



BOARD MINUTES
BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AUGUST 17, 2021

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

DATE APPROVED: August 24, 2021

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

COUNTY BOARD MINUTES 8-10-21 MEETING

Husom moved to approve the minutes from 8-10-21. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

AGENDA

Vetsch moved to approve the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Kaczmarek requested to pull Items B1 (Administration – Finance) and C2 (Sheriff’s Office) for discussion and clarification.

Vetsch moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Items B1 (Administration – Finance) and C2 (Sheriff’s Office) for discussion and clarification. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

* Items B1 and C2 for discussion.

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Refer to Personnel Committee – minor child exposure remote worker guidelines

B. *ADMINISTRATION - FINANCE

1. Request to sign agreement with the Minnesota Participating Addendum Contract Number 196229 for Fleet Card Services under National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) Master Contract 00819
2. Acknowledge Warrants issued between August 3, 2021 and August 10, 2021 (*See Below, Item IX. Warrant Listings*)

C. *SHERIFF’S OFFICE

1. Position backfill: one Communications Officer FTE due to resignation
2. Approve contracts for Law Enforcement Coverage for 2022-2023 for Albertville, Hanover, South Haven, and St. Michael

ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA TO BE DISCUSSED

B. ADMINISTRATION - FINANCE

1. Request to sign agreement with the Minnesota Participating Addendum Contract Number 196229 for Fleet Card Services under NASPO Master Contract 00819

Kaczmarek asked for clarification regarding the difference between a purchase card and a fleet card. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said fleet cards are used by the Sheriff’s Office only for fuel and automotive purchases such as windshield wipers.

C. SHERIFF’S OFFICE

2. Approve contracts for Law Enforcement Coverage for 2022-2023 for Albertville, Hanover, South Haven, and St. Michael

Kaczmarek wanted to know why two of the cities have dates the coverage takes effect but two of the cities don't have a date set. Chief Deputy Matt Treichler explained that it was most likely an oversight. The start date should be January 1, 2022 for all four cities listed.

The Sheriff's Office is negotiating with five other cities about increasing contract hours, but nothing has been decided yet. Kaczmarek asked how close to the cost of the squad and deputy is the rate cities pay? Treichler said the process goes through the Ways & Means Committee and the formula that is used is relatively complex. The Sheriff's Office is recouping the cost of wages, squads, worker's compensation, insurance, and prosecution.

Kaczmarek moved to approve Items B1 and C2 under the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

ADMINISTRATION

Letter of support for a No Horn Request for trains in the City of Maple Lake

Vetsch was contacted by members of Maple Lake's City Council regarding the County Board sending a letter of support for a No Horn Request for trains. Maple Lake's City Council understands this is going to be a lengthy process because there is work that will need to be done on Highway 7 after getting a right-of-way permit.

Kaczmarek asked for clarification on how many railroad crossings are in Maple Lake. Vetsch said there are a total of two railroad crossings which have arms and flashing lights.

Vetsch moved to send a letter of support for a No Horn Request for trains in the City of Maple Lake. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8-9-21

Husom moved to accept the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from 8-9-21. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

Kaczmarek wanted it noted in the minutes that Facilities Services Director Alan Wilczek advised that Community Dental is paying more than \$15.10 in other locations. Daleiden said those are places that have been in operation for a while, and it is unknown what was charged in the beginning.

Vetsch moved to accept the recommendations regarding the Dental Clinic space. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 4-1 with Kaczmarek voting against it.

Vetsch said the utilization of the License Center space will generate revenue to offset the low lease rate. This is a benefit for the citizens because it will generate revenue.

Husom moved to accept the recommendations regarding the License Center space. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

Husom said the Wright County Economic Development Partnership's (WCEDP) current location does not charge the WCEDP rent.

Vetsch moved to accept the recommendations regarding the WCEDP space. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 4-1 with Kaczmarek voting against it.

I. New Government Center Lease Rates

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES 8-9-21 (CONT.)

County Administrator Lee Kelly stated the spaces for discussion include: Dental Clinic, Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP), and the License Center spaces in the new Government Center building.

Dental Clinic Space

Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux presented the lease rate options. Lease rates are calculated annually in accordance with federal requirements. Other dental offices were contacted for rate comparisons, however no like-comparable was found.

