



## BOARD MINUTES

### BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

DATE APPROVED: SEPTEMBER 27, 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 9/6/2022

Commissioner Mary Wetter moved to approve the County Board minutes from Tuesday, September 6, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mark Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

#### AGENDA

Social Services Manager Jill Pooler petitioned to add the Waiver and Community Support Team retreat agenda to the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Christine Husom said to add the petitioned item to the Consent Agenda Section E, Health and Human Services, Item 3.

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek requested to add Item 5 to Ag and Drainage Coordinator Matt Detjen's timed agenda item. Kaczmarek said it was for Ditch #10, Keats Avenue culvert project that is still unfinished from 2020. He said there were some correspondences he had asked Detjen to share with the board.

Daleiden moved to approve the Agenda with the changes. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek. The motion carried 5-0.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

Wetter requested to remove Item E2, approve request for Opioid Settlement Advisory Council (OSAC) To adopt the annual advisory committee per diem rate set by the Wright County Board from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Daleiden moved to approve the Consent Agenda with Item E2 being removed for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Darek Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

\*Item removed for further discussion

\*\* Item petitioned onto Agenda

#### A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Approve The Following Grant Applications:
  - i. LID-001 Lake Pulaski Pump Replacement (\$300,000)
  - ii. CITY-008 City Of Cokato Re Coat Existing Water Tower (\$103,362)
  - iii. CITY-009 City Of Monticello SCADA System (\$533,799)
2. Approve The Following Program Request:
  - i. Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)
3. Schedule Public Hearing For Crawford Lake Improvement District 9:30 A.M. October 4

#### B. ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE

1. Acknowledge Warrants Issued Between August 31, 2022 And September 13, 2022.
2. Review Monthly Finance Report For July And August 2022.
3. Approve 2022 Tobacco License For VIP Tobacco (St. Michael) From September 20, 2022 To December 31, 2022.
4. Motion To Approve The Reimbursement Of The American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARP) As Follows:  
County ARP Funds:  
Approval Of County Reimbursement Of \$288.79 From 01-099-493.6910 Transfer Out Into 01-100-

493.5910 Transfer In As Follows:  
 \$288.79 For Administrative Expenses-Staff Costs  
 Approval Of Use Of ARP Funds From 01-099-493-8419, 8433.  
 \$5,500.00 2.26 Education Assistance- Senior Technology  
 \$3,791.03 2.2 Household Assistance

**C. ADMINISTRATION - HUMAN RESOURCES**

1. Request Approval And Authorization Of Signature Of A Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) To Allow Teamsters Local 320 (Courthouse) Members To Donate Accrued PTO Time To Highway Maintenance Worker Doug Kotila.
2. Request Approval And Authorization Of Signature Of A Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) To Allow International Union Of Operating Engineers Local 49 Members To Donate Accrued PTO Time To Highway Maintenance Worker Doug Kotila.

**D. ATTORNEY**

1. Approve Solar Farm Developers Agreement - PID 213-100-214100 And 213-100-223200.

**E. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

1. Accept Child & Teen Check-Up (C&TC) Grant Amendment: \$155,210.00 For Period 2023-01-01 Through 2023-12-31. Award Amount Reflects The Final Reduction Of The Grant That Began In 2022
2. \*Approve Request For Opioid Settlement Advisory Council (OSAC) To Adopt The Annual Advisory Committee Per Diem Rate Set By The Wright County Board

**F. HIGHWAY**

1. Approval To Enter Into A Gravel Supply Contract With B. McNamara, Inc.
2. Approval Of Class 7 (Crushing Of Bituminous Millings) Quote With B. McNamara, Inc.

**G. SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

1. Authorize Signatures On An Updated JPA With The MN BCA Enabling The Sheriff's Office To Continue To Be A Member The Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force.

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION**

Approve Request For Opioid Settlement Advisory Council (OSAC) To Adopt The Annual Advisory Committee Per Diem Rate Set By The Wright County Board

Wetter asked what the Per Diem rate was for the Annual Advisory Committee. Husom said the per diem rate was \$50.00 as per usual across all groups.

Wetter moved to approve Consent Agenda Item E2 as written. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

**TIMED AGENDA ITEMS**

**MATTHEW DETJEN – AG & DRAINAGE**

Approve The Findings And Order For McLeod County Ditch #11 Redetermination Of Benefits Under Minn. Stat. 103E.351. Detjen said McLeod County had ordered a redetermination of benefits for its County Ditch #11. During the process McLeod County discovered benefits of landowners in Wright County. Due to the discovery McLeod County Ditch #11 is now considered a joint ditch. He said McLeod County already ordered the redetermination of benefits. Detjen said the redetermination of benefits still had be approved for McLeod County Ditch #11, but he said Ditch #11 would be changed to Joint Ditch #111.

Daleiden moved to approve the findings and order for McLeod County Ditch #11 and redetermination of benefits under Minn. Stat. 103E.351. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The motion carried 5-0.

Approve The Findings And Order For The Creation Of Joint Ditch #111 Between McLeod County And Wright County

Under Minn. Stat. 103E.235.

Daleiden moved to approve the findings and order for the creation of joint ditch #111 between McLeod County and Wright County. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

Acceptance Of The Low Quote For Repairs On County Ditch #31 From MSB Excavating & Tiling LLC.

Detjen said there was an informational meeting with landowners on Wednesday, September 7 which seemed to go well. He said all the landowners were on board with the repairs. The total base bid on this quote was \$113,165. There was a culvert replacement added into the bid in case the landowners wanted to repair it at their own expense, but the landowners declined, and it was removed from the bid resulting in the \$113,165.

Kaczmarek asked about a potential second bid due to come in after the original deadline. He said there were six contractors asked to bid on the project and at the meeting a viewer said there was another company possibly interested. Detjen said there was a second bid from a company called Landpride. He said its bid was only \$100 over the winning bid. He said the biggest question mark with the Landpride bid had to do with the tree removal cost, which was a lower cost than MSB Excavating & Tiling LLC bid per acre but included a \$20,000 mobilization charge because it was coming from farther away. He said if it had been accepted it would not have been the low bid.

Kaczmarek said the current engineer recommendation was to have a culvert two feet in diameter smaller than the culvert being replaced. He said the culvert was also to be two feet lower. He said on the east end where the culvert drained there was a wall of dirt approximately two feet from the bottom of the culvert going up. He said the Highway Department deferred to Detjen to determine what records the county had to check if the original design was correct before being fixed. He said that the two-foot diameter and elevation correction is a big difference. Kaczmarek asked what the justification for the road closure and cost in correcting the culvert was when 50 years ago the technology existed to ensure the culvert was the correct size and depth. Kaczmarek said with more and more water being drained into the ditches why would we shrink the culvert. Vetsch asked Detjen if the culvert was going from a 60-inch to a 48-inch or from a 48-inch to a 24-inch. Detjen said the culvert is currently 72-inches. He had been unable to find the original records from the installation of the culvert. He said based on evidence provided by the Highway Department and other investigations the ditch appears to have been constructed earlier than the 1930s. He said the engineering profile was labeled "bridge". He said he was unaware of what the road looked like almost 100 years ago and was unable to determine why the culvert was designed as large as it was. He said that now engineers do hydraulic modeling to determine how much water is entering a culvert. He said engineers plan for a 100-year rain event so that the culvert wouldn't overflow. Based on the information received from the test it was determined that a 72-inch culvert is what was needed so the road would not flood in the case of a 100-year rain event. Detjen said other drainage authorities determine the size of culverts from a 50-year rain event which would have resulted in a smaller 60-inch culvert. Kaczmarek said he wondered how many other culverts may have had similar issues. He said the age of the culvert explained why it had not been made more exacting as the technology was not there in the 1930's where it would have been in the 1970s. He said this needed to get done sooner than later with the wall of dirt in front.

Vetsch moved to approve the Consent Agenda acceptance of the low quote for repairs on County Ditch #31 From MSB Excavating & Tiling LLC. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The roll call vote was unanimous, and the motion passed 5-0.

Schedule A Public Hearing On The Redetermination Of Benefits For County Ditch #13.

Detjen said the redetermination for benefits was ordered on July 16, 2016. He said viewers reports are now ready; however, the lead viewer will be out of the country starting November 1 for about five months. He said the redetermination of benefits is the last step before repairing the ditch. This ditch had an interesting history. There was a barn that had been flooded out due to the ditch not being repaired. Detjen suggested 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, October 25 for the public hearing. Husom said there was already a public hearing scheduled at 9:30 a.m., October 25. Daleiden suggested pushing it back to 11:00 a.m.

Daleiden moved to approve the scheduling of a public hearing on the redetermination of benefits for County Ditch #13 for 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 25. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

\*\*Correspondences regarding project to repair Ditch #10

Detjen said he had received an email from Victor Township wanting an update on the final township crossing under Keats Avenue. Victor Township was concerned that the construction was not done and wondering if it would get done this year. Detjen said he had recently received a correspondence from Great River Energy which informed him there is a line Xcel Energy is using through that area it is not able to disconnect until October 10 at the earliest. Great River Energy

recommended October 17 as a fall-back date as the contractor, Blackstone, is coordinating with a crane operator. Victor Township expressed concern about the possibility of completion and the concern that something might happen to one of the culvert sections being lowered. He said the township was concerned how far the project finish date might be pushed back and whether the road would be closed or reduced to a single lane in case something happened. He said these were valid concerns by the township. He said the culverts that Blackstone had already completed at Knox and Ingram Avenues were believed to take two to three weeks and were completed within one week. He said Ingram Avenue was actually done in three days. Detjen said he was very confident in Blackstone. Kaczmarek said he understood the township's concerns regarding Ditch #10 considering its history. He said no one was present at the meeting from Victor Township.

Kaczmarek asked if the project was delayed at the board's request would there be any agreement legally, where the contractor would take on the cost if the price changed. He said he was concerned as Blackstone was arguing about the cost the first six culvert changes incurred. He asked if the project was to be pushed back to next spring and the contractor backed out of the contract where would the township stand. He asked would the township say it would not pay the extra cost? Detjen said the project was bid in early 2019 with 2020 prices. He said the bid was \$21,000 to lower the culvert. He said a bid received three months ago from a local contractor was \$56,100. Detjen said the first delay was for a valid reason, a section of the culvert broke. He said the contract was written in such a way that Blackstone would honor the agreed upon cost provided another delay was not forthcoming for a less than valid reason. He said Blackstone could request additional funding or cancel the contract if another delay occurred for an invalid reason. Detjen said there are three options. He said the county could push forward and complete the work at the original contract price, delay the work this year and see if Blackstone will honor the original price next year, or cancel the contract with Blackstone and allow the township to put the work out for bid. He said this project was the last item in the contract with Blackstone. He said the county could give the township until late fall to bring the project under a new contract, but he did not believe it would receive a bid nearly as good as the current one.

Wetter asked if the project was to be postponed until spring what would happen if it was a wet spring. Detjen said the culvert is being lowered not replaced but could be impacted by a wet spring. He said the project will also be adding on a little lane to extend the culvert. Husom said she appreciated the township's concern regarding the interruption, but with the conditions being ideal it seemed the best time to do the project was as it had been scheduled. Daleiden asked since there was a risk in breaking the culvert was there a spare if it did break. Detjen said the cost of a spare was too high to keep on hand. He said there was a three-sided concrete section called the apron that broke the prior year during construction so there is a risk. He said that due to the placement and bedding of the aprons the Highway Department knew they would likely break but was confident the barrels were reinforced well enough to survive the lowering. He said that the aprons cost the county \$25,000 each to replace.

Kaczmarek said with a lack of a continuation of a deal the county was on the hook to get the project done and mitigate the circumstances. He says the project should continue. He said there had been too much conflict on billing and did not want to get into the spring and have to deal with rising costs and arguments over who would have to pay. Husom said this project was a part of the agenda 10 years ago and she wanted to see it completed. Kaczmarek said he did not take the decision to go ahead lightly and said it needed to be done. Detjen said everything that he has seen from this contractor shows it is exceeding expectations. Vetsch said since nothing is being changed nothing needed to be voted on.

#### **VIRGIL HAWKINS - HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

##### Approve Transportation Committee Of The Whole (TCOTW) Meeting Minutes From Monday, September 12 2022, And Act On Recommendations.

Assistant Highway Engineer Chad Hausmann presented the TCOTW minutes and recommendations to be approved. Kaczmarek said Page 5 of 6, Item 4, third point said that he was "not interested in offering Davis more than the previously offered \$30,000 per acre." He said it should be corrected to "he liked the wait and see approach and was not in favor of buying any land and not making any intersection changes at this time, especially if development happened in the future, a developer may have to share in intersection improvement cost." Husom asked Hausmann to recap the recommendations. Hausmann recapped the resolutions for the board.

Wetter asked for an update on the meeting with The Original Tom Thumb in Hanover that was scheduled. Hausmann said the meeting happened and that The Original Tom Thumb was considering modifications.

Kaczmarek requested the removal of Item IV, Update on proposed improvements to CR 148 (Braddock Ave. NE) planned for 2024, from the approval of the TCOTW minutes.

Vetsch moved to approve the TCOTW minutes and recommendations with Item IV, update on proposed improvements to CR 148 (Braddock Ave. NE) removed. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek. The motion carried 5-0.

Vetsch moved to approve item IV, update on proposed improvements to CR 148 (Braddock Ave. NE) of the TCOTW. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 4-1. Kaczmarek was opposed.

