

COUNTY OF WEXFORD
HUMAN RESOURCES/PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2023

The regular meeting was called to order by Chair Brian Potter at 4:00 p.m., in the Commissioners' Room, third floor, Historic Courthouse, 437 E. Division St., Cadillac, Michigan.

Members Present: Brian Potter, Kathy Adams, Michael Bush, and Gary Taylor

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Jami Bigger, Deputy County Administrator/HR Director; Randy Boike, Emergency Management Specialist; Robert Champion, Chief Public Defender; Megan Kujawa, Sr. Exec Admin Assistant; Daniel Mosholder, MMR Operations Manager; Kristi Nottingham, Treasurer; Joe Porterfield, County Administrator/Equalization Director; Roxanne Synder, Register of Deeds; Honorable Judge Audrey Van Alst; and Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

ADDED: G.17. Flu Clinic

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Bush to approve the agenda, as amended. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Bush to approve the August 22, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

G.1. Sheriff's Office Monthly Report (August 2023)

Sheriff Taylor was unavailable to attend the meeting. A report was provided in the packet. There were no questions or concerns regarding the report.

G.2. MMR Monthly Update (August 2023)

Mr. Mosholder, Operations Manager, was present; a report was provided in the packet. Mr. Mosholder informed the committee that the ambulance garage project on Cobb Street is expected to be finished by the end of the month. They had two new EMTs start. There are three in paramedic school which is roughly fifteen months long, and they are still looking for a mechanic for the Manton garage.

G.3. Emergency Management Monthly Report (August 2023)

Mr. Randy Boike, Emergency Management Specialist, was present; a report was provided in the packet. Mr. Boike reviewed the report with the committee. Mr. Boike informed the committee that Colfax Township has a marine asset that they do not utilize, mostly because they only have a few people that are trained in the usage. He attended their meeting to encourage them.

Mr. Boike stated the HAZMAT call out was handled properly on its initial response; we did use mutual aid to bring in HAZMAT handling out of Traverse City. They had to bring in carbon boons and matts to place in the water. EGLE took over but he was busy with them most of the week. It is in the phase of being a much greater clean up than EGLE had originally anticipated, and he is documenting accordingly what was done on the County's end.

Chair Potter inquired about the Emergency Plan; Mr. Boike informed the committee that Lt. DeCastro was informed that Lansing has changed some of the reporting and everyone is on hold. The County has been assured in writing that the Plan is currently fine how it sits and by 2024 the plan will be submitted.

G.4. Central Dispatch Monthly Report (August 2023)

Mr. Duane Alworden, Central Dispatch Director, was unavailable to attend but a report was provided in the packet. There were no questions or concerns regarding the report.

G.5. Veterans Services Monthly Report (August 2023)

Ms. Kathy Cline, Veterans Services Director, was unavailable to attend but a report was provided in the packet. There were no questions or concerns regarding the report.

G.6. Acceptance of Resignation from the Wexford County Airport Authority

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Adams to forward a recommendation to the full board to accept the resignation of Michael Keith Hoover from the Wexford County Airport Authority. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

Chair Potter asked that this vacant position be advertised.

G.7. Acceptance of Resignation from the Pine River Natural River Zoning Review Board

A motion was made by Comm. Adams and supported by Comm. Bush to forward a recommendation to the full board to accept Dave Foley's resignation from the member at large position on the Pine River Natural River Zoning Review Board. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

Ms. Bigger noted that Mr. Foley was voted by the PRNRZRB to become a voting member on the board.

G.8. Appointment to the Pine River Natural River Zoning Review Board

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Bush to forward a recommendation to the full board to appoint Richard Harvey as the Primary County Representative and Dan Valley as the County #1 Alternate Representative to the Pine River Natural River Zoning Review Board. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

Ms. Bigger mentioned that there is a vacant position for the #2 Alternate Representative.

G.9. Probate Court Administrator Position Description Update

A motion was made by Comm. Adams and supported by Comm. Taylor to approve the updated Probate Court Administrator Position Description as presented.

