

MEETING OF THE PRICE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

June 20, 2023

Meeting Minutes

County Board Room 101, 126 Cherry St, Phillips, WI 54555

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Alan Barkstrom, County Board Chair.

Invocation: Pastor Larry Tenut.

Pledge of Allegiance recited by those in attendance.

Roll Call: Present (11): Alan Barkstrom, Brian Ernst, Jason Hastings (left 11:21 a.m.), Jeff Hallstrand, Paula Houdek, Mark Kyle, Larry Palecek, Jordan Spacek, Patricia Stephan, Ginny Strobl, Dennis Wartgow. Excused (1): Doug Erickson. Also present: Nick Trimner, Leanna Samardich.

Instructions were given to any members of the public attending electronically.

Approval of Minutes May 16, 2023: Motion Houdek/Stephan to approve the minutes from the May 16 2023 meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Communications and Announcements: Chair Barkstrom acknowledged two awards received by the Child Support Agency. Wisconsin Certificate of Excellence, one of 16 counties recognized. Certificate of Outstanding Achievement, one of eight counties recognized. Last received was 2015. Kudos to Jessie Rumsy, Shelby Bierman, Lisa Neidlein, Leanna Samardich.

Public Comments: Joe Fox, Town of Worcester in opposition to resolution #3.

Presentations:

1. Phillips Area Chamber of Commerce – Laura Palzkill: Update on County Tourism initiatives. Governor's Fishing Opener went well and was good promotion for the area.
2. Community Outreach/Program Coordinator – Cheyanne Litvinoff: This position was the result of elimination of the UWEX Family Educator position and creating the new position in the Health & Human Services Department. Recap of programming and outreach.

Resolutions:

Resolution 20-23

Town of Worcester Bridge and Culvert Aid

Whereas, the Town of Worcester is requesting aid for design and installation of a new bridge on West Solberg Lake Road over Solberg Lake at Disappearing Creek; and

Whereas, project costs are estimated at \$890,000, such costs to be determined upon project completion; and

Whereas, the funding criteria for the above-mentioned project is as follows:

50% Federal LRIP; 25% Price County; 25% Town of Worcester; and

Whereas, the County portion will be recovered by a direct/special tax levy per § 82.08(2)(a), Wis. Stats., assessed to townships participating in the Bridge and Culvert Aid Program.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Price County Board of Supervisors hereby approves the Town of Worcester Bridge and Culvert Aid Request.

Fiscal Impact: \$222,500 municipal tax levy (estimated)

Submitted by the Price County Executive Committee. s/Alan Barkstrom, Chair; Brian Ernst; Jeffrey Hallstrand; Paula Houdek; Larry Palecek. Reviewed by County Administrator: s/Nicholas Trimner.

Adopted by the Price County Board of Supervisors on this 20th day of June 2023. s/Alan Barkstrom, County Board Chair; Jean Gottwald, County Clerk.

Motion Spacek/Palecek to consider resolution for adoption. Roll call vote on resolution adoption: Yes (11): Barkstrom, Ernst, Hallstrand, Hastings, Houdek, Kyle, Palecek, Spacek, Stephan, Strobl, Wartgow. No (0). Motion carried.

Resolution 21-23

Request the Wisconsin Legislature to Amend §59.52(29)(a) Public Works Publication Requirements WHEREAS, under the current State law, if the estimated cost of any public work is between \$5,000 and \$25,000, a class 1 notice is required before the project is contracted; and

WHEREAS, with the incredible increase in costs of construction, repair, remodeling or improvement of any public work, building, supplies or materials the project costs can easily fall in the threshold of \$5,000 to \$25,000; and

WHEREAS, in small rural counties, the publication options are generally on a weekly basis; and

WHEREAS, to meet the publisher's deadlines, the notice information needs to be submitted at least a week before publication; and

WHEREAS, this publication requirement can significantly delay a project and make it extremely difficult to move forward with contractors committing project costs and availability in their schedules.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Price County Board of Supervisors urges the Legislature to amend Wis. Stats. §59.29(29)(a) to eliminate the requirement for a class 1 notice for estimated cost of any public work being between \$5,000 and \$25,000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to

Governor Evers, the Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature, the state legislators for Price County and the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) for consideration at the WCA annual business meeting to become part of the WCA platform.

Submitted by the Price County Executive Committee. s/Alan Barkstrom, Chair; Brian Ernst; Jeffrey Hallstrand; Paula Houdek; Larry Palecek. Reviewed by County Administrator: s/Nicholas Trimner.

Adopted by the Price County Board of Supervisors on this 20th day of June 2023. s/Alan Barkstrom, County Board Chair; Jean Gottwald, County Clerk.

Motion Wartgow/Spacek to consider resolution for adoption. Roll call vote on resolution adoption: Yes (11): Barkstrom, Ernst, Hallstrand, Hastings, Houdek, Kyle, Palecek, Spacek, Stephan, Strobl, Wartgow. No (0). Motion carried.