### ***I. Introductions***

### ***II. Revise Five-Year Plan (to reflect minor changes/updates to the 2023 & 2024 programs)***

**Background:** *The current Five-Year Plan & Map was last updated & approved by the County Board in April 2022. The Five-Year Plan is a living document that needs to be updated occasionally due to changes in funding, grant fund awards, changing timelines with partner agencies, and balancing the workload year to year.*

*The following updates/revisions to the Five-Year Plan are recommended by staff (see attached updated yearly program sheets and map):*

1. *CSAH 75 Pavement Preservation Project in Monticello – scheduled for 2023 in current 5-Yr. Plan*
  - a. *Split into 2 projects, west of T.H. 25 in 2023 & east of T.H. 25 in 2024 – city to update ped ramps and median landscaping.*
  - b. *Change needed due to city planned utility work, Block 52 work in Monticello*
2. *Add Outshop Annandale/Maple Lake area (Land/Design) to year 2023 in the 5-yr. plan*

#### **Discussion:**

*Christine Husom inquired about the existing French Lake & Maple Lake properties, asking if we were planning on keeping the properties or selling?*

- *Virgil Hawkins said at this time there is no set decision and plans are fluid. We have considered expanding the Maple Lake shop, however, talks with landowner have not been productive (but are continuing at this time).*
- *The long-term shop plan shows to close both French Lake and Maple Lake locations after a new location for a shop is found and built in the Annandale/Maple Lake area.*

3. *CSAH 19 Pavement Preservation Project in St. Michael – scheduled for 2023 in current 5-Yr. Plan*
  - a. *Move to 2024 due to change of scope of work to include intersection safety improvements along the CSAH 19 corridor.*

#### **Discussion:**

*Mark Daleiden asked from what point to what point?*

- *Hawkins responded that it will be from Walnut (end of current St. Michael watermain project) to CSAH 34.*
- *Daleiden also asked about RR improvements at CSAH 19 in Albertville. Hawkins replied that the RR work is on for this fall or next spring y BNSF crews.*

- b. *Change prompted out of discussions with the city on the scope of improvements needed at intersections along CSAH 19 in St. Michael.*

4. *Add CSAH 5/T.H. 55 Signal system upgrade to year 2023 in the 5-Yr. Plan*
  - a. *Change needed due to MnDOT planning this work in 2023, for county share of work*

5. *CSAH 37 Pavement Preservation Project (from CSAH 5 to CSAH 6) – scheduled for 2023 in current 5-Yr.*

*Plan*

- a. *Move to year 2024 in 5-Yr. Plan*
  - b. *This project was a casualty of the 2023 Budget cutting directive from the board*
6. *County Road 137 Reconstruction Project in Albertville/Otsego – scheduled for 2024 in 5-Yr. Plan*
    - a. *Change east limit of project (from CSAH 38 to Marx Ave) – so now the project is 0.6 miles versus 3.2 miles in length, gets us thru I94 past MacIver.*
  7. *Delete the CSAH 35/CR 117 left-turn lanes improvements from the 2022 plan*
    - a. *The intersection was converted to an All-Way Stop control due to safety consideration.*
  8. *Update on the status on the CSAH 19 improvements in Hanover (2024). Andrew Plowman with WSB gave an update with PowerPoint slides, which are provided.*
    - a. *19 Reconstruction thru Hanover recommended project in the Wright County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – September 2019*
    - b. *September 2020 – Corridor Study was completed by Wright County*
    - c. *City taking lead on Public Engagement & Design (Coop Agreement 21-56), “Go-no go” in agreement for City Project, to construct in 2024.*
    - d. *ADT increasing (Study shows 11,600, recent counts 13,500) Future – 17,000 – 24,000*
    - e. *4-Lane, Divided Section recommended (Greater than 15,000 is threshold)*
    - f. *Several accesses along the 19 corridor leads to a solution of barbell roundabout configuration*

*The Preliminary Concept and design Goals were to develop alternatives that address the following goals:*

- a. *Create a safe, operationally efficient corridor*
- b. *Consider options that promote resident engagement, business success and economic viability*
- c. *Factors safety of multi-modal users including pedestrians navigating along and crossing Highway 19*
- d. *Considers cost and impact to the City and County, as well as adjacent properties and businesses*

*Engagement Activities to date include:*

- a. *Business Owners Meeting in July*
- b. *Attended the Hanover Harvest Fest in August*
- c. *Online Website [www.hanover19.com](http://www.hanover19.com)*

*The current concept:*

- a. *Evaluating multiple options (signals and roundabouts) and lane configurations*
- b. *Met with business owners along corridor and considered feedback*
- c. *Ultimately, led to similar design to corridor study, with some differences*

*Next Steps:*

- a. *Follow-up Meetings with Businesses - 9/9 – 9/20*
- b. *Economic Development Authority (EDA) Business Social at Big Boar– 9/19*
- c. *City Council Work Session – 9/20*
- d. *Project Open House at City Hall – 9/22 (5 – 7 p.m.)*

*Discussion:*

*Mary Wetter asked if anything will be done on CSAH 34, saying it gets bottled up/congested right there, she was questioning if there were any plans to help alleviate the congestion.*

- *Chad Hausmann noted that they have met with the developers regarding intersections west of CSAH 19 on CSAH 34. Removing signal and installing the RAB will help reduce backups along the developer funded turn lane improvements.*
- *Darek Vetsch asked if the highway will be divided from the CSAH 34 to the river, noting you’d have to make a loop with this design.*

- Plowman explained that yes, the RAB's will create a loop system.
- Daleiden asked if, with this new design, would a second house need to be removed or still just the one?
  - Plowman stated it will still just be the one house.
- Wetter asked if all four RAB's would be constructed at the same time?
  - Hausmann said three of the four would be constructed, with the fourth one being an option and possibly going in at the same time or later.
- Michael Kaczmarek asked if in between the RAB's will be a barrier?
  - Plowman stated that yes there will be a concrete median.
- Kaczmarek asked if they considered divided delineators so cross traffic could still get through, rather than closing it off entirely with a concrete barrier. He also asked what is the justification for the concrete barrier if this is a low-speed low accident area?
  - Plowman said yes, they considered the delineators, but they get wiped out quickly. With the projected traffic numbers the better option in this case is the concrete barrier. Hawkins clarified that it provides safety.
  - Plowman added that it provides better operations, being it only takes one person to mess up operation, having no gaps and people not trying to cross lanes prevents accidents and slowdowns.
- Vetsch: This is scheduled as a 2024 project. What project would be moved up if the city doesn't approve do this project?
  - Hawkins/Hausmann both contributed to the discussion saying that there would be another TCOTW meeting to discuss what projects would be ideal to adjust.
- Wetter asked how is Hanover doing their side of the funding?
  - Plowman said he was unsure at this time, but they are aware that they are responsible for their share of the project which is why they have taken the lead on it and adjusted the design.
- Daleiden asked if there is a date for the city to decide if they are proceeding with the project or not?
  - Plowman said they are going through the process, there is no specific date when they must decide but will likely be later this fall, after the Open House.

**Highway Staff Recommendation:** Highway staff recommends approval of the updated Five-Year Construction Plan & Map (2022-2026). Once updated, the new Five-Year Plan & Map would be published to the county website.

**TCOTW Action:**

***The consensus of the County Board is to move forward with the updated 5-year Construction Plan and Map.***

***III. Proposed clarifications (minor revisions) to the Cost Participation Policy for Highway Construction Projects within municipalities***

**Background:** The current County Cost Participate Policy for cooperative Highway Projects between Wright County and Municipalities was amended on May 6, 2014. Cooperative Project Agreements for specific projects within municipalities are entered into between the County and Municipalities using the Policy.

The following clarifications/revisions to the Cost Participation Policy are recommended by staff (see attached CPP with recommended clarifications/revisions shown):

1. Revise note 6 related to county participation for Pedestrian Ramps
  - a. Per ADA Transition Plan adopted by the County in October 2017
2. Revise note 10 related to electrical power costs at traffic signals and roundabouts
  - a. Clarifies who pays for ongoing power costs
3. Revise note 14 related to Trails and Bikeways along county highways
  - a. Clarifies that the county will cover 100% of the cost for grading the city's trail/bikeway that is included within the county construction project
  - b. Clarifies that additional county cost participation may be possible for the city's trail/bikeway,

- subject to Parks Department grant funding availability*
- c. *Clarifies that existing trails/bikeways that are impacted by county construction activities will be replaced/perpetuated at county cost*
4. *Add note 19 that provides for the county sharing any federal grant funds that have been awarded to the county for the county highway improvement*
    - a. *This will reduce the city's cost for items that are federal eligible items on the project*

**Discussion:**

*Daleiden asked at what distance do crews blacktop the gravel township roads when doing reconstruction.*

- *Hausmann said it varies by project, but typically its anywhere from 30/50 feet, but townships have paid to extend further up to 200ft paved.*
- *Vetsch asked Nate Helgeson if he notices a difference on the 50 vs 100 blacktopped surface on a gravel township road, from the acceleration bumps, if the distance is more like 100ft - is there less acceleration bumps when you come off the pavement or is it linear no matter what the distance is no matter what?*
  - *Helgeson said that from what he has noticed is seems to be less acceleration bumps, but it is also not something he has studied so he couldn't say for certain.*

**Highway Staff Recommendation:** *Highway staff recommends approval of the clarifications to the County Cost Participation Policy.*

**TCOTW Action:**

***The Consensus of the committee is to accept the revisions to the Cost Participation Policy for Highway Construction Projects***

**IV. Update on proposed improvements to CR 148 (Braddock Ave. NE) planned for 2024**

**Background:** *The CR 148 Pavement Preservation/Widening Improvements (from CSAH 83 to CR 113) are currently scheduled for construction in 2024 in the 5-Year Plan.*

*We have been pursuing an option to realign CR 148 (from CSAH 83 to the new Government Center) and construct in conjunction with the T.H. 25/CSAH 83 RAB project in 2023. This CR 148 realignment construction is subject to acquisition of needed right-of-way. The landowner rejected the county's latest offer to purchase the right-of-way needed for the realignment of CR 148.*

*Talking points to determine next steps:*

1. *Discuss/review latest county offer for R/W acquisition and property owner's response*
2. *Consider purchase of entire parcel, for other future county needs (HHW building, Fuel Island, etc.)?*
3. *Consider making a final revised offer for R/W?*
4. *Move forward with 2024 Pavement Preservation/Widening project on CR 148 in current alignment (and revisit the CR 148 realignment option when the parcel comes up for sale in the future)?*
5. *Other?*

**Discussion:**

*Husom asked if they believed Davis had any desire to sell his business? This was met with a unified response of 'no' from the room. Hausmann explained that Davis has been responding the same way for many years, saying "maybe in 5-7 years."*

- *Husom asked if the property has been assessed?*
  - *Jeremy Carlson stated that yes, the property has been appraised.*

*Carlson then explained the process with the owner and the property thus far, explaining that all communication has been very amicable.*

- *The initial offer Carlson made prior to an appraisal was \$15k an acre, which Davis said no to and asked the county to hire an appraiser.*

- *The appraisers estimate came back at \$16k an acre, which Carlson presented to Davis. Davis again did not agree to the offer, this time saying he wanted \$40k an acre.*
- *After doing some research he did have legitimate reasoning behind his numbers based on nearby land sale, though seemingly slightly high so Carlson counter offered at \$30k an acre. Davis did not accept this offer.*
- *All conversations have been good with him, they're just not finding a number to agree on.*

*Husom asked if Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds can be used for this.*

- *Hawkins/Hausmann both indicated yes, with Hausmann noting if they are going to do the project, he wants to do this now and not revisit it in two years when it may not be feasible, or construction costs are significantly higher.*

*Kaczmarek asked if the previous board had a plan when they built the new government buildings to do the intersection rebuild/realignment?*

- *Husom said they had many discussions with the state about different accesses onto T.H.25.*
- *Vetsch said they had several discussions early in the process, but they also had to see how bad the traffic patterns were going to be. He also indicated that the State didn't necessarily want to work with us, nor make it easy.*
- *Kaczmarek is in favor of a wait and see approach, and not buying any land and making any intersection changes currently especially if development happens in the future.*
  - *A developer would possibly have to share intersection improvement costs.*
  - *The county employee work from home policy is also a factor in his decision with fewer employees in the building.*

**Highway Staff Recommendation:** *Highway staff recommends that CR 148 be realigned to provide for the safest transportation system for county traffic, be it in 2023 or sometime in the future.*

**TCOTW Action:**

*The Consensus of the committee is to move forward and make an offer of \$40,000 per acre to the property owner for the acquisition of the property.*

**IV. Adjourn**

*Adjourned: 11:17am*

**ALICIA O'HARE – EXTENSION**

**Approval Of North Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Plan Amendment.**

Water Resources Specialist for Wright Soil and Water Conservation District Alicia O'Hare introduced the North Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Plan amendment. She said this plan being presented is the completed plan and it is halfway done. She said because the plan was part of a pilot project and was one of the first plans to go through for One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) it did not pass muster for everything learned since passing. She requested to continue the amendment process which does require all participating entities to agree to continue. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will determine if a public hearing is necessary. After this process the amendment will be accepted.

Wetter moved to approve the North Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Plan amendment. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

**Approval Of Mississippi River- Saint Cloud Planning Partnership Memorandum Of Agreement Revision.**

O'Hare said the Clearwater River Watershed District has decided not to participate due to concerns about their legal authority and autonomy. BWSR is requiring a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Wetter said it was interesting that lawyers said no new MOA was needed but BWSR said it was. O'Hare said the new MOA is required for clerical reasons. Daleiden said the plan was supposed to eliminate competition between watershed districts. He asked why BWSR was allowing Clearwater to get out. O'Hare said because it is technically a voluntary program. She said the Clearwater River Watershed District will not be eligible for the implementation fund, unless it chooses to adopt the plan at the end of the

planning process. She said the competition would not be there for the Clearwater River Watershed District unless it chose to take a loss and partner with a different district. Vetsch said people have gotten tired of the red tape as the money has not been allocated out. He asked if it was known what the money would be. She said the Northfork Crow has gotten \$1.2 million in its allocation and those are allocated every two years. She said that is the reference point and she did not recall what the other watersheds were getting. She said it should be a couple million dollars every couple years. Vetsch said it was still tied to the legislative sessions in the state funding sessions so the amount could ebb and flow.

Daleiden moved to approve the Mississippi River - Saint Cloud Planning Partnership Memorandum of Agreement revision. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The motion carried 5-0.

## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

### COMMITTEE MINUTES

#### BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (8/22/2022)

County Administrator Lee Kelly summarized the Monday, August 22 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting.

