that these claims should not cause any concern. Husom thought the work group could help uncover the truth behind some of these accusations and put some of these accusations to rest. Vetsch had received requests that the

Secretary of State's Office be involved in the work group, and he had not heard from their office at that point. Daleiden was against the work group because he thought it would never be enough to individuals making these accusations. Vetsch countered that the work group may create more of an understanding of elections and debunking myths about what is done at the county level of government. Annandale resident Judi Gaye said she had the opportunity to talk with Secretary Steve Simon at a convention. She told Simon about the conversations at the Committee of the Whole meeting, and he wanted to assure the board that his staff would be getting in touch with the board.

Wetter moved to approve the board's recommendation to create a work group consisting of representatives of two county commissioners, a representative from each of the four major political parties in Minnesota, a representative of the Secretary of State's Office, a member of the Performance Improvement Plan group, members of Wright County elections and county attorney's staff and an outside legal counsel representative. The recommendation was seconded by Vetsch. Vetsch added an amendment to the motion to requested to add a member of the Information Technology staff to the work group. The addition was accepted by Wetter and the motion carried 4-1, Daleiden being opposed.

Daleiden asked to have the minutes separated from the recommendation. Wetter accepted this recommendation and moved to separately approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

I. Election Integrity Discussion

Board Chair Christine Husom called the meeting to order. Due to the large number of spectators (approximately 60) Husom asked that representatives of groups to speak, not everyone in attendance.

Dustin Lozinski, Monticello, thanked the commissioners for hearing out the group in February and thanked Wright County Sheriff Sean Deringer for investigating some of the concerns raised by the group Midwest Swamp Watch. He also thanked the commissioners for being responsive to previous concerns over the Absentee Ballot Board. He thanked Corissa Aronson from the Elections Division of Wright County Finance & Taxpayer Services for her willingness to answer questions and share information requested.

Rick Weible, a South Dakota resident and director of Midwest Swamp Watch – a group that claims widespread voter fraud took place in 2020 elections – made a presentation to the committee. Weible said his group initially focused on election integrity and has since pivoted to devising an Election Performance Improvement Plan. He said from what has been seen in the 2019, 2020 and 2021 elections, there are things that can easily be done to restore public confidence. He thanked the committee because Wright County has already implemented some of the steps his group advocates to be done statewide.

Weible said there is a strong belief in the employees of Wright County. In terms of election security, the county board has already addressed having a party balance among ballot boards and election judges. He said party balance is essential because, when that is achieved, it wipes away the conspiracy theories because both major parties are overseeing the tabulation of votes. He said many cities and counties around the state are using their own employees to populate the ballot boards without disclosing party affiliation. Weible said many city and county employees are union members and unions only donate to one political party, which is where conspiracy theories start. Having the full disclosure of party balance is essential.

When Weible looked at the Wright County website, it was one of the better performing websites he had seen in terms of security. But unfortunately, 52 percent of the counties in Minnesota lack basic PCI (Payment Card Industry) security. Weible theorized that if a county can't handle basic credit card security, how should it be expected to handle election security, especially when relying on outside vendors. He said he doubts counties are doing forensic scans of voting equipment to make sure they are "on the up-and-up." He stated that there needs to be a re-evaluation of the use of drop boxes, saying that simply because there is a security camera pointed at a drop box doesn't prevent someone loading in multiple ballots.

In terms of equipment performance, Weible has heard from counties in South Dakota claiming his group is disrespectful to election judges. He countered the disrespect of the election judges started when they brought the voting machines in. The judges were replaced by machines and removed the responsibility and accountability of election judges by trusting

the election equipment. He said that, by statute, Minnesota only looks at 3 percent of the vote in post-election reviews – a number that should be higher. The Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) has a standard that one error per one million ballots is enough to walk away from the system. He speculated as to how much work it would take to obtain completed voter histories completed before certifying elections. He said in the Nov. 3, 2020 election, the State Canvassing Board met on Nov. 24. To file to contest an election, the deadline was Dec. 1. Counties had until Dec. 15 to get all the voter histories connected to those who voted in person.

