

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2014-20 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole October 28, 2014, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 4:30 p.m. CDT. Vice Chair John Allen opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Vice Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	John Allen	District #1
	Tim Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #4
	Steven Gray	District #5
Members absent:	Rodney Peterson	District #3
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy Clerk
	Jane Hardwick	Human Services Director

County Administrator Jim Elmquist discussed with the Board a request to purchase Ice Arena flooring.

Ice Arena Flooring
Discussion

Mr. Elmquist reported that dating back to earlier this year, the Ice Arena Committee has been in discussions about the affordability and the need for flooring within the ice arena to allow for other uses other than ice-related activities. At first the price was substantial when considering used but as of late, there have been two vendors in discussions with Commissioner Peterson and Ice Arena Manager Steve Howarth with the pricing being more affordable than previous inquiries. Included in the Board packet was information from the vendors regarding the products under consideration. The two vendors who have flooring available for purchase are Arena Warehouse of Alexandria, MN and Becker Arena Products of Savage, MN.

The Becker Arena has a Homasote product that could be of concern with the arena's temperatures being somewhat warmer at times during the year. Arena Warehouse has a Polar Flooring cover which is used by the Schwann's Super Rink and doesn't appear to have the same issues as the Homasote. While both floors allow for the arena to be more versatile in its use; the Polar Flooring is seemingly the best fit for the Dodge County Ice Arena.

The prices quoted are \$12,000 from Arena Warehouse and \$18,000 from Becker Arena. The Dodge County Ice Arena Manager recommends Arena Warehouse as the selected vendor. It was noted that Mr. Howarth and the County Administrator were able to complete an on-site assessment of the product.

Discussion took place on the two products that were available.

It was Mr. Elmquist's understanding that the Homasote Flooring is not good to work with per the feedback from the Ice Arena Manager at Schwann's Super Rink.

Ice Arena Flooring
Discussion -
Continued

The County Administrator informed the Board that the number one issue with purchasing the Polar Flooring is that the panels are heavy and it will take a couple of people to move each panel. The other issue with this flooring is that it requires a lot of space to store the panels. Mr. Elmquist reported that the Blaine Super Rink is willing to store the panels for Dodge County until April 2015.

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know the City of Kasson's feeling on this purchase.

The County Administrator stated that the City of Kasson is willing to pay for half of the expense of the Polar Flooring as long as the payment for this expense isn't expected until 2015.

Discussion took place on the floor panels, their age and the ability to find replacement panels if needed. It was pointed out that because the floor panels are for an Olympic sized arena, which is larger than the Dodge County Ice Arena, we will have extra panels on hand.

Action on this item will take place during the regular County Board meeting.

Human Services Director Jane Hardwick met with the Board to discuss her request to reestablish positions in lieu of contracted staff.

Human Services
Request to
Reestablish
Positions in Lieu of
Contracted Staff
Discussion

Ms. Hardwick informed the Board that in 2011, Dodge County began to contract for supervision of child protection and welfare services with Family Service Rochester. At that time, they were unsuccessful in directly hiring a well-qualified candidate when this position was vacant.

Human Services desired to have supervision of child and family social services staff and activities by a person experienced in both supervision and the subject-matter to aide in managing day-to-day activities, training of new staff, and addressing complex program issues and changes, including the application of the Minnesota Child Welfare Practice Model; Signs of Safety strength-based, safety-organized approach; and other best practices.

Ms. Hardwick indicated that after this extended and successful contractual arrangement and changes in their child protection practice, she believes they will be successful in attracting and employing a well-qualified supervisor in this role.

It was the Human Services Director's opinion that the position is essential to effective practice. Dodge County is required under state law to provide children's mental health services, child protection, child welfare services, and adoption services, in addition to licensing child foster care providers and family child care providers. The recommended supervisor-to-staff ratio in this area is 1:6-8 full-time-equivalents (FTE) because of the complexity and intensity of staff consultation required and the urgency of decision-making and because their practice model requires more intensive engagement with families.

This position currently supervises eight employee positions and three contracted case management positions. (Human Services had in place 1.5 supervisors for this team under contract, but 0.5 was reassigned by the contractor earlier this year.

Human Services
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Contracted Staff
Discussion -
Continued

Ms. Hardwick noted that she has delayed asking for that to be refilled because it may be handled differently with the merger.

The Human Services Director felt the request fits with MNPrairie staff planning. This position will align with MNPrairie staff planning as well. Across the three sites, they will have three supervisors (as they do now) but desire to have them in employed-staff positions when it is feasible because of liability risk, reduced potential for conflicts of interest, and management. Ms. Hardwick noted that there are situations where they have sought to contract out when necessary.

