

RICHLAND COUNTY CHAPTER 980 COMMITTEE

April 17, 2019

A meeting of the Richland County Chapter 980 Committee was held at 2:00 p.m. on April 17, 2019 in the Main Conference Room of the Community Services Building, 221 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin.

Members Present: Tracy Thorsen, Mike Bindl, Benjamin Southwick, Mary Collins Johnsrud (by phone) and Lynn Newkirk.

Members Absent: Scott Timm.

Others Present: Meghan Rohn.

Approve Agenda and Posting: Motion by Mike Bindl, seconded by Lynn Newkirk to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion carried. Discussion was held regarding the need to approve all previous minutes for the Richland County Chapter 980 Committee so they may be properly posted. Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Lynn Newkirk to approve all minutes that have been created for the Richland County Chapter 980 Committee. Motion carried.

Consideration of Housing Options for Impending Release of Sex Offender: Tracy Thorsen reported that the hearing held on April 4, 2019 resulted in the approval for Mr. Sugden to be placed outside of Richland County at a placement identified by the defense attorney in Ashland County. The judge also stated that this decision did not absolve Richland County of its responsibilities. Discussion was held regarding the interpretation of these actions and it is the belief of Benjamin Southwick that it is still the responsibility of this committee to continue with efforts to find a placement for Mr. Sugden in Richland County, per the original order issued by Judge Sharp.

Tracy Thorsen confirmed that an advertisement was placed in both the Richland Observer and the Shopping New in an attempt to locate a rental property. At this point in time no calls have been received in response to the advertisement and, as a result, the advertisement has been extended another week. There also have not been any calls received in response to the letters sent to the sellers of the properties currently identified by this committee. Tracy Thorsen did receive a call from one of vendors that was sent the list of properties approved by this committee, and noted that while the vendor is interested in purchasing a property, they are not interested in any of the properties currently available. Discussion was held regarding what type of property the vendor is searching for and Tracy Thorsen explained that the vendor wanted to be able to recoup his investment within the first year and wanted information regarding what the terms of the lease agreement would be. As a result, Tracy Thorsen referred him to Scott Timm for further information

County owned properties were once again reviewed. Benjamin Southwick noted there are several properties the County is set to acquire in July and one in May. Tracy Thorsen explained that after speaking with the defense attorney she understood that it was his opinion that this is the most expedient routes counties should be taking fill these placements and counties should even consider

purchasing properties. Benjamin Southwick noted that in reality this is actually a very lengthy process. Benjamin Southwick also discussed a property that was purchased by the County as a sandpit that a trailer could potentially be placed on, however a well and septic system would then need to be put in place. Additional discussion was held regarding the various complicating factors that result from the idea of putting a mobile home on a vacant lot and it was agreed that this too would not be a good option.

The next hearing is scheduled for June 11, 2019 and Tracy Thorsen questioned if someone from this committee needed to be present. Benjamin Southwick explained that Richland County is not a party to the litigation and in his opinion it is time for the committee to submit its report to the Department of Health Services. Benjamin Southwick reviewed the portion of the statute relating to the report however, and it was determined that the report requires a residence be identified.

Further discussion was held regarding what other efforts could be made to identify a residence. Tracy Thorsen will contact local Town Clerks and inquire if they are aware of any rental properties currently available. Identifying owners of multiple homes was also discussed and the possibility of these individuals being willing to rent one of these properties. The committee discussed other potential business owners in the area that own large numbers of properties. Committee members were assigned to contact these individuals to determine if they would be interested in renting any of these properties. A property containing an old vacant school house on Hwy 14 was identified and discussed and it was noted that it meets the necessary requirements, as does a property located at 2070 US Hwy 14, Richland Center, WI. Benjamin Southwick will follow up with the owners regarding these two properties. The advertisement seeking a rental option will continue to run in both publications as well.

Benjamin Southwick noted May 29, 2019 is the deadline to submit the report to the Department of Health Services. Discussion was held regarding the exact requirements of the report and responsibilities of the committee.

Adjourn: The next meeting was scheduled for April 29, 2019 at 3:00pm in the main conference room of the Community Services Building. Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Mike Bindl to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rohn

Confidential Administrative Secretary