Weible questioned a statement made Nov. 13, 2020 by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency that the Nov. 3, 2020 was "the most secure in American history." He said the public has been denied access to machine logs, routers and other equipment. He said he and others who have questioned election security have to prove election fraud. He countered that states should have to prove the election was secure by showing the vote logs, sworn vendor statements, reports that document the issues discovered and patches applied. He said that in both 2016 and 2019 Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar introduced legislation to increase election oversight and wider post-election reviews.

Weible said when Minnesota has been asked to require certifications it has been a joke. He accused Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon of plagiarizing the work of the EAC in certifying votes for Minnesota. In statute, state political parties have the ability to review the source code, but, since this law has been on the books, no political party has reviewed the source code because the estimated cost to review one of the vendors is approximately \$1.4 million. There are three vendors in Minnesota – Hart, ES&S (Elections Systems & Software) and Dominion. He said the Minnesota Secretary of State's election module was "wide open" and the data could be queried and new data injected into it – adding that poll pads were also wide open to hack. He said when it came to Wright County, Weible's group gave the county an "A" grade, but found some issues.

Weible showed a United States map of counties whose voting systems are certified by EAC. Only a handful of Minnesota counties were included on that list. In the EAC Certificate of Conformance, it states, "This certificate is not an endorsement of the product by any agency of the U.S. Government and no warranty of the product is either expressed or implied." He added that an EAC certificate is not a substitute for state or local certification and testing. He asked the committee what testing policies would it like to create to ensure that the equipment is to the county's standard. He suggested creating a task force to develop that policy and standard level.

The county supplied Weible with many of the documents he requested to review. He stated 61 DS200 scanners "up-programmed" the scanner boards on Jan. 7, 2020. He asserted the county never did any testing of the machines after to determine any differences there may have been before and after the up-programming of the DS200's was done. He asked why the scanner board software was updated and whether it fixed a potential problem for the upgrade. He referenced a certificate dated July 31, 2019 in which new firmware was installed for the DS200's and the AutoMARK tabulators and asked why the machines were upgraded and if the vendor identified an issue that required an upgrade. He said those issues should have been documented better.

Weible stated that where he lives in South Dakota, there is only one voting machine vendor, while in Minnesota there are three. He said third-party vendors need to be trained by the designer of the voting machines, adding if anyone other than an authorized vendor touches the voting equipment, it must be decertified. He stated when someone votes, they don't get a receipt that acknowledges how their vote was processed and a voter isn't clear on how the software interpreted a ballot. He claimed that feature on many machines by default has been turned off and does not create a cast-vote record.

He stated that all election equipment is controlled by for-profit, third-party vendors and their subsidiaries. He said that is fine, but local control, oversight and accountability must be maintained by local jurisdictions. He said poll pads can be hacked because they have a direct internet connection to the Secretary of State's Office, transport live data over the internet and are not certified. He stated he has evidence that this data is not secure and can be manipulated.

He said much of the equipment used in elections is susceptible to being hacked. He claimed admin passwords are the same in all 50 states, certificate keys are self-signed, the chips have manufacturer stamps that can identify exactly what job that chip performs and that votes can be manipulated during adjudication. Weible stated he has worked with firms in Minneapolis and Las Vegas to help recruit accomplished hackers so the FBI and CIA can stay ahead of the latest hacking

trends. He said he owns a version of all three voting devices used in Minnesota. He purchased them on eBay and all three are capable of being hacked.

Weible claimed that hand counting ballots is less expensive than a machine count, presenting a generic chart that estimated the cost per ballot to hand count at \$7 and machine counting at \$14 per ballot. He said he was surprised that with all the allegations that have been made that counties haven't stepped up and stated that their elections were secure. Weible referenced a website called Frankspeech.com, a promotional website for MyPillow founder Mike Lindell. According to Frankspeech.com, the 2020 presidential vote in Minnesota that showed Joe Biden winning by 233,012 votes was actually won by Donald Trump by 36,194 votes. Weible, citing Frankspeech.com, said that almost 270,000 votes were "flipped" from one candidate to the other, including 6,762 votes in Wright County. He said it is a simple allegation that would have simple proof by hand-counting the 3.2 million ballots cast in Minnesota during the presidential election.