Daleiden moved to approve the Budget Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations for Monday, August 22. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

#### I. OVERVIEW OF 2023 BUDGET

*County Administrator Lee Kelly said the county is taking a more aggressive approach to the 2023 budget by scheduling the meetings earlier than in previous years. The budget books were presented to the commissioners in early-August. When all the proposed budgets were returned from departments, the total of all requests represented a levy increase of 10.34 percent. Kelly said given the sharp increase in the valuation of residential property in comparison to commercial and agricultural properties the percentage of the levy burden is being pushed to residential properties. The original levy figure was not palatable to the board. The Finance Team met prior to the start of the budget sessions and reached out to department heads asking them to make preliminary cuts to their budgets (the request was a 7 percent reduction of discretionary funds). Those reductions significantly lowered the number for the starting position of the Budget Committee of the Whole (BCOTW) meetings. The goal was to reduce approximately \$2.2 million in department budgets to get the levy increase down from more than 10 percent to closer to 4 or 5 percent.*

*In the original budget proposals, there was a resulting 3.675 percent reduction in the tax rate. With the department cuts factored in, there was a 5.644 percent reduction in the tax rate – which represented a significant amount of money and created a noticeable change. The county's tax rate will be going down because of the growth in the county. With the changes, the budget books currently show an overall levy increase of 4.91 percent with a drop in the tax rate from 43.751 to 38.107. The Budget Committee had a list of approximately \$2.2 million in proposed reduction and non-tax revenue increases. A total of approximately \$5.6 million in expenditure cuts and non-tax revenue increases were needed to drop the year-to-year tax levy increase from more than 10 percent to less than 4 percent.*

*Kelly said the number of new staff requests has been decreased. He said in past years the county board has utilized its fund balance to reduce the levy number. The 2023 budget currently includes using \$1.5 million of the county's fund balance. He added that to get the levy down to a 4 percent increase an additional \$1.1 million would be needed. He cautioned the board that other counties have used their fund balances to lower levy numbers and have found themselves with too little remaining and painted themselves into a financial corner. He added that the county has utilized fund balance dollars in past budgets - \$1.5 million in 2022, \$2.11 million in 2021 and \$2.11 million in 2020. He said the county is in good financial shape and can use additional fund balance dollars if necessary. Kelly said the*

*county has expressed the intention of buying down some of its bonded debt and, as things currently stand, that remains an option.*

*Kelly said that three projects that were part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are recommended to be shifted to a different funding source. These include a Customer Relationship Management software system for the Health & Human Services Department to American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds in the amount of \$250,000, the Montissippi Park project being shifted to ARP in the amount of \$75,000 and the construction of a new Highway Department building being shifted to the Local Option Sales Tax fund in the amount of \$420,000.*

*Kelly discussed the appropriations to outside organizations that are affiliated with the county that will be meeting with the board later in the budget hearings. The Wright County Economic Development Partnership is seeking \$130,000 in funding, a similar request as was made for 2022. The Wright County Fair Board is seeking \$76,000 – the same as the last several years. The Wright County Historical Society is seeking \$320,000 – a slight increase with most of the request pertaining to building maintenance. The Initiative Foundation is seeking \$7,400 after being at \$7,000 for the last decade. The Great River Regional Library (GRRL) is asking for \$2.3 million, but GRRL is part of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that determines the funding formula so the GRRL Board determines the appropriation. The 2023 GRRL line item increased by 7.8 percent or \$171,000.*

*Kelly reminded the board that union negotiations will begin in late-September and there are some unknowns related to that. He said the county is waiting on its insurance renewal from the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT), adding that premiums went up and MCIT will no longer provide cyber security insurance, so that will need to be contracted out.*

*Commissioner Mark Daleiden asked if departments had seen the tax impact comparisons from prior years that makes budgeting a challenge. In 2022, the value of residential properties increased an average of 21.92 percent, while commercial properties went up 6.64 percent and agricultural properties rose just 1.99 percent. Daleiden said because of the huge increase in residential values, more of the tax burden will go to homeowners, while taxes paid by commercial properties in many cases will go down. Kelly said the county is positioned well and going too low on a levy increase could cause issues in future years as the county continues to grow.*

## **II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

*Kelly presented the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) list. A total of 29 CIP requests were submitted for the years 2023-27. Among those CIP requests for 2023 highlighted were poll pad replacement in Elections. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said her department budgets in odd-numbered years for the purchase of equipment. The purchases made in 2023 would be for use in the 2024 election season.*

*Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek asked about a project for the Public Works Building to install a camera system at a cost of \$90,000. Facilities Director Alan Wilczek said it was important to have a camera system in place as the county has in its other facilities. Information Technology Director Matthew Fomby added that not doing this project would impact cyber insurance because there is IT equipment in that building. Kaczmarek said he would like to see what additional cost there would be for insuring the building with or without the camera system installation.*

*Kaczmarek asked about a playground project adjacent to the Government Center. Wilczek said the playground was part of the Government Center construction project and has already been bonded for. Health & Human Services (HHS) Director Jami Goodrum said the playground was an HHS request because it will be used by families during supervised parental visitation meetings.*

*Daleiden commented on a \$75,000 project at Robert Ney Memorial Park and Nature Center. Part of the project is to light ski trails at the site as well as making the Nature Center compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act*

*(ADA). Visitors with disabilities have problems getting to the basement floor because the only access currently is via stairs.*

*Sheriff Sean Deringer spoke to a pair of CIP requests from his office. The office has been at its currently location since 2009 and has begun to outgrow its current office footprint. The construction of a command staff conference*

room and a pair of offices are going to be added with a ballpark cost of approximately \$100,000.

The other project is considerably more significant. The office is in the process of doing a radio compliance project that will require all officer radios to have an encryption bank. Deringer said that during the two-day St. Michael standoff with a suspect that half of his deputies didn't have encrypted channel capability. The Sheriff's Office said this is a four- to seven-year project that could have a final price tag of \$1.75 million because portable officer radios cost \$500 each and squad car radios cost \$800 each. The Sheriff's Office is seeking both CIP and ARP funding. Commissioner Darek Vetsch asked how much would be requested from ARP funds and was told the total cost today to equip deputies with portable radios would be \$961,000. Under the current replacement schedule for end-of-life radios, the Sheriff's Office replaces 14 to 18 radios a year. Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels said getting approval to use ARP funds for this project remains a gray area. Without ARP funding, the CIP request will be \$300,000 in 2023.

Other CIP proposals discussed briefly included Electronic Document Management Services (EDMS) modernization for Financial Services in HHS, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for HHS, an upgrade the county's Compost and Recycling Center and Commvault – a system to build internal backups to avoid cloud storage.

### **III. ADMINISTRATION**

Kelly said his department had a restructuring with the inclusion of centralized Finance, Projects and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) within the department. He said there were no position requests in the 2023 budget. He said several cuts were made in areas that could be reduced to meet the 7 percent reduction request from the board. This included taking out \$2,750 in temporary staff, \$6,500 from conferences and meetings for the Projects Team and an additional \$1,500 from conferences, meetings and training for GIS staff, bringing the reductions to \$10,500 – more than the 7 percent board directive.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

### **IV. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Kelly said the commissioner per diem payments have been consistently under the budget of \$28,000 so that line item was reduced to \$24,000 to provide a reduction in keeping with the 7 percent reduction asked of departments by the county board. Daleiden asked about a telephone line item, which showed \$2,000. Kelly said that, at this time, three commissioners have county-issued phones and Kelly said all five commissioners should have county-issued phones, so that line item is to acquire phones in 2023, when a minimum of two new commissioners will be on the board.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

### **V. COURT ADMINISTRATION**

Court Administrator Monica Tschumper said that she is requesting \$300,000 in court-appointed counsel – an increase of \$32,000. She reminded the board that services provided by Court Administration are a function of the state courts. Daleiden noted that the court-appointed counsel line item is running well above its 2022 budget, so the \$300,000 line item should remain in the 2023 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

### **VI. AUDITOR/TREASURER**

Auditor/Treasurer Bob Hiivala said the almost the entirety of his budget is related to his salary. He made a reduction of \$100 for the postage, publications and brochures and the travel line items and a \$200 reduction in the conferences and meetings line item. Kaczmarek asked Hiivala what conferences he plans to attend in 2023 and Hiivala said there were two in-state conferences – The Association of Minnesota Auditor/Treasurers and the Minnesota Investment Officers Association conferences. Vetsch said that seeing that Hiivala remains tangentially involved with elections that he should share the information learned at those conferences with elections staff.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

*The meeting recessed at 11:27 a.m. The*

*meeting reconvened at 1:02 p.m.*

**VII. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

*Goodrum presented an organizational chart and highlighted three positions the department is looking to add. Goodrum acknowledged the request from Finance to cut 7 percent from its budget and it was difficult to reach that number. She said she removed two Information System Specialist (ISS) positions from her budget, adding that she assumed they would be placed in the centralized IT budget, but was unsure if they had been.*

*Goodrum stated the HHS budget goals, which include maximizing areas of reimbursement, maintaining expenses and providing quality service delivery, as well as making data-driven decisions to boost customer satisfaction and improve performance. HHS Business Manager Christine Partlow said that the 2023 budget represents a 4.4 percent increase in expenditures from 2022. Much of that total is salary and fringe benefit adjustments. Partlow said state reimbursement should cover most of those increases but the state is not keeping pace in timely reimbursement. She detailed some of the items that were removed from budgets. Partlow said that payments for recipients increased by \$560,000 with most of that being child residential treatment Rule 5 (\$340,000). She also explained the increases and decreases in the revenue side of the budget.*

*Social Services Manager Jill Pooler said that HHS is looking for three additional positions that have yet to receive board approval, adding that these positions are a reactive decision to current conditions not a proactive decision looking to meet future needs. The first position is a Waiver & Community Support Supervisor. It has been requested before because the current employee-to-supervisor ratio is 17:1. The supervisor is responsible for seven different complex waiver programs and oversees a \$94.3 million budget. The waiver team is currently managing 1,009 cases internally and there are 620 cases being contracted externally. It was stated that waiver workers bring in approximately \$120,000 in revenue a year. Commissioner Christine Husom said it makes sense to have a worker that generates revenue higher than the employee salary.*

*A second position was a Mental Health Social Worker that HHS wants put back in the budget. Pooler said that since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, civil commitments have doubled. HHS has not been able to meet that need because there haven't been any additional hires in this area for several years. To meet the need, employees from other areas of HHS have been pulled in the civil commitment area to meet the demand. Prior to 2021, the department managed 20-30 civil commitment cases. Today that number is 40-50 cases. Pooler said Wright County HHS is the mental health authority and is mandated by statute to provide these services.*

*A third position is a MnCHOICES Social Worker that would include increasing a vacant 0.5 Full-Time Employee (FTE) social worker that hasn't been filled to a 1.0 FTE. There has been difficulty filling 0.5 FTE positions. For the last three months, workers from other units have been called in to address the backlog of assessment requests. At current staffing levels, clients wait six to eight weeks to receive this service while the statutory requirement is 20 days. As of Aug. 15, there were 42 people waiting for this service. It has required other employees assisting in meeting the demand, which results in more overtime and lost revenue when waiver employees have to help in this area.*

*Goodrum said six to eight positions are needed. Internally, HHS brought that down to 2.5 positions. Now it's down to one. Vetsch said the two main expenditures – residential treatment Rule 5 and adult regional treatment center – total \$800,000 and he doesn't see the correlating revenue that should be tied together. Partlow said on Rule 5, reimbursement in a good year is approximately 20 percent. Vetsch said the only way to properly articulate these issues to the State Legislature is to have figures that determine what is mandated and what the reimbursement percentage is because those two expenditures represent a 100 percent increase. Social Services Manager Michelle Miller said many of the programs don't have a mechanism to recapture funds expended and that HHS attempts to*

*capture as many dollars as possible. Husom said that when Family First legislation was initially passed it was very simple, but layer upon layer of additional red tape added since has made the program much more complicated and expensive and has destroyed the original intent of the legislation.*

*Goodrum said there are many programs that are out of the control of the county because of mandates, but the county is required to operate these programs, where funding uncertainty and high caseloads are making decisions more critical. Vetsch said he wished people understood that a large portion of county taxpayer dollars are going to a very small segment of the population – a handful of people costing the county hundreds of thousands of dollars.*

*It was recommended that the vacant 0.5 FTE MnCHOICES social worker position be used as part of the funding for the 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Coordinator position that had been recommended at the Aug. 15 Committee of the Whole meeting.*

*Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt discussed the two ISS positions that were removed when departments were asked to reduce their budgets by 7 percent. He said those positions haven't been eliminated but have been removed from the HHS budget. Meyer said she had concerns about this as well, saying that those two positions haven't been added into the centralized IT budget. Wilfahrt said until those employees move to IT they should remain in the HHS budget. He said the Projects Team is going to meet with HHS to determine what duties will move to central IT and what will remain in HHS.*

***RECOMMENDATIONS: Verify the accounting for the two ISS positions that were discussed. Approve the revised budget, including the approval of hiring a Waiver & Community Support Supervisor and using the vacant 0.5 FTE MnCHOICES social worker position as a partial funding source to hire an Environmental Health Coordinator.***

#### **BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (8/23/2022)**

County Administrator Lee Kelly summarized the Tuesday, August 23 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting.

Daleiden moved to approve the Budget Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations for Tuesday, August 23. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

#### **I. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

*Information Technology (IT) Director Matthew Fomby said his understanding is that his department will have no new hires in 2023. He took \$448,450 out of his original budget request to meet the request for a 7 percent reduction. He had requested two new employees but took both out of his 2023 budget request. Commissioner Darek Vetsch said if an issue arises that can demonstrate need, Fomby can bring a request to the board or the Personnel Committee, but, for now, the two positions will be kept out of the budget. County Administrator Lee Kelly said if a need presents itself mid-year Fomby can bring a request forward. Fomby explained to the commissioners the function of centralized IT and what functions will remain with individual departments.*

*Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek asked about the training and conferences line item of \$184,000. Fomby said many of his employees have certifications that require ongoing training and the majority of the training sessions are done on-line with employees at their work stations and not traveling. There was a significant increase in the furniture and equipment line item to \$483,600. Fomby explained that Uninterrupted Power Source (UPS) batteries for the Law Enforcement Center are reaching end-of-life and need to be replaced. He added that the same will happen in the Highway Department in 2027. Kaczmarek asked about the overtime line item of \$50,000, which is higher than most departments. Fomby explained that the county has grown to the point that employees will need to be on call in the event of an emergency outside of normal business hours. He added that his budget contains a fund to contract with IT specialists in niche fields that have a specific skill set that allows them to complete a task in hours instead of days or weeks it would take his IT personnel without the specific technical aptitude.*

***RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.***

## II. FINANCE & TAXPAYER SERVICES

Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said the department may be asking for an additional License Center employee mid-year 2023 but won't be requesting it now. She said she needed to remove 7 percent from the budget and the easiest removal was the Genesys phone system with a cost of \$31,608. She explained other line item cuts that were made to meet the 7 percent reduction request. She said her Elections Equipment line item is increased because it is an off-year for elections, but purchases are made in off-years in advance of elections to replace older equipment. Meyer said she increased her revenue line items for specific services and asked the board to revisit the fee schedule for items like passport photos. She said the county tends to be on the low end of fees for service in comparison to those that offer a similar service in the private sector.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented**

## III. COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Brian Lutes stated that some of the line items in his budget are unpredictable, giving as an example sexual offender civil commitments and the associated fees. In any given year the line item goes over budget because it can't accurately be forecast. He added that there are licensing fees for attorneys and continuing education required by law and law licensing fees from the Minnesota Bar Association. Lutes noted that there will be an increase in his office's case management system line item. He said outside of personnel costs, his budget is running pretty lean. He did not request any additional employees for 2023.

