



Sawyer County

Agenda

County Board of Supervisors Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
Large Courtroom; Sawyer County Courthouse

Page

1. PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEETING

- a. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMACjwEk87O2hOU3tNi38RQ/live>
- b. If you wish to view the meeting and are unable to access YouTube , contact Sawyer County Clerk Carol Williamson prior to the meeting at 715-634-4866

2. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW

4. MEETING AGENDA

5. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

- a. Approval of Extension of Emergency Order.

6. COMMITTEE AND REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENTS

7. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

- a. [Administrator's Admin Committee Report 2020-04](#)

8. RESOLUTION TO SPEND NO MORE THAN \$8500 ON FOURTH OPTION FOR SECOND COURTROOM

9. CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS, OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

2 - 7

County Administrator Work Report



April 20, 2020

COVID-19: Given the extraordinary events over the last month, below is a brief overview of COVID-19 issues, status and ongoing matters. COVID-19 has significantly impacted the residents and businesses of Sawyer County and has required county government to adapt its services to respond to their needs. This list is not intended to be a full COVID-19 update or a complete description of all work completed since the COVID-19 pandemic broke. Rather, this list may be used as a reference of COVID-19's effects on Sawyer County's operations:

COVID-19 Response:

Public Health Officer (PHO) and COVID-19 Response Team – Public Health Officer Julia Lyons and her staff, Emergency Management Director Pat Sanchez, and their entire COVID-19 Response Team has done an extraordinary job in the last six (6) weeks in response to COVID-19. Sawyer County is extremely fortunate to have these individuals working so hard to protect Sawyer County during this (hopefully) once-in-a-lifetime event. I work closely with Julia, Pat and other members of the COVID-19 Response Team on a variety of issues on a daily basis, and some of those issues are discussed in more detail below. In addition, the COVID-19 Response Team leaders, Sheriff Mrotek, Chairperson Shuman, other Board members, Human Resources Manager Rose Lillyroot, Accounting Manager Mike Keefe and I participate in status calls at the end of every workday.

Enforcement - The COVID-19 Response Team works closely with the Sheriff's Department to address any enforcement questions, including sharing of confidential health information to first responders, enforcing the Stay at Home Order, and communicating with local businesses. The COVID-19 Response Team has also worked with legal counsel to address other enforcement issues regarding essential and non-essential businesses.

PHO Orders - In addition to the state and federal orders that are in place, the COVID-19 Team works to identify particular issues that require an Order by the PHO. Julia, as PHO, has legal authority to issue certain Orders that are binding or advisory. These orders are then disseminated to the public through press releases and social media outlets.

Intergovernmental Cooperation – I communicate with other Administrators of northern counties on a regular basis to ensure efficient cooperation and coordination of services during COVID-19. We share ideas on how to respond to the emergency and coordinate a unified implementation. I also participate in set weekly calls with WCA, WCEA, and NaCO for information sharing and discussion.

Legislation, Executive Orders and Emergency Orders – State government has issued numerous Orders and passed legislation that changes the COVID-19 landscape on a daily basis. We track all legislation (including potential legislation in order to voice the best interests of the County) and Orders to ensure that the law is being properly applied by the County. We also track professional and organizational guidance published by WCA, legal sources and others to assist in implementing new requirements and processes.

Communications and Public Information:

Public Information Officer (PIO) – Diane McNamer has been redeployed as the Public Information Officer for the COVID-19 Response Team. She assists in public messaging and other social media communications during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media Map and Other Information to Assist with COVID-19 Questions – The COVID-19 Response Team developed a “Media Map” to ensure consistent and accurate messaging throughout the County regarding the County’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to make sure you have the information necessary to answer any constituent or other questions about the County’s COVID-19 response. I encourage each Board Supervisor and all County personnel to use the Media Map when answering questions about the COVID-19 in the County. The COVID-19 Response Team also publishes ongoing data through media statements and the Sawyer County website to keep the public updated.

Addressing Incorrect Information – While a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to produce rumors and it is not possible to address every rumor or mistaken information, there are some instances that the team must respond to incorrect information or inaccurate speculation. Please contact me if you receive information or would like additional information on an issue that is inconsistent with the County’s messaging in the Media Map. No, the Sheriff’s office is not stopping everyone on the highway with MN or IL plates.