Weible then addressed ballot drop boxes, stating all drop boxes should be removed because they are unsecured and video surveillance is not reliable. He showed a still photograph showing a man at a drop box in Gwinnett County, Georgia allegedly depositing several ballots as a form of proof of numerous ballots being submitted.

On the topic of post-election reviews, Weible said Minnesota only requires a 3 percent vote review and said several states have a higher review standard. He added that there is nothing in state statutes that says cities or counties can't have a higher post-election review standard. He questioned why the financial books of cities and counties are audited, but a full audit is not done with elections. He added that employee evaluations of city and county employees are conducted annually, but there is no such requirement to evaluate election performance and election equipment.

He asked that counties complete the voter history rosters before conducting the county canvass of votes. He asked what would it take to meet that standard and what the cost would be. He purported to have 15 affidavits of Wright County voters that have been marked the wrong way, as well as affidavits of people who said they didn't vote, but showed up as having voted and people who stated they did vote, but their names did not show up on the voter history roster. He thanked Wright County elections staff with cooperating with requests, but said many more counties have not be as willing to assist.

Commissioner Darek Vetsch said he hoped Weible would share the PowerPoint presentation with the commissioners so they could go through it in more detail. Vetsch said he appreciates the amount of effort that has gone into the questions about the election process and, regardless of whether the claims are fact or fiction, the county needs to do its due diligence as to what is and isn't true. Vetsch said he hoped to walk out of the meeting with a bipartisan group that can go through each one of the items in full disclosure and sending the requests to the Secretary of State's office. If the answer to the request is no, then Legislative change will be the next avenue. Vetsch would look for a work group to include one or two members from all recognized political parties in Minnesota, a member or two from activist groups, two county commissioners, county elections staff, a representative from the county attorney's office to deal with legal matters and perhaps an outside contracted legal firm to help get additional legal clarifications on data practices and what the work group legally can or can't do.

Husom asked that, in light of the time the commissioners had to get to other meetings, that representatives of the approximately 60 citizens in attendance choose someone to speak on their behalf. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said staff had reviewed many of the questions posed by Weible and his group and felt elections staff would be better versed to address some of the points and allegations made about the integrity of elections in Wright County. At that point, Husom opened the floor to those who wish to speak.

Steve Larson, Monticello – He felt it should be necessary given the presentation by Weible that a representative from the Secretary of State's Office to also make a presentation and comment on the points made. He stated Weible claimed he wanted to eliminate the conspiracy theories surrounding the 2020 elections, yet brought up points that were backed by no evidence, including the drop box and allegations of boxes of votes in Georgia that were proved to be false. He said that there were issues raised that Weible framed as being a problem, but with no evidence to support it. As to the discussion of flipped votes, both Georgia and Arizona had statewide recounts and the votes never really changed. To claim that there were more than 6,000 "flipped votes" in Wright County with no evidence is something that should be questioned. He said he would like to get a wide perspective of views before allocating county funds to consider something like a recount, which he felt was unnecessary.

Jeff Swenson, Buffalo – He stated he is a Sergeant First Class in the Minnesota National Guard. He repeated a quote that stated, “Don’t give a soldier any higher level of trust than you would give any other citizen.” He said we have moved into a technocratic trust as a society and we rely on technology as being valid. He said voting machines use a foreign language that most don’t understand. He said if a trust is betrayed, our belief system is that we can’t believe it would be done. He told the board to prove these allegations are wrong.

Jeremiah Patrick, Buffalo – He said he has been a software contractor for the last 10 years, including work with strategic defense and medical devices. He said before medical devices are allowed to be used they must go through a certification process so rigorous it is a major complaint in the medical industry. He said the same is true for the defense industry. Nobody seems willing to do the same with election equipment, which he finds very concerning. He said a stronger verification process should be held for election software to make sure it is as it should be.

Lee Ann Goerss, Buffalo – She stated her concern is the politicization going on in the country. Her faith in national politics is gone. The only thing that makes her keep faith in politics is that local government isn’t the same. She is putting her trust in the county board to help maintain faith in the system.

Kris Strzyzewski, Maple Lake – She stated her family has lived in Wright County for more than 100 years. She is looking to the county board to protect her family. She said there is a close-knit community in Wright County and wants county government to protect that way of life.

