



PORTAGE COUNTY

MEETING MINUTES

JUDICIAL/GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

PORTAGE COUNTY ANNEX
CONFERENCE ROOM 5
1462 STRONGS AVENUE
STEVENS POINT, WI 54481

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

4:45 PM

REMOTE ATTENDANCE & COMMENT

To attend this meeting by telephone : dial 1-608-338-1399, after dialing the number you will then be asked to enter in a meeting number. Use the following meeting number: 633 722 59, then press #

To attend this meeting by video: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Due to COVID-19 and the potential risk to members of the public who attend meetings in-person, any person who plans to attend the meeting remotely, but wishes to comment on an agenda item can send their comments via email to jentzl@co.portage.wi.us. The deadline for sending comments by email is 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.

Emailed comments will be delivered to committee members at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Remote comment by the public during the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair.

CALL TO ORDER

The Judicial/General Government Committee meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m.

Members present in-person: M. Jacowski, Medin, Potocki

Member present virtually: Raabe

Member excused: Miresse

Staff present in-person: County Clerk Filen, Justice Programs Director Behnke, Register of Deeds Wisinski, and Chief Deputy Clerk of Courts Stimac

Staff present virtually: Corporation Counsel Ray, District Attorney Molepske, Human Resources Director Belanger Tess, and Finance Director Jossie

Member of the public: Kevin Flatoff

PUBLIC NOTICE

Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their request at this time, with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 26, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made by Supervisor Potocki, seconded by Supervisor Medin to approve the minutes. Motion to approve carried by voice vote, with no negative votes.

REPORTS

2. Vendor Invoice Lists

Vendor Invoice Lists October 2021

Chair Jacowski stated that any questions on the reports could be addressed during the office and budget update for the respective department.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

3. Discussion/Possible Action Re: Regarding Special Meeting Attendance (Portage County Ordinance 3.1.47 & 3.1.48)

- Request for special meeting attendance
- Approval of attendance of special meetings
- Special meeting attendance reports

None

4. Corporation Counsel
a. Office and Budget Update

Corporation Counsel Ray provided the following office and budget update to the committee:

Budget—79% expended as of November 23, 2021

Staffing Update—Attorney Tiffany Wunderlin is scheduled to start as an Assistant Corporation Counsel in our office on November 29, 2021.

1. Continuing to work with HHS on finalizing county's participation enrollment in settlements of the national opioid class action lawsuits. Nationwide deadline for governmental entities to confirm enrollment is January 2, 2022. Approval of this enrollment process will track through the HHS Board and the County Board in December. I am meeting with our attorneys and all other corporation counsels on a Zoom call on November 29, 2021.

2. Emergency detention/mental health/guardianship cases remain steady.

3. Continuing to work with multiple departments on COVID-19 related matters.

4. Reviewing and approving procedural steps for the second round of Wisconsin Surplus auction to sell remaining tax deed parcels available for sale.

5. Justice Programs
a. Office and Budget Update

Justice Programs Director Behnke provided the following report:

- Since November 23, 2021, Justice Programs has expended 68% of its allotted budget.
 - Treatment Court has 8 active participants and 4 pending referrals.
 - The TAD grant application is still pending for 2022.
 - Director is working on 2022 contracts for all programs and Portage House.
 - Worked with Portage House Director and Three-Bridges Recovery out of WI Rapids to have the Narcan available to all staff at Portage House. All staff were trained.
 - Director was elected the co-chair of Portage County AODA Coalition starting January 2022 for a one-year term.
 - Treatment Court Oversight Committee will be held on November 1, 2021. Approved were:
 - Eligibility requirements were revised
 - Exit survey was approved for graduates and terminated participants
-
- Justice Programs continues to gather data in conjunction with two social work professors from UW-Stevens Point to evaluate 2015-2018 day report/pretrial program to determine if using an assessment sparingly had an impact of court appearances and pretrial rearrest.

6. Clerk of Courts
a. Office and Budget Update

Chief Deputy Clerk Stimac provided the following report:

Budget Update:

Current budget status:

Expenses = 73.8% Budget is currently on track.

Department Update:

Our office has an accepted offer for the Administrative Associate II position with the candidate to start 12/07/2021. All active vacancies in the Clerk of Courts are now filled.

Scheduled to commence Monday, December 6, 2021 in Circuit Court Branch 2 is a 10 day medical malpractice jury trial. This will be the longest trial of the year, if it does proceed as calendared.

The department received a grant award in the amount \$2750 from Children's Court Improvement Program; these were supplemental funds related to COVID-19. Funds to be used for contactless court appearance equipment (by Zoom) and for a microphone/speaker system to be used at our front counter where we have difficulty communicating with customers because of the glass barrier and muffled sound. Grant approval for these funds are on the next Finance agenda in early December.