Lutes said his department doesn't have specific revenue line items, but he informed the board that the County Attorney's Office prosecutes cases for the Wright County Sheriff's Office. He said the value of prosecuting cases in-house would likely come to approximately \$1 million in revenue for the caseload of working cases with cities in Wright County but prosecution is part of the contracts the Sheriff's Office has with contracted cities in the county. Kaczmarek and Vetsch both said there should be a more representative way to show revenue generated by the County Attorney's Office for the prosecution of crimes.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:01 p.m.

## IV. VETERAN SERVICES

Veteran Services Officer (VSO) Greg Pickard said he was able to make budget cuts to meet the request of a 7 percent reduction from the original budget submission. He said his office has two mandatory training sessions a year, adding that both were in Minnesota. He said his office is making more home visits to disabled vets, but as much of the work that can be done electronically is done that way. The Veterans Administration recently added many of the cancers and conditions veterans suffered as the result of exposure to burn pits that were prevalent in all wars since 1970 as part of a multi-trillion-dollar package approved by Congress. He said his schedule has already ballooned from appointments made by veterans to access these benefits. Pickard said the state added a veteran bonus for those who served after Sept. 11, 2001 through Aug. 31, 2021, which has also added to the workload in his office.

Pickard said he is requesting a reclassification of a vacant position to become an Assistant VSO, which has a pay rate of \$7 an hour more than the Administrative Assistant I position that was vacated earlier in 2022 due to a retirement. The board was in agreement that reclassifying the position to an Assistant VSO position could be included in the 2023 Veteran Services budget.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented, including approval of the reclassification of a vacant Administrative Assistant I position to an Assistant Veteran Services Officer position.**

## V. COURT SERVICES

*Court Services Director Mike MacMillan presented his 2023 budget along with his budget team. He said that his department is over on some line items, which he finds upsetting because it rarely happens in his department. He said he is an advocate of truth in budgeting and that line items should be set based on actual usage data and less on statistics or guesswork. He highlighted the budget reductions requested by the county board and said some line item additions hadn't been taken into consideration, including \$75,000 to operate the truancy program and another \$21,500 for employee costs – training, computers, phones, etc. In order to meet the request for a 7 percent budget reduction, he pulled a paid internship that was scheduled to be in place for 2023 as well as reducing salaries paid with levy dollars by incorporating revenue brought in from the Alternative to Incarceration Grant that wasn't factored into the original budget request. With all additions in revenue and subtractions from line item cuts, he was able to get close to the 7 percent reduction.*

*MacMillan highlighted some aspects of his budgets. He said his department has created a new Fees-for-Service Committee to determine how to do a better job of collections. He said that employees with new Dell computers are unable to process credit card payments and it is a problem that needs to be addressed as soon as possible to rectify. He said historically his department has been very good at collecting fees – taking in more than \$500,000 a year. He said that during the COVID period, collections have been falling behind because more people were struggling financially as a result of the pandemic. When asked by Kaczmarek about his travel line item, it was explained that \$13,000 in travel expenses are reimbursed by a state grant program through The Turn (Adult Drug Court). There is also \$36,000 in training expenses that are reimbursed through the same grant program for The Turn.*

*MacMillan said his staff is statutorily required to have 40-60 hours of required training annually. He said much of the training is done internally and comes out to approximately \$600 per employee. There was an increase in that line item but the reimbursement from the state in the training line item is larger than the expenditure increase. MacMillan was asked about \$30,000 in a line item for Safe Communities of Wright County and he said that has been in his budget for the last 10 years.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

#### **BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (8/24/2022)**

Kelly summarized the Wednesday, August 24 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting. Kaczmarek said on Page 1, Item 1, second paragraph, after “too high” should read “since that figure has only been met once in past years.” He said on page 2 of 3 second paragraph he asked about the significant increase in professional services and asked to add “the sheriff advised the board that he had hired a retired FBI agent as a firearms instructor to train deputies for a fee not to exceed \$70,000 a year.”

Kaczmarek moved to approve the Budget Committee of the Whole minutes for Wednesday August 24. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

#### **I. SHERIFF**

*Sheriff Sean Deringer made his office's budget presentation to the board. He said it was difficult to reduce money in Budget 250 (Jail) and said that all personnel requests for 2023 were removed with the exception of deputies to be hired due to increases in contract hours with cities in Wright County, adding that the salaries of the deputies are offset with revenues from the contract payments from cities. Commissioner Christine Husom asked if a contract falls through and isn't executed, would those deputies not be hired. Office Administrator Shawna Athman said the hirings are contingent on the execution of the contracts. The Sheriff's Office has up to eight deputies “on the bench” to allow them to submit two weeks notice and get them in as replacements sooner than in previous years. Deringer said under this plan, instead of having a position open for three to six months, the Sheriff's Office has been able to fill positions in less than a month. Deringer said a year ago, he reached out to the cities of Otsego, Monticello, St. Michael, Albertville and Delano and recommended that they increase hours. He said the last time there was an increase in patrol hours was Otsego in 2015 and Delano has doubled in size since the last time it increased contract hours.*

*Athman presented the jail budget. She said the primary drivers are personnel and jail medical. Almost all services are mandated and under contract. The jail budget hasn't increased in three years, so it was impossible to remove \$280,000 from the budget in line with a 7 percent reduction request from the county board. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek*

asked if the \$2 million in revenue projected in boarding of prisoners is too high since that figure has only been achieved once in previous years. Athman said COVID impacted jail boarding. She said Hennepin County has asked Wright County to take 70 prisoners for three months, which will drive the number up for revenue in that line item. Deringer said the Hennepin County request alone would be a \$460,000 increase in revenue. Staffing in the jail has been five to seven employees down for most of the last year. The rate remains \$55 a day to board prisoners. Kaczmarek asked if there is a chance to increase the price for boarding. Deringer said those conversations are underway because the rate hasn't increased in 15 years. Several individual line items were discussed as to why those line items increased and both Deringer and Athman said it was due to the goal of bringing in \$2 million in revenue in the jail that would result in more overtime.

Athman addressed the increase in contract hours with Wright County cities. She said that these positions are levy neutral because the hiring of additional patrol deputies will be contingent on securing additional contract hours. Deringer said that his office found ways to reduce its budget, including the elimination of the request for a new dispatcher. Deringer said the Sheriff's Office is currently down three dispatchers and it will be imperative to get those vacant positions filled and up to speed. Deringer said he was pleasantly surprised by the amount of people who have applied for the dispatcher position. He added that there is a rise in critical incidents that make command staff like sergeants and lieutenants more necessary. A lieutenant position was eliminated from the 2022 budget request so Deringer is requesting that a lieutenant be included in the 2023 budget request. The board asked the Sheriff's Office to deliver an organizational chart for future budget requests and where new employees would fit in. Commissioner Mark Daleiden asked if there has ever been a cost formula developed to show cities under contract the county's total costs for law enforcement – from the Sheriff's Office to the jail to the County Attorney's Office – to show what a value cities are getting from these contracts. Deringer said there are charts that show the different aspects of the criminal justice system. Kaczmarek asked if the services provided by the County Attorney's Office are spelled out in contracts or quantified and if any money brought in through the contracts is earmarked for the County Attorney's Office. Athman said money doesn't turn over from the two offices. Commissioner Darek Vetsch suggested when the next round of contracts get signed, attorney costs should be included to detail the prosecution piece. Deringer said as cities continue to grow, the need for service will grow and if cities don't agree to a level of service needed under the contracts, he would give those cities an 18-month notice to seek out another agency to provide law enforcement service because he wouldn't risk the reputation of the Wright County Sheriff's Office if a city doesn't sign on for adequate service. Vetsch asked when the contracts with cities are up for renewal. Athman said in 2024. Vetsch said that in the next contracts there may be the need to include language about contract minimums for hours. Vetsch said as the cities in the county get larger, the contracts are going to get larger and more detail should be provided for a cost breakdown.

Athman explained some of the mandated costs that have required the Professional Services line item to grow over time, including the cost of pre-employment evaluations, prisoner transport, subpoenas, gas mask fittings, interpreters and K9 items that are funded out of this line item. Kaczmarek asked about a significant increase in the Professional Services line item. Deringer said that his office hired a retired FBI agent as a firearms instructor for a fee not to exceed \$70,000 a year. Deringer discussed the Sheriff's Office Training Center and the potential to partner with other agencies for training. He said HVAC issues that have taken place in the facility are close to being rectified. Athman was asked about vehicle prices. She said that Ford is the only manufacturer that is on a government contract for squad cars for 2023 and Ford increased the price of a vehicle by \$7,000 from 2022 – a 22 percent increase. The fuel line item was discussed. The office used 201,000 gallons of gasoline in 2021 and arrived at a per-gallon price for 2023 at \$4.75, which was admittedly a high number. However, in 2022 the cost for fuel went from \$450,000 in 2021 to a projection of \$1.1 million in 2022. The per gallon cost was dropped to \$4.50 a gallon in the revised budget, taking \$53,000 out of that line item. It was pointed out that the cost per gallon for fuel fluctuates for the Sheriff's Office because deputies fill their tanks in different communities, where prices can differ. Commissioner Mary Wetter asked how the Sheriff's Office was stocked with ammunition. Athman said the office is fine at the moment, but that is because orders came in that were backlogged for about 18 months. A week prior to the budget meeting, an order placed in February 2021 arrived.

Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said that Highway and Parks & Recreation currently have \$4.75 a gallon for fuel in their budgets and asked the board for direction on whether, for the sake of unanimity, to have those departments drop the price of fuel in their budgets to \$3.50 a gallon.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve revised budget as presented. Approve the hire of a lieutenant and six deputy positions (deputies contingent on increased contract-hour agreements being signed).**

## **II. PARKS & RECREATION**

*Parks & Recreation Director Ross Demant put together a presentation for his department. In May 2022, the department updated its long-term master plan and how the plan meets the county's value streams. He provided an organizational chart. Parks & Recreation includes an operations and maintenance division, along as housing University of Minnesota Extension and Ag and Drainage employees. The county operates 31 county parks, four regional parks, six swimming beaches, nine lake accesses, 10 river access points and nine playgrounds. There are 80 miles of trails in the 4,727 acres of county parks – 22 miles of blacktop trails and 58 miles of natural surface trails, including 19 miles of designated equine trails and 14 miles of single-track mountain bike trails. There are three full-service campgrounds that include 161 campsites. Campground occupancy from Memorial Day to Labor Day was 95 percent on weekends and 28 percent during the week.*

*Demant said projected revenue would increase 16.5 percent. To meet the county board's request for a 7 percent budget reduction, decreases were made, including summer seasonal staffing, caretaker contracts, professional services, equipment and a vehicle purchase that led to a reduction of almost \$139,000. However, fuel costs and credit card surcharges increased by almost \$38,000. Meyer requested that the unleaded fuel line item drop to \$3.50 a gallon – a savings of \$1,125. There were no requests for additional employees for 2023.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Approve revised budget as presented with a reduction in the per-gallon cost in the fuel line item from \$4.75 a gallon to \$3.50 a gallon.*

## **III. AG & DRAINAGE/WRIGHT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

*Ag & Drainage Supervisor Matthew Detjen made a presentation to the board. Ag & Drainage received \$285,000 in grant funding with five additional grant applications in process. More than 26 miles of ditches were maintained (spraying/mowing) and 10 new ditch repairs will have been completed by the end of the year. Plans for 2023 include increased time spent on controlling noxious weeds, more education/information dealing with Emerald Ash Borer, applying for funding to hire an intern dedicated to Emerald Ash Borer/forestry initiatives, increasing the number of ditch repairs and maintenance of previous repairs and continue to reduce the number of benefitted landowners along county ditches. Detjen said his division was able to make the 7 percent reduction in its budget as requested by the county board. No new positions were requested for 2023.*

*Luke Johnson of the Wright Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) made a presentation about its budget. SWCD has five elected board members and seven full-time and two part-time employees. It has an operating budget of \$1,048,350 – of which \$886,500 is directly related to personnel costs. The division wasn't looking to add any employees in 2023. An additional position had been proposed, but was removed as part of the requested budget reductions. It was noted that the last time SWCD added a new employee was in 2015. SWCD works in partnership with the Highway and Parks & Recreation Departments and provides professional engineering services for the Ag & Drainage Division. There are several collaborative efforts with SWCD and county departments, including Buffer Law adherence, noxious weed control, education and outreach, water management, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention and financial/payroll services. Excluding personnel costs, there was zero increase to the levy. Due to existing staff steps, cost of living increases and benefits, the 2023 budget reflects a \$34,087 increase from 2022.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Approve revised budget as presented.*

*The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.*

*Meeting minutes submitted by John Holler, Communications Specialist*

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (8/25/2022)**

Kelly summarized the Thursday, August 25 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting. Husom said she spoke with Executive Director of the Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) Jolene Foss about the WCEDP taking a 7 percent budget cut. Husom said Foss agreed to the budget cut.

**I. Daleiden moved to approve the Budget Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations for Thursday,**

**August 25. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0. RECORDER**

County Recorder Tanya West made the budget presentation for her office, along with Chief Deputy Recorder Kelly Day and Land Records Administrator Trinity Nathe. West said she had a conservative budget prior to the county board requesting departments to make a 7 percent reduction in their budget requests. To accomplish the reduction, she raised the revenue projection under Vital Statistics by \$4,200 because the initial projection was kept lower than what is expected in 2023. Since taking over Vital Statistics in 2017, the growth of the county has driven revenue in this line item up by more than 50 percent and consistently comes in above the budgeted projection. She anticipates that more revenue will be generated as the deadline to implement Real ID will result in more people purchasing passports to fly commercially. She said that she anticipates mortgage tax revenue will be decreasing in 2023 as interest rates remain high. West doesn't anticipate another foreclosure crisis like the one that hit in 2008 after the housing boom that preceded it.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

## II. ASSESSOR

County Assessor Tony Rasmuson made the presentation of his department budget along with Assistant County Assessor Keith Triplett and Senior Appraisal Manager Tammy Anderson. Rasmuson said the number of licensed assessors has dropped sharply in the last year – dropping from 823 to 693 in Minnesota. He said many older assessors are leaving the field, making recruitment and retention a priority. There are vigorous requirements in classroom training and experience that are necessary. Most of the training done for new employees is completed in-house. He said he has several job reclassifications in his 2023 budget because when an Appraiser I reaches a certain level of education and is certified as an Accredited Minnesota Assessor (AMA) he or she is elevated to an Appraiser II. The board authorized three position reclassifications.