Lori Cocking, Waverly – She encouraged everyone to go to their local election offices to learn what they do. She’s very proud of the integrity in the Marysville Township elections. She said those opposed to believing all the media misinformation to check it out for themselves. She encouraged people to talk to those involved in the election process, whether at the state level or locally.

Lozinski asked how many people signed up to be election judges this year. Approximately 40 people raised their hands. Commissioner Mark Daleiden asked how many have been election judges previously. Three hands were raised.

Judi Gay, Annandale – She said this year was the first time she has signed up to be an election judge and believes it is a civic duty. She is a veteran from the Vietnam era who loves her country, Minnesota and that her family has spent the last 32 years in Wright County. She wants to make sure that her vote is accurately counted. She said she would like to hear from someone at the Secretary of State’s Office to respond to allegations and what changes Secretary Simon or his staff would like to see changed.

Cori Stenberg, Buffalo – She said what the assembled group wants to make clear is that there are concerns and doubts about election integrity and wants to find the truth – whether it proves or disproves what they fear is correct. She said she doesn’t necessarily buy into the conspiracy theories, but the group wants to help – not bring forth problems or accusations. She felt all political parties need to work together to find the truth.

Steve Johnson, St. Michael – He is a native Minnesotan who has worked in various locations throughout the country, but came back to Minnesota in retirement. He was often brought into companies that were failing to turn them around. He said there is a voter integrity problem and the solution should be kept simple. He said solve the problem at the lowest level. The further a problem goes up, the more resources it costs to fix. He believes the county should go back to hand counting paper ballots. He said the past can’t be fixed, but the future can be. Paper ballots are easy to audit. When he first stuck a ballot in a scanner, he wondered if it was accurately tallied and that was in 1978. He said machines can make mistakes. He said whatever path the county board takes, to keep it simple.

Daleiden asked Johnson how soon he believed election ballots could be counted – one day, two days, ten weeks? Daleiden asked Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer how long it took to hand count the ballots in the 2010 gubernatorial race between Mark Dayton and Tom Emmer that required a recount. Kryzer said the county had four tables of ballot counters going eight hours a day for approximately two weeks for one race. After hearing responses yelled out back and forth from audience members, Vetsch said he didn’t want the meeting to become a shouting match and that is why there is a need for a small work group. Vetsch said there are lot more important issues to address before considering hand-counting votes.

Commissioner Mary Wetter said she has been an election judge. She said people make mistakes. Strzyzewski returned to the microphone and posed the question of whether we are going to let Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) take over our reality. Many people have jobs to machines and she counts on people, not machines.

Vetsch said our government is only as good as the people who believe in the integrity of it. In his experience, for every person who comes to a county board room, there are 10-20 more that believe the same way. He said this meeting's attendance shows that there is a lot of questioning of what is taking place. Vetsch asked if the board was interested in the logistics of creating a work group.

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said there was an email sent to commissioners from Lozinski in March and staff had time to review it. He asked if elections staff wanted to respond to some of the accusations or refer to the work group. It was determined to send it to the work group, which Kaczmarek said he would be very interested in being a part of.

Jay Johnson, Buffalo – *He self-identified as the person with the enormous "Trump-JFK Jr." flag that became a point of contention in Buffalo. He said when the truth comes out, everyone is going to be standing under his flag. He said the 2020 election was run by the military. He said they knew right after the election who won. He claimed CNN took 50,000 votes away from Trump. He said the military tracks people on their cell phones and have since 2002. He said whoever cheated in the 2020 election will eventually be caught.*

Husom said there is a proposal to create a work group and that Commissioners Vetsch and Kaczmarek expressed interest in representing the county board. Vetsch said, for the sake of transparency, to reach out to the four acknowledged major political parties in Minnesota – Republican, Democrat, Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis and Legal Marijuana Now – to appoint members to it. Weible's group was invited to appoint a member. Husom said she feels confident that everyone in the board room for the meeting wants the truth. There was a consensus among the committee to begin the process of reaching out to prospective work group members from various recommended membership groups.