	Rate Per Square Foot	Cost Includes
Option 1	\$19.60	Depreciation, Interest, and Operating Costs
Option 2	\$15.10	Interest and Operating Costs
Option 3	\$6.79	Operating Costs
Option 4	\$7.25	Price Proposed by Community Dental Care

Health & Human Services Director Jami Goodrum Schwartz requested leniency for Community Dental Care (CDC). CDC receives one of the lowest reimbursement rates for the services it provides. The partnership would benefit the community, helping individuals receive dental care needs.

Commissioner Daleiden suggested the lease rate of \$6.79 per square foot for the first year to allow CDC time to get established and gain clientele. The rate could be adjusted the following year. Kelly stated the cost allocation could be reviewed annually or a yearly percentage increase could be added to a multi-year lease. Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels stated the lease agreement with CDC must be approved by the state. Each time a change is made, the agreement must be re-submitted to the state for approval.

Commissioner Vetsch suggested charging a higher rate and paying a portion of the cost with American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for the first three years. By year four, CDC would be charged the full amount. The group discussed keeping the lease rate for each of the spaces similar.

Commissioner Kaczmarek questioned the CDC budgeted amounts for doctors. Goodrum Schwartz stated she was not familiar with CDC budgeting process. CDC is planning on a phased approach for adding staff members as the need arises. Kaczmarek stated the lease rate would not include water and electric costs; he questioned if that is the case for all the leased spaces. Goodrum Schwartz stated separate water and electric are included in the agreement for CDC to operate.

Kaczmarek stated CDC should pay the lease rate of \$15.10 per square foot. Daleiden stated CDC is a non-profit, designed to help individuals who cannot visit a regular dental clinic due to lack of insurance. In the long-run, CDC will benefit residents of the county.

Vetsch suggested setting the lease rate at \$15.10 per square foot and using ARP funds to assist CDC with the cost. Karels stated the county could use ARP funds to award a grant to CDC, and then ask CDC to apply the funds toward the lease.

Facilities Director Alan Wilczek stated CDC is currently paying a lease rate of more than \$15.10 per square foot at other established locations. He suggested setting a rental rate similar to the rate at other CDC locations. Wilczek also stated he would expect CDC to want a minimum 10-year lease.

Kaczmarek stated he would like to use a quantifiable number to justify lowering rent. Kaczmarek also questioned if the lease agreement should include language that will increase the lease rate if CDC has a higher profit than anticipated. Daleiden stated he would like the contract to be set for the term, so the county does not have to seek re-approval from the state.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES 8-9-21 (CONT.)

Recommendation: Charge CDC a lease rate of \$15.10 per square foot. Use ARP funds to buy-down the rate to \$7.25 per square foot for three years. CDC will be charged the full lease rate amount of \$15.10 per square foot in the fourth year of the contract.

License Center Space

The testing room space is approximately 655 square feet and will be used by the county on the days it is not being used by the state. Vetsch stated the funds were received to fully operate all 93 Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) locations, however there is no timeline for re-opening.

Recommendation: Start negotiations with DVS with a lease rate of \$3.85 per square foot.

Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) Space

The space is approximately 950 square feet. The county has contributed to the WCEDP for several years. Vetsch stated WCEDP has access to some free or low-cost locations. Kaczmarek stated the new Government Center space is brand new real estate in Buffalo and suggested charging a lease rate of \$19.60 per square foot. Vetsch recommended a rate closer to what CDC is being charged.

Vetsch stated WCEDP would like to be located in a building with better public access. There is citizen benefit because it is a free service to the citizens.

Recommendation: Set the lease rate at \$15.10 per square foot. The county will increase the WCEDP budget by \$10,000 to offset the rent expense for two years. WCEDP will be responsible for any future rent increases. The value to the residents will be evaluated in two years.

DITCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES 8-10-21

Kaczmarek moved to accept the Ditch Committee of the Whole meeting minutes and recommendations with the listed modifications from 8-10-21. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0.

Vetsch said the committee moved forward with the public hearing for all ditches listed in the minutes except for Ditch #33. Ditch #33 has pending information so it is unknown when the public hearing will be for that ditch.

Husom asked for clarification as to which company completed the viewers report for Ditch #7. Drainage Administrator Jan Edmonson confirmed it was H2O Viewers that did the redetermination of benefits for Ditch #7.

Husom asked for clarification regarding Judicial Ditch #1 and Ditch #7 and how the two can be combined because the ditches are not near one another. Edmonson said the public hearings for those two ditches could be combined.

