

**IRON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Meeting Minutes December 11, 2024**  
**Approved**

**1. Meeting called to order.**

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

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

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

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

Youngs certified that the meeting was properly noticed.

**5. Approve minutes of November 12, 2024 as presented.**

Lutgen requested a correction to #6 – correct the spelling of Doug Swartz's name. Motion to approve the minutes with that correction made by Lutgen, seconded by Lauer. All yes, carried.

**6. Communications.**

Youngs informed of a tree lighting at the ADRC tomorrow for Alzheimer's/dementia.

**7. Land and Water Conservation to give Presentation of Department Overview**

County Conservationist Heather Palmquist gave a presentation of what the department does and some of the major projects they've accomplished on a limited budget in the past couple of years.

**8. Committee, Department Heads and Chairman's Report**

Swartz reported the Memorial Building floors are almost done, they're making a few purchases to keep things going in the right direction and they're still moving forward with the 501(c)(3). They're having a hard time finding a licensed & insured electrician.

Thomas said the Highway Dept. had a meeting on November 19th – will purchase dash cameras for some Highway Department vehicles and flagging operations, agreed to purchase a 2020 skid steer for \$63,000. Commissioner's Report: County H & J projects are completed and reimbursement requests have been submitted to the State, started cutting trees on County H & G, winter readiness agreement for \$25,000 was submitted to the State, County H surplus of \$50,000 will be used on County G, signing of traffic signs and pavement marking agreement with the State for 2025 with additional funding available for pavement marking, Carey gravel crushing is on the agenda for tonight.

Erickson advised that Forestry stumpage is at 1.52 million which is up \$37k over last year at this time but coming in slow lately so we may or may not be where we were last year. Two items on tonight's agenda, #15, the Forestry 15-year plan and #19 – special use permit for an event out by Whitecap, a bike race for kids which would use some county land. We approved a title and appraisal for the land around the Gile Flowage to move that project forward, looked at going in with Highway on some gravel crushing. Eric reported in November we made our first official Carbon Credit sale. Gross sales were \$1,010,000. Expenses-to-date have to be taken off first so Iron County is looking at receiving approximately \$575,000. The typical time from sale until we receive money is 30-60 days and we're about 30 days into it so we're expecting to see revenue sometime between now and mid-January. Anu has entered into an agreement with a private

company that is going to provide carbon credit sales internationally which will allow buyers more confidentiality in purchasing. Anu has put 75,000 carbon credits into this business as seed credits. They picked 5 projects out of their total portfolio and Iron County and Bayfield County were two of the five.

Hanson shared that recycling is right on budget. Zoning still has permits coming in and everything is going well. The airport has started a new flight schedule and are now running to Munising and talking about adding another stop. Program by Michigan State Police – Defensive Driving Class – for Gogebic and Iron County kids. Any students who are interested can sign up for the class. Hanson also reported that the Airport Committee was really impressed that Iron County has youth representation on our committees.

Boes – no meeting yet – 12/18 Economic Development meeting in Mercer.

Lauer informed that the Transportation Committee 11.15 – historically the 85.21 grant was split 50/50 with Highline. We will still split that grant but now 60/40 – exclusive of the \$15k county match and volunteer driver funding. Because the funding was less than what we were hoping for, we will not be exploring expansion into the southern and western parts of the County at this time. In Human Services, there was a reduction of expenses \$23,000 that was put into the budget due to Transportation allocation, updated a job description, reviewed 24 budget status and 25 budget, caseloads, many 2025 contracts were approved, discussed RFP for a 2025 contract which is not being pursued at this time due to a considerable reduction in that contract. Our agency is still working with Mercer School in hopes of getting more involved there, Krystal Ferrell is working with two social workers, one who will be taking the national exam soon and is also providing support to Florence and Bayfield Counties. ADRC has a new reporting system and staff are in the process of learning that system. We're hiring a cook for Mercer. We have one applicant so far and we started congregate on Wednesdays with the meals brought in from Hurley. Health Department – the Board of Health approved support for the Health Department to pursue a Public Health Accreditation which will be a lot of work. Approved some resolutions which are on today's agenda. We approved payout for overtime of 39.75 hours for the Environmental Health Specialist which occurred due to nitrate testing last summer. There is a requirement that the tests have to be sampled and done during a certain time frame, which is why this occurred. The Department Head is working to ensure that there is no overtime in the future.