RECOMMENDATION: *It was the consensus to create a work group consisting of representatives of two county commissioners, a representative from each of the four major political parties in Minnesota, a representative of the Secretary of State's Office, a member of the Performance Improvement Plan group, members of the Wright County elections and county attorney's staff and an outside legal counsel representative.*

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (5/25/2022)

Vetsch talked about the need to hire a property appraiser within the county as many of the townships use the county for appraisals. Recruitment and retention was discussed at the meeting as well and attempted to plan for the years ahead. The goal was promoting healthy work environments. The Bereavement Policy and the Personal Leave Policy updates were discussed and recommended for approval. The Paid Time Off (PTO) Donation Policy was also updated to put a cap on donation of hours and create a standardized form for this transfer of donated hours. Vetsch also informed the board of the temporary transition of the Geographic Imaging Systems (GIS) positions to Project Administration under Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels. Vetsch talked about the formalization of transferring Highway staff over to Finance Department. Wilfahrt requested that the hiring of the property appraiser be added to the recommendations. Vetsch agreed to add this to his motion. Kryzer noted that Policy 604 was already approved.

Vetsch moved to approve the Personnel and Employee Relations meeting minutes, the recommendations made in the meeting from Wednesday, May 25 and the hiring of a property appraiser. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0.

I. Hiring of a Property Appraiser

Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice told the committee that they had added two appraisal districts with Silver Creek and Middleville Townships which came out to be about 2,500 new parcels. He explained that during the budget process the discussion was started to talk about hiring a new Property Administrator in June if the need arose. There was need due to the parcels in Silver Creek and Middleville and Mattice explained that the position should be advertised and have the new hire start as soon as possible. The most qualified candidates would be required to train under the State Board of Assessors as per their policy. After completion of this training, they would work under Assessor Tony

Rasmuson. Commissioner Darek Vetsch asked what the charge rate would be adding that he thought it was in a 60/40 blend. Mattice confirmed it was 60 percent charged to the county, 40 percent charged outside the county.

II. Review the Creation and Recommendations from R.A.I.S.E. (Retain, Attract, Inform, Support, and Engage) Work Group

County Administrator Lee Kelly discussed the initiative and idea behind the new Retain, Attract, Inform, Support, and Engage (R.A.I.S.E.) Work Group. Kelly thought it would be a good opportunity to address employee retention, bring up issues and solve problems. Wednesday, May 18 was the group's first meeting. Mattice explained that the founding principle of the group was to strengthen communication in order to build trust and respect with the county employees. He explained that the group wanted the county employees to feel appreciated in their day-to-day work lives. R.A.I.S.E. strives to promote a healthy work environment throughout the county and address issues. The goal of that first meeting was to lay the groundwork to build off of for future meetings. Two recommendations were brought forward at the first meeting. The first recommendation of the group were minor revisions to the bereavement policy. This recommendation was brought to Human Resources Director Schawn Johnson who assisted in making the recommended modifications. The change would be to include bereavement in Paid Time Off (PTO). The second recommendation was a modification to the Personal Leave Policy. Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer, Johnson and outside counsel worked through issues that came along with making changes to this policy. The result of this discussion was the recommendation to work on a new policy, to coincide with Policy 602, that would cover probationary employees for emergency medical leave. Mattice introduced several members of R.A.I.S.E. who were also at the present Personnel/Employee Relations Meeting to include Highway Department representative Nathaniel Helgeson, Finance representative Heather Lemieux, Sheriff's Office representative Matthew Treichler, Attorney's Office representative Greg Kryzer, Health and Human Services Representative Jill Pooler, and Court Services representative Mike MacMillan. The group had seven members who made up a good cross section of the county departments. Kryzer asked if the proposed policy would be strictly for probationary employees and what the intended goal would be. Johnson said there needed to be a differentiation between probationary and regular employees. He suggested creating a clear stand-alone policy for these employees to be Policy 610 and leave Policy 602 as it was written. Vetsch stated the policy would be 602.10 - Leave Without Pay for Probationary Employees. Johnson clarified that it would be 610 - Unpaid Emergency Medical Leave for Probationary Employees and it would apply to employees who had been with the county for 0-12 months. Vetsch appreciated the separation of probationary and regular employee policies for clarity. Johnson added that he wanted to stick with emergency medical leave for probationary employees and not add any other type of leave onto that policy. Kryzer asked if the term "emergency medical" was clarified in the new policy and whether or not it included pregnancy. Johnson thought that it needed to be more clearly defined and that there needed to be more discussion with Human Resources personnel and time to tweak the language. Vetsch suggested that the committee wait to push out the policy as he wanted to clarify language in the policy and the definition of emergency medical leave.

