



BOARD MINUTES
BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 20, 2020

Christine Husom	District 1
Darek Vetsch	District 2
Mark Daleiden	District 3
Michael Potter	District 4
Charles Borrell	District 5

DATE APPROVED: MARCH 24, 2020

The Wright County Board met in emergency session at 10:00 A.M. with Husom, Vetsch, Potter, and Daleiden present. Commissioner Borrell joined the meeting remotely.

AGENDA

Petitions were accepted to the Agenda as follows:

- COVID-19 Response Grant Award (Lee Kelly)

Daleiden moved to approve the Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Vetsch and carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

TIMED AGENDA ITEMS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE/CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioner Husom made the following statement to recap the past few days:

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted most people around the world. It's disruptive and distressing to large numbers of people.

The US has taken bold steps to flatten the curve, to slow the spread of the virus. In Minnesota the State, counties and local jurisdictions have joined in the efforts.

At the 3-17-20 County Board Meeting, a State of Emergency was declared in Wright County. The County held a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) Meeting on 3-18-20 to review the Plan. It was determined to be prudent for the health and safety of our employees to release as many staff home to work as possible.

On 3-18-20, a Committee Of The Whole (COTW) Meeting was held to review the discussion at the COOP Meeting. Minutes from the COTW Meeting will be acted upon at today's Board Meeting.

Husom thanked staff and said she is grateful for the robust Public Health and Emergency Management Divisions in Wright County who have been proactive and sharing gathered information. She said the Continuity of Operations Plan is in place for a reason, hoping it is never used. When a pandemic happens, it is very helpful to be able to rely on the Plan.
(end of statement)

3-19-20 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COTW) MINUTES

Vetsch moved to approve the COTW Minutes and recommendations. The motion was seconded by Potter. Christine Partlow, Health & Human Services Business Manager, suggested a modification to the date in the recommendation of item #1 and #2 from "4-03-20" to "4-04-20." The Auditor/Treasurer's Office indicated that the end of the pay period is 4-04-20. Vetsch and Potter agreed to amend the motion to include modifying the date to 4-04-20 as suggested. The motion to approve the 3-19-20 COTW Minutes as amended carried 5-0 on a roll call vote. The minutes follow:

I. REVIEW OF COOP (CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN) INFORMATION

Lee Kelly, County Administrator, distributed a memo to the County Commissioners dated 3-19-20 regarding "COOP Meeting 03/18/20 Recommendations" (see attached). Kelly said some of the action items in the memo have been implemented already, such as closing the public counters at the Government Center, limiting the number of employees working on site, and suspending nonessential out-of-state travel.

Kelly said staff is utilizing social distancing of six feet between people in meetings, and some employees are allowed to work remotely to get as many people out of the workplace as possible. The COOP plan states that County policy is to pay employees whether they are working at home or at a County facility. Kelly's recommendation is to have the public areas closed until 4-01-20, or perhaps 4-03-20, which is the end of the next pay period. The situation continues to evolve rapidly. Discussions will continue regarding logistics such as whether to have weekly Board meetings or as legislative changes occur.

3-19-20 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COTW) MINUTES (cont.):

Christine Husom, County Board Chair, said employees will track their work time at offsite locations on their timesheets. There is potential for reimbursement. Kelly said there is no information about reimbursement yet, but documentation of employee remote work hours will be necessary to obtain those funds should they become available.

Darek Vetsch, County Commissioner, said he agrees with limiting public access to County facilities and allowing some employees to work at home until 4-3-20. This will allow Department Heads to draft long-term plans and determine employee workloads. Vetsch proposed holding a County Board meeting on Tuesday, 3-24-20 as planned, and adding a Committee Of The Whole meeting on Thursday, 3-26-20 to discuss expectations for the following week.

Mark Daleiden, County Commissioner, said there may be employees who will not be able to come back to work because of family or personal health concerns. He asked for estimates regarding how many employees might be in that situation. Husom said that information would allow Department Heads to adjust workloads. Kelly said lots of Departments are rotating staff. Alan Wilczek, Facilities Services Director, clarified that not all employees at home can work remotely, due either to the nature of their duties or perhaps because they are without the necessary technology. Vetsch said the goal was to be able to have employees complete training videos by next week, if possible.

