

IRON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Meeting Minutes for May 28, 2024
Approved

1. Meeting called to order:

The meeting was called to order by Larry Youngs at 6:00pm in the County Board Room.

2. Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Present were Erickson, Boes, Lauer, Lutgen, Hiller, Wolff, Loreti, Francis, Youngs, Thomas, Haeger, Krall, Hanson, Absent Mullard and Swartz.

4. Acknowledge that the meeting was properly noticed and posted:

The clerk certified that the meeting was properly noticed and posted.

5. Approve minutes of April 16, 2024 as presented:

Motion to approve the minutes as presented made by Lutgen. seconded by Lauer. All yes. Carried.

6. Communications:

The clerk noted that Teresa Way from Child Support and Rebecca Holm from UW Extension both received awards for achievement.

7. Committee, Department Heads and Chairman's Report:

Wolff noted that Finance discussed COVID Funds, the Fair Committee request for loan, the Saxon Harbor Loan, posting of the Child Support Position, Budget Timeline, and a Sub Committee to work on the handbook.

Lutgen reported that the extension was able to cut \$23,000 from their budget, reviewed the annual report, she went to the library meeting, and it was noted that the charges that the county gets charged for library services was voted on to raise it by 3%, she noted that she voted no but the motion still passed.

Krall reported that law enforcement was able to save \$1000.00 a month but switching where they purchase items, they posted for a jailer position in house and the issues with the pension.

Youngs noted that the error with not enough being taken out was a clerical error and they are not allowed to change the decision to opt out now. They will look into sending a letter and will work on trying to help the affected jailers.

Boes reported that the development zone noted that the housing development is hoping to break ground in August. He also received the budget from them and feels that they are just an extension of the Chamber. He would like to see some work done in Mercer and Sherman.

Hanson reported that zoning is up 38 more permits compared to last year at this time. The airport just missed the dollar amount to receive more federal funding.

Lauer reported that the Health Department has many different community programs going as well as a combined program with other counties. The food and health permits are due by June 30th.

Thomas reported that Hwy will extend the blacktop on County J by 600 feet due to grant funds remaining. There are no grant funds for County G so that may be placed on hold. Issues with the rock that was used on the shoulder on County FF have been discussed with Simmonson and the cost to remove and replace it would be around \$75,000.00.

Haeger reported that LCC staff are busy with both the Mercer and Hurley schools with programs before school gets out. They have other projects going for summer, the Carey Creek project was for 9 culverts,

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but they only completed 8 last year but Heather found a grant they are able to complete the 9th one this year. IT is placing a policy together for accepting a use policy. They also discussed improving the sound system and layout for the boardroom.

Francis reported that the memorial building has Julie Ducette doing the bookings for the rentals and Brea Lombardo is working on the financials and placing the last year into QuickBooks. The committee has a separate checkbook and will be paying Brea for her time out of that. Rental rates will probably increase in 2025. Roxanne went over the agreements and found they automatically renew and that they are both with Iron County, but Iron County has not been getting the rent.

8. Public comment pursuant to Resolution #2341:

Sam Kussard noted the issue with the error that was made on the retirement for the jailers and the effects that it has on those individuals. These are not easy jobs to fill as we need to have someone here 24/7 and we could lose people.

9. UW Extension to give an overview of their programs:

Mary, the director of the UW Extension office explained what exactly they did and offered the County and Iron County.

10. Election of Agriculture and Extension Committee seat #5:

Youngs noted that there needs to be 5 members on the committee and last month we only voted for 4. He asked for any nominations, Lutgen nominated Paul Mullard. Any other nominations were called 3 times hearing none, Hiller motioned to cast a unanimous ballot for Paul Mullard and close nominations second by Thomas. All yes, Carried.

11. Designate Financial Institution Chippewa Valley as County's primary banking institution:

It was noted that this is not exclusive but that our primary banking institution would be Chippewa Valley. Motion to make Chippewa Valley our Primary Bank made by Wolff, seconded by Lutgen. All yes, Carried.

12. Discuss/Action to use remaining COVID/ARPA Funds for replacement of heat pumps at the courthouse:

The clerk reported that there is a total of \$98191.41 remaining funds and that we would like to utilize the remaining funds for the 5 additional heat pumps that will cost \$85,000.00 and then the remaining funds would like to retain that for the possibility of additional costs that could occur as this last round had additional charges. Motion to approve made by Erickson, seconded by Thomas. All yes, Carried.

13. Discuss/Action on Tribal ARPA Funds:

The clerk noted that the remaining balance is \$57,218.40. They would like to have this on the next finance agenda so that they can review the requirements and use it for items that have already been budgeted.

14. Discuss/Approve Logger appointed to Forestry Committee as Advisory only:

Recommendation to place a logger on forestry to assist with their expertise and perspective. Motion to place Eli Ladwig on the Forestry Committee as an advisory only member made by Hanson, seconded by Lauer. All Yes, Carried.

15. Rezone from RR-1 (Recreation Residential) to R-3 (Rural Residential) at 4597N Wallace Road, Town of Mercer; Justin and Cody Fields owners:

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Motion to approve made by Hiller, seconded by Lauer. All yes, Carried.

16. Discuss/Action on Fair Board request for general obligation loan:

The Fair Board would like to build a permanent stage at the fairgrounds. Currently they rent one for 3 days a year and it is very costly. They would like to utilize the grounds more than just 3 days a year. They are working on getting bands there this summer as well as having a drive-in movie night on June 21 and 22. The signers will be Chairman Larry Youngs, Treasurer Clara Maki and Clerk Christan Brandt, the rate is 4.75% for 10 years and the amount of the loan is for \$40,000.00. Motion to allow the Fair Board to use the levy as collateral for general obligation loan made by Wolff seconded by Thomas. All yes, Carried.