Kryzer pointed out that issues with the pregnancy medical leave policy is a recruitment issue for the county. He had personal experience in the past with a candidate who would have turned down employment due to issues with the pregnancy leave and lack of insurance coverage during the probationary period. Assistant Human Resources Director Lori Pawelk thought that the long-term employees who have exhausted their Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits and still needed medical leave should also be included in this conversation. She thought this needed to be addressed in order to make it fair across the county. Kryzer stated that there would be no change to the long-term employee policy in regard to FMLA. Kryzer explained that the policy for the probationary employee would fashion like an FMLA benefit without being an official FMLA benefit or association. Pawelk expressed the want for this policy to be also written for long-term employees because of the lack of benefits incurred if FMLA had been exhausted by an employee. Johnson explained that if FMLA had been exhausted and an employee still needed to take medical leave, they would not be covered by the county's insurance policy while they were on an unpaid medical leave. Vetsch wanted to be clear that these were two different conversations, and the group was just addressing the probationary employees at that time.

Commissioner Mark Daleiden clarified that the county's probationary period was one year. Pawelk confirmed and emphasized the need to have long-term employees covered similarly and addressed the fact that donated time was taxed to the donor. She added that there were more nuances that needed to be addressed before moving forward with this

policy for probationary employees. Court Services Director Mike MacMillan suggested that they should go back and clarify the intent at the next R.A.I.S.E. meeting. He added that the group should make changes that fit into existing policies instead of doing it the other way around. Vetsch asked for clarification on the goal of the R.A.I.S.E. discussion. Johnson gave an example of a probationary employee who was in a severe car accident and needed extended leave past the time allotted for emergency medical leave. The additional month of unpaid leave required that the employee pay his or her own medical bills at that time. He understood the need to do this for new employees as a retention tool, but thought it was important to look out for the other employees in this was as well.

Kryzer stated that the group needed to keep FMLA out of the current discussion because it was easy to confuse FMLA and personal leave. He added that there was no proposal to change the FMLA policy. He said that they are proposing to say that the county is going to pay for your probationary period health insurance up to three months in an employees' first year. Pawelk voiced concerns and explained that as a new employee the clock for any medical leave would start at the time of the medical event. The availability of this leave would start after the two weeks of employment to include paid leave of up to three months. Johnson expressed the desire to discuss this further outside of an official meeting, in order to clarify and bring forward to the committee and the board a clearer definition and explanation of the desired changes. Daleiden asked if this policy would have to be discussed again when union contracts come up. Johnson said it would not have to because union discussions of this nature refer to county policy. Mattice asked if the committee would approve the continued discussion on this matter. Daleiden thought this was a good idea to continue the discussion. Johnson said that the last thing the group wanted to do was create a policy that was more confusing to staff.

Recommendation: To approve the revisions to Policy 604, to refer to staff Policies 602 and 610 for further discussion and language clarification, and to bring it forward to the County Board when the new policy was approved.

III. Discuss Process and Methods to Review and Analyze the Needs and Future of County GIS functions

Kelly introduced a discussion about the recent job openings in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst positions throughout the county and wanted to receive input on the potential to make some changes to the structure of this position. Alignment throughout the county had recently become a big discussion and goal. Mattice explained that the GIS Department was made up of four GIS positions within the county, three being vacant. Mattice thought this provided a good opportunity to talk about enterprise function as the county looked to fill these positions. Mattice, Kelly and County Surveyor Steve Jobe met on Thursday, May 12 to discuss this concept and how the county could help with the transition. Monday, May 23 Mattice met with Projects Administrator Elizabeth Karels and GIS Coordinator Alek Halverson to discuss workflow, product, and quantity. They also looked at the project list which was extensive and included almost every department in the county. Vetsch suggested moving these positions under Karels. This change would allow the GIS Department to be under one roof. Mattice pointed out that the GIS analysts had a wide range of projects they did, some analysts varying more than others. Vetsch pointed out that doing all the different types of projects under one department may pose a challenge.

