



## BOARD MINUTES

### BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APRIL 2, 2020

DATE APPROVED: APRIL 7, 2020

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

The Wright County Board met in special session at 3:00 P.M. with Husom, Vetsch, Potter, and Daleiden present. Commissioner Borrell joined the meeting remotely.

#### CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - FUTURE STATE OF COUNTY OPERATIONS

##### I. REVIEW 3-26-20 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

Lee Kelly, County Administrator, reviewed the 3-26-20 Committee Of The Whole minutes. Darek Vetsch, County Commissioner, moved to approve the 3-26-20 Committee Of The Whole minutes and recommendations. The motion was seconded by Mark Daleiden, County Commissioner. Michael Potter, County Commissioner, commented that employees are still performing essential services. Vetsch said County business is being conducted. Planning & Zoning has received 71 permits since 3-16-20, eight of which are commercial. Building inspections are being done. County business is carrying on. The motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote. The 3-26-20 Committee Of The Whole Minutes follow:

##### **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

*Christine Husom, County Board Chair, reported that the License Bureau is closed according to Becky Aanerud, License Bureau Supervisor. There are a few locations in the State that remain open, and can be found online. Husom said many employees are now working remotely. Mark Daleiden, County Commissioner, said Department Heads should post any notices of closures issued by the State to keep the public informed.*

*Lee Kelly, County Administrator, said this meeting was initially scheduled as a check-in based on the decisions made regarding the period of 3-18-20 through 4-04-20. Due to the Executive Order issued yesterday by Governor Tim Walz, Kelly asked whether the County should make additional changes. Departments have already sent some workers home in an effort to get as many employees as possible out of the building.*

*Darek Vetsch, County Commissioner, said he has read through the Order a number of times. It is open to interpretation regarding what constitutes essential or emergency services. Vetsch recommended to stay the course with some people working remotely through the next pay period ending 4-18-20. Perhaps a few more people could be sent home to work. On the judicial level, Vetsch suggested shortening the hours that the Government Center is open to 9 A.M. till 3 P.M. Husom agreed with continuing the current remote workplan through 4-18-20, but said people need to drop off or file documents with the Courts. The current hours are reasonable. The building closes at 5 P.M. now, and there are no evening meetings. Charles Borrell, County Commissioner, agreed with Vetsch about continuing the remote work schedule, but did not favor limiting the Government Center hours.*

*Monica Tschumper, Court Administrator, said they get their directives from the State. Their counters closed Monday, but staff is available through phone, fax, or email. Certain hearings will always be held. The court calendar has been cut back significantly. The hours remain the same. Several people are working from home. They keep minimal staff in the office to keep essential services going. Court Administration will reduce onsite staff even more next week.*

*Marc Mattice, Parks and Recreation Administrator, distributed a letter sent to his staff, dated today (see attachment). Mattice said this document outlines what Parks is doing starting tomorrow (3-27-20) to protect Parks workers and serve the public. He listed the staff who will be working remotely. Currently outhouses and portable toilets are open. Any flush toilets would be closed due to the Executive Order. Playgrounds and campgrounds are closed. Parks, trails, and open spaces are open. Fenced-in dog parks are closed. Off leash dog parks are open. The County can service 250 people per acre with social distancing.*

*Mattice said he has advised his staff that essential services include maintaining trash and refuse pickup, surface cleaning of portable toilets, outhouses, trash can lids and doors, and other high use amenities. They will continue to support the operations and overall maintenance of the park and trail systems. They will continue park, trail, and open space inspections and repairs*

**3-26-20 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES (cont.):**

*related to safety and health hazards. Staff will also continue to keep the fleet and necessary equipment maintained to allow the continued operations on essential functions.*

*Campgrounds are set to open on May 1. He is working on a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) for campgrounds and swimming beaches. Drinking fountains are closed. Portable toilets are being stocked with sanitizer by the vendor. Fishing piers are not deemed an essential service. Once the Stay-At-Home Order is lifted, they will begin working on fishing piers and docks.*

*Jami Goodrum Schwartz, Health & Human Services Director, said she would like to be able to lock the exterior doors to the Health & Human Services Center (HHSC) on Monday, 3-30-20 and direct public traffic to the third-floor office at the Government Center. Employees will continue to work inside the HHSC. They will use signs to direct the public who may stop by. They have a plexiglass window around reception on the third floor. The public will be assisted through the window with some services like EBT cards. The numbers of people coming into the HHSC lobby have dropped substantially. The Agency is still providing essential services. The consensus was to lock the HHSC exterior doors and post signage effective 3-30-20.*

*Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Director, said they have pushed out as many staff as possible. They don't have access to testing. The Department has lost two people who were exposed to family members with COVID-19 symptoms who can't get tests. There are two more cases in Wright County as of the latest update. Some COVID-19 cases are no longer isolated in the home. Grosshuesch confirmed that there is community transmission in Wright County, meaning that health officials are unable to determine where the patients contracted the virus. These patients had no history of travel or known exposure to a person infected with COVID-19.*

*Grosshuesch said Public Health has a very active response plan utilizing a Hotline and Text line for anything related to COVID-19. Wright County is the only county hotline with texting capability. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is working with Wright County Public Health for homeless individuals. The Hotline / Text line number is 763-682-7607 and is available to receive calls now.*

*Grosshuesch did not have an update on the supply chain for COVID-19 tests. They are very difficult to procure. Those available in the community are reserved for hospital settings. For the next two weeks, tests will remain restricted to hospitals, so the supply chain can be built up. There will be more extensive testing once the restrictions are loosened.*

*Kelly summarized that the County will continue the plan originally put in place on 3-18-20 through the next pay period ending 4-18-20. Staff has looked at alternatives, and now that the Stay-At-Home order was extended by two weeks, those options may be reconsidered at a future time, if appropriate.*

*Kelly said there are a number of items related to facilities projects. Owners Committees have been canceled. A few items need action which are over the threshold of \$10,000. Methods for handling these need to be determined. He asked whether the County Board will continue with weekly meetings as the pandemic develops. Otherwise, staff could handle certain items up to a dollar amount set by the County Board. Discussion ensued regarding dollar amount limits that staff could authorize. The consensus was that the threshold could be raised to \$20,000. Borrell said Kelly should communicate with Husom when this situation occurs.*

*Kelly said contractors have asked whether the building site will be open or closed. Kelly said a letter will be sent today saying the site is open for business. Contractors have the option to decide whether or not they want to work at the site.*

*A special County Board Meeting has been scheduled at 3:00 P.M. on 4-02-20, Kelly suggested scheduling another Committee Of The Whole to keep discussions related to COVID-19 going on a weekly basis. Husom said the meeting on 4-02-20 will allow the Board to respond to any orders from the Governor. Discussion continued about whether and when to schedule the next Committee Of The Whole meeting.*

*Goodrum Schwartz asked for essential worker letters. Some staff are being asked for them by daycare workers. The letters may also be needed when staff travels for County work. Goodrum Schwartz asked for a centralized process to get these letters for staff. Kelly said it would be easiest to draft something County-wide. This morning he and other management staff discussed compiling a list of essential employees by classification. There is leeway in the Executive Order to determine essential employees on a department-by-department basis for government entities. So far, they have relied upon Department Heads to do so. Kelly*

**3-26-20 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES (cont.):**

*will work with Department Heads to compile that list. Vetsch asked that the essential employee letter be distributed at the discretion of Department Heads.*

*Sheriff Sean Deringer said as long as the Courts are open, there will be deputies at the Government Center. Their presence is being felt in the community. Deringer said the Sheriff's Office is thirty percent down for general calls for service for March when compared to a five-year look back. However, the Sheriff's Office is not responding to medical calls unless life-saving measures are needed. Face-to-face contacts are limited. Complaints are taken over the phone when possible, or when there is no crime in progress or evidence to be collected. Deputies call ahead and ask to meet people outside whenever possible. There is still plenty of staff out in the community.*

*Husom asked whether there was consensus to extend the current procedures such as closing the public counters and allowing employees to work from home when possible through the next pay period ending 4-18-20. She asked for other questions and comments.*

*Kelly estimated that potentially 45 employees would remain out after 4-04-20. Additionally, approximately 12 employees have no internet at home. He emphasized that these are rough numbers.*

*Husom said employees will continue to get paid as per the status quo through 4-18-20. Deringer requested that any communication regarding compensation for working remotely to please state that the Sheriff's Office is not following this plan. If Sheriff's employees are looking for clarification, they may speak with Command Staff. He said Administrator Kelly has done a good job indicating that no matter where staff is working, whether onsite or off, that staff will continue to get paid. It's a good plan, but the Sheriff's Office cannot operate under it for a number of reasons.*

