



BOARD MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MAY 15, 2020

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

DATE APPROVED: MAY 19, 2020

The Wright County Board met in special session with Husom, Vetsch, Potter and Daleiden present. Commissioner Borrell joined the meeting remotely.

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

Husom stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss moving forward with opening of public facing windows for departments based on the changing direction from the State. A draft Preparedness Plan was sent to departments for review and feedback.

Lee Kelly, County Administrator, anticipates presenting a final draft of the Plan at the next County Board Meeting. They had anticipated that Governor Walz would extend the stay-at-home order but that did not happen. Staff has been working on plans to address how business will be conducted when moving to face-to-face contact with the public. This includes installation of plexiglass at public facing counters and use of distancing stickers to address social distancing. There are still a few areas that need to have the plexiglass installed. Queuing may be implemented to address gatherings of no more than 10 people.

It is anticipated that the largest influx of people will be for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Discussion included use of the east entry as primary or potentially staffing the Lobby for queuing. Vetsch suggested opening the Planning & Zoning Office one week ahead of the DMV to reduce the number of people in that corridor upon reopening.

Sean Riley, Planning & Zoning Administrator said many staff are working remotely. If the plan involves opening public-facing counters, the public may have an expectation that staff are onsite. If the direction is given that staff are to return to the office, he said this should apply consistently to all departments. Every department is working to address the needs of the public as best they can.

Husom stated that departments will need to decide whether staff can work remotely. There will be instances where an employee will not be able to work onsite because they are medically advised not to. Kelly said in those instances, employees can work with Human Resources. However, he understands the guidance given is to telework when possible and to utilize other strategies if needed such as social distancing through shift work. Husom said opening the public counters does not equate to all employees returning to the work site. This will be done in stages and should be respectful of people's concerns and ability/inability to be on site. Vetsch said it will be up to departments to determine what staff needs to be onsite to manage their public-facing counters.

Greg Pickard, Veteran Services Officer, said when the public counters open, they will service people by appointment only. No walk-in services will be available. He said this is based on size of the office and HIPPA laws.

Borrell supports opening public counters by appointment only. He said COVID-19 is not over; the increase in cases was postponed. He does not want to open public facing counters to walk in patrons, and then have to turn around and close at a future date. He supports smaller steps. Daleiden thought appointments will better control traffic. He suggested that when the DMV does open, that those with expired licenses be given first priority. Vetsch said that appointments will work with most departments, but there may not be the ability to do that with DMV.

Becky Aanerud, License Bureau Supervisor, referenced a memorandum from the Department of Vehicle Services that provides guidelines on services to the public.

- Offices may open for over the counter and face-to-face services provided there is a COVID-19 preparedness plan in place.
- Offices may continue to offer drop off, curbside, and mail in services in addition to over-the-counter services.
- Offices that are closed are not required to open.
- Offices that wish to continue offering limited services only with no face-to-face may continue to do so.
- Offices are not required to meet the 40-hour per week requirement as referenced in MN Statute but they need to notify them and apply for a variance.
- The preparedness plan must be submitted outlining plans to clean and maintain the office with the amount of public.

Aanerud said with the proposed change in reversing the line to the License Bureau to the east entrance, there will be the ability to have three staff at the counter with three customers. There is space for five in the hallway meeting the 6' social distancing requirement.

The remainder of people would be spaced out through the lobby and outside. The dilemma will include controlling lines, those that show up without an appointment, and service provided when there are multiple services required. Borrell asked what will happen if staff become infected with COVID-19. Aanerud said the License Bureau will have to close. The Board also discussed the possible influx of residents from other counties requesting services, because the DMV's in other counties are closed. A drive up drop box is planned for the alley at the Government Center. Other options discussed included queuing in the Lobby for those that have appointments, and utilizing staff from other departments to help with setting up appointments to include information on what type of documentation is required.

Tanya West, Recorder, said the patrons of the DMV may require service from their office as well. They will need to work together on whatever schedule is decided. The Recorder's Office utilizes SharePoint to schedule appointments. They also have a booth in the corridor that could be shared with the Auditor/Treasurer's Office for appointments. The Office has run into situations where those that have scheduled appointments run early or late which can pose problems.

Matthew Treichler, Chief Deputy Sheriff, said the Sheriff's Office has been offering appointments for over a month and it has worked well. If a person shows up without an appointment, the greeter checks to see whether there is someone available. Otherwise, the person is provided information on how to make an appointment. He said another important factor is providing information to the public. The Sheriff's Office and Court Services both have a large social media presence and could assist in relaying information to the public on the re-opening of public facing windows. It was agreed that any decision moving forward should be communicated through various social media venues.

