



PORTAGE COUNTY

MEETING MINUTES

JUDICIAL/GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

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

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

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: 585 834 110, 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 04:45 P.M.

Members Present: Vinnie Miresse, Dennis Raabe, Stan Potocki, Matt Jacowski, Dave Medin

Attending In-Person: Dennis Raabe, Stan Potocki, Matt Jacowski, Dave Medin

Attending Online: Vinnie Miresse

Staff Attending In-Person: County Clerk Filen, Justice Programs Director Behnke, Veterans Services Director Clements, District Attorney Molepske

Staff Attending Online: Corporation Counsel Ray, Clerk of Courts Roth, Register of Deeds Wisinski

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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. November 23, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made by Stan Potocki, seconded by Dennis Raabe, to approve the November 23rd minutes. Motion to approve carried by voice vote, with no negative votes.

REPORTS

2. Vendor Invoice Lists
 - a. November 2021
 - b. December 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

4. Register of Deeds
a. Office and Budget Update

The following report was provided by Register of Deeds Wisinski:

- Thank you for your support on moving Passport Acceptance Agency from the Clerk of Courts office to the Register of Deeds office. All the paperwork has been submitted to the Department of State. Even though we had a tentative approval, we now wait for the official approval. Once that is complete, testing information will be sent to staff to become agents.
- 2021 budget ended strong. Revenues were well over 100% with most expense line items under 100%. The line items that were considerable under 100% were related to meetings and conferences. Those didn't resume until the middle of the year. Some meetings are still being held virtually. Our internal photocopies fees were at 118%. That was offset by other accounts being lower.
- Even though it is early in the year, the 2022 budget is where it should be at. We had a nice transfer fee come in on a sale that boosted the transfer fee for the county.
- All the 2022 assessment rolls were released to the assessors the second week of January. We are not able to begin any 2022 work until the assessment rolls are turned over from the previous year and released to the assessors. Staff gets this done very early in January.
- Everything else in the office is status quo.

5. Corporation Counsel
a. Office and Budget Update

Corporation Counsel Ray provided the following report:

Budget—3% expended as of January 25, 2022

Staffing Update—Attorney Tiffany Wunderlin started as an Assistant Corporation Counsel in our office on November 29, 2021. She is primarily handling CHIPS and TPR cases with the HHS Department.

- We submitted all the paperwork necessary for Portage County to participate in the first settlement segment of the national opioid manufacturer and distributor class action lawsuits. This is the first of several settlements that are anticipated in the cases. All of the Wisconsin counties participating in the lawsuits approved the current proposed settlement. Portage County's share of the initial settlement is anticipated to be approximately \$2,051,647 before attorney fees and expenses.
- Emergency detention/mental health/guardianship cases increased significantly in December but have now decreased significantly since early January.
- Continuing to work with multiple departments on COVID-19 related matters. Update on the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision re: OSHA's vaccine mandate. The portion of the mandate applicable to Medicare and Medicaid facilities was allowed to stand. As a result, Portage County Human Resources worked with Portage County Health Care Center and Corporation Counsel to create and follow a policy to process, review and approve vaccine exemption requests from Health Care Center employees and related departments. If vaccine exemption requests are approved, the HCC has protocols in place that include testing in order to avoid any staff infected with COVID-19 from having direct contact with HCC residents.
- Sold all but one tax deed property on most recent auction round on Wisconsin Surplus Auction website. Will work with Space and Properties to market and sell any remaining tax deed parcels (the Treasurer recently discovered several older parcels from 2003 which the county still owns).
- Continue scheduling and conducting closings on former H2O tax deed parcels in Village of Plover. Several more parcels should be sold in 2022.
- Working with County Clerk and supervisor candidates on questions and processes related to the upcoming February and April elections.

6. Justice Programs
a. Office and Budget Update

Justice Programs Director Behnke provided the following report:

- In 2021, Justice Programs has expended 87% of its allotted budget
- The TAD grant was approved for 2022.

- Treatment Court Oversight Committee will be held on February 7, 2022
- Treatment Court current and 2021 statistics:
 - Current Active Participants: 7
 - Graduations: 5 (2021)
 - Terminations: 4 (2021)
 - Administrative Discharge: 2 (2021)
 - Current Pending: 4
 - Ineligible: 7 (2021)
 - 4 – prior violent offense
 - 1 - Law Enforcement denial
 - 1 - prior manufacturing/sale
 - 1 - DA rescinded plea agreement)
- The Director and the Programs Director for JusticePoint met with the Public Defenders office, which included some private attorneys and the District Attorney's Office to educate all on the Day Report, Pretrial Supervision, Post Trial Supervision, and Treatment Court program.
- Executive Holman was provided a timeline of what needs to occur (workgroup and committee approvals, software set up, training) if the ARPA funds are approved to fund the changes of the pretrial program.
- Paula Cummings is retiring. It is a large loss for the department. Some of her duties (Treatment Court groups) will be run through JusticePoint. It is unknown who will do the administrative duties.