*The meeting adjourned at 10:37 A.M.*

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Schedule a Special County Board Meeting on 4-02-20 at 3:00 P.M.**
- 2) Maintain the current plan for as many County employees as possible to work remotely with pay and to continue the closure of public counters at the Government Center through 4-18-20 (the end of the next pay period).**

*Minutes submitted by Deb Schreiner, Administrative Specialist  
(End of 3-26-20 Committee Of The Whole Minutes)*

**II. HIRING OF TEMPORARY PUBLIC HEALTH WORKER**

Jami Goodrum Schwartz, Health and Human Services (HHS) Director, petitioned this item onto the meeting. She requested a part-time, temporary Public Health Planner position for 15 hours per week to do data analytics. Schwartz spoke with AFSCME representatives and they agreed that this position would be important for the County and to proceed as it is related to COVID-19. The Public Health Planner would work from home. Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Director, said there is an initiative between several counties and the University of Minnesota to track information related to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. She added that this person will compile various data regarding COVID-19 cases such as unemployment insurance applications, and other County data related to the pandemic and the Stay-At-Home Order. Currently the County is not able to get that information.

Charles Borrell, County Commissioner, asked whether current Public Health staff could cross-train to perform the Public Health Planner functions. Grosshuesch said the need is for someone to do data analytics and develop a system to track the COVID-19 illness in the County as testing resources are very limited. A local system needs to be developed because the State is currently not providing that information. Eventually staff could be cross-trained in these functions. Most of the HHS staff have caseloads which fill their time. Schwartz said HHS has only one Public Health Planner now. These duties would not fall under the job descriptions of other staff. The temporary Public Health Planner would work from 4-18-20 through 8-31-20.

Grosshuesch said there are seven confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wright County to date. Borrell asked how many had recovered. Grosshuesch said her staff will post information every weekday on the County website regarding the number of cases, those off of isolation, and the number of deaths (currently at zero) in the County as it is received from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Five cases have recovered to date. Daleiden said it would be good for the County to have this information. The State is not providing it. Grosshuesch said that information on cases reported via the media or other sources is not necessarily something she may disclose. Grosshuesch was not sure she could even disclose how many are hospitalized by County. All she may convey is that there were cases hospitalized. Public Health is waiting for a legal opinion on this question. Christine Husom,

County Board Chair, said the State discloses the number hospitalized, the number of cases, deaths, and how many people have recovered. Unfortunately, they do not break down the information by counties. Grosshuesch said other counties are frustrated as well. They were told they may receive a legal opinion this week. Another legal opinion is sought regarding cases in congregate living communities, especially long-term care facilities. That is not considered public information, either.

Vetsch clarified that the part-time, temporary Public Health Planner position would be a .375 FTE, and the County may be able to receive reimbursement in the future. Daleiden moved to approve the hiring of a part-time, temporary Public Health Worker, seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 4-1 on a roll call vote, with Borrell casting the nay vote.

### **III. SCHEDULE UPCOMING MEETINGS**

#### **A. Additional COVID-19 Related Meeting**

Daleiden moved to schedule a Special County Board meeting on 4-09-20 at 1:00 P.M., seconded by Potter. The motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

#### **B. Cancel 4-13-20 Health and Human Services Board Meeting**

Daleiden moved to cancel the 4-13-20 Health and Human Services Board meeting, seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

#### **C. 4-14-20 County Board Workshop**

This meeting will stay on the County Board calendar until a decision is made at either the 4-07-20 or 4-09-20 County Board meeting.

### **IV. DEFER PAYMENT FOR ENTERPRISE LOAN FUND WITH WRIGHT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (WCEDP)**

Kelly said Duane Northagen, Executive Director of the WCEDP informed him that the Initiative Foundation has deferred payments on their loans for 90 days. Northagen asked Kelly if the County would like to do something similar with the Enterprise Fund loans. There are two outstanding loans. Potter said the two companies have been diligent about making on-time payments. Potter moved to defer payments for Plug Technologies & CowGirl Tuff for 90 days. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. Borrell said this item should not be discussed at this meeting as it was not posted on the agenda. Potter rescinded the motion. Daleiden said this item could be added to the 4-07-20 County Board meeting agenda.

In another matter, Schwartz and Michelle Miller, Social Services Manager, presented an update regarding contingency plans that are being developed for housing foster children and homeless persons with COVID 19. Several counties are working together on this plan and have identified potential locations in Central Minnesota. County employees may be needed to assist in staffing these locations if they are activated.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 P.M.

County Board Minutes submitted by Deb Schreiner, Administrative Specialist