Employee Work and Building Access:

County Employees’ Remote Work – In late March, we developed a process to determine which employees’ work could be performed remotely. We rolled out the plan in late March, and now have very few employees working within the courthouse. Foresters, Land Records, Child Support, Surveyors, UWEX, and some HHS divisions are all working remotely or in the field. Other County offices have minimal staff on a rotating basis such as the Register of Deeds, Treasury, Clerks, Zoning, Administration, and Courts. Those that are in offices are behind locked doors and maintain 6 feet distance from others. Maintenance even provides cleaning supplies to those offices to minimize the interaction of others within their work spaces. Remote work is an ongoing process and presents daily questions, but Rose Lillyroot, Department Administrators, and County employees have done a fantastic job in moving forward in this new reality of COVID-19.

Employee Benefits – Legislation and state and federal Orders have significantly impacted employee benefits, including paid leave, during COVID-19. We have revised and adopted new employee policies where required by law. We also work closely with

WCA and other resources to ensure our County policies stay consistent with any new law.

Building Access and Other Operational Changes:

Virtual Meeting Process - We have developed and continue to improve the virtual meeting environment. While the County Board meeting will occur in-person on April 21, 2020, both the Finance Committee and Administration Committee met virtually this month. We also use virtual meetings for other staff meetings, daily debriefings and meetings with other county administrators.

Restricted Access/Single Point of Entry – Access to the courthouse is now limited to a single point of entry being the door off the parking lot. The COVID-19 Response Team has published a lot of information for the public to assist in minimizing the in-person trips to the courthouse. Citizens may also may email or call a specific department to set up an in-person appointment if necessary.

Maintenance /Cleaning Operations – Maintenance staff, under the direction of Tim Hagberg, has suspended projects and routine maintenance and has redirected their efforts to focus on cleaning and disinfecting employee and public areas. They are also installing a UV light system in the cold air return of all furnaces which will kill a high percentage of bacteria, germs, mold spores, and allergens present in the air circulating throughout the courthouse.

Screen/Mask – We are implementing a masking protocol for employees that will require them to wear masks while at work under certain conditions. Although we have limited access to the courthouse to a single point of entry, we are also considering screening people before entry or meeting with employees as an extra precaution.

Drop Boxes – We installed drop boxes for delivery of items that would otherwise be dropped off in-person at County offices. This reduces in-person visits to the courthouse. Assigned staff check the drop boxes at least twice per day and items are delivered to the appropriate department. The drop boxes do not replace general mail service.

Other Financial Considerations:

COVID-19 Expense Tracking – COVID-19's global financial impacts are already hitting Sawyer County. Departments have been instructed to track all eligible expenses so those may be claimed and reimbursed by the federal and state government. Accounting Manager Mike Keefe has set up codes within the financial system that will allow reporting of these expenses to FEMA once that process has been developed. We do not know the exact percentage of costs that will be reimbursed, however, the team is thorough in tracking to ensure any eligible cost will be claimed.

Reimbursement and Grant Funding – Both the state and federal governments moved relief bills in hopes to offset local governments' expenses. We track all legislation, stay involved with WCA, and review daily briefings for up-to-date financial information. To date, there has not been any federal or state relief dedicated to loss of revenue the county

will experience due to decrease in sales tax and other major sources of revenue. In addition, the team reviews and grant opportunities available to the County.

Sales Tax Impact – Preliminary forecasts show a decrease in the County’s sales tax revenue of between \$205,000 and \$320,000 due to COVID-19. This decrease could be even greater with a protracted economic decline and further economic disruption.

Property Tax Payment Deadlines – On April 15, 2020, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 1038 which then became Act 185. Among other changes, this Act allows counties to approve waiving of interest and penalties on late property tax payments if paid prior to October 1, 2020. If the county adopts such a resolution, each taxing district could then adopt a similar resolution. This option will be brought before Committees and Board in May to discuss the ramifications of doing so.

Other New Matters:

Consolidation of UW-Extension Committee with Land, Water and Forestry Resource Committee and Economic Development with Administration Committee – On April 16th, the Administration Committee discussed the possible reorganization and consolidation of the UW-Extension and Economic Development Committee. The Administration Committee voted to add oversight of UW-Extension to the Land, Water and Forestry Resource Committee. If approved by the Board, revisions to the Board Policies and Procedures Manual and Land, Water and Forestry Resource Committee Bylaws must be made.

TimeClocks Plus – The implementation of the TimeClocks Plus system has been delayed while staff responds to the COVID-19 emergency. Implementation will recommence as time permits.

County Trails – County Forester Greg Peterson, Public Health Officer Julia Lyons and I will be meeting this week with ABSF (Birkie) CAMBA, and Hospital staff to discuss the spring opening of the County’s trails. The trails are usually closed until late April/early May to allow trail conditions to improve after the spring thaw. We continue to monitor the permitted activities pursuant to the state Stay at Home Order. In light of COVID-19, opening the trails and the OO Building requires additional consideration in order to open safely. Opening the trails under safe conditions gives the public an opportunity to get outside.