7. District Attorney
a. Office and Budget Update

District Attorney Molepske provided an office and budget update to the committee.

8. b. Discussion/ Possible Action: Proposal to adopt the public safety risk assessment for defendants on bond pre-trial.

DA Molepske stated that the discussions continue regarding implementing the public risk assessment. Director Behnke is working on drafting the proposal.

9. Clerk of Courts
a. Office and Budget Update

The following report was provided by Clerk of Court's Roth:

Budget Update:

Current budget status:

2021 Expenses = 87.2%

2021 Revenues = 89.9%

Department Update:

Thank you for your support of the recent county board resolution transferring passport services to ROD and increasing hours for one of their staff. We will work together by job shadowing and training as needed as well as equipment transfer for preparedness set for 04/01/2022 effective date.

Jenny Biadasz started as Administrative Associate II in December, no current active recruitments.

Continue to enter requisitions for 2021, attorney fees and GAL fees. This is due to juvenile grant funds that we receive for costs incurred in 2021. We are finalizing entry of invoices this week to maximize our potential for reimbursement through the end of 2021.

I applied for and in the same day received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 for camera and audio equipment for the courts. Currently working with IT to determine how to integrate this with our current setup. This already was approved at the Finance Committee in early January. It is our third grant from CCIP, COVID funds.

10. Veterans Services
a. Office and Budget Update

Veteran Services Director Clements provided a verbal report of the office and budget update that was included in the agenda packet.

11. County Clerk
a. Office and Budget Update

The following report was provided by County Clerk Filen:

Office and Budget Update 1.25.22

2021 Budget expenditure 87.1%

Elections

Absentee ballots started going out today for the February 15 Spring Primary. Contested races on the ballot include County Executive, Supervisory District 14, and races for 5 school districts.

January 7, nomination paper challenges were filed against 5 county board candidates in an effort to eliminate those candidates from the ballot for the April election. After reviewing the challenges and the nomination papers, 4 signatures total were deducted from the total signature count. None of the candidates lost ballot status so they will all be candidates for the April election. The challenger has an option to file a formal complaint with the Wisconsin Elections Commission based on my decision to maintain ballot status for all candidates. To my knowledge a complaint has not been filed.

On January 11 there was a court order issued by a Waukesha Judge prohibiting the use of absentee ballot dropboxes which became very widely used during the 2020 elections. The Judge's ruling also prohibited someone other than the voter from delivering their ballot to the municipal clerk. Additionally, the Judge ruled that the WEC had to withdraw previous guidance provided to clerks regarding dropboxes and returning ballots. Of course, there were concerns about this change happening during an active election period and many questions that were left unanswered such as what guidance would be provided to the clerks now and how timely could that be provided. Last night, the Court of Appeals issued a stay on the Circuit Court's ruling until February 15 meaning absentee dropboxes can be used for the primary, but it remains unsettled past February 15th.

We made several upgrades to our election supplies including:

1. Updated ballot bags from single-use plastic bags to reusable canvas bags.
2. Tamper-evident security bags for election media.
3. Tamper-evident supply bags to transport ballots and supplies to clerks.

These have been issued to the clerks and have received lots of positive feedback on the changes.

Dog licenses and Commercial Animal Establishments

2022 dog licenses were issued to all the municipal treasurers and all 2021 tags have been reconciled.

8 of 12 commercial animal establishment licenses have been issued for 2022.

Marriage licenses

2021 Revenue 94.9%

335 marriage licenses were issued in 2021, up by 10 from 2020.

Tax Deeds

The tax deed sale that ended at the beginning of January was successful overall with 3 of the 5 parcels selling for an approximate total of \$80,000. The two parcels that did not sell will be going back to the Space and Properties Committee next week for further discussion and possible action. In addition, the Treasurer notified the tax deed staff group of two parcels owned by the County since being taken by tax deed in 2003. There does not seem to be a reason those parcels were not previously listed for sale. We are bringing those two parcels to Space and Properties next week as well for discussion/possible action.

DA&I Administrative Support

With the upcoming retirement of Paula Cummings, County Executive Holman asked if the County Clerk's Office would temporarily provide administrative support for the Diversity Affairs and Inclusiveness Committee. Deputy Clerk Jentz will be providing the admin support starting in February and running through April-May.

CORRESPONDENCE**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Tentatively scheduled for February 22 if warranted.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dennis Raabe, seconded by Matt Jacowski, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 05:38 PM

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.