

Additional Strategic Plan Feedback

Stacy Kleist <Stacy.Kleist@WICOURTS.GOV>

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To: Clinton Langreck <clinton.langreck@co.richland.wi.us>;

Cc: Cheryl Dull <cheryl.dull@co.richland.wi.us>; Ingrid Glasbrenner <ingrid.glasbrenner@co.richland.wi.us>; Marty Brewer <marty.brewer@co.richland.wi.us>; Shaun Murphy-Lopez <shaun.murphy@co.richland.wi.us>; Melissa Luck <melissa.luck@co.richland.wi.us>; Amy Forehand (forehand.amy@mail.da.state.wi.us) <forehand.amy@mail.da.state.wi.us>; Amy Hoffman <amy.hoffman@co.richland.wi.us>; Angie Arneson <angie.arneson@uwc.edu>; Barbara Scott <barbara.scott@co.richland.wi.us>; Carla Doudna <carla.doudna@co.richland.wi.us>; Cathy Cooper <Cathy.Cooper@wi.nacdn.net>; Clay Porter <clay.porter@co.richland.wi.us>; Clinton Langreck <clinton.langreck@co.richland.wi.us>; Craig Saxe <craig.saxe@wisc.edu>; Darin Gudgeon <darin.gudgeon@co.richland.wi.us>; Derek S. Kalish <derek.kalish@co.richland.wi.us>; James Rossing <james.rossing@co.richland.wi.us>; Jasen Glasbrenner (jlgasbrenner@yahoo.com) <jlgasbrenner@yahoo.com>; Jenifer Laue <jenifer.laue@wicourts.gov>; Jennifer Harper <Jennifer.Harper@da.wi.gov>; Jim Bindl (james.bindl@co.richland.wi.us) <james.bindl@co.richland.wi.us>; Julie Keller <julie.keller@co.richland.wi.us>; Karen Knock <karen.knock@co.richland.wi.us>; Mike Bindl <mike.bindl@co.richland.wi.us>; Randy Nelson <randy.nelson@co.richland.wi.us>; Roger Petrick (roger.petrick@co.richland.wi.us) <roger.petrick@co.richland.wi.us>; Sandra Campbell <sandra.campbell@wisc.edu>; Stacy S Kleist <Stacy.Kleist@wicourts.gov>; Sue Triggs <sue.triggs@co.richland.wi.us>; Tom Rislow <tom.rislow@co.richland.wi.us>; Tracy Gobin <tracy@symonsrec.com>; Tracy Thorsen <tracy.thorsen@co.richland.wi.us>;

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Hi Clint,

When you talk to leaders in other communities about their strategic plans, it would be helpful to know how they've addressed employee retention and compensation matters, particularly health insurance. I hear the concerns of many Richland County employees about the rising costs of health insurance and the county's continued non-participation in the state plan. Have other counties/municipalities stayed in the state plan or rejoined the state plan? Has Richland County explored getting back into the state plan? If not, why?

In regards to employee compensation, what have other counties/municipalities done to provide compensation that's comparable with the surrounding private sector and other agencies? As I mentioned to you earlier, Columbia, Dodge, and LaCrosse counties have recently been exploring the use of American Rescue Plan funds to provide additional compensation for all of their employees who worked during the COVID period. Has Richland County explored this yet? All Richland County employees who served the public during the pandemic faced and met challenges to provide a continuum of quality service. There must be a way to compensate them for that. Talking to other counties who've used the American Rescue monies might be a good start.

In regards to increasing county revenues, do all county agencies know how to use revenue-enhancing programs that are already available to them? The Wisconsin Department of Revenue has a couple of great tools that are available to government agencies, one that's been around for a long time called Tax Refund Interception Program or TRIP, and the other, more recent revenue-enhancing program which has been extremely useful for the Circuit Court called State Debt Collection or SDC. Departments who are not using both of these tools need to explore them. From SDC alone in 2021, the Clerk of Court has collected more than \$185,000.

Are all departments finding and writing grants? As I have shared with you personally, I would be interested in writing grants for Richland County but would want to be compensated for doing that. In the past year, I've gotten Richland County over \$200,000 in non-matching equipment grant funds. This included the \$58,000 grant that was used to upgrade the antiquated phone system in the courthouse and the \$150,000 competitive grant that's to be used for a number of items throughout the

courthouse including air filtration systems for the jail and all departments throughout the building (1st/2nd/3rd floors), touch-free water refill stations, touch-free faucets in all of the bathrooms, and limited touch access doors to secure the employee-only areas on the 1st floor of the building. I believe that Richland County could benefit from trying for more grants but it's important that they be professionally composed.

Perhaps a roundtable meeting with department heads focused on revenue-enhancing practices would be a good place to start. Give the people who have had successes with revenue enhancement a chance to share their expertise and also give them credit for doing it.

Have a good day. Stay safe.

Stacy S. Kleist
Clerk of Circuit Court
Richland County, Wisconsin

(608) 647-3956 phone
(608) 647-3911 fax