Matthew Fomby, IT Director, recommended using a greeter at building entrances. The greeter would check with those entering the building as to whether they have made an appointment. If not, the person would be directed to do so. Mike MacMillan, Court Services Director, viewed this as good customer service that would help to open up in an orderly manner and to guide people to the right areas. Regarding marketing, he said it is important to inform the public on what is occurring. He offered assistance in getting the word out through social media to help with the deluge that some departments will face. He said it is important that information is sent to staff so that the direction on opening is clear. Potter thought it would be good to have staff at building entrances to guide people at the onset of opening the public facing counters.

Fomby suggested meeting with staff to discuss technology options for online appointments. A demo meeting has been scheduled on 5-18-20. What is selected will be a transitional option until a scheduling system can be set up long term. Discussion included departments that have already been utilizing appointment scheduling and to allow departments to continue with that method if desired. Bob Hiivala, Auditor/Treasurer, said the software will need to include the ability to schedule appointments at multiple departments. Tammi Vaith, Chief Deputy Auditor/Treasurer, understands Hennepin County is looking to keep the majority of staff working remotely for the remainder of the year. She is unsure how that will affect the DMV and passport issuance. She thought more planning should be done with departments prior to any action on opening.

Discussion led to face coverings. Daleiden said some employees have indicated that they will not report to work unless everyone is wearing a face covering, and others that will not come in if they are made to. The County will need to provide direction on the plan. Husom said at the next Board Meeting, discussion can include the opening plan and the platform recommended for online appointments. Kelly said it is important to clarify that it is face coverings and not PPE (personal protective equipment). The County is promoting but making voluntary for staff to wear face coverings. The key is to be respectful of coworkers and space. Husom said it is about respect, and it is important not to dismiss anyone with concerns or limitations of being able to return to work.

The Board conveyed the need for departments to submit their plans prior to the next Board Meeting. Vetsch said it is important for departments to indicate if there is anything that they don't have to allow them to open. Husom said if the date is set then people have an opportunity to prepare. Hiivala asked for clarification on whether departments will not open windows and see people by appointment or open the windows for walk up customers. Husom responded that public windows will be open by appointment.

Kelly said currently, the facility is open but public counters are closed. That will continue until 5-27-20. Starting 5-27-20, the public counters will open but by appointment. Vetsch said appointments will have priority and walk up individuals will be taken at the department's discretion.

Jami Goodrum-Schwartz, Health & Human Services (HHS) Director, said two-thirds of HHS clients can be handled by phone to make appointments. What can occur with new clients or those dropping off paperwork is that they will have additional questions. She said it is not efficient to schedule another appointment but rather address the questions at that time. She voiced concern with scalability of certain areas as it pertains to clients and social distancing. Schwartz supports being firm about the appointment scheduling but allow staff to work with clients as needed. She hopes there will be strong Human Resources support relating to the necessary changes in scheduling staff and working from home.

Vetsch questioned whether the directive to Administration to determine staff for the lobbies and will all doors remain open to the public. Daleiden thought the Government Center should have rovers. This could be done by current staff. Husom said she is not in

favor of locking doors. She said they do need to limit the number of people and their proximity. Vetsch said part of the marketing will be to let people know the best option for expedited services is to have an appointment.

Vetsch made a motion to set an opening date of 5-27-20 for public facing windows for departments that have not opened including Assessor, Recorder, HHS, Extension, Planning & Zoning, Veteran Services, Administration and Auditor/Treasurer. The motion includes a tentative opening date of 6-04-20 for the Department of Motor Vehicles. That date could change dependent on whether the walk-up window is ready. The motion includes directing people to make appointments. The motion was seconded by Daleiden and carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Daleiden referenced the draft preparedness plan that was sent by the Administrator for review. He asked that Department Heads provide input prior to the 5-19-20 Board meeting. Kelly stated that the draft face covering policy that was reviewed at the last Workshop Meeting will be sent to department heads. Vetsch said based on previous discussions, it was a strong suggestion that department heads encourage employees to wear a face covering and respect the wishes of co-workers. It is not deemed as mandatory. Kelly restated that the draft reflects it is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

MAY 5, 2020 COUNTY BOARD MINUTES

The Board laid approval of the minutes over to the 5-19-20 Board Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 A.M.

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