The Human Services Director informed the Board that funding for the supervision contract is included within the 2014 Dodge County Human Services budget and the 2015 MNPrairie budget. The cost of contracting for this position is approximately \$102,000 per year (which includes salary, benefits, employer management and administrative overhead, training, and mileage); with about \$63,000 of that amount for salary. The projected annual salary cost of employing for this position would range from \$49,000 to \$76,000; plus benefits, training, etc.

Ms. Hardwick's recommendation was to post and fill a Child & Family Social Services Supervisor position.

Commissioner Gray noted that these two discussion items were postponed from the last meeting in order to allow Commissioner Tjosaas an opportunity to comment on the requests.

Commissioner Tjosaas indicated he has had time to review the requests and he supports filling the two positions as recommended.

It was Commissioner Gray's opinion the two positions should be filled by MNPrairie, not Dodge County.

Commissioner Allen wanted to know if there are three supervisors.

Ms. Hardwick clarified that there will be three supervisors across the counties if the position is filled.

Commissioner Allen stated that since the proposed positions will become a part of MNPrairie and line up better with what they are trying to accomplish, the employees should be hired by MNPrairie.

The Human Services Director reported that MNPrairie budgeted for these positions in 2015, not 2014.

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know if the other two counties were in the same position as Dodge County in relation to these two positions.

Ms. Hardwick reported that Waseca County has just hired a Social Worker and any new positions added in those agencies wasn't budgeted for in 2014.

Human Services
Request to
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Contracted Staff
Discussion -
Continued

Commissioner Tjosaas was supportive of the request to fill the two positions and stated Human Services still needs to go about Dodge County business until the switch.

Commissioner Gray commented it's a possibility the individuals hired for the positions may only be here for two weeks before the merger. Mr. Gray questioned why the county would invest the extra time, money and effort into something the county wouldn't receive much benefit from.

Ms. Hardwick stated filling these two positions would lower costs for the county when compared to what the county is paying for contracted services.

Commissioner Erickson felt filling the two positions would give the two employees background into Dodge County operations and they would have that background going into MNPrairie which would set them up for success. Mr. Erickson stated he believes filling the two positions now is worth the investment.

Commissioner Gray commented that he hasn't seen any figures indicating what incidental costs, operating costs, etc. will be until the end of the year and he would like to have that information by the end of the year. Commissioner Gray informed Ms. Hardwick that he wanted an idea of when the incidental costs to the county were going to end.

Commissioner Allen stated he was not keen on filling the position, however he would consider the request if the county could save money by hiring this individual.

The Human Services Director informed the Board that back in 2010, Dodge County Human Services began contracting with Steele County Human Services for the provision of part-time Child Support Supervision. At that time, they did not have on staff a supervisor of child support enforcement activities who was a subject-matter expert who could manage day-to-day child support activities, train new staff, and address complex program issues and changes. Human Services was also preparing for the possibility of a twelve-county Human Services merger that would have changed the way they manage child support enforcement.

Dodge County reached out to Steele County because they were contiguous and had on staff a supervisor with extensive child support knowledge and experience in supervising and administering child support enforcement activities. Steele County agreed to share a supervisor under a contractual arrangement. Human Services also hopes that this arrangement would help inform how best to manage further inter-county integration of Human Services and child support enforcement. This has been a successful and cost-effective model for accessing subject-matter-expert supervision for this important program area and Dodge County Human Services child support staff of four.

Ms. Hardwick reported that in 2013, Waseca County entered into the same arrangement, and Dodge County Human Services began sharing one child support supervisor across three sites with 16 staff and a child support caseload to manage. They knew they were stretching this capacity, but did not want to prematurely set up another arrangement in light of the impending merger discussion.

Human Services
Request to
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Contracted Staff
Discussion -
Continued

Earlier this year, it became clear that this arrangement was no longer satisfactory because the staff-to-supervisor ratio was not adequate, and they began considering other options.

The Human Services Director indicated that the position is essential to effective child support supervision and administration. Dodge County is required under state law to administer state and federal child support laws. The recommended supervisor-to-staff ratio in this area is 1:10-12 full-time-equivalents (FTEs). This suggests that 1.5 supervisors would be the appropriate level across the three sites.

In July 2014, Human Services expanded their EDMS to the child support business area. They anticipate that this will result in some efficiency that may enable them over time to adjust their staff-to-caseload ratio, but have not yet fully experienced it. At the same time, they have had one very experienced case worker who normally handles a very large caseload out on an extended leave. Human Services caseloads across the three sites were listed as follows:

County	September 2014 Child Support Caseload	Number of Child Support Case Workers
Dodge	905	4
Steele	1,980	8
Waseca	908	4
Total	3,793	16

This provides a current average staff-to-caseload ratio of 1:237. At present, they believe they can increase that to closer to 1:270 after about a year of EDMS experience and being fully staffed, but do not yet know this for certain and have not been successful at obtaining such data from other counties with EDMS experience in child support.