Lutgen informed that, as we know, U.W. Extension had a budget reduction. Bruce, their Horticulturist ended his position on November 30<sup>th</sup> and started a new position with U.W. Madison as their Statewide Horticulture Outreach Specialist on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Neil Klemme has been busy facilitating a training for Youth Council members, he acquired a \$5,000 in technical support from an anonymous donor for upcoming youth council projects, SISU endurance cross country ski club, he's getting ready for the summer youth camp. Joe Miller, Community Development has been very active as well. He is providing FEMA assistance for a grant for the Hurley Fire Department and doing research for the Northern Highlands Health Foundation Clinic grant so we can open a clinic in Mercer. He's also done some other IT programming, Be Nice to Your Robot, Home & Health Repair Resource Fair, Entrepreneurship Boot Camp, and mobile food pantry. Becky helps hold everything together and has been getting meeting minutes and agendas

on the County website. Youngs added that Joe and Becky are helping with Economic Development.

Wolff explained that Finance met and talked about four things on tonight's agenda– Roxanne as temporary Administrative Coordinator, approval Board Rules, approved the handbook draft and a discussion on the wage and benefits study. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Roxanne, Kasey, Tana, Christan and Kurt met and discussed ways to improve financial reporting. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the County finalized its loan on the 24 Cap X Loan and paid off the 23 Placement Loan. The next big thing to work on is special revenue funding and how it's recorded and how the budgets are set up.

Youngs reported the consultants that were hired reported that we have everything we need. We just have to present it to the budget and audit differently.

**9. Public comment pursuant to Resolution #2341.**

None

**10. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3079 Establish a Usual and Customary Fee for Follow-up Testing under the Transient Non-Community Program.**

**WHEREAS**, the Iron County Health Department is committed to ensuring safe drinking water for all communities in compliance with Wisconsin Administrative Code ss. NR 809.31(2) and NR 809.06; and

**WHEREAS**, follow-up testing is required for total coliform-positive samples to ensure public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, such follow-up actions necessitate allocation of resources, including but not limited to:

- Staff time for sampling, assessment, and documentation;
- Transportation costs, including mileage reimbursement;
- Administrative support for compliance monitoring and reporting;
- Laboratory fees for sample processing;
- Equipment and supply costs required for sample collection and testing;
- Communication expenses related to coordination with water system owners and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and

**WHEREAS**, the costs associated with these services are subject to change due to rising operational expenses;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Iron County Health Department hereby establishes a \$35 usual and customary fee to support the costs associated with collecting all follow-up samples for total coliform-positive systems as part of the TN program.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this fee shall be used to offset the direct and indirect costs incurred during the follow-up testing process, ensuring continued compliance with public health and safety standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that these fee amounts shall be reviewed annually to ensure they remain aligned with rising costs of care and program needs, and to ensure the TN program continues to operate sustainably and effectively.

Respectfully submitted by the Iron County Board of Health for consideration by the Iron County Board of Supervisors on December 3, 2024, at their regular Board of Health Meeting.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3079 Establish a Usual and Customary Fee for Follow-up Testing under the Transient Non-Community Program made by Lauer, seconded by Lutgen. All yes. Carried.

**11. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3080 Increase Usual and Customary Fee for Routine Foot Care Services.**

**Resolution to Increase Usual and Customary Fee for Routine Foot Care Services**

**WHEREAS**, the Iron County Health Department has been providing essential routine foot care services to the community since 2013, with the goal of improving the health and well-being of individuals; and  
**WHEREAS**, the usual and customary fees for routine foot care services have remained unchanged since the program's inception in 2013, despite rising operational costs and increasing demands for services; and  
**WHEREAS**, the cost of providing quality foot care has increased over the past several years, due to factors such as higher costs for medical supplies, staff wages, and other necessary resources to deliver care; and  
**WHEREAS**, the current fees do not adequately cover the expenses involved in providing these services, potentially limiting access to care for those who need it most, especially as patient demand has grown; and  
**WHEREAS**, increasing the fees for routine foot care services is necessary to maintain the sustainability of the program, ensure high standards of care, and continue to serve the community effectively.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the usual and customary fee for routine foot care services provided by the Iron County Health Department be increased to the following:

1. **\$30** for an initial foot care screening, to reflect the comprehensive evaluation and preventive care provided for new patients.
2. **\$20** for routine foot care visits, to support ongoing care and monitoring of patients who require regular treatment and education.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that these adjustments to the usual and customary fees be implemented starting on January 1, 2025, and that all affected parties—including patients—be notified of the new rates in advance.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that these fee increases be reviewed annually to ensure they remain aligned with the rising costs of care, and to ensure the program continues to operate sustainably while maintaining accessibility for all patients in need of routine foot care.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3080 Increase Usual and Customary Fee for Routine Foot Care Services made by Wolff, seconded by Loreti. All yes. Carried.

