

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Executive Committee
Date of Meeting: Thursday, April 30, 2020
Electronic and Hard Copy Filing Date: Thursday, April 30, 2020

Chair Mary Anne McMillan Urell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Executive Committee Members Present: Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell, Mr. Larry Grisen, Mr. Michael Taylor, Mr. Dennis Bork and Mr. Max Weiss.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Ms. Sonya Hansen, Ms. Roxann Halverson, Ms. Brenda Creighton, Ms. Tina Anibas, Mr. David Danzinger, Mr. Tom Bilski, and Ms. Carol Burmeister.

Public Comments Regarding Posted Agenda Items: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Minutes from the Previous Meeting: Mr. Grisen made a motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2020, seconded by Mr. Taylor. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Waiving Interest and Penalties on Property Tax Payment Installments under Act 185: The Committee listened to a webinar from the Wisconsin Counties Association regarding Act 185. There are many things to think about before agreeing to waive interest and penalties on property taxes and postponing the July due date to October. By doing so you need to think about the settlement that is required in August, possibly taking out a loan to cover expenses until revenues come in, how this affects the tax deed process, and software programming needs for this delay. Mr. Bork made a motion to recommend to the County Board that Buffalo County not proceed with Act 185, seconded by Mr. Taylor. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Tax Deed Process for 2017: Ms. Anibas spoke regarding the tax deed process. There are counties that are foreclosing on vacant land but delaying the process on improved properties. Ms. Halverson explained she would like direction from the committee on how to proceed given the current economic circumstances people are facing. Ms. Anibas and Ms. Halverson both work with property owners to set up payment plans for delinquent taxes. The taxes that would be foreclosed are three years past due. Mr. Taylor made a motion to continue with our current tax deed process, seconded by Mr. Grisen. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding A Resolution to Authorize the Purchase of Liquid Propane for the 2020-2021 Heating Season: The low bid for 45,000 gallons of LP is from Countryside Cooperative at \$.84 per gallon. The LP needs to be paid for in full, but any unused portion becomes a credit towards next year. Mr. Weiss made a motion to approve the bid from Countryside Cooperative for 45,000 gallons of LP at \$.84 per gallon, seconded by Mr. Bork. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Payment of Wisconsin Extension Association

Dues: A discussion was held on the payment for UW Extension Association dues. Mr. Bork made a motion to approve payment of the dues, seconded by Mr. Grisen. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding a Donation from Fidlar Technologies:

A discussion was held on how to handle donations to the county. There is a policy on donations and gifts to employees. Ms. Burmeister had suggested the \$500 donation from Fidlar be directed to local food pantries due to current pandemic situations. It was discussed to create a list of organizations in the county and a policy to govern those donations. Mr. Bork made a motion to split the donation between the food pantries in Buffalo County, seconded by Mr. Weiss. Carried. A policy will be worked on and brought forward at another time to the Finance Committee.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Filling the Vacant Zoning Administrative

Assistant Position: Ms. Lindstrom has issued a letter of retirement which will be effective June 30, 2020. Mr. Owecke would like to be able to fill this position and have the individual work with Ms. Lindstrom before her retirement date. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve filling the position, seconded by Mr. Grisen. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Administrative Assistant Position

Description: The committee reviewed the description and changed a few items. The word “Administrator” was changed to “Coordinator” throughout the document. A few duties were removed as the County Clerk’s Office handles them, but others were added. Mr. Grisen made a motion to approve the amended position description, seconded by Mr. Weiss. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Filling the Administrative Assistant Position –

Administration Office: Mr. Taylor made a motion to fill the Administrative Assistant position, seconded by Mr. Grisen. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Sign Project:

Ms. Hansen gave a review of the sign project. Currently there are two Seasonal Highway workers completing the project, but Mr. Platteter had indicated if those workers are needed elsewhere, they will be pulled. Ms. Hansen would like to be able to hire someone if that were to happen so that the project can be completed. Mr. Grisen made a motion to empower Ms. Hansen to hire two individuals if the Highway employees are needed elsewhere, seconded by Mr. Bork. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the COVID-19 Plan:

Ms. Hansen explained there are employees that have summer homes that with the warmer weather they would like to go to. However, the current COVID-19 Plan that governs employees and County Board Supervisors prohibits any unnecessary travel. She would like guidance to allow travel to summer homes but have them follow safety guidelines. Ms. McMillan Urell does not want to allow air travel at this time as there are increased risks with that type of travel. If an employee or County Board Supervisor is to travel, they must let the Department Manager know of the plans. Mr. Taylor made a motion to strike the word “shall” from page 8 bullet

point 19 and replace it with “may”, seconded by Mr. Bork. All in favor, with Mr. Grisen abstaining. Carried.

Ms. Hansen explained that a policy will need to be worked on to transition everyone to return to work.

Review/Discussion regarding the Chairperson Report: Ms. McMillan Urell discussed the testing being held tomorrow at the Highway Shop. WCA is requesting all resolution ideas to be sent to them by June 22nd for the fall conference. An article printed in the “Arrow” by Trempealeau County talks about encroachment into road right-of-way areas and how they are handling these situations. This would be a good read for County Board Supervisors.

Review/Discussion regarding the Administrative Coordinator Report: Ms. Hansen reported that Buffalo County received a grant for \$1.2 million towards the bike trail. The campaign for donations is slow due to COVID-19 but is still ongoing. The internet contract with Cochrane Telephone has been signed for 5-years. The cost per month decreased from \$800 per month to \$650 per month. Ms. Hansen thanked Ms. Anibas for the work she did in recovering funds due the county from the Payment in Lieu of Taxes. Ms. Anibas found that our payment was not the full amount it was supposed to be, and she worked diligently to get the correct amount. WEA Trust showed that we had six high claims but overall, we have an 84% loss ratio on our health insurance. Obtaining 30% of the CARES funding for Buffalo County is another item that Ms. Hansen is working on. Some committees are looking to hold an organizational meeting to elect the chair and vice chair. It was agreed to allow this if social distancing and other safe practices are being done.

Public Comments: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the next meeting date and time: Any further meeting of the Executive Committee will be scheduled as needed. The Finance Committee will meet May 20th at 8:00 a.m. and HR will meet on May 11th at 9:00 a.m.

Chair McMillan Urell adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxann Halverson
Buffalo County Clerk