Ms. Hardwick is requesting that Dodge County temporarily hire a half-time supervisor until they have more experience with EDMS, by the end of July 2015, and know what their longer term staffing levels should be.

The Human Services Director reported that as they prepare for MNPrairie implementation, one of the gaps for the three agencies is the development of data practices expertise, handling of data requests, and review for potential data breach risks. This area has grown in complexity beyond the historical state and federal data practices requirements to include HIPAA protected health information regulations and IRS data handling requirements. Given that child support officers often have experience in paralegal-type activities and research, it seems appropriate to consider pairing these two subject areas in one position that would provide child support supervision part-time and part-time data practices consultation.

The funding for the child support supervision contract is included within the 2014 Dodge County Human Service budget and the same for the 2015 MNPrairie Budget. There is also some savings that has occurred in that same budget line in 2014, due to a reassignment of 0.5 FTE by the child and family social services supervisor contractor that reduced their costs under that contract.

Human Services
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Discussion -
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Ms. Hardwick informed the Board that the cost of contracting for this position is approximately \$24,000 per year for salary, benefits, and some Steele County administrative overhead, which is matched by federal IV-D funds at 66 percent, leaving the county share of costs at approximately \$8,200. The beginning salary range for this position would be approximately \$43,000 plus benefits. The child support portion of this activity would be matched by federal IV-D funds at 66 percent and the remainder at approximately 30 percent, leaving the county/MNPrairie costs to be about \$22,400 for salary and about \$8,700 for benefits.

It was the Human Services Director's recommendation that the 2014 cost of this position be split between Dodge County Human Services and MNPrairie, for a county/MNPrairie cost share of about \$15,600 each.

Dodge County would need to amend the current Steele County contract once this position has been posted and filled.

Ms. Hardwick's recommendation to the Board at the regular County Board meeting will be to adopt a motion to authorize the posting and filling of a temporary (9-month) child support supervisor and data practices specialist position and to share the cost of the position with MNPrairie, pending concurrence by the MNPrairie Joint Powers Board.

Commissioner Erickson clarified that the data practices portion will be funded by MNPrairie.

Ms. Hardwick informed the Board that this is a temporary approach and that they are planning to hire from within with the hope that they won't need to backfill any positions.

Discussion took place on where the other two counties are with their child support services.

Commissioner Allen stated that Dodge County does a very good job with their Child Support; it was his opinion that this is not the case with the other two counties.

Commissioner Gray commented that there has been a lot of conversation about the benefits that MNPrairie brings to Dodge County. Mr. Gray would like that benefit information shared with the Board by the end of the year, he felt it would be helpful information for them to have.

Emergency Management Director Matthew Maas and Building Operations Supervisor Roger Friedt discussed radon mitigation with the Board.

Radon Mitigation
Project Update

Mr. Maas reported to the Board that upon completing the last radon mitigation project, they found there were still some small levels of radon in a couple of areas which could potentially lead to concerns during the colder months.

Radon Mitigation
Project Update -
Continued

While there are currently no industrial standards or requirements for the county to follow on mitigation they have continued to review the concerns with Athelon Enterprises and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Athelon has provided the county with a proposal to add an additional two suction points and a 6" diameter exhaust pipe. These suction points would be placed in the areas they were not able to get airflow from with the previous system because of the limestone subslab. This system would be installed in a similar process as the previous one, with one suction point being installed with the option of adding a second one immediately, if needed. This installation of the first suction point will also point out the correct location of the second, if needed.

The total price of installing both points would be \$10,450, with a roof contractor.

Mr. Maas noted the planned remodeling projects have been accounted for in the proposed radon mitigation plan and the expectation is this plan will also accommodate for those changes. Upon the completing of this project the expectation is to have no radon concerns which would allow this area to be occupied by employees again. The Emergency Management Director pointed out that depending on the timing of the completion of this project, the mitigation may also make this area available for relocating employees during the remodeling project.

The Building Operations Supervisor stated he would like the work done before winter so they know the radon mitigation works before the remodeling project is started in this area.

Mr. Maas reported the remodeling project has been taken into consideration by Athelon.

Mr. Friedt informed the Board that he has been working with Wold Architects to find an agreeable location for the new pipe.

The Emergency Management Director recommended moving forward with the Athelon radon mitigation proposal for the courthouse lower level.

Commissioner Gray asked for a building project update.

Building Project
Update

The Building Operations Supervisor informed the Board that utility work is being completed and that most of the interior walls were down in the Government Services Building.

The Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

JOHN ALLEN
VICE CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: