

**LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PLANNING MEETING  
PROCEEDINGS; MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2011**

The La Crosse County Board of Supervisors Planning Meeting was held on Monday, September 12, 2011 in the Administrative Center, Room B410. The County Clerk, Ginny Dankmeyer, took attendance. 25 supervisors were present when Chair Tara Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and those otherwise present, excused or absent are noted in the roll call detail:

<b>District Name</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
1 Richmond, Andrea	Present
2 Geary, Ralph	Present
3 Feehan, Bill	Present
4 Johnson, Jai	Present at 06:02 PM
5 Johnson, Karin	Present
6 Billings, Jill	Excused
7 Plesha, Roger	Present
8 Freedland, Maureen	Present
9 Hampson, Sharon	Excused at 06:47 PM
10 Wood, Margaret	Present
11 Kader, Audrey	Present at 06:03 PM
12 Flood, Bridget	Present
13 Brockmiller, Bill	Present
14 Medinger, John	Present at 06:03 PM
15 Mach, Beverly	Present
16 Sebranek, Gerald	Excused
17 Meyer, Donald	Present
18 Johnson, Tara	Present
19 Keil, Robert	Present
20 Bina, Donald	Present
21 Manthei, Dennis	Excused
22 Ebert, Ray	Present
23 Gamroth, Tammy	Present
24 Pfaff, Leon	Present
25 Schroeder, Jeffrey	Present
26 Burke, Vicki	Present
27 Pedretti, Marilyn	Present
28 Doyle, Steve	Excused
29 Kruse, Monica	Present
30 Spiker, Charles	Present
31 Ferries, Dan	Present
32 Benrud, Arlene	Present
33 Berns, Jim	Present at 06:02 PM
34 Wehrs, Tina	Excused
35 Bilskemper, Joe	Excused

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### PUBLIC HEARING

- There was no one that signed up to speak or who requested comments to be read at the public hearing.

Motion by D. Meyer/S. Hampson to close the public hearing passed on a unanimous voice vote with 25 ayes, 4 absent – J. Johnson, A. Kader, J. Medinger, and J. Berns, 6 excused – J. Billings, G. Sebranek, D. Manthei, S. Doyle, T. Wehrs, and J. Bilskemper.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

#### County Board Chair Report - Tara Johnson

- Final Supervisory District Plan discussion
  - A vote will be taken at Thursday's Monthly meeting on the Final Supervisory Redistricting Plan. At that meeting, we will ask for a motion to waive the First and Second readings so the redistricting plan can be passed within the deadline, September 19, 2011, given by the State. If you want individual maps for review, they will be in the County Clerk's office. Corporation Counsel William Shepherd stated there is nothing that can be changed at this point.
- County Board downsizing discussion – Suggestions were asked from the Supervisors regarding downsizing, committee structure, and new district boundaries. This will be a way to generate a list for a special committee to come up with a proposal for any changes that may need to be made and possible ordinance changes so the new county board in April will be ready to proceed with those arrangements in place.
  - Supervisor Ebert suggested going to four committees with seven members and board chair not on any committees and perhaps joining Aging and Long Term Care with Judiciary & Law.
  - Supervisor Ferries - would like to see the committees stay the same but with lower numbers on the committees.
  - Supervisor Flood – same committees and less people.
  - Supervisor Burke – keep five standing committees plus Executive Committee; reduce by one supervisor on each except Health & Human Services and perhaps getting a more equitable distribution of supervisors on committees.
  - Supervisor Kader – keep standing committees and look at commonality of interest before merging committees together. Five committees have been working well so far.
  - Supervisor Pfaff – continue with five committees; if you lower members by one member, you end up with a tie at voting.
  - Supervisor Geary – keep committees the same and having people on a number of committees is not bad. He suggested having the committees decide on what they think would be an acceptable size.
  - Supervisor Hampson noted that historically, one supervisor serves on both HHS and ALTC.
  - Supervisor Schroeder would like to explore the idea of eliminating the Executive Committee and replacing it with Committee of the Whole.
  - Supervisor Ebert – likes the idea to have a topic come up once and then vote on it again in ten days; danger is you fight the battle twice.
  - Supervisor Geary – the public does not get an opportunity to speak at the Planning or Monthly Board meeting. They only are allowed to speak at the committee meetings where most supervisors are not present to hear them speak.
  - Supervisor Medinger – there has to be leadership and we need someone to lead and expect the Board Chair to lead.
  - Supervisor Kader – suggested the meeting time to be changed.
  - Supervisor Mach – publicizing the information about district and boundary changes, public awareness of new maps.
  - Supervisor Burke – suggested perhaps putting new districts on tax bills.