Chair Potter asked Administrator Porterfield to give his recommendations on the position descriptions and reclassifications on the agenda.

Mr. Porterfield stated that as far as the position descriptions he understands updating them because job duties change over time. However, regarding the reclassifications, he does not know where in the budget the funds would come from.

Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst informed the committee that both position descriptions for his office are out of date and do not reflect what the employees who fill those positions do.

A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

G.10. Family Division Court Administrator Position Description Update

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Bush to approve the updated Family Division Court Administrator Position Description as presented. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion, passed 4-0.

G.11. Reclassification Request for Probate & Family Division Court Administrators

A motion was made by Comm. Bush and supported by Comm. Adams to forward a recommendation to the full board to approve the reclassification of the Probate & Family Division Court Administrators to level M3 effective January 01, 2024.

Mr. Porterfield highlighted his previous comment. He stated that Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst has been working on his department's budget with him and that he has shifted some of his appropriations to be funded more by the Child Care Fund Grant.

Comm. Adams asked for the difference in cost, Ms. Bigger stated that a total of \$3,120 annually at the year four rate, but those employees do have the ability to be at the year six rate which would be \$10,803 annually for both positions at the M3 level.

Chair Potter stated that pertaining to reclassifications that boards prior to the current sitting board that had done some increases based on budget and timing and at the time it was feasible to do; however, we are in different times and the actions of previous boards does not constitute that the current sitting board is held to making those same decisions. He would like to move forward based on what is presented in front of them and the best course of action would be to look at the budget and that if it is the best interest of the County to make that vote and not necessarily vote on it to go just because of what was done in the past.

Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst spoke to the committee and reviewed his letter that was provided in the packet. He stated that the justification for both of the positions is the same. He stated that when looking at reclassifications that the whole group should be looked at, meaning that when one M2 is changed that it is automatically being asked that everyone should be considered to come to the committee and board to ask for a change. He stated that for classification and reclassification of a position it is standard to look at the jobs being completed by that position to classify the position and that the provided classification rubric is very subjective. Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst discussed several different M2 positions and when they were reclassified. He went on to state that he does not find it fair that just because certain departments have the funding for the increase, that the increase is given to that position, versus if an increase is given then everyone at that classification should be given the increase. Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst reviewed his justifications with the committee.

Chair Potter stated that he would like to make note that Honorable Judge Edward VanAlst mentioned that this board made those decisions and Chair Potter wanted to clarify that it was previous boards and not the current one.

Comm. Taylor asked for Mr. Porterfield's thoughts. Mr. Porterfield stated that it is no secret that the County has amazing staff he just does not know where the funding would come from to support this because next year there will be no ARPA funds to supplement the budget and he does not want to consider reducing staff.

A vote was called, motion failed 1-3, with Comm. Bush, Comm. Potter, and Comm. Taylor voting against the motion.

G.12. Reclassification Request for District Court Chief Deputy Clerk

A motion was made by Comm. Bush and supported by Comm. Adams to forward a recommendation to the full board to approve the reclassification of the District Court Chief Deputy Clerk to level M1 effective January 01, 2024.

Honorable Judge Audrey Van Alst spoke to the committee and stated that she echoes everything that Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst stated. However, she does have a couple points to add. Honorable Judge Audrey Van Alst stated that she has a hard time retaining employees and recruiting due to the wages. She would like to see this increase for her employee to be able to retain her employee. She went on to highlight Honorable Judge Edward Van Alst's comment that when following the County's Policy on classification for a position, it is very subjective and does not believe that it is a good tool. Honorable Judge Audrey Van Alst reviewed with the committee her justifications.

Chair Potter discussed that with the union contracts there have been increases for employees' wages and these presented increases are just looking at individual positions. He went on to discuss that one Judge informed the committee that all the administrators for the courts be the same across the board while the other Judge stated that it should be based on how many people they supervise and the intensity of their position. That puts the board in a position where it is hard to decide where the increases should and should not go and in these situations the board relies on the Administrator and the budget to make this call. He noted that the Finance Committee has not reviewed the draft of the budget yet. This board has to consider how making these decisions are going to affect the County and budget further down the road. Unfortunately, in the past the board did make decisions based on the money being there at that time, but it has since had a downhill domino effect.

A vote was called, motion failed 2-2, with Comm. Potter and Comm. Taylor voting against the motion.

G.13. Request for an Additional Attorney in the Public Defender's Office

A motion was made by Comm. Bush and supported by Comm. Taylor to forward a recommendation to the full board to approve the addition of a full-time staff attorney to the Public Defender's roster effective October 04, 2023.

Mr. Champion said he is preparing for the implementation of Standard 6 and 7. Mr. Champion noted that he expects that filling this position will be difficult due to high number of attorney vacancies all over the State. This position is covered by the State grant in his office.

A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

G.14. Public Defender Office Manager Position Description Update

A motion was made by Comm. Adams and supported by Comm. Bush to approve the updated position description of the Public Defender's Office Manager as presented. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

G.15. Reclassification Request for the Public Defender Office Manager

A motion was made by Comm. Bush and supported by Comm. Taylor to forward a recommendation to the full board to approve the reclassification of the Public Defender Office Manager to level M4 effective January 01, 2024.

Mr. Champion reviewed with the committee the different circumstances regarding his office and how he is funded independently by the State through grant funding. He also explained how the State has and is continuing to make changes to the operations of his office and the reporting that he does for the State, which in turn has made changes in this position and increased the job duties for this position. However, if the State was to not fund this office anymore the County is not liable to take over costs.

Chair Potter commented that the issue is that if the County had to retain the position, then they could not lower the position to a lesser rate or level and have the same duties. Chair Potter asked if there were any recent staff members added. Mr. Champion stated that there are three support staff in the office, including the Office Manager position and there was an investigator and social worker position added last year.

Mr. Porterfield stated that his concern about this is that it is unknown how long the money will continue to be there to fund these Public Defenders Offices, so yes currently looking at numbers the money is there from the funding from the State, the question is in the future if the State decides to stop funding. He also mentioned this is where fairness needs to come into play and the County cannot keep doing these reclassifications.

A vote was called, all opposed. Motion failed, 0-4.

G.16. Employee Recognition

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Adams to forward a recommendation to the full board to present a certificate of appreciation at the next Board of Commissioners meeting to Ms. Brenda Stoll for her 10 years of dedicated service. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

G.17. Flu Clinic

A motion was made by Comm. Bush and supported by Comm. Adams to forward a recommendation to the full board to approve Cadillac Family Physicians to provide on-site flu immunizations and for the County to pay the full \$35 for any Wexford County employee whose cost is not covered by insurance. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed, 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Medical Examiner Report – July and August 2023.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Porterfield stated that he really does think the world of and appreciates all the hard work that our employees put into their jobs. Unfortunately, the budget numbers make him nervous because it is not that he cannot make the budget come in where it needs to be because of the supplemental ARPA funds, it is the years that follow with inflation, down revenues, increases in health insurances and there is no supplemental funding.

Ms. Bigger stated that she will be attending the MERS conference and will be out of the office the rest of the week.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

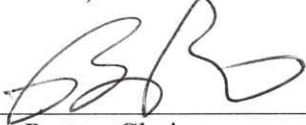
None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Mr. Potter just wanted to say that as a board the County treats its employees very well in comparison to years past this board has been very dedicated to its employees including yearly raises, HSA monies to help with the increase health costs, and were given the COVID bonus monies for employee retention. In this particular set of reclassifications, the committee is not able to justify with the budget to raise the positions.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Comm. Taylor and supported by Comm. Bush to adjourn at 4:42 p.m. A vote was called, all in favor. Motion passed 4-0.



Brian Potter, Chair



Megan Kujawa, Recording Secretary