Daleiden asked how far along the NextGen 911 GIS system was. Treichler confirmed the project is moving along at a good pace. Daleiden asked if it would be a continuous project. Treichler confirmed that this would be a continuous position and it would require continuous maintenance. Karels pointed out that that position would be a full-time position, that would be able to step in on other projects when needed. Vetsch asked what level of backlog was being created in the county while they waited to hire another GIS analyst. Mattice said that the one GIS analyst the county had was currently on military leave and there was the potential that the county could end up with no GIS assistance. He added that in regard to the backlog of jobs, the number one priority was parcel maintenance and updates. Daleiden asked if they can hire a contractor temporarily. Mattice said he had a discussion with Jobe about whether there was a need for this position. Mattice said this decision was up to Jobe and that Mattice would touch base regarding a mutual aid option. Vetsch asked what the plan for day-to-day tasks across departments in the meantime. Daleiden asked if there have been applicants and if so, why applicants were choosing not to come to Wright County. Johnson said it is a tight market and that the county has a hard time competing with the private sector in regard to salary. He added that they were hoping to be in the same position as Sheriff's Office who have a full-time GIS analyst on staff. Vetsch asked if it would be best to move this position to Karels' department at least for an interim period. Kelly thought that the role of

GIS has changed over time and thought looking at it as an enterprise function would make the most sense moving it under the Projects Division. He wanted to come up with a format to build that structure moving forward.

Vetsch asked if the county can find contractors in the interim. Karels wasn't sure if the committee understood how many projects the GIS analysts have at one time. They had 30 projects at one time and there was a need for visibility and reporting so people within the county understood why it takes so much time to complete projects. There was a clear need to get more of these individuals on staff. Daleiden asked if what the county could do to increase the pay and reevaluate the employees. Johnson said he could reach out to other counties to see what they are paying, but the difficulty the county is having finding GIS assistance is due to a lack of availability of this skill. Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt asked if there was a need for this job and whether that was the reason it was shooting salaries up. Johnson confirmed that he thought this was a contributing factor and thought that over time this demand would level out. Mattice added that the GIS analyst job postings were continuous. Vetsch offered the idea that separating out levels of GIS might allow the county to hire an applicant and train up individuals to the level they need. Mattice pointed out that this discussion has nothing to do with Jobe's ability to manage these individuals, but rather if this position is an enterprise position or not.

Recommendation: To approve the transfer the GIS positions over to project administration. Karels will reach out to contractors and look for mutual aid in the interim. Johnson will continue to try to find applicants for this position and will reach out to neighboring counties to see if Wright County is doing anything differently from the other counties.

IV. Update on Highway Finance Centralization

Kelly wanted to provide an update on the initiative to strategically work toward centralization with regard to Finance and Information Technology Departments. The next move they would like to make is to move over the Highway staff, Patsy Waytashek, and Sara Hamann, and have them report to the Finance staff. He wanted to talk about how they would like this process to happen moving forward. The intention is to make this move at the beginning of a new pay period to make it the cleanest. Vetsch deferred to Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux's recommendation. Lemieux confirmed that the start of a pay period would be the best and said she would work with County Highway Engineer Virgil Hawkins and the Highway Department. Kelly asked if in the future the County Board wanted departments to ask for permission when making internal moves similar to the one being discussed, or if departments would be allowed to go ahead and make these moves based on discretion. Vetsch thought if it was not a contentious decision, departments should move forward without discussion or mitigation.

Recommendation: To approve the transfer of Highway staff Patsy Waytashek and Sarah Hamann over to Finance Department.

