

**Meeting Minutes of
Lincoln County Administrative and Legislative Committee
Monday, March 23, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.**

Via Teleconference

Instructions for Attendees:

Teleconference Toll Free Dial-In Number: 1 402-282-0080

Access Code (for attendees): 959801852#

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Lee, Paul Gilk, Julie Allen, Greta Rusch, Hans Breitenmoser, Robert Weaver, Calvin Callahan

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

VISITORS: Jason Hake, Dave Smith, NL Bergstrom, Nate Walrath, Diana Petruzates, September Murphy, Chris Marlowe

1. Call meeting to order.

Meeting called to order at 8:00 AM by Chair Lee.

2. Work-From-Home-Policy

Hake explained the effort to protect employee/public health and maintain social distancing by allowing telecommuting (working from home) on a temporary basis. In consultation with Bergstrom (corp counsel) and Smith (IT), Hake has developed a "voluntary temporary telecommuting policy" which sets forth telecommuting program expectations for employees. The policy requires if Department Heads determine that employees can continue to provide valuable public service by telecommuting, then the Dept Head requests approval for each person from the Administrative Coordinator and IT Director. Assuming approval from all three, then the employee fills-out an application and agrees to follow the policy (as well as all other current work rules).

Weaver/Rusch to approve the Voluntary Temporary Telecommuting Policy to be administered by the Administrative Coordinator. Motion passed on a voice vote.

3. Committee Meetings - Only if Necessary

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing recommendations by public health, department heads should consult with respective committee chairs to determine when committee meetings are required.

Gilk/Allen to dispense with regular meeting schedules and hold committee meetings only when necessary; when necessary - teleconference meetings are the preferred method of holding meetings until further notice. Motion carried on a voice vote.

4. Limited Access to Buildings - Appointment Only

Hake indicates that across the state, counties are closing public buildings to foot traffic. Bergstrom added that the Circuit Court system has issued orders which significantly scale back court operations. Hake & Bergstrom have prepared a press release to inform the public that until further notice, Lincoln County will be limiting access to public buildings for the well-being of the public and county employees. To the greatest extent possible, public business should be

conducted by email, phone or regular mail. When public service needs cannot be met by any other method, then appointments will be available (with appropriate social distancing).

Rusch/Callahan to approve limited access to buildings with Hake to issue a press release outlining the changes in building access. Motion carried on a voice vote.

5. General Update- COVID-19 Budget Implications

Hake indicates that Chair Lee signed a COVID-19 Emergency Declaration on March 19, 2020. This was suggested by WCA and is being done by counties throughout the state. Hake also stressed the severe budget implications which this pandemic will have on the county revenues and the 2020 budget including (a) a decline in sales tax revenue; (b) a decline in jail revenue due to housing fewer out-of-county inmates.

This has immediate and ongoing implications for county operations and service; this is not a business-as-usual time. Departments will be expected to immediately undertake whatever austerity measures are possible to assist in the impact of these revenue shortfalls.

Breitenmoser/Rusch to authorize the Administrative Coordinator or Corporation Counsel to contact state and federal legislators on behalf of the county, as necessary, to relay the county's position on COVID-19 related legislation with reports to the Administrative & Legislative Committee, as appropriate. Motion carried on a voice vote.

6. Hiring Freeze Except Essential Service Positions

Hake reiterates that the budget impact of the pandemic is immediate and substantial; therefore, he recommends that hiring be frozen except for essential service positions. The committee discussed the mechanics of hiring, authorizations and clarified what is meant by "essential positions."

Weaver/Breitenmoser to adopt a hiring freeze effective immediately; authorize the Administrative Coordinator to reassign work (if necessary) to meet service demands without rehiring for vacant/new positions; and give the Administrative Coordinator the authority to determine which positions are essential. Motion carried on a voice vote.

7. Moratorium on Non-Essential Purchasing by Departments

Hake recommended that ALL purchasing (operations or CIP) cease immediately except those required to maintain essential services and for COVID-19 response. Additionally, Hake recommended a moratorium on NEW contracts or purchases of services for programs except for programs/services directly related to COVID-19 preparedness/response. To the greatest extent possible, departments should be undertaking austerity measures to help blunt expected 2020 budget shortfalls.

Weaver/Rusch to place a moratorium on county purchasing (and contracts) except for those directly related to providing essential services or for COVID-19 preparedness/response with the Administrative Coordinator having the authority to determine what is essential. Motion carried on a voice vote.

8. Reporting Requirements to Administrative Coordinator

- a. Employee Accountability - Hake indicated that especially in light of telecommuting and potential absences due to COVID-19 that it is essential that his office obtain and maintain current records of employee attendance and productivity.
- b. Record-keeping of Expenses for Possible Federal/State Reimbursement - Hake also indicated that efforts to obtain any available state or federal disaster reimbursement will be highly dependent on good record-keeping.

For both of these reasons, Hake will develop record-keeping tools with reporting to the Administrative Coordinator.

Breitenmoser/Weaver to authorize the Administrative Coordinator to develop record-keeping mechanisms and require that departments comply with record-keeping and reporting requirements as prescribed by the Administrative Coordinator. Motion carried on a voice vote.

9. NCHC Funding Request - Advance of 2020 Payment

Hake reported that NCHC has requested the Lincoln County advance their 2020 levy immediately rather than pay it on a quarterly basis, as prescribed by the Joint Agreement. Hake explained and Weaver expounded on the extreme impact that service interruption (due to COVID-19) will have on the NCHC budget since it relies so heavily on program revenues rather than tax levy. Hake suggested that within approximately one month, the Pine Crest Nursing Home final vacation liability balance should be finalized and paid which will result in a cash transfer to NCHC.

Weaver/Rusch to advance our second and third quarter tax levy (payments) to NCHC earlier than scheduled if the Administrative Coordinator and Finance Director determine that (a) it can be done without without critical impact to Lincoln County cash management and is essential to NCHC financial viability. Motion carried on a voice vote.

10. Set next meeting date.

The committee will meet via teleconference twice monthly to receive updates on county operations, financial outlook and community response. There was a consensus around scheduling teleconferences for 8 am on Mondays. The next meeting will be held via teleconference on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 8 AM. Suggested agenda items include: County Board elections/implications of COVID-19; YTD budget reports (county-wide) with emphasis on budget shortfalls; general updates.

11. Adjourn.

Breitenmoser/Allen to adjourn. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Minutes prepared by Jason Hake, Administrative Coordinator