Rasmuson shared his concern about the sharp increase in residential property values that took place in 2022, saying that it is a problem throughout the state and the country and isn't unique to Wright County. Commissioner Mark Daleiden noted that his home property tax went up considerably, while his business property tax went down, which has been a driver of the 2023 budget process to account for the inequity in market value differences between residential, commercial and agricultural properties. To meet the county board request of a 7 percent reduction, the Assessor took a vehicle request out of the budget despite having three department vehicles that are 2008 models or older. The result of that and minor line item changes, the Assessor's 2023 budget is relatively flat compared to 2022.

Rasmuson addressed an overage in his overtime budget by saying there were two factors. First, his department made a changeover in its Certified Asset Management Assessor (CAMA) software during 2022 which was a huge project that was labor-intensive. Second, due to the sharp increase in residential property values there were many more appeals to valuations than in previous years. As the Tyler Technologies CAMA system is integrated, he anticipates overtime going down, but added that with the most recent assessment, he expects more office activity with complaints and appeals.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented to include the three position classification changes approved by the county board.**

## III. SURVEYOR

County Surveyor Steve Jobe said many of the changes in his 2023 budget are the result of the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Division being moved from his office to Administration. Jobe said inflation has hit the supplies that his office requires to increase significantly, as well as long wait times for delivery. Jobe said he could reduce his fuel line item from \$7,200 to \$5,600. Jobe said he feels it is time to increase the plat review fees collected by his office. The fee is currently \$300 per plat and \$40 per lot. Other counties' fees have increased sharply to cover their costs. Jobe proposed a modest increase to \$350 per plat and \$50 per lot that would create more revenue and still remain less than surrounding counties. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said that when fee change requests like this come forward, he would like departments to provide a cost breakdown for expenses and comparables.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

#### **IV. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION**

*U of M Extension Regional Director Lori Vicich presented her 2023 budget proposal. She thanked the board for its approval of a complicated plan implemented in 2022 to combine Extension education efforts with Meeker and McLeod counties to use the expertise areas of each of the three counties' Extension educators to work for three counties instead of one and the partnership brings their skill sets to all three counties. She said longtime Wright County Extension Educator Adam Austing recently accepted another job and a job search is ongoing to find a replacement. She said the Extension budget is simple and straightforward and the majority of the line items remain effectively the same. To meet the request from the county board of a 7 percent budget reduction, \$1,000 was taken out of travel reimbursement and \$1,329 out of photocopy expenses.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

#### **V. PLANNING & ZONING**

*Planning & Zoning Administrator Barry Rhineberger presented his 2023 budget proposal. Commissioner Darek Vetsch asked that a comparison be done in 2023 to determine comparable fees for building permits in other jurisdictions to determine if the county's fee structure is in line with other cities and counties. Rhineberger said in 2021, the revenue brought in by permit fees on single family homes was \$332,000, which represented 43 percent of the department's revenue for the year. Over the past several years these fees have represented 43 to 50 percent of department revenues. He said the 2022 revenues are slightly behind 2021, perhaps signaling a flattening out of the housing boom of the previous two years.*

*Daleiden asked why the per diem line item increased by \$10,000. Rhineberger said that the county board early in 2022 increased the per diem for Planning Commission meetings from \$60 to \$120 because of the length of those meetings – which often take more than four hours. Rhineberger said to meet the request for a 7 percent budget reduction, he removed \$25,000 from his vehicle purchase line item and increased the repair/maintenance budget by \$3,000 to fix electrical issues with one of the department's vehicles. Daleiden asked about \$15,000 in the Furniture & Equipment line item. Rhineberger stated he wasn't the department head when the new Government Center design was reviewed by department heads for the layout and amenities for each office. The employee cubicles are glass on three sides and employees that often use large maps are taping them to the glass instead of having fabric cubes to pin them to. In addition, fabric helps absorb sound that glass doesn't so when more than one employee is on the phone, it gets quite loud in the office. From the time of the initial budget request, he received a quote for \$8,600 to renovate the cubicles. It was the consensus to remove the \$15,000 from the Furniture & Equipment line item with the potential to revisit the issue during the year if the department's expenditure budget comes in under projections.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented with the removal of \$15,000 from the Furniture & Equipment line item as well as a reduction in the fuel line item from a unit price of \$4.75 a gallon to \$3.50 a gallon.**

#### **VI. BUILDING CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

*Facilities Director Alan Wilczek made the presentation. He said that there is very little in the way of increases in the budget from 2022 to 2023. He stated the biggest drivers in his budget are personnel, utilities and professional services. He added that the 2022 budget is trending on par with projections. He said the county board had budgeted for utilities at the old Government Center for six months after it was vacated in hopes it would be sold and that hasn't happened. The offset of that is that utilities in the new Government Center are less than what was projected. He said the biggest cost in the old GC is to cool the server room which has fiber running through it. Daleiden asked if the old GC will be heated in the winter. Wilczek said until the county board instructs him that the building will be completely shut down, it will continue to be heated because once the equipment is completely turned off, it will be virtually impossible to restart the equipment and expect it to function after being dormant for a winter. He said that there remain certain legal obligations associated with the vacated buildings, like keeping the elevators and fire alarms operable and snow removal in the event emergency personnel needs to get to the entrances to the building. He figured the total cost of items needed to keep the Government Center operable for six months at approximately \$100,000. It is hoped the sale of the Health & Human Services Center will be completed by the end of 2022.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

## **VII. WRIGHT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (WCEDP)**

WCEDP Executive Director Jolene Foss made the presentation and was joined by the WCEDP Board. Foss said that the WCEDP will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. She said the WCEDP request for support in 2023 is \$145,000. Foss said the goal of WCEDP is business retention, expansion and recruitment. She said the WCEDP partners with the Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Center to provide potential employees with the skills needed in the workplace. She praised the county board for its willingness to work with WCEDP and that the board is receptive to the county's growth. Foss highlighted some of the programs and initiatives WCEDP sponsors and partners in. When asked about the requested 7 percent reduction in budgets, Vetsch said that only about 10 percent of WCEDP's budget is discretionary and, Foss added that, as a non-profit, WCEDP is not in the revenue-generating business. Foss said that dues paid by the cities was increased less than \$6,000 for 2023 (for a total of \$28,000) and did not increase private business dues, which are between \$300 and \$600 a year (for a total of \$10,000).

Kaczmarek said that the information provided didn't quantify the increase in new businesses and the jobs created by those brought to the county by the WCEDP and said he would not be in favor of approving the request for \$145,000. Foss said she respectfully disagreed and said that it is difficult to quantify hard numbers on the work WCEDP does because economic development is a long game and there are numerous instances of WCEDP helping new businesses find locations and assisting them in securing financing and grants. Daleiden added that if the county doesn't have an Economic Development Partnership, those counties surrounding Wright County that do would be much more likely to attract new businesses, pointing out a pair of businesses in St. Michael that the county board will be touring in

October. Kaczmarek said he wanted his objection to the \$145,000 request to be on the record and, if the consensus of the board voted to approve it, he wouldn't object to the approval of the overall budget and levy. He said constituents question the need for WCEDP because of the rapid growth of the county. Foss said there are several avenues by which prospective businesses and the WCEDP get together and she attends many meetings a year to get the word out on WCEDP.

**RECOMMENDATION: It was the consensus of the board to approve the budget request of \$145,000 for 2023.**

## **VIII. BUDGET 100**

County Administrator Lee Kelly made the presentation. He said the departmental changes requested have been reflected in the documentation the commissioners had in front of them. He said the light and power line item reflects the most current numbers available. Kelly said that the State Legislature had proposed a larger figure for county program aid, but it did not pass so county program aid will remain the same. Vetsch asked if investment income was at \$1.6 million. Kelly said that number should be closer to \$2 million. Vetsch said with interest rates going up, he is optimistic that investment income should increase. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer said that money in Fund 3 and Fund 11 were shifted into the General Fund to be reflected as county program aid. The only change in the revised budget was to increase the amount of fund balance dollars to apply toward reducing the levy from \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget as presented.**

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (8/29/2022)**

Kelly summarized the Monday, August 29 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting.

Vetsch moved to approve the Budget Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations for Monday, August 29. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

## **I. ROAD & BRIDGE**

Wright County Highway Engineer Virgil Hawkins presented the budget for the Highway Department. Projects slated for 2023 include a roundabout at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and CSAH 83, CSAH 35 expansion to four lanes in St. Michael and the CSAH 2 bridge replacement at the Stearns County Line in Fairhaven. Hawkins said the total Highway budget in 2021 was approximately \$30 million and in 2022 it was approximately \$35 million. In 2023, he is anticipating a budget of \$37 million. As to the portion of his budget that is applied to the property tax levy, the totals were \$9.3 million in 2021, \$9.7 million in 2022 and \$7.3 million for 2023. Hawkins said approximately \$14 million in Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds will be used for projects in 2023. Hawkins said that over the next five years, LOST will cover approximately \$70 million in construction project costs.

Assistant Highway Engineer Chad Hausmann highlighted the projects completed in 2022 and those projects scheduled for 2023. The department did a pair of major pavement preservation projects and 27 miles of sealcoating. He added that the county maintains 15,000 road signs and 12,000 pavement markings. In addition to the projects Hawkins listed, Hausmann said in 2023 there will be 24 miles of pavement preservation, 5.5 miles of maintenance paving and 21 miles of sealcoating.

In order to meet the county board's request to remove 7 percent from department budgets, Highway delayed a 2023 pavement preservation project on Hwy. 37 between CSAH 5 and CSAH 6 – a 2.2-mile project – in Albion Township with a cost of \$580,000. A total of \$224,000 was taken out of the highway maintenance contract and \$491,250 was removed from the shop maintenance line item. There was a reduction in the fuel line item noted – dropping the unit price in the line item from \$4.75 a gallon for fuel to \$3.50 a gallon. Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek asked it would ever be practical financially to create all county signs in-house. Hausmann said perhaps at some point, but currently the county doesn't have the necessary equipment to make signs in-house.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approved revised budget at presented.**

## II. WRIGHT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WCHS Office Manager Sally Stevens made the presentation along with WCHS President Ken Gregornick. Stevens said the WCHS pays for repairs and rent and asked if county departments do the same because it would be difficult to make the 7 percent cut requested from the county board. Stevens said the site and building repairs/improvement line item was increased by \$10,000 because significant repairs were needed to WCHS-related buildings at the Wright County Fairgrounds. She said she could remove the additional cost, but the repairs won't be done. Stevens added that when the WCHS gets looped into the county's Internet service, the \$2,200 in that line item could be eliminated. She said the WCHS phone system is an analog system hooked into the phone system at the old Government Center and, when that goes offline, the WCHS will lose phone service. She said WCHS employee are in an old building that isn't HVAC-friendly. She said the WCHS has been able to reduce approximately \$13,000, which would be a 4.2 percent reduction from its \$320,000 budget funded by Wright County. To make any more reductions might result in staffing cuts, which she wanted to avoid.

Stevens said COVID had a tragic impact on WCHS. Trying to get donations since 2020 has been very difficult and membership numbers have dropped significantly. WCHS has three full-time employees and two part-staff (librarians). Stevens does most of the programming work herself and is looking to hire a 10-hour-a-week employee to run some outreach programs to increase revenue. Stevens said payroll and facility costs are 82 percent of the total budget, so even small reductions are difficult to absorb. She said much of the upkeep work used to be done by Sentence-to-Service inmates, but those numbers have dropped considerably during the COVID period. She said the roof of the log cabin may have to be taken down because it has significant roof damage and rotting. She said the small cabin next to the log cabin may have to be taken down and salvaged for supplies to repair the main cabin. She added that memberships are down \$3,000 and that the county subsidizes 77 percent of the WCHS budget.

Stevens said \$10,000 could be removed from site/building improvement line item, \$500 could be removed from the COVID cleaning supplies line item, \$1,000 could be removed from the rentals and leases line item and \$500 removed from the Nelsonian line item in hopes that a donor will cover those costs. Commissioner Mark Daleiden said the county board can keep kicking the can down the road and provide just enough funding to barely keep the WCHS above water. He requested keeping the budget at the original request of \$320,000. The consensus of the board was to allow the \$10,000 in the site/building improvement to stay in the budget and make \$3,000 in reductions. Daleiden asked how much WCHS has in reserves. Stevens said \$150,000 in money market accounts and investments. Stevens added that if WCHS gets in the county's internet loop, it would save \$2,200.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve revised budget with \$3,000 removed for a funding total of \$317,000.**

### **III. WRIGHT COUNTY FAIR BOARD**

Wright County Fair Board member Jeff Wheeler and Fair Board President Ward Westphal made the presentation. Wheeler said the traditional guidebook for the fair was discontinued because it was difficult to get the book out – in 2021 the entire City of Annandale didn't get the fair book until two weeks after the fair ended. The Fair Board approved sending out a mailing to all county residents because the guidebook cost approximately \$15,000. Wheeler said there are two grant programs the Fair Board can access – one is to promote agriculture programs and the other is an arts grant through the Legacy Fund. Wheeler said that the fair lost \$98,830 last year.

Kaczmarek asked what type of financial commitment the City of Howard Lake has for hosting the county fair. Wheeler said the city provides 180,000 gallons of water at no charge. Kaczmarek asked if more events at the Fairgrounds could create more revenue. Wheeler said an issue about having larger events is that there isn't a hotel within 25 miles of the city so that rules out some events. He said small events take place. There will be a demolition derby Sept. 17 which will bring in revenue. All offseason events require work by somebody. He said 20 years ago, the Fair Board was made up of farmers or retired farmers. Now the younger board members have jobs and families that prevent them from putting in the time on nights and weekends. Kaczmarek asked about storage for boats. Wheeler responded that the indoor storage is full and nobody wants outdoor storage during the winter months. He also said that insurance costs to operate the fair have gone up significantly because so few companies underwrite those types of policies needed to protect the fair in the event of an accident taking place on the grounds.