(104-11/12)

- Supervisor Hampson – mentioned the [www.vpa.wi.gov](http://www.vpa.wi.gov) as a way to find out your new district, representatives, and polling place location.
- Supervisor Spiker – important that the Board Chair appoints to committees if you lack a quorum; if you drop size of committees, we will have quorum problems.
- Supervisor Hampson – consider the committee chair to appoint a replacement.
- Supervisor Geary – replacing members if someone misses a meeting 2 or 3 times; should have mechanism to remove that person from committee.
- Chair Johnson noted that she has established office hours of: Tuesday 9am-12pm, Wednesday 12pm-4pm and Thursday 8am-11:30am.
- County Board Budget including Supervisor expenses
  - Chair Johnson noted that the Board budget is being reviewed right now and what does it mean to shift from 35 to 29 with regards to benefits, compensation, and travel / conference expenses. It has been two cycles since County Board Supervisor pay has changed. The Executive Committee in the October cycle will look at the proposed budget. Please let the Chair know of any suggestions. It is important to be equitable and fair and we could use a refresher course on what the ordinance says about expenses and meal/travel reimbursement. Supervisor Feehan noted that he does not intend to run again and has learned just how much time is really invested in all the meetings as a Supervisor. He believes it is time for Supervisors to receive a raise and the downsizing of the board will create a situation where we don't have to increase the board budget to do so. A lot of the work done on this board goes largely unrecognized. Supervisor Geary suggested a list of comparable counties on how many supervisors they have and how much they get paid. Finance staff and County Clerk are working on a list of comparable counties and compensation.
- Supervisor Conference Reports
  - Supervisor Freedland attended a meeting put on by the Wisconsin Council of Children and Family on how children and families are fairing in these tough economic times. There were some astonishing figures presented. Some of the positives were the percentages of teens not in school and not high school graduates' going down by 33%, and the teen birth rate is down. But, clearly there are more children and families in poverty. Couleecap does a count of homeless people on the same day every year and this year it was 278 homeless people in La Crosse. A year ago it was 167 homeless people in La Crosse. Right now, City of La Crosse has higher poverty level than the City of Milwaukee. Randy Nelson from the School District of La Crosse indicated that they expect a 50% increase in free and reduced lunch families. There was a speaker from the faith community indicating that they are doing more, but their congregants have less to give and increasing charity is not going to be the answer. Human Services Director Jason Witt indicated that they will have to work smarter to structure services, changes that the County has made, and working with the schools and the community.
  - Supervisor Wood attended the National Association of Local Boards of Health annual conference in Idaho. The Surgeon General, Regina Benjamin, attended. The model from trying to cure and get people healthy after suffering from disease is changing to a prevention model. Dr. Judy Monroe, deputy from the CDC, also attended. There were different tracks at the conference: community engagement, community health assessment (where you live does matter in terms of how healthy you are), healthy partnerships (making sure you are not alone, it is a community issue to stay healthy) and healthy homes. The County did not pay the way. The Wisconsin Association of Local Boards of Health and the National Association paid.

**Administrator Report - Steve O'Malley**

**PROCLAMATION RE: SEPTEMBER 2011 – LIBRARIES & UW EXTENSION MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, educational programs for agricultural producers and professionals, businesses, local governments, communities, families and youth are brought to the residents of La Crosse County; and, **WHEREAS**, educational and library programs identify and respond to specific community needs for education, research and knowledge to improve the quality of life in local communities, to strengthen families, to increase the competitiveness of businesses and agriculture, enhance decision-making in local government, and to develop leadership skills for managing resources and planning for the future; and, **WHEREAS**, libraries provide recreational and educational resources in the pursuit of life-long learning; and, **WHEREAS**, UW-Extension programming combines faculty, campus-based specialists, and staff expertise to bring University research to the people of La Crosse County in the areas of Agriculture/Horticulture; Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development; Family Living Education; and 4H & Youth Development; and, **WHEREAS**, UW-Extension faculty & staff and area library staff are committed to educating the residents of La Crosse County in order to promote life-long learning and provide a more knowledgeable and informed community. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the La Crosse County Board does hereby proclaim the month of September as La Crosse County Libraries and UW Extension Month, and urges all residents to join in recognizing the valuable contribution of persons dedicated to educating the residents and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities in La Crosse County.