1. Wright County Redeterminations Ordered

Meeting called to order by Daleiden at 10:35 am

Kryzer stated the purpose of the meeting was for the Drainage Authority to give staff direction on how they want to proceed with the Redeterminations of Benefits ordered in previous years that have not been finalized or adopted. The drainage authority determined that the benefits or damages of record determined in a drainage proceeding did not reflect reasonable present-day land values and the benefited areas have changed. Several redeterminations of benefits have been ordered and staff would like to proceed with the hearings or procedures needed to adopt the viewers' reports.

DITCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES 8-10-21

Husom agreed with Kryzer and added that the County Ditches were established in the early 1900's and have not had a redetermination of benefits. The land values and the benefited areas have changed, and the roles are no longer fair. In some cases, there is thirteen landowners paying for the benefits of the system, and there are several landowners within the watershed that currently benefit from the system but are not part of the benefitted roles.

When the drainage authority ordered a redetermination of benefits on County Ditch 20, there were several landowners that were not happy because they did not have land directly on the ditch system. However, the process must be done, and an explanation given to the landowners as to how they benefit from the system by their water draining to that ditch. The only fair way to complete the necessary repairs and maintenance on the systems, required by statute, is to complete the redetermination of benefits so that everyone benefitted is sharing in the costs.

2. Notifications regarding the Public Hearings and informal meetings

Daleiden stated the importance of getting the affected landowners notices of the informal meetings in addition to the meetings and hearings required. Staff needs to assure the persons affected by the drainage system are aware of the drainage proceedings and that the county provide a forum for informal discussions. Notifications should explain the Counties position according to MN. Statue. The drainage authority may make orders to redetermine benefits to make it the fairest, or abandon the ditch system, which requires 100% of the current benefitted landowners to agree upon. The drainage authority is required by statue to maintain the systems.

3. List of Redeterminations Ordered

Wright County Redeterminations of Benefits Ongoing				
Ditch #	Location	Ordered	Viewers	Notes
County Ditch #7	City of Cokato	2019	H2Over Viewers	
County Ditch #13	Buffalo Township	2017	MN Viewers Association	Reestablishment of Record Completed
County Ditch #16	French Lake Township	2019	H2Over Viewers	First Public Hearing Held on 2/19/2020
County Ditch #18	French Lake Township	2017	MN Viewers Association	
County Ditch #19	French Lake Township	2019	H2Over Viewers	First Public Heating Held on 2/19/2020
County Ditch #23	Woodland Township	2017	MN Viewers Association	
County Ditch #31	Woodland Township	2017	MN Viewers Association	Repair Report Completed on 7/12/2021
County Ditch #33	City of Monticello & TWP	2018	H2Over Viewers	First Public Hearing Held on 8/27/2019
Judicial Ditch #1	Marysville Township	2019	H2Over Viewers	

DITCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES 8-10-21 (CONT.)

Potential Redetermination of Benefits in 2022				
Ditch #	Location	Ordered	Viewers	Notes
County Ditch #17	Buffalo Township	NA	NA	Vote to Order ROB at Township Meeting
County Ditch #35	Maple Lake Township	NA	NA	Outstanding Repair Request

- **Notations by Detjen regarding each system:**

- CD 7 – Waiting for the Public Hearing to be scheduled – H2Over Viewers have completed the viewers report
- CD 13 – Re-establishment of Records has been completed. Re-determination of benefits needs to be completed now by MN. Viewers Association. ROB is on hold until Detjen can get feedback from the viewers. This system should be a priority.
- CD 16 – First public hearing was held on 2/19/20 and the 2nd PH needs to be set. Detjen stated that CD 16 drains into CD 19 and pays 23% of the benefits. CD 19 acts as the outlet. Both systems can be scheduled together. H2Over Viewers completed the ROB.
- CD 18 – MN. Viewers Assoc. PH needs to be scheduled; the viewers report is complete.
- CD 23 and CD 31 – The repair report was completed the middle of July 2021 and the ROB for both systems can be done together.
- CD 33 – H2Over Viewers have completed the ROB. Commissioner Vetsch requested that staff make sure H2Over Viewers be paid in full for the ROB. However, things will need to be put on hold, as Vetsch is working with the City of Monticello regarding possibly conveying a portion of the system to the City. Which in turn, the County would give the City of Monticello back a portion of the outlet fee they were charged.
- Judicial Ditch #1 – H2Over Viewers completed the ROB, and a PH will need to be scheduled. Since Judicial 1 and CD 7 are both smaller systems, the Public Hearings could maybe be scheduled the same day.
- Detjen noted that staff will need to verify the viewers reports that are final and compare it to current landowners, since it has not been updated since 2017-2018. Landowners may have changed.