Included in the agenda was a memo regarding the transfer of passport services to Register of Deeds effective April 1, 2022. Cindy Wisinski has a resolution before you today to increase her staff by 10 hours per week tentatively. Should she require additional hours I want the committee to be aware that the Clerk of Court's is eliminating one full-time position with this arrangement. All other duties of the eliminated position have been absorbed within the department.

7. Veterans Services
a. Office and Budget Update

Veterans Services Director was present and provided a written report that was included in the agenda packet.

8. Register of Deeds
a. Office and Budget Update

Register of Deeds Wisinski provided the following report:

Budget update: Revenue for the 2021 budget is above what was projected. Expenses are at where they should be.

Office update: We are working to get ownership as current as possible for when the Treasurers office is ready run the tax bills. Transcendent just converted all records to a web base system. Having a few hiccups with that, but we are hopeful things will be resolved and running smoothly soon.

Passports: The Clerk of Courts, HR Director, Finance Director and Register of Deeds have been working together to move Passport Issuance from the Clerk of Courts office to the Register of Deeds office. A memo was sent to the County Board Chair and County Executive regarding the move of duties. Should this pass all committees and County Board, passport issuance in the Register of Deeds would begin April 1st, 2022. Wisinski explained the Resolution before them. Per the Finance Director the fiscal note in the resolution transfers salaries and fringe for a full year due to training and all other amounts are based on 8 months' worth of revenue/fees.

b. Discussion/Possible Action on moving Passport issuance from the Clerk of Courts office to the Register of Deeds office.

A motion was made by Supervisor Medin, seconded by Supervisor Raabe to approve the resolution as presented at the meeting which included the fiscal note. Motion carried by voice vote, with no negative votes.

9. District Attorney
a. Office and Budget Update

District Attorney Molepske provided the following report:

Budget Update:
Current budget status:
Expenses= 61.0% Budget is currently on track.

Department Update:
This month our office has hired for our open Assistant District Attorney position. Andrew Muchler is joining our team and very excited to begin his career. He was a staff attorney at Judicare and worked for Appeals Judge Kloppenburg. We have also hired two new legal associates, Taylor Beam and Rachel Obremski. Rachel interned with our office before starting as our Admin Associate when she was then promoted to LA. Taylor came to us from an insurance company where she worked with litigation. Our Admin Associate position has been filled by hiring Jacob Landsverk. He is a Navy Veteran who came from 3 years of working in the Milwaukee Co DA Office. Currently, the DA office has 8 trials scheduled to go in the next month and 34 jury trials already scheduled for next year. On average, the DA office has approximately 12 trials a year. The rise in trials post-COVID has caused a significant uptick in work for our office and will inevitably cause stress to our budget. Law Enforcement is moving to a new Records Management system in the beginning of 2022

which will affect the way the DA Office receives referrals, jail list, media, and the retaining of media for our office.

Chair Jacowski requested that DA Molepske bring information back next month regarding bail reform. Chair Jacowski requested that DA Molepske provide the County Clerk's Office with the proper language for the agenda item for the next meeting.

10. County Clerk
a. Office and Budget Update

County Clerk Filen provided the following report:

Office and Budget Update 11.23.21

2021 Budget expenditure 75.7%

Redistricting

The Final Supervisory District Plan is complete and was submitted to the DOA, Secretary of State, the Legislative Technology Services Bureau, and the Wisconsin Elections Commission. The new maps will be in place for the spring elections

The City did revise their ward plan after the County adopted the Supervisory District Plan so there is a discrepancy in the County and City resolutions, but the corrected information was filled with the appropriate parties and you will see in the minutes to be approved at the next County Board meeting that an explanatory note was added for perpetuity

Elections

Nomination papers are ready to be picked up in the County Clerk's Office

Preparations are underway for the 2022 elections

I recently completed two training programs through the Wisconsin Elections Commission to become a certified train the trainer for Baseline Chief Inspector Training and MCT Core Municipal Clerk training

Dog licenses and Commercial Animal Establishments

2022 dog licenses are currently being issued to municipal treasurers

Commercial animal establishment licenses are in the process of being renewed

Marriage licenses

318 licenses have been issued thus far, last year we issued 325 so we should have no issue surpassing licenses issued in 2020

A marriage license bill was signed into law at the beginning of November that will take effect in July 2022 that will impact marriage license issuance including the following:

Applicants can apply in any county, which may affect revenue

Marriage license can be filed in any county Register of Deeds

Tax Deeds

Another tax deed sale is scheduled to begin December 7 and run through January 5

Inspections have been completed for the 2018 tax deed parcels

CORRESPONDENCE

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

December 28, 2021 at 4:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Supervisor Raabe, seconded by Supervisor Jacowski to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote, with no negative votes. Meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Notice: Any person who has special needs and plans on attending this meeting in-person or remotely should contact the Facilities Office at 715-346-1598 as soon as possible to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Notice: A quorum of the Portage County Board of Supervisors, or any committee thereof, may be present at this meeting.