

Richland County

HHS & Veterans Standing Committee

September 9, 2022

The Richland County Health and Human Services & Veterans Committee convened on Thursday, September 9, 2022, in the County Board room at 181 W. Seminary Street, in person, via videoconference and teleconference.

Committee members present included Ken Rynes, Francis Braithwaite, Lee Van Landuyt, Ingrid Glasbrenner, Tim Gottschall, Cindy Chicker, and Dr. Jerel Berres. Donald Seep, attended by Web Ex.

Department heads, staff, and public present were Karen Knock, Trisha Clements, Angie Rizner, Michael Windle, Meghan Rohn, Jaymie Bruckner, Stephanie Ronnfeldt, Rose Kohout, Clint Langreck, Derek Kalish, Jessica Tisdale, Larry Sebranek, Dominic Anderson, Bill Lobeck, Marge Freeman, and Tom Perry. Roxanne Klubertanz-Gerber, Sharon Pasold, Brittney Wirtz, Briana Turk, Tammy Wheelock, Shaun Murphy Lopez, and Barbara Scott logged in by WebEx. Gabriel Schmitt was present from MIS running the teleconferencing.

Not Present: Danielle Rudersdorf, Sherry Hillesheim, and Kerry Severson

Agenda:

1. **Call to order:** Committee Chair Ingrid Glasbrenner called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.
2. **Proof of notification:** Chair Ingrid Glasbrenner verified that the meeting had been properly posted.
3. **Approve Agenda:** Motion by Tim Gottschall, seconded by Cindy Chicker to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion Carried.
4. **Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Ken Rynes, seconded by Lee Van Landuyt to approve the August 11, 2022 Health & Human Services & Veterans Standing Committee minutes. Motion carried.
5. **Public Comments:** Larry Sebranek, Dominic Anderson, Bill Lobeck, Marge Freeman, and Tom Perry provided public comments regarding Veteran Services Office operations.
6. **Review & Discuss 2024-2027 Budget Levy Reductions per Resolution 22-96:** Ingrid Glasbrenner reviewed the portion of the resolution tasking the Health and Human Services & Veterans Standing Committee with developing a recommended list of proposed projected levy reductions of \$320,000 in 2024, \$637,000 in 2025, \$783,000 in 2026 and \$1,004,000 in 2027. It was noted that the total amounts listed in the resolution are cumulative.

County Board Supervisor Shaun Murphy-Lopez provided the committee with a review of the educational information being used by the Referendum Ad Hoc Committee which provides context for the work of the committee, will serve as the basis for educational materials that will be developed for the public, and will assist with communication with the various County departments and committees. Materials include context regarding staffing levels, revenues and expenses, property tax levy, and operational vs. debt levy. Misconceptions surrounding three categories were addressed, including Health and Human Services, Pine Valley Community Village, and state shared revenues. A history of wage and benefit changes for county employees were also reviewed and it was highlighted that for the last decade annual pay increases have been skipped, and health insurance benefits have continued to be reduced. It was acknowledged that this path is no longer sustainable.

Shaun Murphy-Lopez outlined the next steps for the Referendum Ad Hoc Committee which include communicating directly with committees and department heads affected by a potential referendum, and obtaining questions committees may have. Information will also need to be obtained regarding how each committee plans to describe the identified property tax levy decrease, which budget amounts will be recommended as a permanent decrease, and which will be recommended for inclusion on a potential referendum. Research will be done on other potential operating levy referendums and the public will need to be educated. A report will be submitted to the Finance and Personnel Standing Committee.

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Lee Van Landuyt questioned if other counties are experiencing similar deficits. He also explained that the State has up to a \$5 Billion excess at this point and questioned if counties could join together to persuade the government to utilize some of this excess to assist struggling communities instead of raising property taxes. Shaun Murphy-Lopez explained that in June the County Board passed a resolution asking the State of Wisconsin to increase shared revenues to the County and forwarded the resolution onto the Wisconsin Counties Association, Governor Evers, and elected representatives. It was noted as a part of their policy book, the Wisconsin Counties Association advocates for increased shared revenues.

Ingrid Glasbrenner asked for clarification regarding what the Referendum Ad Hoc Committee is looking for regarding how each committee plans to describe the identified property tax levy decrease. It was explained that the committee must be able to explain to the public what services will be lost in each department if the referendum does not pass. This information needs to be provided to the Finance and Personnel Standing Committee by October 31, 2022. The County Clerk, Derek Kalish would need to be notified by the end of January 2023 if the decision is to move forward with a referendum.

Discussion was then held regarding ideas as to where services could be cut or reduced to meet the projected levy reductions put forward in Resolution 22-96.

