

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Tuesday, June 1, 2021  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.  
**PLACE:** Wood County Courthouse – Conference Room 114

**PRESENT:** Ed Wagner, Lance Pliml, Adam Fischer, Mike Feirer, Donna Rozar (via Webex)

**OTHERS PRESENT** (for part or all of the meeting, in person or via Webex): Dennis Polach, Bill Clendenning, Adam Fandre, Kim McGrath, Kelli Quinnell, Reuben Van Tassel, Heather Gehrt, Ed Newton, Shawn Becker, Quentin Ellis, Jason DeMarco, Trent Miner, Sue Kunferman, Sandra Green, Amy Kaup, PaNya Yang, Marissa Laher, Mary Solheim, Nick Flugaur, Fritz Schubert, Kyle Theiler, Jason Grueneberg, Chad Schooley, Brandon Vruwink, Mary Schlagenhaft, Jodi Pingel, Lori Heideman, WAOW, Thomas Heiser, Tim Deaton (The Horton Group), Steve Schneider (Bug Tussel Wireless)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wagner at 9:00 a.m.

Public Comments: Thomas Heiser, retired Police Chief from the Town of Grand Rapids, spoke in favor of, and asked the Committee to support, the building of a new jail.

**Motion (Feirer/Pliml) to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**

Finance Director Newton stated that the County has received half of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$7.4 million. Treasurer Gehrt stated that the funds have been deposited in a separate, interest-bearing account with unique general ledger accounts associated with them. There is also a separate account established for the other half of the funds that will be received in 2022. Discussion on how the funds can be utilized ensued.

Wellness Coordinator Fandre provided a brief update on Wellness Program activities.

Finance Director Newton gave an update on Finance Department activities. Newton stated that the year-end audit will be finalized this week and the cost allocation audit will begin next week. Newton announced that the Deputy Finance Director position has been filled internally by PaNya Yang, formerly the Payroll Administrator.

Newton requested permission from the Committee to fill the Payroll Administrator vacancy. Brief discussion ensued.

**Motion (Rozar/Pliml) to approve the request to fill the Payroll Administrator vacancy. Motion carried unanimously.**

Newton introduced two resolutions to the Committee. One resolution is to authorize the building of a new Wood County Jail and Sheriff's Department and the other resolution is to authorize the issuance of bond or promissory note for a new Wood County Jail and Sheriff's Department. The resolution to authorize the building of a new Wood County Jail and Sheriff's Department is co-introduced by this Committee as well as the Public Safety and the Property and Information Technology Committees. Newton explained that this was because all three Committees have direct interest in the project. The official recommendation of the Jail Study Ad Hoc Committee was to bond for \$58 million to build a new jail to reduce recidivism, increase community safety, and reduce long-term cost while improving the health and well-being of the community. Discussion ensued at length.

**Motion (Feirer/Rozar) to approve the resolution to authorize the issuance of bond or promissory note for a new Wood County Jail and Sheriff's Department. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion (Feirer/Pliml) to authorize the building of a new jail. Motion carried unanimously.**

Newton provided information to the Committee members regarding the initial CIP requests. Newton stated that a separate meeting will be needed to go through the requests. Newton stated that the CIP requests total close to \$9 million and the debt level of the request is \$5 million. Newton reminded the Committee that there is still \$455,000 left over from 2020 that Parks & Forestry did not utilize due to receiving grant funds for their project that was allocated in the 2020 CIP. Discussion ensued.

HR Director McGrath introduced Tim Deaton of The Horton Group. Mr. Deaton presented information regarding claims experience over 2020 and year-to-date in 2021. Additionally, Mr. Deaton presented preliminary information on premium projection for 2022. Brief discussion ensued. He will return to the July Committee meeting with additional claims experience data.

Bug Tussel Wireless CEO, Steve Schneider, gave a presentation to the Committee regarding rural broadband funding opportunities. Mr. Schneider explained a three-tiered approach that his company would like to take for addressing rural broadband in Wood County. He explained that work is already under way for the first tier by getting all residents access to internet at 25 Mbps. The second tier that he proposed is a "Middle Mile Network" that would create a network connecting all of the towers and critical community institutions throughout the County. The third tier would be to partner with organizations that will do fiber to home installation. Mr. Schneider stated that his company would like to partner with Wood County on a grant that is part of the Public Service Commission's \$100 million allocated for rural broadband to complete tier two, the Middle Mile Network. Mr. Schneider explained that Bug Tussel Wireless would offer 40 basis points on a conduit bond that the County would issue and offer to Bug Tussel. Discussion ensued.

HR Director McGrath presented information to the Committee regarding an overhaul to the Employee Service and Retirement Program. McGrath explained the program to the Committee and that it was designed to fit into the current budget. She further explained that she solicited feedback from the Department Head group and obtained a lot of favorable feedback. She stated that she included it in the packet and on the agenda as an informational piece only and that no action is needed by the Committee.

McGrath stated that the current Employee Coronavirus Pandemic Plan was approved by the Operations Committee in July of 2020. She stated that it is currently outdated and she is requesting that the Committee end the Plan.

**Motion (Fischer/Feirer) to end the Employee Coronavirus Pandemic Plan. Motion carried unanimously.**

Pliml stated that the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee requested that he bring the telework policy to the Committee for consideration. The current directive is that all employees should be back working on site as of today, June 1<sup>st</sup>. The current policy allows for telework on a limited or short term basis with Department Head approval, but does not allow for any position to be 100% telework. Health Director Kunferman stated that the current policy is restrictive to the point that she would not be comfortable telling someone that they can have a hybrid telework arrangement where they work from home two days per week. Discussion ensued at length. The Committee directed McGrath to work with Department Heads to develop a revised policy that works best for all departments and bring the policy back to the Committee.

Items for next agenda: CIP  
Bug Tussel Wireless  
Telework Policy  
ARPA Funds

The next regular Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Wagner declared the meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Kelli Quinnell. Minutes in draft form until approved at the next meeting.