## **12. Discuss/ Action Resolution 2024-3081 Increase the Usual and Customary Fee for Bacteria and Nitrate Water Testing.**

**WHEREAS**, public and private water systems play a critical role in providing safe drinking water to many residents, yet they can be vulnerable to contamination by bacteria and nitrate from natural and human sources; and

**WHEREAS**, regular water testing for bacteria and nitrate is necessary to detect contamination early and ensure the safety of drinking water for residents who rely on private wells; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recommends annual testing of private wells to monitor for bacterial and nitrate contamination; and

**WHEREAS**, the current fee structure for bacteria and nitrate water testing no longer sufficiently covers the costs associated with laboratory analysis, sample collection, staff time, and administrative duties; and

**WHEREAS**, rising operational costs necessitate adjustments to the fee structure to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the water testing program;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Iron County Health Department hereby increases the usual and customary fee for bacteria and nitrate water testing to \$27 per test, effective January 1, 2025.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this fee shall be used to offset the direct and indirect costs incurred to ensure continued access to high-quality testing services for private well owners, and ensuring continued compliance with public health and safety standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this fee structure will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with program costs and operational needs while supporting the goal of safe drinking water for all.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3081 Increase the Usual and Customary Fee for Bacteria and Nitrate Water Testing made by Francis, seconded by Mullard. All yes. Carried.

### **13. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3082 Support of Impact Seven 40 Unit Housing Development :**

Whereas the Iron County Board of Supervisors supports Impact seven and the addition of the 40-Unit Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) development that would include training space to be leased to Northwood Technical College.

Whereas, the project will provide the needed housing and manufacturing training, and other programs Northwood Technical College is able to incorporate into this apartment community.

Be it further resolved that the Iron County Board of Supervisors supports and encourages Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) to provide the resources needed for this development to allow for a spring groundbreaking.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3082 Support of Impact Seven 40 Unit Housing Development made by Lauer, seconded by Swartz. All yes. Carried.

### **14. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3083 Board Rules**

**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin law permits Iron County (the “County”) to adopt and enforce ordinances addressing administration and organization; and

**WHEREAS**, Counties are given broad flexibility under Wis. Stats. §§ 59.03 and 59.51 to organize their board rules in a manner best suited to a particular county board; and

**WHEREAS**, the Iron County Board - Standing Rules have not been reviewed or updated since 1994; and

**WHEREAS**, in September 2024, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) released the inaugural version of the County Board Rules Template to guide and assist county board supervisors in drafting or revising their board rules, providing an opportunity to update County ordinance pertaining to Board Rules; and

**WHEREAS**, an amendment to the Iron County Code of Ordinances has been prepared to address the Board Rules; and

1. Recitals. The Recitals set forth above are true and accurate, and are therefore incorporated into the Resolution and shall be used not just for reference.
2. Approval of the Board Rules Ordinance. The Iron County Board of Supervisors hereby approves and adopts the Board Rules Ordinance Chapter 1, Section 2 Board Rules attached hereto as Exhibit A, which repeals and replaces current Iron County Ordinance Chapter 1, Section 2 Standing Rules-Board of Supervisors.
3. Rules of Governance Procedure. The Iron County Board of Supervisors finds that the County’s approval and adoption of the Board Rules Ordinance is beneficial to legally sound, recently updated, and workable rules of governance procedure.
4. Additional Actions. The Iron County Clerk, Corporation Counsel, Administrative Coordinator, and Finance and Personnel Committee are hereby authorized to take all necessary steps to ensure that Iron County Board of Supervisor’s action and decision set forth herein is completed.
5. Conflict with Other Laws. Nothing in this Resolution shall be deemed to conflict with any other applicable state law, as each may be amended. In the event of any conflict between the County ordinance and state law, the state law shall control.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3083 Board Rules made by Lutgen, seconded by Boes. All yes. Carried.

### **15. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3084 Iron County Forestry and Parks 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3084 Iron County Forestry and Parks 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan made by Erickson, seconded by Hanson. All yes. Carried.