Kaczmarek said all departments were asked to make a 7 percent reduction in their budget requests. Wheeler said the Fair isn't a county department like other departments and the workforce is primarily made up of volunteers that use the support provided by the county to do the maintenance work and upkeep on facilities. Commissioner Christine Husom said that the county leasing the Fairgrounds for \$1 is a very big contribution on top of financial funding. Wheeler said the purpose of the county fair is to provide education, entertainment and competition and he feels that is an important factor. Daleiden asked if not charging an admission fee to anyone age 17 and under has hurt the Fair Board's bottom line. Wheeler estimated that about \$5,500 was not brought in because children's tickets were \$2 each. He added that he anticipates that the free child admission will remain.

Commissioner Darek Vetsch said that to be fair with other departments and organizations, he suggested to drop the requested allocation of \$76,000 down to the \$72,000 to reflect the 5.75 percent reduction. The commissioners felt the reduction was fair given the budget requests.

**RECOMMENDATION: Reduce original funding request of \$76,000 to \$72,000.**

### **IV. REVIEW OF POSITION REQUESTS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Husom reviewed the additional positions and reclassifications that remained in the revised budget proposals. These included six deputies in the Sheriff's Office (which would only be hired to meet additional contract hours with cities in the county) and a Lieutenant position, two new positions in Health and Human Services, three job reclassifications in the Assessor's Office and one reclassification in Veteran Services. Husom said she was comfortable with the positions that were being requested and thanked department heads for being mindful of the burden homeowners are going to absorb in the levy due to the startling one-year increase in residential property values.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve position requests from the Sheriff's Office to hire six additional deputies (only if contracted hours increase to cover these positions) and a Lieutenant. Approve positions in Health and Human Services (a Waiver and Community Support Supervisor and using the vacant 0.5 FTE MnCHOICES social worker position as a partial funding source to hire a 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Coordinator position). Approve three position reclassifications in the Assessor's Office (three Property Appraiser I to Property Appraiser II) and a reclassification in Veteran Services from an Administrative Assistant I to an Assistant Veteran Services Officer.**

The Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) list for 2023 was reviewed. Kaczmarek asked if insurance costs would rise if the \$90,000 security/surveillance camera installation at the Public Works Building wasn't completed. Risk Manager Tim Dahl said camera surveillance is a critical tool for a potential legal defense when accusations are made against the county. Dahl added that cameras serve as a loss prevention tool because it adds "more eyes" to the county campus

and provides a record. He added that this fills a gap in the security network that he felt was needed – saying that the installation would be a future investment. Dahl added that the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) will no longer renew cybersecurity coverage, which means counties will have to go into the open market to provide coverage. Kaczmarek said he didn't see the benefit in spending \$90,000 for this project. Commissioners Husom, Daleiden and Vetsch all provided their opinions to keep the security camera project at the Public Works Building.

County Administrator Lee Kelly said that the projects in the 2023 CIP budget had been discussed at the beginning of the budget sessions and were previous vetted.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve the list of Capital Improvement Projects in the CIP Plan for 2023 as presented, noting that some eligible projects will be funded through American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.**

#### **V. BUDGET RECAP AND REVIEW OF OVERALL LEVY**

Vetsch reviewed the Administration budget and stated that, after some research and discussions with both Administration and Finance, one FTE in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Administration can be eliminated with \$50,000 of the FTE salary being moved into the Information Technology (IT) Professional Services line item for the 2023 budget. Vetsch stated that with the reductions in the budgets, the county levy increase is down to 3.89 percent, which he said is needed because of the increase that residential properties are going to pay because of the dramatic impact the increase in residential property values sustained in 2022. Vetsch added that to reach that levy number, \$2,156,027 will be taken from reserve funds to apply toward reducing the levy. Kelly said that the Finance Team will recalculate totals to come to a final number that will be fully vetted. Husom said it was a difficult year, but thanked department heads and staff for pulling together to accomplish the goal of keeping budgets and the levy as low as possible.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Approve the elimination the Enterprise Resource Planning Administrator position from the Administration budget and allocating \$50,000 of that FTE salary into the IT Professional Services line item for the 2023 budget.**
2. **Approve taking \$2,156,027 from reserve funds to apply toward the 2023 certified levy to reduce the levy increase to 3.89 percent.**

#### **DITCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE INFORMATIONAL (9/7/2022)**

Kaczmarek summarized the Ditch Committee of the Whole meeting. He said there were name changes emailed to staff.

Kaczmarek moved to approve the Ditch Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations with corrections. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

#### **I. Informational Meeting on the Repair Report for County Ditch # 31 Phase # 1**

The board, acting as the drainage authority for County Ditch #31, heard a presentation on Phase #1 Repairs from Joe Lewis of Houston Engineering Inc. Public comments were then received on the repairs, with discussion focusing on the extent of repairs, tree removal, and methods to attempt to reduce costs. The board agreed to consider all submitted bids for this report project. The board directed staff to bring back the low bid to the next board meeting for approval and to move forward with Phase #1 Repairs.

**RECOMMENDATION: To have staff to bring back the low bid to the next board meeting for approval and to move forward with Phase #1 Repairs.**

#### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (9/13/2022)**

Daleiden summarized the meeting minutes. Husom said to remain consistent with session two, the first three are last names, make them all last names. On Page 2 when Vetsch said, “beyond 40 hours per pay period would be considered a remote worker.” Husom said this did not make sense and recommended striking the sentence from the minutes. Two lines down from the stricken line should have quotation marks around “occasional” and single quotation marks around “meant.” Kaczmarek said he wanted to separate out Item 4 if the motion makers agreed. Vetsch clarified his comments between a remote worker and an occasional worker. Daleiden said his comment was to ensure the definition remained in the minutes.

Daleiden moved to approve the Personnel and Employee Relations minutes and recommendations with Items 1,2,3,5,6. The

motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0.

Vetsch moved to approve the Personnel and Employee Relations minutes and recommendations Item 4. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 4-1. Kaczmarek was opposed.

### **PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (9/13/2022)**

Wetter summarized the Planning and Zoning Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations. Wetter recommended to have staff reach out to other counties to see if they had an existing fee schedule. She changed the recommendation to “change the process for townships to receive one-off ordinances to the following process: the townships would have to apply to the Planning and Zoning Department for an ordinance amendment with a majority resolution pass. If that ordinance is not adopted, the townships can then petition onto the County Board for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a one-off ordinance for their townships based on a fee schedule set by the County Board. The townships would need to go through the amendment changing process before taking the request before the board in the form of an MOU.”

Daleiden said on Page 4, second paragraph, last line of the paragraph, he would like to strike “Daleiden noted that there was nothing legally requiring townships to bring forward changes to the county board.”

Wetter moved to approve the Planning & Zoning Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations with changes. The motion was seconded by Daleiden. The motion carried 5-0.

#### ***I. Discuss Proposed Solid Waste Ordinance***

*Planning and Zoning Administrator Barry Rhineberger introduced the new Environmental Health Supervisor Jacob Wagaman to the board. Rhineberger then started to discuss the concept of the Solid Waste Ordinance stating the inception was before his time with the county. Rhineberger said he was looking at a complete rewrite of the ordinance and the current language was not sufficient for licensing standards. He and his staff were looking to Sherburne County’s Solid Waste Ordinance as a baseline for Wright County’s new ordinance creation and adoption. Rhineberger said when referencing enforcement, he was strictly looking at the hauler aspect of enforcement. He was looking for approval to publish this new ordinance that he had drafted and presented in the agenda. Rhineberger’s plan was to send the draft ordinance out to all municipalities in the county and receive comments. He said after 30 days, he would bring the draft ordinance with any revisions or comments before the board for approval.*

*Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer said in order to publish this ordinance, the board would need to set a date for a public hearing regarding this ordinance. He said he understood there was a concern regarding how to enforce this new hauler licensing portion of the ordinance. Kryzer said he had reached out to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agenda (MPCA) to ask how it went about enforcement and monitoring. The MPCA had told him in their experience haulers self-police well and thought the county should not be concerned over this portion of the ordinance. Commissioner Mark Daleiden asked who would do the follow up enforcement. Kryzer said Planning and Zoning would send a letter to notify the hauler that it needed to be licensed when hauling within the county.*

*Commissioner Darek Vetsch asked where the minimum hauling fees were specified in the draft ordinance. Rhineberger said this would be adopted by the board in the beginning of a new year and it could change on a yearly basis if the board deemed necessary. Vetsch said he was speaking specifically about citywide garbage and stated that he did not want the haulers to subsidize citywide garbage collection. Rhineberger said the fees were based on volume rather than a set value. Vetsch said he wanted to have a discussion on this aspect of the draft ordinance. Kryzer noted that this fee schedule was not in the draft ordinance at that time as fees would be decided at the start of a new year. Vetsch asked if the fee would be put on the residents. Kryzer said it was at a volume rate that was variable. There was discussion on whether or not garbage was subsidized and Daleiden confirmed that Monticello operated through a subsidy.*

*Husom asked about an underlined section in the draft ordinance and asked how the term department was defined. Rhineberger said the term department was referring to Planning and Zoning. Husom thought the verbiage should be changed to reflect who the department was specifically. Kryzer recommended keeping the verbiage as it was in the draft to give the county flexibility to redefine the term if necessary. Husom asked that the red portion of the draft removed before it was distributed to the public.*

*Vetsch asked, regarding Item 4.5C on Page 20, if there would be a recommended fee schedule ready for the public hearing.*

Rhineberger said there had been discussion regarding what the fees could be. He said it was discussed that haulers would have a base fee plus an additional fee per vehicle based on volume. He said there would be a database with the vehicles and VIN numbers to track the licensing. Rhineberger noted that to his knowledge Wright County was one of the last counties not licensing haulers. Kryzer recommended that the hauler fee not exceed \$25 per truck. Vetsch wanted to confirm that the recommendation was a flat fee for the company and a fee per truck to balance out the playing field between larger and smaller companies. Kryzer confirmed this was the intention. Kryzer noted that Item 4.4F on Page 19, charges on Mixed Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), addressed the question regarding the fee being variable based on volume. Rhineberger said he approached this draft from an enforceability of an ordinance perspective rather than specifically about solid waste.

Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek asked what the staff impact would be. Rhineberger said he would not be losing personnel to this as they would be duties to a position rather than the opposite way, and gave the water testing staffing impact brought up during budget discussions as an example of this in action.

Kaczmarek asked, regarding Item 4.4C on Page 18, whether garbage trucks were going through Wright County for labeling and asked how it would affect Rhineberger's staff's time to set up locations to charge and label haulers. Rhineberger said his staff would send out labels based on the list of trucks and VIN numbers. His staff would enforce the permitting that way rather than going to the haulers. Kaczmarek wanted a clear figure specifying impact to staffing cost. Rhineberger thought this would be something that comes out of a first-year review of the ordinance enforcement process. Vetsch asked if Kryzer or Rhineberger knew how many trucks Sherburne County licensed.

Rhineberger did not say if he knew the number of licensed trucks in Sherburne County but said his staff already had a sticker mocked up for the licensed trucks and that cost would be minimal. He said Planning and Zoning's permanent inspection vendor had a licensing portion to their software that he wanted to utilize if the spreadsheet became too cumbersome. Vetsch thought there would be an issue with unlicensed outside county haulers coming in and causing an issue with licensed internal haulers. Daleiden asked if Rhineberger planned to have numbers on the stickers or if they would be general. Rhineberger said the intention was to have numbers associated with the stickers. Kryzer said that the intention was to have a different color each year and have numbers on the stickers as well. He added that the estimate cost for this process was around \$500 and stated that the cost for tracking and stickers was minimal. Husom thought the review of the first year would be the best way to see where to cut cost and how to do a cost analysis.

Kaczmarek asked if Item 7.1A-E Solid Waste Landfills the backfill was new or existing. Kryzer said most of the items were included in the current Solid Waste Ordinance in the county, with the addition of the verbiage "or well" in section C and all of section D. He said he and Rhineberger were looking to MPCA for the regulations which specified 1,000-foot setback from state highways, which would then be taken and applied to county highways as well. Kaczmarek asked how this change would affect existing landfills. Kryzer said it would not affect existing landfills, as they would be grandfathered into the ordinance. Kaczmarek asked for clarification on whether trash needed to be dumped 1,000 feet away from the road. Kryzer confirmed that was correct.

Vetsch asked if city and township vehicles were exempt from the licensing requirement. Kryzer did not think those vehicles would be required to be licensed. Rhineberger said if the cities or townships decided to have their own collection service and drive their own trucks, cities and townships would have to meet the standards dictated by the ordinance. Vetsch asked if compost materials were considered hauling goods. Rhineberger said this definition was only applicable to licensed haulers. Kryzer said according to Item 2.95 Self Hauler, it defined a person who transports their own solid waste for solid waste management purposes as a self-hauler and would be exempt. Vetsch was concerned for the cities and townships who provided occasional services such as hauling away Christmas trees for residents as unlicensed haulers. Kryzer thought the \$25 for licensing would not stop the cities and townships from hauling and he said it was important for the cities and townships to report these numbers even when hauling on an occasional basis. Rhineberger said there could be a designation between a licensed hauler and a self-hauler, and this is where the self-hauler would still report but not be required to pay for a license. Vetsch said he wanted to be able to articulate to residents the reasoning behind this designation and explain when a self-hauler or licensed hauler would be applicable in a situation.

