

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

DATE: June 23, 2022
 TIME: 3:00 p.m.
 PLACE: Room 114, Wood County Courthouse
 TIME ADJOURNED: 3:45 p.m.
 MEMBERS PRESENT: Jake Hahn, Laura Clark, Matt Susa, Robert Whitrock, Jeff Conradt
 OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Kastenholz, Adam Fischer, Brandon Vruwink and via AV Kyle Theiler, Laura Valenstein, and Bill Clendenning

1. At 3:02 p.m., Committee Secretary Kastenholz called the meeting to order.
2. Kastenholz requested nominations for the committee chairperson. Laura Clark nominated Jake Hahn as chair. There were no other nominations. There was a unanimous vote in favor of Hahn as chair. Hahn commenced chairing the meeting.
3. Jeff Conradt nominated Laura Clark as vice chair. No other nominations. There was a unanimous vote in favor of Clark as vice chair of the committee.
4. Discussion had on whether a conflict existed for Supervisor Fischer to be on the Health and Human Services Committee while being a foster parent.

Brandon Vruwink stated the County does not set foster care rates, so there are no monetary conflicts. The County does not set policy for the foster care program either.

Adam Fischer stated he works with the child's social worker. Fischer further stated he has been a foster care provider since 2012 and has been on the county board since 2016.

Brandon Vruwink stated that foster care is regulated by the State and is uniform across the state.

Jake Hahn doesn't see a conflict here and recognizes the county needs foster care providers.

Matt Susa concurred there is a need for foster homes.

Moved by Hahn, seconded by Whitrock, to declare that there is no conflict of interest between being a foster care parent and being chair of Health and Human Services Committee. Hahn and Whitrock voted aye; Conradt, Clark, and Susa voted nay. Motion lost.

Brandon Vruwink stated the County can't revoke a license of a foster parent. County social workers do not supervise foster parents. The State handles supervision and license issues of foster parents.

Nothing on foster care has been brought up in Health and Human Services Committee meetings in years.

Moved by Conradt to forward the matter on to County Board Chair Lance Pliml. No second; motion died.

Moved by Hahn, seconded by Whitrock, that Supervisor Fischer can continue to serve on Health and Human Services Committee and to serve as a foster parent but that at any time a vote arises that has anything to do with foster care, he must abstain. Hahn and Whitrock voted aye. Susa, Clark, and Conradt voted nay. Motion lost.

Moved by Susa, seconded by Clark, that there is an inherent conflict of interest for Fischer to serve as a foster parent while being on the Health and Human Services Committee. 3 ayes (Conradt, Susa, and Clark), and 2 nays (Whitrock and Hahn). Motion carries.

Question was asked of Corporation Counsel Kastenholz as to what happens next. Kastenholz advised that Fischer will have to consider his options and if he doesn't comply with the Ethics Committee's decision, then the matter can be brought to the county board and the board could vote to ask the County Board Chair to remove Fischer from the Health and Human Services Committee.

5. Meeting adjourned 3:45 p.m.

Minutes taken by Peter Kastenholz.