

**Ad Hoc Committee, Government Services Project
Monday, November 14, 2011, 11:00 a.m.
Lincoln County Service Center, Rm. 248
Merrill, Wisconsin 54452**

MINUTES

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by committee Chairman Bailey at 11:00 a.m. Besides Supervisor Bailey in attendance were committee members Bill Zeitz, Arlene Meyer, Bob Lee, Randy Scholz, and Dan Leydet. Also in attendance at various times during the meeting were Paul Proulx (Coroner) and Jeff Jaeger (Sheriff). The meeting was facilitated by Art Lersch, UW-Extension.

2. Approval of minutes from the October 25, 2011 meeting

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

3. Public Comment

None

4. Department Head Interview (Coroner)

Mr. Scholz began the interview by stating that the Coroner's office total (2012) budget is \$48,545. Just over \$41,000 of that total are tax levy dollars. Next, Coroner Paul Proulx provided an overview of his department. He began by stating that the difference between the amount of tax levy received and the department's total budget comes from fees charged for death certificates, cremation, and disinterment. Mr. Proulx reported that he is on call 24/7, and that he personally handles most calls that come in. He stated that he works as coroner on average between 20 and 24 hours a week. Four deputy coroners on relatively rare occasions also respond to calls. He mentioned that several state statutes, but primarily 59.34 and chapter 979, outline the mandated services that county coroners must provide.

When asked what cost savings or revenue generation ideas he has for the department, he mentioned that the office will continue to charge fees for death certificates (\$75), cremation and disinterment. He expects revenues from these sources to increase as the cost of funerals rise. He also reported that autopsy prices have begun to decline as many pathologists now charge for only the procedures they are asked to perform rather than a flat fee based on doing a complete autopsy. Other savings will continue to be realized by using Lincoln County Sheriff Office vehicles. When asked whether he thought his experience as a former law enforcement official was useful, Mr. Proulx stated that his background has helped him to conduct thorough criminal investigations in cases of suspicious deaths, something that many coroners with only a medical background are not capable of doing. Lastly, he stated that it probably makes more sense and is more convenient for him to continue to work out of his home, although having an office in the Service Center could have some advantages.

5. Department Head Interview (Sheriff)

Mr. Scholz mentioned that the Sheriff Office's 2012 total estimated budget is \$6,465,478 and that about \$5,481,945 of that total comes from the tax levy. Sheriff Jaeger then provided an overview of the office operations. He began by stating that the office exists primarily to provide the mandated services of administering the county jail, performing 911 center and regular dispatch duties, and enforcing local, state and federal law. He explained that the office has always done 911 dispatching. More recently it has taken on regular dispatching services for both of the county's cities, providing full service to Merrill and limited service to Tomahawk. Sheriff Jaeger also mentioned that there is a push in law enforcement to combine the resources of various departments in the effort to plan for how to best deal with major occurrences on a multi-county or even statewide basis. The impetus for much of this approach comes from the federal and state governments, specifically the national Department of Homeland Security.

The Sheriff explained that there are really only two programs that the office administers that are not mandated, DARE and community oriented policing. The DARE program has about a \$7,000 annual budget for materials. The department's DARE program serves three schools: Maple Grove, Pine River, and Tomahawk Elementary. He conveyed that he feels that the program has been very effective. Community oriented policing is primarily administered by neighborhood residents with only occasional advice provided to them by the office.

Sheriff Jaeger mentioned that currently the jail brings in about \$400,000 in revenue to the county by housing prisoners from other counties. The department receives \$32 per prisoner from the two counties it currently contracts with, Marathon and Portage. The per day costs for housing these prisoners is \$6 per day. He stated that there are two other counties that Lincoln County is hoping to contract with. The jail is often not full, so there is opportunity to house additional prisoners. Cost savings measures that have recently been implemented including reducing the number of patrol officers from 23 to 21 (two less patrol officers on staff than was the case in 1999) and the number of patrol vehicles from 10 to eight. The department also employs 21 correctional officers. He mentioned that any further reduction in patrol or correctional officers would result in increased overtime costs. Currently, the department also has five officers in its investigation department, a recreation officer, and a court security officer. There is one vehicle for the recreation officer, one for the Sheriff, one for the Chief Deputy, four for the detectives, one for the court security officer, and three for transporting prisoners (recently reduced from five). The department also leases a snowmobile and an ATV and has a special response vehicle.

6. Continue to determine timelines for Administrative Coordinator and Ad Hoc Committee conversations with department heads

By consensus, committee members agreed that the Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court and the District Attorney should appear before the committee at its next meeting.

10. County Committee Structure

A proposal was made by the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to ask the rest of County Board Supervisors not on the committee either through a discussion at a board meeting or surveying them whether they think modification of the county's committee structure could help lead to more efficient government and better

communication amongst committees and individual supervisors. By consensus the committee agreed not to conduct the research at this time.

11. Discussion on potential recommendations to County Board

Lersch presented and explained a report from Marathon County that showed the results of a ranking of services exercise by county board supervisors. He also mentioned that as soon as the department head interviews are completed, the committee will be provided an overview by Administrative Coordinator Scholz on the following:

- What Lincoln County government restructuring initiatives have recently occurred?
- What restructuring efforts are beginning to happen?
- What is being planned by administration and department heads that could occur in the near future?
- How have the initiatives that have already occurred increased the efficiency of county government? (i.e. What have been the impacts and what are the expected impacts of changes that are beginning to happen or that are being planned?)

The primary idea of this overview is to make committee members fully aware of what is going on so that they do not suggest recommendations related to changes that are already occurring.

12. Update on proposed UW System lapse budget reductions requested by the state

Lersch handed out and summarized a memo given to him by Cooperative Extension Dean Richard Klemme and Central District Director Thomas Schmidt. The memo's primary points were:

- The Wisconsin State Department of Administration (DOA) has requested state agencies to give back (one time savings requirement/lapse) \$174.3 million to state coffers.
- The money is requested as a means to cover expected shortfalls in revenue collected.
- 38% of the money (about \$66 million) must come from the University of Wisconsin System.
- 7% of the University of Wisconsin System budget is funded by the state.
- The University of Wisconsin System has not been designated by DOA as a high priority program.
- The University of Wisconsin System is willing to pay its fair share of the lapse.

Lersch also mentioned that it is unknown how the latest round of budget reductions will affect Cooperative Extension services (estimated \$1 to \$2 million in addition to earlier cuts). The Dean has indicated that the dollars can be absorbed, but that any further reductions will likely adversely affect services. After talking with legislators, Extension's Chancellor (Ray Cross) informed Lersch that there is no expectation that the DOA will modify the lapse request it has made of the University of Wisconsin System.

10. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The following items were identified by the committee.

- Department Head Interview (Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court)
- Department Head Interview (District Attorney)
- Continue to determine timelines for Administrative Coordinator and Ad Hoc Committee conversations with department heads
- Discussion of potential recommendations to County Board

11. Next Meeting(s) Date(s)

The next meeting is scheduled to take place **Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 8:00 a.m., Room 156, Lincoln County Service Center.**

12. Adjourn

Supervisor Meyer made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Supervisor Zeitz. All ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Art Lersch, UW-Extension.