4. **Drainage Authority's options**

- Kryzer stated that as the Drainage Authority based on the information giving at a Public Hearing for a re-determination can make one or more of the following decisions:
 - Rise and report to the full board an order accepting the redetermination the benefits and damages as described in the viewer's report
 - Direct the viewers to further review the area or portions of the drainage systems and determine if adjustments should be made to the proposed benefits and damages and perennial strips of vegetation.
 - Rise and report to the full board that it adopts an order rejecting the viewers report and directing a new report be conducted.
 - Direct the viewers to adjust and submit a revised report.

5. **Direction to Staff**

- Kaczmarek requested that staff proceed with completing the required proceedings for County Ditch 31 and County Ditch 7. Also, CD 23 and CD 31 could be completed together.
- Daleiden stated the first step would be for Detjen to get ahold of both viewer groups and see what their availability would be and then have staff get some agreed upon dates for the hearings.

6. **Notations by Detjen regarding each system for a potential ROB:**

DITCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES 8-10-21 (CONT.)

- *CD 17 Landowners had agreed at previous informational meetings that they would be in favor of ordering a Re-determination of Benefits. Husom stated that there is a repair request that was submitted, and the current landowners know that the ROB needs to be done prior to that repair.*
- *CD 35 There is an outstanding repair request that was submitted to staff by one of the benefited landowners. There is a lot of land that floods on that system. However, there are some current benefited landowners who are very much against any maintenance on the system.*

Kryzer suggested that Detjen get a quote for a re-establishment of records, prior to ordering a re-determination of benefits on this system.

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 8-11-21

Wetter moved to accept the Ways & Means meeting minutes and recommendations from 8-11-21. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

Daleiden wanted clarification regarding the cost to the county for insurance on the buildings at the fairgrounds and if the county is reimbursed by the Fair Board. County Administrator Lee Kelly said it gets complicated because there is different coverage depending on buildings versus property in the open and events that are held on site.

Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said a public hearing during a Committee of the Whole meeting is being requested for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, October 19, 2021.

Husom moved to set a public hearing during the Committee of the Whole meeting at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, October 19, 2021. The motion was seconded by Wetter and carried 5-0.

Kryzer said regarding Tobacco Ordinance 21-4 as part of the County Attorney's Office's review of the ordinance for the Safe Schools meeting, there were three sections that still referenced minors, under age 18, which was not included in the recommendations of the minutes. Kryzer asked for motion to modify the recommendation.

Husom moved to make the changes in the three sections of Tobacco Ordinance 21-4 referring to minors. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek and carried 5-0.

I. *Buildings at Wright County Fairgrounds*

Risk Manager Tim Dahl explained the county insures the buildings on the Wright County Fairgrounds through Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT). After examining the buildings, the county was advised to file a claim through MCIT. The county's deductible covers the entire site, not per building. Most likely if there is weather damage on one building including shingle damage, it's more than likely there is weather damage on the other buildings as well. The Field Adjuster for MCIT came out and looked at all the shingled buildings on the fairgrounds. The claim was expanded to include the Dairy Barn with three-tab shingles, and the Octagon building which has two different roofing types.

The Octagon building's three-tab shingles are not only weather worn but there is also evidence of wind damage. One of the challenges with any weather repair is the adjuster can only see what they can see meaning there is always the potential for unknowns. Some of the unknowns could include, can the color and quality of the shingles be matched, is the underlayment damaged or impacted, are there any building code changes that have occurred that the building would need to have fixed to bring it up to compliance?

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES 8-11-21 (CONT.)

The county received a check for the depreciated amount. If the county commits to the repairs MCIT will release the replacement cost with the one deductible.

Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer explained that the county owns the fairgrounds which includes all the buildings. Under the lease the Fair Board is responsible for maintenance of all buildings that are not moveable. Fair Board Treasurer Jeff Wheeler agreed with Kryzer adding the AG Society, which is the Fair Board, and its members maintain the property for the purpose of operating the fair.