Commissioner Mary Wetter said there was a recycle day where residents were charged for the dumping items that could not be collected on regular garbage collection days. Rhineberger said this fell under a self-hauling situation and he would still get reports on these "Clean Up Days". Husom said the city of Buffalo had a similar process that if a resident had something that needed to be hauled away, the city would charge the resident an additional fee. Rhineberger confirmed all

*these unique situations discussed would be covered under the new ordinance.*

*Daleiden recommended asked if the public hearing should be during a regular board meeting. Kryzer confirmed this would be ideal. Husom asked what the minimum posting was. Kryzer said minimum was 10 days but recommended 30 days' notice to allow cities and townships to review and submit comments. Vetsch recommended staff create a cover letter to give a synopsis for the update to the ordinance. Daleiden recommended the public hearing be scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 25. There was a board consensus for this date and time.*

**RECOMMENDATION: To schedule a Solid Waste Ordinance public hearing at 9:30 a.m. on October 25, 2022.**

## **II. Discuss Township Ordinance Enforcement**

*Rhineberger explained that currently there were three townships that had adopted their own ordinances for zoning ordinances regarding specific uses. The townships have every right to adopt their own ordinances and Rhineberger said without a contract from the county board townships were required to do enforcement on their own. He had conversations with townships in the past but wanted to be sure it was the board's intention to enter into a contract with the townships for ordinance enforcement purposes. Rhineberger said there was only one active contract for enforcement with a township at that time. He said he had met with the township and its intention was to continue with county enforcement as the township was used to. Rhineberger said entering a contract with the county for enforcement was a sentiment that was increasing in movement among the townships. He said the more of these he gets, the more difficult it is for him and his staff to keep track of and properly enforce as the township ordinances are stricter than the county ordinance from which it is based.*

*Husom asked which townships had their own ordinances at that time. Rhineberger specified that he was speaking about Rockford Township's gravel ordinance and a contract with the county for enforcement, Franklin Township's solar ordinance, and Buffalo Township's solar ordinance and moratorium for gravel. Rhineberger said he wanted to know if he should help townships write their own ordinances or if it was the board's intention to write a contract for enforcement for township ordinance enforcement. Husom thought the issue was a complex one as the townships' ordinances needed to be at least as restrictive as the county's ordinances. Rhineberger said he had run into that specific issue in the past with townships.*

*Vetsch said he was leaning towards not continuing to have these one-off ordinance enforcements as it was getting difficult to enforce language that was different from ordinance language that the county used. He thought this made compliance more difficult between townships, on top of the additional cost of enforcement. He saw two solution options, those being the townships could apply for an ordinance change or townships could take on planning and zoning themselves and take on enforcement. Husom thought this could be problematic and become too cumbersome to have the county continue to take on enforcement. She thought one offs should be the townships responsibility.*

*Kaczmarek asked if there was a cost to Rockford Township, Franklin Township, and Buffalo Township for having the county do enforcement. Rhineberger said there was not, and stated that he did the research, recommendations, and assistance for free. He added that it was difficult to track all the township specific needs associated with their ordinances. Vetsch asked how Rhineberger made the distinction between saying yes to one township and no to another. He thought there needed to be an objective way to decide which townships to provide assistance to. Kaczmarek thought the service should come at a cost to the townships as it was taking staff time and was not a service offered across the board throughout the county. He was in favor of adding a fee charged to townships seeking assistance with ordinance enforcement. Vetsch asked if there would be a fee schedule for township ordinance enforcement and noted that he struggled with how to quantify a fee across the board for ordinance enforcement as it could vary so greatly. Rhineberger agreed and said that in his experience, the time put into assisting townships far exceeded what was being charged.*

*Kaczmarek asked if the township representatives present had any input. Victor Township Supervisor Troy Lange said his residents had concerns about the continued loss of farmland to solar fields. His concern came from his fire chief as there was no document in place that gave the fire departments a plan for emergency situations that may arise from solar fields. Husom asked if Victor Township had its own solar ordinance. Rhineberger said he had been working with Victor Township on the language for the ordinance. He said this was a good example of what the board was talking about and pointed out that there was certain language that needed to be included in township ordinances. Vetsch said he would rather see the townships apply to have an ordinance changed rather than having different ordinances in each township.*

*Kaczmarek said there had been interest in doing training for fire departments because of the increase in solar fields. He*

*did however think there was a constitutional issue with demanding access to a private solar farm to review the layout. Rhineberger said he was working to draft a document that would give specific hazard mitigation layout information to fire departments for emergency situation preparedness.*

*Vetsch thought in some situations there was language already present in ordinances that addressed concerns and answered questions that residents and townships had, and it was a matter of educating the townships. Kryzer recommended that if a township wanted a change to an ordinance, that the township submit a formal request to Planning and Zoning. From there, Planning and Zoning could bring the request to the Planning Commission, who would either discuss the request with the township or bring the request forward to the County Board with a recommended solution. Vetsch thought there should still be a small fee associated with the requests, in order to diminish the number of small requests being brought forward.*

*Daleiden said this should be a topic discussed at the Township Quarterly Meeting. Husom thought there should be a standard in place regarding ordinance changes and enforcement on a county level to maintain a baseline across townships. Vetsch thought the townships would still want control of their ordinances and reiterated that the process of a fee schedule should be considered. Rhineberger said looking at the townships and assisting with their ordinances was main the intention.*

*Husom thought the county should reach out to the other townships to see if they would be willing to work with the county to get small changes made so the county could continue to be the enforcer. Lange said he did not want to diverge from the county ordinance, he just wanted to be sure the ordinance addressed the specific concerns of the township. Silver Creek Township Supervisor Chris Newman agreed that there should be a process and a fee charge to townships when requesting to make changes to ordinances. He thought there should be an additional step added to the process and suggested the option of a fee schedule. He said a fee schedule for the one-offs would allow the ordinances to be more specific to resident concerns. He did not think the townships would be opposed to a fee schedule.*

*Kryzer said that typically when the county enters into an agreement with a township it takes the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). He said that at that time the MOU did not include fees, but that item could be added. Newman said he did not want to dissuade from county enforcement of ordinances and was not opposed to the creation of a fee schedule. Rhineberger said that enforcement was a term being used more as administration of an ordinance rather than an enforcement of an ordinance. He said a fee scheduled would be difficult to quantify for administration of an ordinance rather than enforcement. He did not think there could be a set fee for this as each township could have a different expectations and applications. Kaczmarek asked if Rhineberger could check with other counties to see if any had an existing fee schedule for this type of ordinance enforcement or service. Rhineberger said he would do that.*

*Vetsch recommended that in order for townships to receive a one-off ordinance, the townships would have to apply to the Planning and Zoning for an ordinance amendment with a majority resolution pass. If that ordinance is not adopted, the townships can then petition onto the County Board for an MOU for a one-off ordinance for their township based on a fee schedule set by the County Board. He said the townships would need to go through the amendment changing process before taking the request before the board in the form of an MOU.*

*Kryzer said he thought that was a fair recommendation and thought the proposal from Victor Township fire chief would be beneficial to adopt countywide. There was a consensus from the board that this was a good discussion to have at the Planning Commission.*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. To have staff reach out to other counties to see if there was an existing fee schedule in place for ordinance enforcement.***
- 2. To change the process for townships to receive one-off ordinances to the following process: he townships would have to apply to the Planning and Zoning for an ordinance amendment with a majority resolution pass. If that ordinance is not adopted, the townships can then petition onto the County Board for an MOU for a one-off ordinance for their township based on a fee schedule set by the County Board. The townships would need to go through the amendment changing process before taking the request before the board in the form of an MOU.***
- 3. To discuss a first proposal at the Planning Commission to adopt countywide within the existing ordinance.***

**COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP (9/13/2022)**

Vetsch summarized the county board workshop.

Vetsch moved to approve the County Board Workshop minutes and recommendations. The motion was seconded by Wetter. The motion carried 5-0.

**I. Schedule Meetings as Needed**

Administrator Lee Kelly had nothing to recommend.

**II. Budget 2023**

Kelly introduced the draft of the budget resolution to be voted on Tuesday, September 20. The draft was as it was left at the end of Monday, August 29. He said the staff had updated the tax impact statement as well as the overall budget page with the levy at 3.89 percent. He said the fund balance of \$2.1 million was added into the budget to bring about the 3.89 percent levy. Commissioner Christine Husom confirmed the budget was being voted on Tuesday, September 20.

Commissioner Mike Kaczmarek said he noted the outside entities or departments had all taken a reduction or were given a reduction in their budget except for the Wright County Economic Development Partnership (EDP) which had its budget increased to \$145,000. Kaczmarek said the EDP received discounted rent. He asked how the EDP had its budget increased when every other entity's budget decreased. Husom said this question was discussed when the board met with the EDP. She said the budget requested was their bottom line. She said the EDP was a large department with a large budget. Commissioner Darek Vetsch said the board could have pushed harder. He said 7 percent of the whole budget was different from 7 percent of the discretionary budget. He said wages were removed from consideration as they were not discretionary. He said of its total budget about \$50,000 of the budget request was considered discretionary. Vetsch said some of the programming could either be removed or diluted. He said the discretionary budget could be decreased by 7 percent or \$3,500 to coincide with the other budgets.

Kaczmarek said the county fair which takes half the money still showed a loss. He said this shows that departments are still going to struggle with or without a reduction to their budgets. He said if he was a department head, he would be concerned that the EDP did not have its budget reduced. Kaczmarek said this should be discussed to be fair and consistent across the board. He said not every department was reduced 7 percent. Husom said some budget items were set and could not be reduced like salaries and benefits.

Commissioner Wetter said since every entity was reduced some it would be fair for the EDP budget to be reduced. Vetsch said EDP's fund balance had grown and it was using its fund balance as were other departments. Commissioner Mark Daleiden asked if the fair board was asked to take a budget cut. Kaczmarek said that it was asked. Kelly said its budget had been reduced.

Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux said that the fair board was asked to take a reduction. She asked the board if the request was to have the EDP redo its budget from \$145,000 to \$141,500. Kaczmarek said if there was an average amount that had been cut then maybe that would be fairer. Lemieux said she did not believe there was an average as every department's budgets were different. Kaczmarek asked if there was a consensus. Daleiden said it would be good to talk to EDP Director Jolene Foss prior to reducing the EDP budget. He said he believed \$3,500 was not going to make a huge difference to the EDP's plans. Daleiden said while the budget could not be increased, it could be decreased before the end of the year. Daleiden said it could be done at a later time. Kelly said the EDP had a staff outing and was not available to attend the meeting. Vetsch said a budget decrease would not change the tax levy as the deduction would be deleted out of the fund balance. He said the deduction would be brought up at the Tuesday, September 20 board meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION: Continue with the budget as planned and talk with EDP Director Jolene Foss about reducing EDP's discretionary budget 7 percent, or \$3,500. The budget would be brought up for vote on Tuesday, September 20.**

**III. Gravel Tax Policy**

County Auditor-Treasurer Robert Hiivala introduced Ordinance 22-2 to discuss the definitions of terms inside the ordinance and to outline how the special reserve fund would be spent. He said that in 1980 the state introduced the depletion tax, allowing counties to assess a tax on aggregate materials removed. He said Wright County adopted the Depletion Tax in 2002. He said in 2009 the state raised the tax to 21.5 cents per cubic yard and 15 cents per ton with 42.5 percent going to the Highway Department, 42.5 percent to the municipalities where the aggregate was mined, and 15 percent to the special reserve fund. He said 5 percent of the total tax has been kept by the county for the administration of the tax. He said that the

special reserve fund could be used for reclamation or conservation needs if there were no abandoned pits or quarries in the county. He said this was why it was important to define the terms in the ordinance.

Hiivala said in Ordinance 22-2 § 111.002 Item 6 "Abandoned Pit" was defined as any pit, deposit, or quarry located on public or tax forfeited property that has not been reclaimed to the applicable standards of the jurisdiction. Vetsch asked Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer if the definitions were consistent with the state's definitions. He explained this question as due to being asked about topsoil mining. He said some municipalities did not have pits, but they were mining topsoil. Kryzer said he did not believe topsoil was considered an aggregate material. Hiivala said Minnesota Statute 298.75 defines the materials that would be subject to the aggregate tax and topsoil was not included.

Hiivala said privately-owned property could not use the reserve fund for reclamation as that was something that should have been a part of the initial plan when applying for the permit to mine. Vetsch asked about pits that were abandoned or should have been reclaimed but were not. Husom said these were pits that had been grandfathered in. Hiivala specified these were pits that were in operation before the ordinance. Daleiden said he asked about abandoned pits and gave the example of one on Highway 25. Vetsch said there were pits that cities own that they could apply to use the special reserve funds to reclaim them.

Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice said in the writing of the ordinance, he had spoken with other counties on their procedures and how they defined "abandoned pits". He said a couple of counties had developed an application process and created a committee to review applications and determine eligibility. He gave an example of a pit once owned by Owner A and then sold to Owner B. He said this pit would not be eligible as it was still privately owned, and the responsibility of the care was on the owner. He said it had been difficult finding an abandoned pit that would be eligible. He said that owners could put applications in for reclamation and environmental projects to bring an area back to its natural state.

Husom said she had seen clean fill used to reclaim sites, so that it may eventually be developed into housing or commercial property. She asked if this was a possibility. Mattice said this was a possibility.

Kaczmarek asked if there was any thought to making this a reimbursement process as opposed to outright dispensing money up front and wishing them well. Mattice said the process was recommended as a reimbursable award. He said if the board accepted the creation of the committee recommended by this ordinance, then an applicant would go before the committee and once approved would go before the county board for approval. He said once the applicant was approved by the board the applicant would then submit invoices and a work progress report to the Finance Department for up to \$10,000 in reimbursements, depending on the amount awarded. Kaczmarek asked about a hypothetical property owner who allowed his pit to fall into disrepair, what would the county do to ensure the pit was cleaned up. Kryzer said there was one pit that the county would be pursuing enforcement action against next year. He said the county would be assessing the property for all the cost of fixing the mess the owner had created and not cleaned up.

Vetsch said the board should set aside a dollar amount of \$10,000 to \$15,000 each year for reclamation help. He said he thought there would be one township or city a year that asked for help and one abandoned mine every few years. He said if no applications were made that money set aside could be transferred to provide environmental improvements.

Hiivala said Ordinance 22-2 authorized the proposed Aggregate Tax Committee to review applications and make recommendations to the board. Vetsch asked who would be applying. Mattice said it could be any township or government entity. Hiivala, Vetsch and Mattice discussed what would qualify for environmental reclamation with the example given of a township seeking help to recover from erosion to its roads versus wear and tear of those same roads. Mattice asked if the proposal needed to specify what was eligible and was not eligible for conservation and environmental reclamation projects to be considered by the Aggregate Tax Committee. Vetsch said this was important as there were many projects such as roads which ran along lakes that due to erosion had large amounts of gravel falling into the lakes. Vetsch said he wanted to see what circumstances an opportunity for a matching grant from the county would be.

Hiivala said the topic talked about was the extent of reclamation. He said the reclamation plan put out by Howard Lake could be detailed. He said the city wanted to put bike paths or walking paths around the water. He said what the board wanted to do was define a minimum dollar amount it could put toward reclamation. He said the proposal recommended a maximum of \$10,000 with a 100 percent match for a \$20,000 total grant.

