

**Ad Hoc Committee, Government Services Project
Tuesday, September 6, 2011 8:00 a.m.
Lincoln County Service Center, Rm. 156
Merrill, Wisconsin 54452**

MINUTES

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by committee Chairman Bailey at 8:09 a.m. Besides Mr. Bailey in attendance were committee members Dan Leydet, Bill Zeitz, and Randy Scholz. Also in attendance at various times during the meeting were Rick Wolf (Veterans Services Department), Dan Miller (Solid Waste Department), Diane Hanson (Land Information/Conservation and Zoning), Nancy Bergstrom, Sheila Pudelko, Diana Smith and Bob Smith. Committee members Arlene Meyer and Bob Lee were unable to attend. The meeting was facilitated by Art Lersch, UW-Extension.

2. Approval of minutes for the August 23, 2011 meeting.

Supervisor Zeitz made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scholz. All ayes.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Department Head Interview (Veterans)

Rick Wolf, Veterans Services Director, provided a brief overview of department functions. He mentioned that the primary purposed of the department is to advocate for and be an advisor to the approximately 3,100 veterans and their families who live in Lincoln County. Much of this activity involves helping veterans and their families receive primarily the government benefits that they are entitled to. He also stated that the department is mandated by the state, but not the federal government. He, Mr. Scholz and Mr. Leydet confirmed that the office's annual budget is about \$144,000, with all but roughly \$10,000 coming through tax levy support. The additional \$10,000 is obtained from a grant. There was discussion about why more grant dollars are not available from primarily the federal government. Mr. Wolf stated that he and his one staff person are currently doing the bear minimum in trainings in order to maintain their accreditation as qualified liaisons to the veteran population. Currently, he mentioned that neither he nor his staff person have time to engage in lobbying for veterans' benefit rights, which should be an important function of the office. When asked for cost savings/revenue generation ideas, he stated that if the office had another staff person it could bring more revenue (claim money) into the county to assist veterans. It was acknowledged through discussion that it would be difficult to define up front just how much additional claim dollars could be obtained by the county if someone else were hired. During the discussion, Mr. Wolf mentioned that the office helped to bring to Lincoln County veterans over \$12 million in assistance in 2008.

11. Fairgrounds Costs (This item was moved up on the agenda to accommodate citizens attending the meeting.)

The committee requested that Diana Smith express her concerns about tax levy dollars being used to maintain the fairgrounds. She mentioned that she felt that those holding events on the grounds could pay more to the county for their upkeep. County officials mentioned that the Public Property Committee has asked that a new lease/fairgrounds usage policy be developed and instituted. Plans are to implement the new policy next year. Chair Bailey mentioned that this issue if stakeholders wish should be addressed during Public Property Committee meetings.

6. Department Head Interview (Solid Waste) (This item was moved up on the agenda to accommodate department heads' schedules.)

The discussion began with a reminder that the Solid Waste department does not receive-tax levy support (enterprise fund). It was also pointed out that for the last several years the operation has been providing the county with \$200,000 annually to help offset the levy. Dan Miller then gave an overview of the department's functions and the plan to create another landfill cell. He indicated that since 2001 the landfill has accepted waste from outside of Lincoln County. The operation has also been off the levy since that year. Currently, there is no cap on how much non-Lincoln County waste can be accepted. Waste from outside the county, including fly ash, has generated a great deal of revenue for the operation. He said that the existing landfill site will become full and close sometime in 2014 or 2015, with the new expansion on track to receive all necessary permits by sometime mid next year and construction to begin late in 2012. Estimated total construction costs stand at \$12.5 million. Mr. Miller mentioned that keys to future success and cost savings for the solid waste operation include continuing to build a secure, sustainable waste stream (i.e. contracting to accept waste from outside the county), perhaps capturing methane gas that could be used by an onsite business/industry, and sharing county workers (Solid Waste, Highway, Forestry) so the facility does not have to hire more of its own labor as it transitions into new site development.

5. Department Head Interview (Land Information/Conservation & Zoning)

Mr. Scholz began the discussion by stating that Land Information/Conservation is supported by five separate tax levy lines and that Zoning is supported by another. The five tax levy lines in Land Information/Conservation for 2010 were: Survey (\$154,133); Tax description (\$82,771); Tax Assessment (\$73,759); Land Records (\$178,094); and Land Conservation (\$186,651). Zoning received about \$132,000 in tax levy support. Department Head Diane Hanson then provided an overview of the services provided by her department under each one of the tax levy lines. She reminded committee members that the department maintains all the land records for the county, a function that has to be done accurately in order to ensure that correct amounts of property tax revenue are obtained. She also emphasized that the department provides GIS information/assistance to several county departments including Forestry and the Sheriff. When asked how costs in her department could be reduced, she stated that the only way to do so is to eliminate programs. Ms. Hanson also explained how and why Land Information and Land Conservation were merged in 2003. She also stated that beginning in 2012, all townships and cities in the county will be charged their portion of software costs related to maintaining up to date and accurate land records. Lastly, she and the committee discussed the need for a shoreland zoning position dedicated to

serving only or mostly Lincoln County. The current position is equally split between Langlade and Lincoln counties.

8. Continue to determine timelines for Administrative Coordinator and Ad Hoc Committee conversations with department heads. (This agenda item was moved up to accommodate committee members' schedules)

By consensus, committee members agreed that the department heads of Social Services and Health should appear before the committee at its next meeting.

7. Discussion on potential recommendations for County Board

The committee decided that it will first complete department head interviews before potential recommendations are discussed. It also decided that this item will be kept on future meeting agendas in case a specific idea brought forth during a department head interview merits further discussion that same day.

9. County Committee Structure

Because of time constraints, committee members agreed that the item should be laid over until the next meeting.

10. County Board Compensation

Because of time constraints, committee members agreed that the item should be laid over until the next meeting.

12. Updates on state budget issues

None at this time.

13. Agenda Items for next meeting

The committee agreed that the following items will be placed on the next meeting agenda.

- Department Head Interview (Social Services)
- Department Head Interview (Health Department)
- Continue to determine timelines for Administrative Coordinator and Ad Hoc Committee conversations with department heads
- Discussion on potential recommendations for County Board
- County Committee Structure
- County Board Compensation

- Updates on state budget issues

14. The next meeting is scheduled to take place **Tuesday, September 20, 2011, 8:00 a.m., Room 156,** Lincoln County Service Center.

Committee members also agreed to set the following meeting for Tuesday, October 4, 8:00 a.m., Room 156, Lincoln County Service Center.

15. Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Scholz to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zeitz. All ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Art Lersch, UW-Extension, Lincoln County