#### **16. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3085 Temporary Administrative Coordinator**

##### **APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR**

**WHEREAS**, under Wis. Stat. § 59.19, Iron County appoints the Administrative Coordinator position to coordinate administrative and management functions of County government not otherwise vested by law in Boards or Commissions or other elected officers; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 23, 2016, the County Board passed Resolution 2894 paying a separate \$5,000 Administrative Coordinator salary to the sitting County Clerk; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 10, 2020, the County Board passed a motion to increase the salary for the Administrative Coordinator position by the same annual amount as other County employees, and the 2024 annual salary of the Administrative Coordinator position is \$5,520; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 25, 2023, the County Board appointed the Deputy Clerk as Administrative Coordinator, replacing the retiring Clerk effective October 6, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 15, 2024, the Finance Committee discussed growing complexities of County government and increasing reliance on Board members with Finance, Human Resources, and Administrative expertise to manage or assist in managing County affairs; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 15, 2024, the Finance Committee reviewed the current appointment for the Administrative Coordinator position, reviewed the general responsibilities authorized by Wis. Stat. § 59.19, established the duties shown in Addendum A, and asked any interested County employees to notify the Board Chair by November 8, 2024:

**WHEREAS**, on November 19, 2024, the Board Chair reported no interest in the Administrator Coordinator position by County employees; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 19, 2024, the Finance Committee recommended appointment of Roxanne Lutgen to temporarily fill the part-time Administrative Coordinator Position at a pay rate of \$40 stipend per day in office, plus mileage, effective January 1, 2025 until the earlier of July 1, 2025 or Board appointment of a permanent replacement; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 19, 2024, the Finance Committee considered **RESOLUTION 2024-3085** with motion made by Lauer, seconded by Erickson, 4 yes, Roxanne Lutgen abstained, motion carried;

**WHEREAS**, **RESOLUTION 2024-3085** is now respectfully submitted to the Iron County Board for its consideration; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the County Board Chair, County Clerk and Finance Committee are hereby authorized to take any and all such other and further action necessary to effectuate the intent of this Resolution so long as any such action is consistent with the terms of this Resolution.

This Resolution is hereby recommended by the Iron County Finance Committee at its meeting on November 19, 2024 for approval by the Iron County Board of Supervisors at its meeting on December 11, 2024.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3085 Temporary Administrative Coordinator made by Erickson, seconded by Loreti. All yes **except for Lutgen who abstained**. Carried.

#### **17. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3086 Revised Employee Handbook**

**WHEREAS**, the Iron County Employee Handbook has not been fully reviewed or updated in several years; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) released an Employee Template to guide and assist county department heads and board supervisors in drafting or revising their employee handbooks; and

**WHEREAS**, Iron County Department Heads met over the course of the past six months to review and update the WCA template to create a revised Iron County Employee Handbook; and

This Resolution is hereby recommended by the Iron County Finance Committee at its meeting on November 19, 2024 for approval by the Iron County Board of Supervisors at its meeting on December 11, 2024.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3086 Revised Employee Handbook made by Mullard, seconded by Swartz. All yes. Carried.

#### **18. Discuss/Action Resolution 2024-3087 Wage Study**

##### **APPROVE IRON COUNTY WAGE AND BENEFIT STUDY CONTRACTS**

**WHEREAS**, the Iron County Finance Committee has identified a need to study and analyze the current wage and benefit plans and to develop recommendations for future total compensation and benefit structures for the County's employees; and

**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin State Statute Section 59.22 provides that the county board shall set compensation of county employees and the Iron County Board does so annually by adopting a compensation increase; and

**WHEREAS**, it is advisable to consider adjustments to the pay ranges and benefit plans for County employees periodically to make sure that our wage rates and benefits remain at a level sufficient to allow Iron County to attract and retain good employees; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 12, 2024, the Iron County Board approved a budget allocation of \$25,000 for the wage and benefit study expenses related to contracts to be entered into by Iron County with Cottingham and Butler; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Iron County Board authorizes the County Chair to sign the Cottingham and Butler wage and benefit agreements for wage and benefit study projects planned to occur in first quarter 2025.

The Iron County Finance Committee approved moving forward with negotiating wage and benefit study agreements, shown in Exhibit A, at its meeting on November 19, 2024, for approval by the Iron County Board of Supervisors at its meeting on December 11, 2024.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-3087 Wage Study made by Wolff, seconded by Lutgen. Roll call, all yes. Carried.

#### **19. Discuss/Action on Forestry Special Use Permit**

Motion to approve Forestry Special Use Permit made by Thomas, seconded by Wolff. All yes. Carried.

#### **20. Discuss/Action Opioid Workplan**

Motion to approve Opioid Workplan by Lutgen, seconded by Lauer. All yes. Carried.

#### **21. Discuss/Action 2025 Iron County Library Agreement with Northern Waters Library Service.**

Motion to approve 2025 Iron County Library Agreement with Northern Waters Library Service by Lutgen, seconded by Loreti. All yes. Carried.

#### **22. Discuss/Action 2025 Contract between Iron County and Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.**

Motion to approve 2025 Contract between Iron County and Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System by Thomas, seconded by Mullard. All yes. Carried.

### **23. Adjournment**

Youngs adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Approved: January 28, 2025

Submitted by

Christan Brandt, County Clerk