Kaczmarek said he believed the Fair Board should be included in the meetings and communications between MCIT and the county. That way all parties are kept in the loop of what is happening. Wheeler added that the Welker Schoolhouse and the two log cabins are owned by the Historical Society and the Fair Board has never had any involvement with the upkeep or operation of those buildings. The 4-H Food Stand has also been a separate entity that the Fair Board does not have jurisdiction over.

A. 4-H Building

Kryzer confirmed the 4-H building/Food Stand is owned by the county but the Fair Board/AG Society maintains the building. The way the lease reads is, the AG Society is responsible for maintaining and repairing all the buildings under their control in good and safe condition. If the AG Society does not maintain the buildings in a good and safe condition the county can repair the building and then bill it back to the AG Society.

Fair Board 4-H Coordinator Tracy Gutknecht said 4-H gets a budget from the county, the Historical Society gets a budget from the county and the AG Society gets a budget from the county. She asked if any of the three have an allocated amount for maintenance and repairs? She said 4-H doesn't have a problem maintaining the building but when the budget is received the entire amount is put into the program itself. As a result, the maintenance and repairs are paid for with the funds made from the Food Stand.

County Administrator Lee Kelly said regarding the budget, the entities including University of Minnesota Extension and the Fair Board present their budget to the county as part of the county's share. After the budget is approved it's up to the entity on how the funds will be spent.

B. Roof replacement at Historical Society Buildings

Kryzer explained the Historical Society is responsible for maintenance and repairs on the building. Historical Society Curator Hannah King said the buildings were "gifted" the same way the items in the collection were gifted to the Historical Society.

Facilities Services Director Alan Wilczek said he has two different proposals coming in that day for the Welker Schoolhouse, the Octagon, and the Barn. There are two cabins with cedar shakes which have not been addressed and are not included in the claim with MCIT.

C. Two Cabins

King advised that the Historical Society was not planning on having the two cabins included on the insurance claim because it is looking into grant funding for the repairs. There are specific companies that work with historical buildings. There is also the option to have a vocational school do the repairs.

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES 8-11-21 (CONT.)

Dahl said the only issue with hiring a vocational school or an outside company to do the repairs would be if the entity doesn't have the appropriate insurance/licensing to do the work and someone is injured it could fall back on the county. As of now, the cabins are locked and not accessible to the public due to safety.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee recommends the \$5,000 deductible be split between the buildings at a certain percentage based on the cost of repairs. Wilczek will get bids for the building repairs which will include a bid for a steel roof on the Barn. After bids are received Wilczek will contact the Fair Board and Dahl.

Work on the two cabins will be put on hold until the board can discuss it at budget time.

II. Proposed Amendments to the Tobacco Ordinance

Kryzer provided the committee with a draft of the Tobacco Ordinance, Amendment Number 1-4. When the state updated the tobacco regulations to age 21 to purchase tobacco, Wright County became non-compliant. This amendment is to bring the county back into compliance with the state law.

Kryzer went through the updated draft ordinance section by section with the committee.

Kryzer explained the true definition of tobacco-related devices in Section Three. Section Four defines what a tobacco products shop is. Any establishment that derives more than 25 percent of its gross revenue from the sale of tobacco products. In Section Five, child-care providers were added to the amendment.

Section Six states that licensees are responsible for ensuring proper training of employees. The licensees are also responsible for paying any administrative penalties and are prohibited from making employees reimburse the licensee.

Anna Olsen from Public Health explained how it is determined whether an employee would receive an administrative penalty. There is a push in Public Health to put pressure on the establishment that sells the tobacco product. Part of the responsibility is ensuring that its staff are appropriately trained.

State law changed how to do compliance checks because the age to purchase was raised. In Section Seven, persons involved with compliance checks must be over the age of 18 years but less than 21 years. Public Health receives grant funding from various organizations for conducting educational compliance checks. If it's an educational compliance check and an establishment is in violation by selling to a person not 21 years old, it's virtually a "freebie" and no penalties will be imposed. Public Health decides before it goes on compliance checks if it will be an educational or an annual compliance check.

Section Eight has a lot of changes and there is more detail regarding the applicants because of issues with some dishonest applicants. The applicant must state percentages of tobacco sales. There is a provision that the applicant may require a letter from a Certified Public Accountant. Section 13, the penalties were increased to be more in line with state law.