Schawn Johnson, Human Resources Director, said a few minutes before this meeting, he received news that the Senate has passed a "Families First Corona Virus Response Act" (FFCRA). The FFCRA expands Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) coverage to anyone with the Coronavirus, which allows them twelve weeks of protected leave. Also embedded in the FFCRA is the "Emergency Sick Leave Act." This Act puts the onus back on employers to pay sick leave to anyone in several situations, including someone with the Coronavirus, or who is a caregiver for a family member with the virus, is experiencing symptoms, or has been advised to self-quarantine or has been ordered to quarantine due to COVID-19, among other scenarios. Johnson recommended staying with the status quo for the time being to see what the State and Federal Governments are going to do.

Matthew Fomby, Information Technology (IT) Director, said Virtual Private Networks (VPN) has so far been limited to employees with laptops. VPNs can now be added to employees with desktop PCs and relocated to their homes. Almost everyone in the County has access to Linked In Learning (online training). He is compiling a list of training sessions that could be done remotely. After 4-03-20, IT staff could start relocating PCs and monitors to employees' homes.

Kelly asked Jami Goodrum Schwartz, Health & Human Services Director, whether there will be a Health & Human Services (HHS) Board Meeting on Monday, 3-23-20. Goodrum Schwartz said there were consent items that could be moved to the County Board meeting on Tuesday, 3-24-20. There was consensus among the County Board to do so.

Wilczek asked for direction regarding whether after-hours meetings in County conference rooms will be canceled. The intention is to instruct maintenance staff to lock the exterior doors at 5:00 P.M. Goodrum Schwartz said her staff has canceled public meetings. The consensus was to work with each department and decide on a case-by-case basis. Wilczek said the doors will be locked at 5 P.M. Department Heads can work with Deb Schreiner, Administrative Specialist, or him.

Sean Riley, Planning & Zoning Administrator, said the next Planning Commission Board of Adjustment meeting has been canceled. Tony Rasmuson, County Assessor, said notifications of value will be sent out next week. There are meetings scheduled in April that will likely need to be canceled. He is waiting for direction from the Department of Revenue regarding individual districts holding their local Boards of Appeal and Equalization meetings. The statute says that local meetings have to be held from April 1 through May 31st. The County Board of Equalization meeting in June may have to be extended as well. Rasmuson does not want his appraisers to do physical reviews of properties at this time and will find a way to work through that situation.

Charles Borrell, County Commissioner, said the County should continue to provide services. He asked whether County employees who could not work from home would be eligible for unemployment benefits if the pandemic continues for a long time. Kelly said if there is no work available for them to do, employees would be eligible for unemployment benefits. At this time, the County is compensating staff for working whether they are onsite or remote. He commended the Board for moving forward with the work-from-home strategy.

Recommendations:

1. *Extend the current employee compensation plan to 4-04-20, which allows employees to work from home.*
2. *Department Heads will provide an estimate of the number of employees who will not physically be able to return to work after 4-04-20 due to the impacts of COVID 19.*
3. *Place 3-23-20 Health & Human Services Consent Agenda Items on the 3-24-20 County Board Agenda.*
4. *Schedule a Committee Of The Whole regarding COVID 19 strategies on 3-26-20 at 10 A.M.*
5. *Determine how many employees have no access to the Internet or computer at home.*

Minutes submitted by Deb Schreiner, Administrative Specialist

(End of 3-19-20 COTW Minutes)

COVID-19 RESPONSE GRANT AWARD

Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Director, announced a COVID-19 Response Grant Award received from the MN Department of Health in the amount of \$147,695.00 for the period of 3-03-20 to 2-01-21. She stated that the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) has asked to be kept updated on costs as work is continued on COVID-19. AMC will be providing that information to the legislature as they continue to discuss funding.

Vetsch moved to accept the COVID-19 Response Grant Award in the amount of \$147,695.00 for the period of 3-03-20 to 2-01-21. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. Christine Partlow, Health & Human Services Business Manager, provided a list of items that the grant funding can be utilized for. Grosshuesch explained there is a Health Care Coalition that serves the region and funding is expected through that resource. Supplies can be purchased for those in the community that are isolated at home, but a positive test is required. They are committed to providing support to those that are self-quarantined or isolated because they can't get tested and in connecting people with resources in the community. The motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Brian Asleson, Chief Deputy Attorney, referenced upcoming meetings of the Board. The Board has the ability to conduct meetings by telephone or by some other electronic method. Some public bodies have limited the number of attendees to maintain social distancing. Asleson recommended offering this interactive method to department heads or the public rather than attendance at the meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 AM.

County Board Minutes submitted by Susan Backes, Clerk to the County Board