

## MINUTES OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: October 2, 2020  
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
 PLACE: Room 114, Wood County Courthouse  
 TIME ADJOURNED: 10:47 a.m.  
 MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bill Clendenning, Bill Leichtnam,  
 Kenneth Curry, Ed Wagner, Joseph Zurfluh  
 OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Kastenholz. See attached list.

1. At 9:01 a.m., the meeting was called to order.
2. Public comments. None at this time.
3. The minutes for the September 4, 2020, meeting and the minutes for two meetings on September 15, 2020, were reviewed. There being no objections, the minutes were deemed approved by the Chair.
4. There were no new claims.
5. There were no new animal claims against the County.
6. Committee reviewed monthly voucher and department reports of the departments it oversees. Moved by Leichtnam, seconded by Wagner, to approve the reports and payment of department vouchers. All ayes.
  - a. Discussion on Register of Deeds vault closure. Supervisor Leichtnam explained that a local title company complained that the Register of Deeds' vault continues to be shut down when other neighboring counties have opened up their vaults for limited public access. Register of Deeds Ringer sent the attached communication explaining why the vault continues to be closed. Moved by Leichtnam, seconded by Zurfluh, to support the Register of Deeds in keeping the vault closed. All ayes.
7. Clerk of Courts Cindy Joosten talked to the Committee about Digital Audio Recording (DAR) units. Clerk of Courts Joosten explained that a DAR unit can do an audio recording of communications made on the record in court proceedings. The state pays for these DAR units but the county needs to pay for the wiring, which has been estimated at approximately \$2,500. The Clerk of Courts believes she can cover the cost under her budget and will proceed to do so. There were no objections to the plan.

8. Employee wage plan. Child Support Director Vruwink advised that he doesn't support going from 11 to 16 steps; he thinks it takes too much time. Other general discussion had.
9. District Attorney update on Chapter 48 cases. District Attorney Lambert gave background data on the work of his office. The Ch. 48 cases constitute less than 5% of the workload of the District Attorney's office. Lambert made clear that the concerns had by Human Services had to do with approach versus results, as the results have been excellent. The two departments are and will continue to work on the approach and communication issues.
10. Parent Engagement Center (PEC) video tour. Child Support Director Brent Vruwink shared a video of the PEC, which is on the north end of the county. It is a trauma informed space for enhancing parenting skills and serves multiple needs for both Human Services and Child Support.
11. Discuss upcoming department head performance reviews. The Committee directed the Child Support Director and Corporation Counsel to do a self-evaluation and present them to the committee for the next meeting. The Committee will go into closed session at that meeting to do the performance evaluations.
12. The Committee reviewed correspondence and legislative issues.
  - a. Report of Citizens Groundwater Group. Supervisor Leichtnam advised the report from the Citizens Groundwater Group will be in the county board packet. Leichtnam then gave an oral synopsis of the meeting.
13. County Board rules. No action taken.
14. Criminal Justice Coordinator Committee update. The subcommittee selected a new Criminal Justice Coordinator recently. The plan is for the subcommittee to continue for another six months. Concern was expressed on that; the question being, why?

**Moved by Wagner, seconded by Curry, to terminate the Criminal Justice Coordinator Ad Hoc Committee effective 12/31/2020.**

**Moved by Clendenning, seconded by Leichtnam, to amend the termination date of the Ad Hoc Committee to 03/01/2021.**

**Motion passed 3 ayes, 2 nays. Supervisors Wagner and Curry voted no.**

**Vote on amended motion passed 3 ayes, 2 nays. Supervisors Wagner and Curry voted no.**

15. Attendance at meetings. Moved by Curry, seconded by Leichtnam, to authorize the committee members to attend the Heart of Wisconsin Legislative Breakfast on October 23. All ayes.
16. Agenda items for the November 2020 meeting:
  - Department head performance reviews.
17. The next committee meeting will be November 6, 2020, at 9 a.m.
18. Meeting adjourned without objection by the Chairperson at 10:47 a.m.

Minutes taken by Peter Kastenholz.

Good Morning Supervisor Leichtnam,

Here's the requested list regarding the vault closure:

- I am concerned for the safety of my staff with the increased traffic in our office, if the vault were to be open. Employees within the courthouse have tested positive for Covid.
- The numbers across the County and State continue to rise. The mask mandate was extended by Governor Evers to November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- I have not received one phone call or email from any Attorney stating a complaint with the extension of the vault closure. I learned Attorney Bender contacted the Judicial and Legislative committee, he did not express any concern with me prior to contacting my oversight committee.
- I spoke to Sherry, from Goetz Title and she stated she doesn't like to have to come to the courthouse due to the increased risk. She did not express any complaint with the vault being closed to me.
- I am not able to disinfect the books – If I wipe them down, it will cause the need to replace binders in the future. The cost is too great to have the public touch them, then my staff touch them with no disinfectant. If searchers are allowed in the vault, one staff member would need to step away from their duties to disinfect the counter/computers that were used. This causes a delay in recording and vital records.
- I spoke to Supervisor Clendenning, Supervisor Leichtnam, and Health Director Kunferman prior to making the decision to continue to restrict the public from the vault. The policy put in place by the Wood County Chairman allows me to make the decision for what's best for my staff and public during this pandemic situation.
- The Register of Deeds window is open with an improved glass shield. The public is able to obtain their vital records, copies of requested documents and drop off documents for recording.
- Documents are available online through Tapestry or with a subscription of Laredo. As always, the Register of Deeds staff will print or email copies for the fee of \$2 for the first page and \$1 for each additional page, per document. Searchers are able to obtain the needed information. We do not waive fees to anyone and in fairness to all users and the taxpayers of Wood County, that will be the continued practice.
- Laredo software had a recent upgrade to provide a more efficient, real time service to our users across the State.

Thank you for your help and for contacting me about this. I wouldn't have known unless you would have called; I am on vacation since my husband just got home from his year-long deployment. In that event, I apologize for not being present in person. Feel free to reach me on my cell phone (listed below), if you have questions or need more information.

Thank you,

Tiffany R. Ringer  
Wood County Register of Deeds  
400 Market Street/PO Box 8095  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495  
Ph. 715-421-8455  
Cell 715-697-3782

# Judicial & Legislative Committee Meeting

Date:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	REPRESENTING
REUBEN VAN TASSEL	MAINT.
Craig Lambert	D.A.
Brent Vreinh	CSA
SHAUN BECKER	WCSA
DENNIS POLACH	WCB. #14
Attending via video conferencing & telephonically	
Sup. Brad Hamilton	Co. Bd. District 18
Cindy Joosten	Clerk of Courts
Mary Anderson	Register in Probate
Jason DeMarco	FT
Heather Gehrt	Treasurer