Vetsch said the fund balance was more than \$400,000 and had grown by more than \$10,000 a year. Vetsch said the committee would be lucky to get two applicants a year based on the parameters. He suggested raising the maximum to \$15,000 per applicant with the match. He was concerned \$20,000 would not be enough. Mattice said the match could be labor and equipment or cash. Hiivala said the maximum would be changed to \$30,000 per project with the base at \$15,000. Kaczmarek said the county needed to have enough money to cover the amount if everyone who was eligible took what they were eligible for. He said the county knew the time frame when applications were available. He said the county needed to ensure it had the right dollar amount of reserves on hand.

Daleiden asked how many active pits were in the county and how many had not been closed. Vetsch said he believed the number was 34 to 40. Planning and Zoning Administrator Barry Rhineberger said he was unsure of the number but had a

spreadsheet that showed the locations and numbers. Hiivala said he had reached out to different jurisdictions that did their own zoning and asked them to identify pits and whether they were active or inactive. He said he wanted to know what kind of reclamation plan they required when they were issuing mining permits. Daleiden said having that information would help make a better decision on how many pits there were and how many needed to be reclaimed. Vetsch said when someone went to get a mining permit, they were required to have a reclamation plan. He said the fund balance money was for an emergency and not to cover private owners. He gave the example of an owner running a mine for 20 years. After all that time the land was worthless, and the owner stopped paying taxes and walked away. That mine was now the county's problem and the county could apply to use emergency funds to fix the problem. He also said if the owner was done with the land the county could apply to use it if it was city, county or township-owned land or tax forfeited. Vetsch said the more than 30 pits active in Wright County were not a liability to the fund balance if they did not become tax forfeited which was unlikely.

Mattice said most of the active pits are bonded and have reclamation plans attached to them. Vetsch mentioned Silver Creek Township. He said it costs Silver Creek about \$16,000 every few years to reclaim a portion of their pits. The township could apply for the grant and Wright County's portion would be \$8,000. Vetsch said this was not on an annual basis. He said this could allow some much-needed environmental projects get done that would have ongoing benefits.

Hiivala said the proposal was for a committee to handle applications and make recommendations which would then be returned to the board for a vote.

Daleiden asked about importers, companies bringing in aggregates from outside the county and stockpiling in the county. He asked specifically if the importing company was taxed on the imported material. Hiivala said the county could not double tax the product. Daleiden asked if the importers were supposed to share their importing activities with the county. Kryzer said the problem was that all questionable activity had to be proved which would involve a lot of staff time. He said the county's best bet was to set up a situation where the gravel pits policed themselves. He said reports needed to be publicized, letting the companies who paid their fees to the county know the companies that did not, but should have. Vetsch said crushed concrete was not taxable.

Kaczmarek asked that with all the records haulers or pit owners were required to have available, what would trigger a pit audit? Hiivala said that the county would send out an audit compliance questionnaire randomly asking for supporting documents and assessing fines as warranted. Kaczmarek said that as word spread among the aggregate companies, they would be more careful to ensure the rules were being followed. He asked when the new committee would be addressed. Mattice said at this meeting it was a suggestion. The board would recommend the members. Kaczmarek asked who the "department" in the recommendation was. He said he would be interested in joining this committee. Hiivala said he were considering changing "department" possibly to "designee".

Mattice said the administration would clean up the document and re-present it to the board for a vote. Vetsch said having a township resident on the committee could create a conflict of interest as they would potentially be voting on their own requests. Kryzer said the committee would only be able to make recommendations. Final approval stayed with the board. Husom said going forward the board could appoint people temporarily until 2023 when it would be officially listed as a committee. Daleiden said cities and townships needed to be asked to apply for help. Kryzer said this could wait until next year so the new county board could vote on it.

Husom asked if there was consensus to adopt the ordinance. Vetsch asked if there would be a public hearing. Mattice said a public hearing could be held in October. Consensus was to move forward with the process and hold a public hearing.

**RECOMMENDATION: The consensus was to move forward with the process and schedule a public hearing.**

#### **IV. Fair Audit**

Hiivala said the requested audit allowed him to look hard at what the county board wanted information on while he gave the fair board feedback. He said he looked at internal controls, and legal compliance, and he followed agreed-upon procedures by the state auditors on small entities. He looked at board minutes and conflicts of interest. He said the fair board is a quasi-governmental entity; he had the fair board take the same oath as the Wright County Board to ensure it is following rules of conflicts of interest. His intent was to look for actual numbers used for the 2021 fair. He said he appreciated the fair boards use of QuickBooks as it made analyzing the financial data easier. He sampled 10 dispersals and found the fair board had adequate support for every expenditure including payroll. He looked at the revenue and receipts of revenue and found them to all be supported. He said regarding the legal compliance, since he was there on site this year, he was looking at the controls in place. He observed how the fair handled ticket sales, which is the largest point of contact between the fair and the public. He said the fair sells gate admissions, parking, and beer. Hiivala said he observed the money collection procedure at the end of the night and watched how the fair board used the reconciliation spreadsheets. There are internal controls, they are not written but are implied and that is what Hiivala tested. He said nothing amiss was found in the audit. While doing legal compliance he discovered that at the end of the night the fair board deposited too much money in the bank and therefore was under-collateralized. He said the bank had caught this and had pledged the collateral. Hiivala told the fair board that it was its job to ensure the deposit was collateralized, and the board has added that to a procedure going forward.

Hiivala said the major source of revenue is people registering for the fair as a vendor. The vendors will store items at the fairgrounds when the fair is not going on. He said the biggest moving part is taking the ticket sales. There is a safe on-site with armed guards. He made the recommendation to take the extra cash on hand daily and deposit it in the bank. He said he was there when this was presented to the board, and they balked at it. He recommended the board to limit the amount of cash it had on hand. He said for seasonal income he recommended including that amount in the minutes. Hiivala had been shown by the individual in charge of the storage on a presentation that listed every building and who was renting the space. He recommended presenting this information to the fair board and making it a part of the minutes. Vetsch asked what would happen to the information if that individual in charge of the storage on site was to leave the board and it had not been made a part of the minutes. Hiivala said there is a charge committee led by the individual. He said there are signed contracts. The best practice would be to make all the information a part of the board minutes. Husom said it was curious how the county owned the property, but the fair board received the money for the rental of the storage. Hiivala said while he did not ask the question but did say that as stewards of the property it was the fair boards responsibility to make the best use of the property on the county board's behalf. Wetter said that technically the dairy building was built by people in the dairy community who gave money to build that building. She said there are other buildings that the fair board built. Husom said there was a question about the leasing of space, are there some parts of the property that are being leased out. Hiivala asked if she meant off season, then yes, the fair board had done that in the past. He said the fair board was actively looking to get more events during the fairground off season. He said the fair board was using the storage but didn't want to have to move all the equipment out of it. Husom asked if there was a farmer paying rent for the property the county owned. Hiivala said where the mud races were located was a field that was being planted by a local farmer. He said as long as the farmer maintained the property and removed the crops by the time the fair began, he could use it per his agreement with the fair board. Husom confirmed with Hiivala the field was rented for free. Kaczmarek said the value of the crop is not what it used to be. Depending on if it was a dry year, farmers were getting little value for their crops. He said that in the proposal, Page 3, Number 9 said the county could have the assessor look at the land and determine what the actual use of that property was. Hiivala said the county did pay the tax on the fairgrounds, per the assessor's office it is eligible to apply for tax exemption. Vetsch said the tax was an inconsequential amount of money and the board paid the tax to itself. Hiivala said the fair board was not concerned about the taxes. Vetsch said the money paid was a donation to the local school board. Husom said the fair board went from three checking accounts to two checking accounts and two savings accounts. Hiivala said the fair board did move a checking account to Bank West when the previous bank changed ownership. He said it was a small board, but some things were needed to improve. He said the treasurer and secretary can sign checks. He recommended a third member not involved in the issuance of checks to take the time to look at the bank statements.

Wetter asked about insurance and liability since the county owned the land. She asked if someone fell off the ferris wheel was the county liable? Hiivala referred to Risk Manager Tim Dahl. Dahl said the fair board had insurance through Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) with exclusions. Dahl was working with the fair so the county and Agricultural Society could know who was covered, when and how. He said there was no time when the county could not be sued. He said being sued did not mean the county was liable, but as the property owner the county had exclusive control over the lease. Vetsch asked if it was subject to tort benefits. Dahl said it was subject to loss. Kryzer said if the fair was bankrupt the county was left holding the bag. Dahl said the county was working on getting certificates of insurance and ultimately, he was working on updating the lease. Hiivala said the fair did have spectator insurance and insurance to cover the employees who drove Gators around.

Kaczmarek asked about investment opportunities. Hiivala identified an opportunity to invest the fund balance. He encouraged the fair board to work with a broker, he believed it could get 3.5 percent interest for nine months. Kaczmarek asked, with the board changing at the beginning of the year, when a good time was to follow up on the recommendations he addressed. Hiivala said the county needed to direct him to return. Husom said it would be good to follow-up with the board. Hiivala and Husom discussed the breakout of different sales events and the events that brought people in.

**RECOMMENDATION: To follow-up to on recommendations made during the audit.**

#### **V. Compost Facility Auction Update**

Kelly provided a rundown of the items listed at auction or being listed at auction in the near future. Included were items listed on publicsurplus.com which had been used for the past few years. He said he had seen some good results of things being sold which allowed him to take a look around campus to determine if things were still needed or could be sold. Wetter said she had brought the subject up due to the skid steer being sold without a replacement for staff to use. She also said the loader from the Highway Department was in need of work to make it more serviceable. Mattice said anyone who had a stake in the process had gone to the compost facility to walk through and discuss the equipment. He said the skid steer was

identified by staff as not being used often enough to maintain. He said it was mostly used as a broom and the Highway Department had a much better option for sweeping. He said the loader did need some repairs. He said the loader was in decent shape. Mattice said the staff had been spoken to. Wetter said she did not want to see any staff hurt because of lack of proper gear. Mattice said the staff knew they could borrow items from the Highway Department. Mattice said the county had received \$26,000 for the items auctioned so far. He said there were still items available for auction and some items that were still needing to go up for auction.

Kaczmarek said he was not sure the chain of command was followed in complaining about equipment and wondered why someone would throw a wrench into the process. Mattice said the person may not have been in the room, but the supervisors were when the equipment was discussed. Kaczmarek asked about the truck scale. Mattice said it was sold if the buyer came to pick it up. Kaczmarek asked what was in the bins listed for auction. Mattice said they are roll off bins of varying condition and the bins were not full. Daleiden asked about the hole left by the truck scale. Mattice said it would be filled in with gravel and cones put around it so it would not be an obstruction.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### Approve The 2023 Budget Resolution.

Kelly said the board needed to adopt a preliminary levy prior to Friday, September 30, which is being brought forward at a 3.89 percent levy increase for 2023. Daleiden said the increase was no fault to the county assessor or the taxpayers of the county. He said the fault for the raised levy fell on the state legislators not working and getting the homestead credit fixed which is why this was all put on the homeowners' backs. He said most of it is cost increases for employees and insurance. Husom said the percentage of the county's growth was higher than the percentage of the levy. She said the board doesn't have control over property values. She was grateful to go forward with this. She said it was a lot of work.

Daleiden moved to approve the 2023 budget resolution accepting the proposed tax levy to the county at \$90,652,259. The motion was seconded by Vetsch. The motion carried 5-0. On a roll Call Vote.

### Schedule A Closed Session For Labor Negotiations Strategy.

Kelly said the county has received its insurance renewal numbers and would like to discuss with the board those details and what proposal to bring to the unions. He said the administration has had one meeting with the unions and would like to update the board. He recommended 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 4.

Vetsch moved to schedule a closed session for labor negotiations strategy 1:00 pm, Tuesday, October 4. The motion was seconded by Kaczmarek. The motion carried 5-0.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE / ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES**

### County Administrator Lee Kelly

Kelly reminded the board about the annual pork chop picnic. He said the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) had released the registration for the annual conference in December. He said if any of the commissioners were interested in attending, they should let him know and he would register them as a group. He was able to attend the Dental Clinic opening and was glad to see it up and going. He said labor negotiations had started last week and were ongoing.

### Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek

Kaczmarek said he attended the Minnesota Rural Counties meeting. He said Kelly had shared all the material from the meeting. The Director, Dan Larson is resigning. The fair board met and it has openings for its board. Kaczmarek said the Fair Board requested to use a meeting room at the new Government Center for its regular meetings. He said the Fair Board meet at 7:00 p.m. the first Monday of the month. There was a discussion about the rules and specifics of allowing an outside agency to utilize Government Center facilities in the evenings.

### Commissioner Mark Daleiden

Daleiden said the Parks Commission meeting was Monday, September 12. He said the commission updated the memorial bench policy due to rising costs. It approved the disabled veteran hunt, talked about the Otsego playground, natural surface trail updates, future BeeBe Lake redesign to be more Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) friendly and some of the prairie restoration projects. He said the campgrounds were very successful this year, they opened May 5 and will close September 30 with the exception of Bertram which closes October 21.

Commissioner Christine Husom

Husom met with the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee for the first time. She said that Wright County over the course of 18 years would be getting \$3.8 million. It was unclear how this would be dispensed. All 87 counties and cities with populations over 30,000 people would receive funding. The committee looked at best practices for opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery. She said the committee was also looking at its funding prioritization survey. Husom said Mentorship, Education, and Drug Awareness (MEADA), had a good discussion. She said the Street Party of Hope was well attended with several community groups attending. Husom said the dental clinic opening was well attended.

Commissioner Darek Vetsch

Vetsch said much was going on with the Energy Transition Advisory Committee. He said legislative recommendations were coming up. He said the Energy Transition Advisory Committee was trying to figure out the dollar amount for non-operating power plants was difficult. He said it was attempting to get language to avoid any trigger to energy ratio relief. He said there were good questions answered at Xcel breakfast. He said there were interesting ideas being considered with hydrogen and the nuclear power plant.

Commissioner Mary Wetter

Wetter met with University of Minnesota Extension and toured the Family Farm of the Year. She met with Wright County Community Action. She said the biggest push there was the Head Start program and paperwork. She attended the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) Key Land Use Issues Conference. She was impressed by the meeting and discussed several of the items addressed at the meeting. She attended the dental clinic opening and enjoyed hearing Husom give the welcome speech.

Commissioner Mark Daleiden

Daleiden said that the Friday, September 23 tour of compost facilities should be moved to next year. He said he couldn't make it and it didn't feel it was necessary due to the upcoming election. The tour was cancelled. Husom said the Mayor's Association meeting was to be held September 21. Husom said the staff pork chop picnic would be Thursday, September 23.

*The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.*

*County Board Minutes submitted by Phil Hodges Administrative Specialist.*