Motion by D. Ferries/K. Johnson to approve passed on a unanimous voice vote with 28 ayes, 7 excused - J. Billings, J. Bilskemper, S. Doyle, S. Hampson, D. Manthei, G. Sebranek and T. Wehrs.

- A reminder that there will be a special Executive Meeting, Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:50 p.m. regarding the replacement of the facilities truck.
- Also, there has been a suggestion to have a special meeting for Exec and Public Works. City Council acted on amendments to the La Crosse International Business Park covenants and we need to verify that our actions are consistent to what city did. We may need to meet before the Exec meeting on Thursday.
- Update on Jail – Sheriff Helgeson
  - We have been in the new jail addition for a little over six months. Thank you to Captain Daggett and her team that collaborated with the architect to work on the design of the facility. They worked over the details and blueprints for weeks and weeks, and it really paid off. We went into the new addition almost flawlessly. There is very little that is not working as we hoped for. In the new addition, we have Justice Sanctions and Probation and Parole so they are closer to each other and the jail, so if we have issues we all are under the same roof and get it taken care of right away. The jail office, where inmates are released, is right next to Justice Sanctions. A new booking area was designed. This is where they go when first arrested-fingerprinted, photo taken and cells issued for short term. We usually have about 6,000 bookings per year through the La Crosse County jail from warrants for not paying to probation holds to serious crimes. We also have a new receiving medical area, which we are very satisfied with. The jail nursing staff was working out of a cubby hole, and now they have a pharmacy area, desks and examination rooms, and we are pleased with that too. There also is an office available for the physicians and psychiatrists that come in. Kitchen was large enough to be able to provide meals for the jail and La Crosse County Aging, Meals on Wheels, and it was sized for the future. We remodeled the women's blocks and tried to make it equivalent to what the men have with their direct supervision. We have carpet, movable chairs and tables, skylights, and try to make it more equal to what the men had in direct supervision. Video

(106-11/12)

visitation seems to be working fine with no complaints. Programming has expanded with enough area to do so.

Some of the challenges we've encountered include, the camera system has had some problems but is being worked on next week. They will be replacing about 190 cameras at the manufacturer's cost, not costing La Crosse County anything. It was not operating as it was supposed to. We are having some problems with video visitation. Some of the booths are not working yet. Facilities Director Jim Speropulos is pursuing that and the contractor won't be paid until fixed accordingly.

We have not been able to open the L pod, which is one of the direct supervision blocks. We have noticed quite an uptick of our inmate population, which we never anticipated back when we were designing the jail. This last February 2010, we had 170 inmates for an average monthly population of 150 men and 20 women. This past August, we were up to 164 men and 25 women for a total of about 189, which is up 19 from last August, and the numbers continue to climb. This past Monday we had 217 inmates, 184 men and 33 females. We are having some problems with the numbers. We expected to be able to run the booking/receiving area with one jailer. This area has both medical and receiving cells, where people stay for the first 24 hours. Our anticipation was that if we had lower numbers, they could move more people upstairs and have less in the receiving area and be able to keep one jail staff member back in the receiving/medical area. But, we are now running 30 to 40 inmates through which we did not anticipate. We are seeing more seriously mentally ill in jail than we have ever seen in our La Crosse County jail. Our jail psychologist, Steve Josephson, said that in his 15 to 20 years he has not seen inmates as ill as right now. They are being kept downstairs to keep a close watch on and separate. There are a number of reasons for that right now. Hospitals are not accepting the mentally ill as they did before; hospitals are sending inmates back to us who really should be in a hospital. Winnebago and Mendota, the state health institutions, reduced the number of people they will take in. We have a jail here; we don't have a hospital. The jail is not a place for the serious mentally ill and, unfortunately, that is what we are experiencing. Recently, one of our local hospitals reduced bed space on their psych unit from 65 to 22. We have no explanation as why the population has gone up. We are seeing more people come into our jail under the influence of drugs than in the past. It is hard to quantify those numbers. They usually come in for theft or disorderly conduct and now they are coming in ill from meth use or heroin. Heroin has become very common, and part of it is from abuse of opiate pain medicine. A lot of persons are ill and causing problems, which is why we need two staff people in our medical/booking area. Now, the good news is we have not needed to open pod L and we cannot open it because we don't have staff for it without paying overtime. We are working with the space we have as long as we can. We have about 40 in the direct supervision block and there are 57 beds there, and we have room to grow. It is working great beyond our expectation. We are accomplishing what we want. There are more programming opportunities. We are also teaching "Thinking for a Change." When they leave jail, they can continue to take the classes. This program has proven to have impact and change in people's lives. We are working hard to see what we can do to reduce jail population and see what we can identify as problem areas. Jane Klekamp, Captain Daggett, and Supervisor Vicki Burke are working on transition from jail to community and offering them tools and mechanisms so they don't return to jail. We don't know what is driving the increase in population in the jail; it is very complicated. Sheriff Steve Helgeson addressed questions from the Board.