Resolution 22-23

Request Elimination of the 0% Levy Cap Imposed on Wisconsin Counties

WHEREAS, in 2012, the State of Wisconsin imposed limits on town, village, city and county property tax levies under Wis. Stat. §66.0602; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. §66.0602 limits that increase to the local property tax levy to no more than the greater of (a) 0% of last year's actual levy or (b) a percentage equal to the percentage change in equalized value due to new construction less improvements removed; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of net new construction in Price County used to calculate the increase in the operating levy allowance has significantly lagged the CPI-U over this period; and

WHEREAS, as a result, Price County has been forced to absorb inflationary increases in normal operating expenditures with no offsetting increase in revenues; and

WHEREAS, the ever-increasing costs of operations including effective employee recruitment and retention, maintenance materials, operating supplies and unfunded mandates such as Child Protective Services, the issue continues to escalate out of control; and

WHEREAS, Price County has taken measures to curb spending by cutting costs, eliminating positions, reducing program offerings and postponing necessary work on building and highway infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, to continue to provide essential services to county citizens, Price County has resorted to using debt to fund qualified expenditures previously funded in its operating levy resulting in a higher cost to Price County taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, Price County will soon be unable to continue to fund operating levy by using debt; and

WHEREAS, the use of the referendum process to exceed the levy limit for normal operating and mandated costs presents an unacceptable risk for counties to be able to fund operations should such a referendum fail.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Price County Board of Supervisors requests complete elimination of the current 0% tax levy cap or replacing it with a levy allowance that adequately reflects annual inflationary increases and the continual escalating cost of state mandated services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Evers, the Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature, the state legislators for Price County and the Wisconsin Counties Association for consideration at the WCA annual business meeting to become part of the WCA platform.

Submitted by the Price County Executive Committee. s/Alan Barkstrom, Chair; Brian Ernst; Jeffrey Hallstrand; Paula Houdek; Larry Palecek. Reviewed by County Administrator: s/Nicholas Trimner.

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Motion Wartgow/Houdek to consider resolution for adoption. Roll call vote on resolution adoption: Yes (8): Barkstrom, Hallstrand, Houdek, Kyle, Palecek, Spacek, Stephan, Wartgow. No (3): Ernst, Hastings, Strobl. Motion carried.

Appointments:

1. Zoning Board of Adjustment: Three-year term to expire June 30, 2026 (Thomas Frane, Margaret Novak, Mark Luoma): Motion Hallstrand/Houdek to approve appointments as presented. Motion carried.

Reports:

1. Forestry & Parks Department – 2022 Annual Report.

Convened to the Committee of the Whole at 9:27 a.m.

1. County Board Supervisor District 10
 - a. Resignation of Supervisor Wakefield: Effective May 17, 2023
 - b. Options to Fill Position

- i. Appointment: Motion Wartgow/Palecek to direct appointment to fill the vacancy of Supervisor District 10. Roll call vote: Yes (10): Barkstrom, Ernst, Hallstrand, Hastings, Kyle, Palecek, Spacek, Stephan, Strobl, Wartgow. No (1): Houdek. Motion carried.
 - ii. Call for Special Election (April 2, 2024): Contest will be on the April 2, 2024 ballot.
- 2. Board Chair Report – Alan Barkstrom: Northwoods Rail Transit Commission meeting update. Met with Laura West, the new USDA representative.
- 3. County Administrator’s Report – Nick Trimner
 - a. 2023 Financial Summary: Reviewed report, including areas of overages. Last day of redemption is July 27th for 2019 tax delinquent properties – including the Phillips Lionite Wood Products Co, LLC

Supervisor Hastings left meeting at 11:21 a.m.

- b. 2024 Budget
 - i. Department Guidelines: No major issues for 2024, yet.
 - ii. Exercise on Budget and Debt Service: With the zero-levy cap, look at debt to continue viable operations. Interactive exercise held to allow Supervisors to decide where debt funding should go and if there should be a debt increase. Nine supervisors in the room participated.
 - c. Updates: Nothing more.
- 4. Committee Chair Reports:
 - a. Administration – Wartgow: Has not met.
 - b. Buildings & Grounds – Spacek: Has not met. Summer maintenance and projects.
 - c. Executive – Barkstrom: Issue with trespass and destruction of public property on County-owned land. 5R property cleanup is ongoing. Continued discussion on Fred Mueller property. County Administrator’s performance review.
 - d. Forestry & Parks – Hallstrand: Pine Line Trail and Timms Hill projects. Carbon credit plotting done. Summer projects. \$750,000 requested in state budget for Lower Steve Creek Dam.
 - e. Health and Human Services – Houdek: Woodland Enhanced Health Services Commission appointment approved for Paula Houdek. Report on Health and Wellness Coalition and Public Health Level II Certification. Foster Care Appreciation banquet held.
 - f. Highway & Transportation – Palecek: Summer paving projects – County Highways B and E. Prepping County Highway W for next year’s project. Summer maintenance. Airport grounds and building maintenance. Terminal was remodeled. Dams continue to deal with debris from spring runoff. Supervisor Palecek attended Summer Road School.
 - g. Land Use & UW-Extension – Wartgow: Several special exemptions and conditional use permits. UW-Extension is waiting to hear from state if additional funding for 4-H Educator will be available.
 - h. Law Enforcement – Palecek: Reviewed inmate, dispatch and response data. State continues to recruit a replacement DA. Working on impound fee. Joe Lillie retirement as of July 3rd. Yamaha offering free use of UTV for rec officer.

Convene out of Committee of the Whole at 11:51 a.m.

Motion Palecek/Hallstrand to postpone closed session to a future County Board meeting. Motion carried.

Closed Session: Pursuant to the exemption in Wis. State Statute 19.85 (1)(c) for considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility and for the purpose of:

- a. County Administrator Performance Review. b. Motion to Return to Open Session

Take Action, as needed, on closed session items: N/A

Date of Next Meeting: August 15, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Board Room

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Jean Gottwald, County Clerk