There are roughly 80 establishments that sell tobacco products in the county. However, the county does not regulate the cities of Buffalo, Annandale, and Howard Lake because they have their own police departments.

Olsen suggested making a change in Section Eight to remove the applicant's residential address. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer asked if the committee would be open to increasing the application fee which is \$150.

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES 8-11-21 (CONT.)**RECOMMENDATION:**

- *Remove applicant's residential address in Section Eight – Application*
- *Meyer and Olsen will discuss how much the increase to the application fee should be*
- *Refer to the budgeting process for increasing fees*
- *Refer an increase in fees to the public hearing*
- *Send notice to all the license holders that there will be a public hearing in October*

BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 8-11-21

Vetsch moved to accept the Broadband Committee meeting minutes and recommendations from 8-11-21. The motion was seconded by Husom and carried 5-0.

I. Border-to-Border Broadband Development Program

Senior Attorney/Lobbyist Shane Zahrt from Flaherty and Hood stated Minnesota's Johnson Economic Development bill was passed during a special session in June 2021. This bill contains \$70 million intended to address broadband projects and was added to the state's Border-to-Border broadband grant program. Zahrt clarified that this has been confusingly referred to as a state appropriation, when in fact it is the state taking necessary steps to use part of the state's own American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocations to invest in broadband. Zahrt stated the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) must apply for \$70 million of funding for broadband through the ARP's Capital Projects Fund. Zahrt stated that DEED must apply by September 30, 2021 or 90 days after the federal government begins accepting applications; whichever date is later. Zahrt stated that because of the timeline, he does not anticipate a Border-to-Border grant round in calendar year 2021.

Commissioner Daleiden asked if the state needs to have a plan for the use of the funding before it is submitted to the federal level. According to Zahrt, the state does not have to describe the exact plan for the use of funds. Zahrt stated that it's his understanding that DEED worked closely with federal partners to make sure they knew what they needed to do to secure the funding and meet federal requirements. Zahrt stated that DEED plans to follow its standard Border-to-Border grant program for this round of grants, except that DEED may modify some of the parameters of the program to match the federal requirements.

Daleiden asked who past recipients of Border-to-Border Grants have been. Zahrt shared that the state's Border-to-Border broadband grant program was established in 2014, and recipients historically included broadband providers, like Midco, some smaller providers like co-ops, and a handful of local governments.

Commissioner Vetsch asked if the county's ARP funds could be used for local matches for Border-to-Border Grants. Zahrt replied that his team is still researching this topic.

Vetsch asked about how the county could support townships with developing franchise agreements. Vetsch also asked if the townships could use their ARP funds to pay for legal fees associated with developing franchise agreements. Karels stated that ARP funds can be used for legal services of franchise agreements if it leads to a broadband project. Daleiden suggested that the group provide the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) with information on what the county is doing regarding broadband.

Karels asked Zahrt if ARP or state funds could be used in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) areas. Zahrt stated that he is still researching this topic and will be providing a written response. Karels shared that RDOF is a federal program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) where companies previously bid on projects to bring fiber to the home in certain areas. Karels stated that RDOF is a six-year program, but that the providers do not know the schedule for when they will receive funding. Karels stated that in the past year some Border-to-Border recipients lost their funding due to the areas being awarded funds at part of the RDOF program.

BROADBAND COMMITTEE MINUTES 8-11-21 (CONT.)

Vetsch stated that the county wants to develop a high-level strategy for going after grant opportunities. Daleiden stated that Design Nine's feasibility study will help identify strategies. Karels asked if it would make sense to set aside a portion of ARP money to offer a local match for the Border-to-Border grants, if allowed. IT Director Matthew Fomby stated setting aside funds may make sense but suggested waiting to decide until after the feasibility study is complete.

Communications Specialist John Holler asked about the level of interest that the internet service providers have in partnering with the county on broadband projects. Karels stated the providers are very interested in working with the county to expand their services. Vetsch stated he would like to do a request for proposal (RFP) process and as part of the evaluation consider how much funding an internet service provider will provide themselves. Daleiden stated that the county must keep in mind what Design Nine recommends in the feasibility study.

Vetsch shared that in addition to franchise agreements, he has heard that some townships have faced challenges with right of way agreements. Daleiden suggested talking to MAT about how they can support townships on this topic. Vetsch suggested that the county compiles a list of firms or choose one firm to have on retainer to help townships with cable franchise and right of way agreements. Fomby stated that having a central resource will help move the process along.