17. Discuss/action an offer to purchase 32-acre parcel #0218-0000 in the Town of Gurney:

Motion to approve made by Erickson seconded by Thomas. All yes, Carried.

18. Discuss/Action Refinance of Saxon Harbor Loan current obligation expires June 8, 2024:

Iron County is going to pay off a portion of the Harbor Loan and needs to refinance the remainder of the loan. The loan will be taken out with Chippewa Valley Bank with a one-year interest only loan and prepayment option with no penalty. The signers will be Chairman Larry Youngs, Treasurer Clara Maki and Clerk Christan Brandt, the amount of the loan is for approximately \$2,225,774.49 for Saxon Harbor. Motion to approve the one-year interest only loan with Chippewa Valley made by Wolff, seconded by Lutgen, All yes, Carried.

19. Discuss/Action on Timecards for employees:

Motion to table this discussion made by Hiller, seconded by Lutgen. All yes, carried.

20. Discuss/Action on Resolution # 3067 Support of Forecastle Timber LLC application to the USDA Forest Legacy Program.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FORECASTLE TIMBER, LLC, APPLICATION TO THE USDA FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Forecastle Timber, LLC, is a private working forest of approximately 1,005 acres enrolled in WDNR Managed Forest Land (Open) located in portions of Section 9 & 16, Township 44N, Range 4E, Town of Oma, Iron County, Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Forecastle Timber, LLC, is dedicated to managing productive forest lands for environmental and economic benefits along with public access for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, Forecastle Timber, LLC, in collaboration with the WDNR, is applying to obtain a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Legacy Program permanent conservation easement; and

WHEREAS, Forest Legacy conservation easements restrict development, limit uses that impact the conservation values, and require adherence to a Multi-Resource Management Plan to protect values such as soil and water, biodiversity, recreation access, timber, and more; and

WHEREAS, the timber tract will remain in private ownership and on the tax rolls in its entirety providing a source of raw timber products and recreational opportunities in perpetuity.

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Iron County Board of Supervisors, and its Forestry Committee, supports the Forecastle Timber, LLC, application for a USDA Forest Legacy Program conservation easement for the parcel described in the Town of Oma, Iron County, Wisconsin. Motion to approve made by Loreti, seconded by Hiller. All yes, Carried.

21. Discussion/Action on Personnel Policy Handbook changes to Workforce Reduction or Layoff:

Wolff stated that in order to move on with Phase IIA we need to change some items in the handbook, per the attorney that we are working with from our insurance company. Items in the handbook include the table of contents page to strike out the section Permanent Layoff, items under Employee Status page 2: . Any employee transferring from one department to another shall be placed on the bottom of the seniority list, for purposes of layoffs and vacation preference, for the department into which the employee transfers.

page 6: ~~Fails to advise his/her department head of intent to return to work within three (3) working days after receiving a notice of recall from layoff directed to his/her last known address;~~

page 32: A workforce reduction, commonly called a "layoff", is a method of reducing the number of employees either on a permanent, temporary, or emergency basis. If the County needs to layoff employees, County officials will meet with affected employees to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities. ~~Employees laid off will be given as much notice as practical prior to the effective date of the layoff. When it becomes necessary to reduce the force, layoffs shall be in inverse order to the length of service, provided that the remaining employees are qualified to do the available work. Employees shall be rehired in order of their seniority and job classification provided they are qualified to perform the available work.~~

Emergency Layoff/Furlough Days. The County Board has the authority to direct an emergency layoff/furlough days for all County employees or employees of certain departments. A department head shall implement furlough days as directed by the County Board but may schedule same to best fit the department's needs. Emergency layoffs/furlough days are unpaid, but employees will continue to maintain their benefits.

Layoff Notification. Employees being placed on permanent or temporary layoff status will receive written notification of the effective date of the layoff, their benefit rights, ~~their recall rights~~ and how to file for unemployment compensation. Employees being placed on layoff status (except for an emergency layoff/furlough day) should receive notification at least ten (10) working days prior to the first day of the layoff. ~~The Finance/Personnel Committee and the department head will try to answer all questions employees may have at the time of the layoff.~~

and page 33: Permanent Layoff. ~~If a permanent reduction in the number of employees is necessary, the decision of who will be laid off will be based primarily on department needs, position title, skill needs and past performance reviews. Permanent layoff within a department shall be based on seniority.~~

Motion to approve the updates to the handbook as presented made by Wolff, seconded by Lutgen. All Yes, Carried.

22. Discuss/Action five-year Capital Plan and Budget Timeline:

Wolff reported that the clerk sent out the 5-year plan spreadsheet to the bigger departments and that these need to be completed as soon as possible. We want to get things moving so that budget items can get worked on in July and August.

23. Discussion/Action on Phase II Budget Reconciliation

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- a. Phase II Part A Budget Changes:** Forestry will have changes to the budget of \$239,000.00, Aging will have \$80,000.00 and the Hwy will reduce the levy by \$225,000.00, Fair and exhibits has \$5000.00, Treasurer's office \$4000.00, Board \$10,000.00. Motion to have the clerk update the budget changes for Part A made by Wolff, seconded by Lutgen. All yes, Carried.
- b. Levy Review:** Wolff noted that the board had him start this 90 days ago with a \$2.6million dollar budget deficit. We are down to \$850,000.00. He also explained how the levy works and the difference between base and debt levy.

24. Adjournment:

Youngs adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

Approved: June 25, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
Christan Brandt,
Iron County Clerk