(107-11/12)

- Budget Update
  - This illustrates the kind of challenge we face. In addition to the state budget cuts, there are federal changes and waiver laws. We have no ability to raise property taxes for staff; however, we can for paying off debt service. The local and global economy is impacting our ability. We are losing about \$600,000 a year of interest revenue. We have no ability to make it up in operating levies. There are a number of significant impacts. We still are working on finalizing the County Administrator's budget. We still have a gap of about \$160,000 to bring the budget in at 0. We are looking at a number of items. We do have positive news from the Mississippi Valley Health Services that they were receptive to a 5% increase in revenue. All counties are trying to reduce their reliance on Lakeview. We are going to look at our outside agencies and our contributions. We don't foresee many changes in user fees or changes in fund balance. This will be a difficult budget year with a 0% operating levy. In the next two years, it will be very challenging. There will be major capital items that the next County Board will have to address in Highway and Lakeview as well as the Administrative side. The best news is in regards to the Law Enforcement Center debt. A resolution will be brought on Thursday, which will only deal with 2011 Highway Debt. The 2001A LEC debt has four years left after this year. It looks like we will be able to pay off the 2001A debt three years early in 2012 instead of refinancing. Because of how we managed our Law Enforcement Center project and coming in under budget, we have reserves in jail assessment and how we stretched out the actual drawing of the debt. We are saving about \$364,000 worth of interest. Resolution will only be for highway short term debt. County Administrator's budget finished this week. Budget book should be in lockers by end of month. This is the most challenging year and no operating levy relief.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

- Supervisor Feehan requested a report on county employment over last decade and where growth of employment has taken place and the savings from WRS.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion by V. Burke/B. Brockmiller to enter into closed session for the purpose of conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85 (1)(g) TO WIT: IMMINENT OR CURRENT LITIGATION CONCERNING LA CROSSE COUNTY OR ITS DEPARTMENTS passed on a unanimous voice vote with 28 ayes, 7 excused - J. Billings, J. Bilskemper, S. Doyle, S. Hampson, D. Manthei, G. Sebranek and T. Wehrs.

#### **RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

Motion by A. Richmond/D. Meyer to reconvene into open session passed on a unanimous voice vote with 27 ayes, 8 excused - J. Billings, J. Bilskemper, S. Doyle, S. Hampson, D. Manthei, J. Medinger, G. Sebranek and T. Wehrs.

**CHAIR T. JOHNSON NOTED THAT NO VOTES OR ACTION WAS TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION.**

#### **ADJOURN**

Motion by R. Keil/J. Johnson to adjourn at 8:39 PM passed on a unanimous voice vote with 27 ayes, 8 excused - J. Billings, J. Bilskemper, S. Doyle, S. Hampson, D. Manthei, J. Medinger, G. Sebranek and T. Wehrs.

(108-11/12)

STATE OF WISCONSIN )

COUNTY OF LA CROSSE )

I, Ginny Dankmeyer , La Crosse County Clerk, in and for the County of La Crosse, Wisconsin, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Journal of Proceedings of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors at the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors Planning Meeting held Monday, September 12, 2011 and that it is the whole thereof. IN WITNESS THEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND AND AFFIXED THE OFFICIAL SEAL THIS DAY 26 OF SEPTEMBER 2011.