V. Consideration of Revision to Policy 310 to include Sick Time Donation

Kelly explained that a conversation has been started about allowing the donation of sick time. The county has traditionally not allowed this type of donation, but it has come to their attention that there are several employees that would like to be able to donate their sick time to their fellow employees. There was a draft of a revised draft of Policy 302 – Sick Time Donation. Johnson expressed the desire to update the policy to allow for donation of sick time and wanted to create a form that would make this transfer of time more formal. The form would address donations being given and the request for donations. The form would also clarify how many hours to donate, which bank of time the donation was being taken from, and if there was a specific employee they wanted to donate to. There would be a copy for Finance and Human Resources for each employee file and payroll documentation. Some parameters of this recommended change included a recommended maximum of 480 hours for a 12-month period donated to one employee. The employee taking leave on the donated time will not be allowed to incur more sick or PTO time while on donated leave. Employees wishing to donate must have at least 160 hours of leave saved up in order to donate. This safeguards against an employee donating their time and then needing time donated to them later down the road. The maximum time one employee can donate would be 80 hours, this was standard across cities and counties he talked to. Kelly said that there were a lot of long-term employees who have this time to donate and the desire to donate as well. Vetsch added that they had a similar discussion at the R.A.I.S.E. meeting regarding the benefits and the liabilities of paying out sick days.

He and the R.A.I.S.E. committee thought donation option was the best option when taking everything into consideration. Daleiden asked if the donator would have to pay the taxes on donated leave. Johnson responded that in some situations this was correct, and the donator would have to pay taxes on the donated time. Lemieux said that if it was a "normal" pregnancy, it would not be considered an emergency situation. Johnson expressed the desire for people to be aware of the difference and would include language to clarify the difference. Pawelk clarified that donated time ends when the leave period ends. If someone desires to extend their leave past what is allotted the disability would end with the designated leave period. She added that employees have to use their own time up before they can use donated time. Vetsch confirmed that this was understood by the group. Treichler asked if donated time would change anything in regard to health benefits. Johnson confirmed that it would not. He added that the employee would still be responsible for their own medical finances and insurance.

Recommendation: To approve the revisions to Policy 310 to include sick time donation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To approve the revisions to Policy 604, to refer to staff Policies 602 and 610 for further discussion and language clarification, and to bring it forward to the County Board when the new policy was approved.***
- 2. To approve the transfer the GIS positions over to project administration.***
- 3. To approve the transfer of Highway staff Patsy Waytashek and Sarah Hamann over to Finance Department.***
- 4. To approve the revisions to Policy 310 to include sick time donation.***

ADVISORY COMMITTEE / ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES

Vetsch met with the I-94 Coalition and talked about a planned trip to Washington DC in July 2022. The members were looking to have representatives to attend. He wanted to see if the board was interested in sending a county staff member. Daleiden asked if Vetsch would attend this meeting. Daleiden offered that staff from Highway may have interest in this. Vetsch wanted to get a formal request regarding attendance for the next meeting.

Wetter attended a Minnesota Rural Counties (MRC) meeting where legislative bills were discussed. The Broadband Bill was the only one that was passed and discussed. The federal government would be giving \$110 million in capital funds and there was some dispute about where this funding would go. She also attended a Historical Society meeting where she learned that the archivist Betty Dierks and front desk receptionist Kay Nordberg would be retiring. Projects the Historical Society were working on included cleaning up the outside of the facility.

Kaczmarek met with R.A.I.S.E. where good discussions were had regarding employee relations. He also met with the MRC and discussed drainage authority. Kaczmarek met with the Highway 12 coalition and who reported that he fatality rate is down from last year at this time. Highway 12 had a survey done that asked residents what type of work they wanted done on the road and residents had requested a four-lane highway be put in.

Husom met with Buffalo and Annandale Safe Schools. They talked about addressing mental health and vaping issues in schools. She said the debt schedule was also discussed and it showed the county in good standing for its size. She went to Great River Regional Library and there was a preliminary budget set for 2023 which would be approved at a later date. There are building project proposals for the library system discussed as well. Wright Roads Classes for teens and adults reported that it was helping spread traffic safety awareness.

Daleiden met with Wellness Committee on who had been working on a survey for the employees to ask what food the employees would like to see in the café space. There may be the potential to bring in a coffee shop and the committee was considering how much interest the employees showed. Husom asked if the coffee shop would be available to the public. Daleiden said that was the intention and shared that food trucks were also being considered.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

County Board Minutes submitted by Laine Stephan, Office Manager.