PSC Broadband Grant – On March 19, 2020, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission issued a list of grant applications approved for broadband expansion. Sawyer County was included in the amount of \$41,400. This project will build a 3-mile fiber route from Highway 63 at Seely WI along County Road OO to the OO Building. The process of completing the grant agreement is underway so it may be finalized by the PSC.

Airport Construction Projects – Public Works Committee has been presented with some options for reconstruction of the airport’s apron and taxilanes. The project is anticipated to begin next spring. With recent enactment of the CARES Act, there may be funding for this project in the current year. Airport Manager Derek Leslie is working with the WI Bureau of Aeronautics who is working with the FAA regarding the administration

of this funding. The airport's beacon light was scheduled for repairs as part of an overall airport improvement project. While the Public Works Committee reviewed the costs for the repairs to the beacon light tower, certain repairs must be expedited due to the light failures and need to comply with federal regulations.

Secondary Dispatch – A temporary secondary dispatch center has been set up in the Administration area of the courthouse in case it becomes necessary to isolate dispatch personnel from others within the Sheriff's office.

California Avenue Extension – Maintenance Director Tim Hagberg and I met with city representatives about the potential of extending California Avenue through to Nyman Avenue. Construction has commenced on replacing the sewer main through the area behind the Senior Resource Center. The city will come before the Public Works Committee in May regarding a wider easement to allow for the road.

Ongoing Matters/Updates:

Construction of Main Street in Hayward – Construction continues and is still scheduled for completion by Memorial Day weekend. Main Street and cross streets will occasionally be closed to through traffic. Limitations on parking have reduced since many County employees are working remotely and the overall number of citizens conducting business at the courthouse has been reduced due to COVID-19.

Winter Depot Update – Ron Petit reported that the roof costs went over-budget and the Friends of the Tussockia Trail are seeking additional funds. Mike Keefe and I are working with Ron ensure on-going proper allocation of costs between the grant and the Friends.

Thoreson/Civil Action No. 19-CV-99B – The litigation process continues in the lawsuit filed by Peter J. Thoreson against the County, City, and the investigating officers involved in a search and seizure of Peter Thoreson in 2016 and 2019. Mr. Simatic conducted on-site interviews and collected information for the discovery process last month. I will keep you informed as the matter progresses.

2nd Circuit Court - As a reminder, it is anticipated that Sawyer County will be in the last cycle of counties to receive an additional circuit court but it will not become official until after November 14, 2021. The Director of State Courts reviews judicial need, County Board support and whether the County has the required infrastructure in place by May 31, 2023.

Second Circuit Court Infrastructure Planning – On April 16th, the Finance Committee discussed the costs to construct a second courtroom. Architects provided three alternatives, two of which include plans to add on to the existing courthouse, and another to build a facility next to the jail. Public Works may explore a fourth alternative of moving some existing staff out of the courthouse to accommodate a second courtroom within the existing footprint.

Referendum to Exceed Levy Limit and 2021 Budget: On April 16th, the Finance Committee discussed a referendum to exceed the levy limit. Given the financial impact of COVID-19, it was decided that Mike Keefe and I will work with department directors to

work on 2020 projections and 2021 budget to provide more specific documentation for the need to proceed with a referendum. The referendum to increase the levy limit takes on new importance given the financial impacts of COVID-19 on the County's increased expenses and reduced revenue.

Municode – The Municode contract is finalized. Municode will coordinate and organize the County's Code of Ordinances, and ongoing publication. The project is expected to take up to 12 months.

OO Property Ground Lease and MOU – Discussions continue for the Ground Lease on the OO property with the American Birkebeiner Foundation went before the Land Water Forestry Resource Committee for review on March 11th. The Committee voted to table the documents until May so additional information could be located and in light of the COVID-19 virus's impact on holding public meetings.

Opioid Litigation – I participated in a conference call on April 17th with the attorneys representing the county in the opioid litigation. Work continues on reaching a settlement.

Other Items:

- County Fairgrounds MOU
- COBRA contract renewal
- Various open record requests
- CAFO public hearing
- Ongoing Comprehensive Plan and Outdoor Recreation Plan updates
- Airport Hangar Lease/empty hangar inquiries
- Airport FBO fee oversight; FBO application process for hanger lessees and other businesses
- Dam repairs and construction; investigate special assessment process; potential lake district creation
- Ongoing meetings with Department Directors and Department issues
- Addressing ongoing human resources challenges
- Ongoing research and attention to alternative funding sources and grant opportunities to assist in County funding with topics beyond COVID-19
- Senior Resource Center – Budget and MOU
- Internal contract reviews