

AD HOC COMMITTEE
For the Study of
Richland County Administration
May 14, 2019

The Ad Hoc Committee met on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 1:00 p.m., in the County Board Room, located on the Third Floor of the Courthouse, 181 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin.

Committee members present included: Melissa Luck, Marty Brewer, Linda Gentes, Buford Marshall, Shaun Murphy-Lopez, Kerry Severson, James Bindl, Tom Rislow, Barb Scott, Jo Ann Krulatz and Chris Storer. Larry Sebranek was absent.

Others present included: Victor Vlasak, County Clerk; Jeanetta Kirkpatrick, County Board Chair; and County Board Supervisors Jayme Walsh and Don Seep.

Chair Luck called the meeting to order.

The Clerk verified that the meeting had been properly noticed. Copies of the agenda were sent by email to all Committee members and WRCO, a copy was posted on the Courthouse Bulletin Board and a copy was faxed to The Richland Observer.

Motion by Gentes, second by Scott that the agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Motion by Krulatz, second by Severson that the printed copies of the minutes for the April. 24th meeting be approved. Motion carried.

A slide presentation was presented on the results of the Department Head Survey. Chair Luck reviewed each slide. 14 department heads responded to the survey. Responses were compared to similar questions asked in the survey completed by County Board Supervisors. Below are comments received from department heads to the question "What do you think could be done to strengthen relationships between the county board supervisors and department heads?"

- I think supervisors need to spend some time in different departments seeing what really happens in the departments so they have a better understanding when items come to the county board session.
- A bit more interaction and communication about needs of departments, concerns, etc.
- Allow department heads to manage their departments without the micro-managing and foster a notion that the county board should focus on strategic planning, policy and establishing a long-term vision for the county.
- Clear goals and expectations of roles and responsibilities.
- There are barriers inherent in the board decision making structure that limit the ability to develop stronger relationships. County board supervisors don't get to know the work of the department heads.
- Having or asking the department head to give a brief written quarterly (or semi-annual) update of the highlights/successes/challenges at their dept.
- They are far removed from each department that they don't serve on. Maybe including them in our department head meetings a few at a time would be good.
- County board needs to be consistent. Make sure it is communicated that decisions - although difficult - are being done for the best interest of Richland County and its people.

- Communication – board members should be allowed to reach out to dept. heads – especially regarding agenda items. Be more informed on actions committees pass to make a more informed decision on voting on items at board level.
- See more supervisors getting to know what departments do. How many supervisors actually know what all departments do?
- I believe dealing with committee members does not allow time for other county board members. Some county board members have never been in my office.
- All supervisors need to spend some time in the departments, like a ride-along or “job shadow” to better understand what departments do and what statutory functions they serve.
- Listening to department heads concerns. Treating everyone fairly. Do not go along with a department head because you are on their committee.
- When items appear on the county board agenda, read the resolutions and background information when provided. Call that department beforehand if the supervisor doesn’t understand.
- A small portion of the county board members work at their positions. I would expect more input and concern in the workings of all departments to better understand how county government works.
- Operating in silos is inhibiting growth and financial stability. There is no way we can improve when no one can see the ultimate goal. Silos do not work, but operating in a silo almost seems encouraged here at Richland County.
- The county supervisors – when considering Ad-Hoc committees recommendation – should think about what’s best for the whole-not just the oversight committee of which they may be a member.
- Department heads should meet with Ad Hoc Committee – they should hear the departmental struggles.
- We need to make Richland County a place to be proud of. People do not think highly of Richland County government = we need to change some perceptions.
- Should welcome questions from board members regarding decisions made at other committees brought to the board floor rather than pass an agenda item because the committee passed it.
- Seems like some supervisors don’t care about employees. Seems like too much fighting between supervisors and rumors supervisors already giving up.
- I always keep my committee abreast of all problems in my department which keeps us all in the knowledge.
- Although I realize much expense would be involved, I think we could benefit from having an actual county administrator who works with dept. heads on matters related to personnel issues. Supervisors and dept. heads should also be encouraged to get outside of Richland County and meet with counterparts in other counties for ideas, particularly counties that have had success in various areas. Not all new ideas are good but sometimes a fresh perspective is helpful.

Chair Luck indicated that she would be asking county employees if they have any input or ideas. Discussion took place regarding the pros and cons of a part-time and full-time

administrator coordinator. The duties of the position would need to be clearly defined and supported by the Board.

Motion by Murphy-Lopez, second by Marshall to adjourn to Wednesday, May 29th.
Motion carried.

Victor V. Vlasak
Richland County Clerk