Zahrt stated the federal infrastructure bill passed in the US Senate August 10, 2021 with \$65 billion for infrastructure investments. Zahrt stated that Minnesota's allocation is expected to be at least \$100 million, assuming the bill passes in the US House in the same form as it currently in.

Zahrt stated that his team will be able to provide follow-up to research questions in September. Zahrt suggested added a Border-to-Border grant primer to a future agenda.

RECOMMENDATION: Karels will contact MAT to share information and find out resources they have for franchise and right of way agreements.

II. Feasibility Study Update

Karels provided an update on the broadband surveys. Approximately 375 paper surveys were returned, 2,255 online residential surveys were completed, and 64 online business surveys were completed. Karels stated this was about a 5 percent participation rate. Daleiden asked if the groups should contact cities and schools and ask them to post the survey on their websites.

Karels shared that as part of the feasibility study, the county and consultant, Design Nine have met with 13 internet service providers. Those providers are sharing information and maps with Design Nine, which will be incorporated into the final report.

Karels stated that Design Nine is planning to visit the county September 13 and 14 to hold public information meetings and smaller stakeholder meetings. Vetsch asked Karels to confirm the public information meeting dates and times with Design Nine.

Daleiden proposed the County may want to extend broadband survey end date to middle of September or after hearing back from the cities, townships, and schools.

RECOMMENDATION: Holler will send the survey information to schools and cities to put on their websites for further promotion. Karels will confirm meeting days with Design Nine.

IV. Action Items/Agenda for Next Meeting

Karels suggested having the next meeting when Design Nine is available to meet in-person, between September 13-15. Topics will include updates from Flaherty and Hood, information from MAT, and updates from Design Nine.

BROADBAND COMMITTEE MINUTES 8-11-21 (CONT.)

The next meeting will be set at a County Board meeting.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE/ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES

Safe Schools. Wednesday, August 11, 2021 Kelly attended the Safe Schools meeting. There was a presentation on drug use trends that are seen in the schools. There was discussion on wRight Choice, the tobacco ordinance and truancy. Kaczmarek said over the summer the County Attorney's Office and Health & Human Services implemented a new program to address truancy throughout the county.

Wright County Community Action (WCCA). Tuesday, August 10, 2021 Wetter attended the WCCA meeting. The biggest discussion was regarding Head Start. Enrollment for three- and four-year-old children was down last year but numbers are expected to go up this coming school year. There was training on eligibility requirements, policies and procedures which was very informative.

In Wright County 7 percent of seniors live in poverty. WCCA is hiring a new Executive Director, which has been posted nationally. WCCA switched the insurance for employees to Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP). Vetsch attended a meeting with WCEDP, Wright County Economic Development Partnership Jolene Foss and consulting firm Flaherty & Hood. There were discussions about other funding options for the American Rescue Plan (ARP). There may be funds available through Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The group worked on grant opportunities.

Region 7W Transportation. Vetsch attended a regular meeting for follow-up due to issues that arose regarding the funding formula at the previous meeting. The policy was reviewed to make sure it is fair and equitable across the counties in the region. After reviewing the past five years of funding Vetsch stated it is very equitable.

Monticello Township Board Meeting. Vetsch attended the special meeting to discuss closing Davidson Avenue NE at Highway 25.

Mentorship Education and Drug Awareness Coalition of Wright County (M.E.A.D.A.). There was discussion regarding the seminar from Thursday, August 12, 2021. There were two sessions. The first session was directed toward professionals and the second session was geared toward the public. After the two sessions there were breakout sessions to discuss what was talked about in the earlier sessions.

A \$500 grant was awarded to the wRight Choice program. There was an update from the students regarding a mini grant that was previously awarded.

Local Heroes Days. The three-day event is scheduled for Thursday, August 19, 2021 through Saturday, August 21, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the RV Center in Monticello, 3880 Chelsea Road W. There is no admission and free food honoring first responder's active military, veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, educators and medical personnel.

Cokato Carnival. The carnival was August 14-15, 2021. The weather was perfect and there was a good turnout.

Planning Commission. The Planning Commission implemented the use of the timer/stop clock which helped cut the length of the meeting down considerably.

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

County Board Minutes submitted by Angie Fisher, Administrative Specialist