- a. **2024-2027 Clerical Assistance for VSO:** Karen Knock discussed potential areas where reductions could be made as well as options still being researched, including reduction of per diem costs, donation of 5% wage increase for the Veterans Services Officer, and the transition of the cost of cemetery flags to the County Clerk's office. It was also explained that since cemetery flag holders are not covered by state statute, some counties have needed to eliminate the ability to provide them due to budget cuts. Karen Knock explained the Commitment to Veterans Support and Outreach Act being endorsed by Senator Baldwin which would provide federal aid to local offices and the Rural Veterans Coordination Program, a pilot program to help states provide services to rural veterans.

Discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of moving the Veterans Services Office to the Community Services Building and possibly utilizing support staff within Health and Human Services. Karen Knock explained that a Veterans Benefit Specialist is needed to be able to file claims, see walk-ins, and complete tasks she does when she is not available. It was stressed that removing this part-time position would diminish services. Karen Knock also discussed State Statute 45.80E regarding the need for separation from other departments, and a poll that had been previously conducted showing a large number of the veteran population would not come to Health and Human Services to receive services.

Discussion was held regarding the cost to maintain the current part-time Veterans Benefit Specialist Position and what the potential savings would be if this position were changed to a clerical position. Ingrid Glasbrenner explained that the committee needs to take a look at other counties around the state with similar veteran population, look at what they are doing, and if any of them are housed within Health and Human Services. Karen Knock noted she has already begun pulling this information together. It was requested the information be put in "black and white" so the committee is able to review the information.

Tim Gottschall questioned if there is any opportunity for consortiums or sharing of resources between counties. Karen Knock explained that there are two counties that do have a consortium where there is one Veterans Services Officer that works part time in one county and part time in the other county. Ken Rynes questioned the polling information that was discussed earlier and questioned when the poll took place and who was polled. Karen Knock explained the poll was taken before she was in her current position and was not able to provide details regarding the poll. Dr. Jerel Berres requested information regarding what services provided within the Veterans Services Office are mandated and what are not.

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- b. **2024-2027 HHS Levy Reduction:** Trisha Clements and Stephanie Ronnfeldt reviewed a document outlining potential reductions or increases in revenues for 2024, as well as potential reductions or increases in revenues still needing to be researched for 2025-2027. Potential reductions or areas of savings for 2024 included reductions to the placements funds, technology expenses, and Child and Youth Services comp time payouts and premium pay. Also included for 2024 was the potential to increase AMSO and Comprehensive Community Services expenses allocated to the agency, resulting in a reduction of tax levy. Other options discussed were the transition of a leased maintenance position to a county Custodian position, increasing utilization of SOR and Opioid Settlement funding, elimination of an APS/Crisis position, and withdrawing the request for the reclassification of the Youth Aide Worker position.

Options for potential reductions or areas of savings still needing additional research for 2025-2027 were discussed and included eliminating the purchase of a new Electronic Health Record system, maximizing revenue to free up base county allocations offsetting AMSO. Reduction in the MOE required by the Capital Consortium, requesting additional funding through the Capital Consortium, and utilize short term borrowing to cover Workman's comp were also discussed.

Dr. Jerel Berres noted the large of amount of funds being removed from placement allocations and questioned how it can be known what placement expenses will be. Trisha Clements discussed how the estimates were arrived at and acknowledged that placements are never a guarantee. It was clarified that the items listed do not included items that would be considered for the referendum and discussion has begun on what some of these options would be. Trisha Clements explained that through discussion it was determined that options should be tangible public. Some options that have been discussed are Aging Programs, the Nutrition Program, and the Transportation Program. It was noted that some of these programs do include some mandated services.

7. **Review & Discuss Statutory Role of VSO Board/Committee:** Ingrid Glasbrenner stated that Attorney Michael Windle was asked to attend the meeting to discuss the roll of the Veterans Services Board/Committee due to changes that have taken place in the last few years, including moving to a County Administrator structure, and absorbing the Veterans Services Committee into the Health and Human Services & Veterans Standing Committee. Michael Windle reviewed the statutes that govern the County Veterans Services Officer, and County Veterans Services Commission, and it was explained that the Commission has little to no role in the operation of the Veterans Services Office. While sole duty of the Veterans Services Commission is to dispense aide to needy veterans within the county, within the Committee Structure Document a provision was included in the definition of the Health and Human Services and Veterans Standing Committee that the Veterans Commission provides oversight and advice regarding the Veterans Services Department. Therefore, while there is no statutory requirement that the Commission and the Veterans Services Office interact, the County Board has elected to create this requirement and has the ability to change it.

Michael Windle provided his interpretation and advised that the Health and Humans Services & Veterans Standing Committee provide oversight over the Veterans Services Office but any employment issues pertaining the County Veterans Services Officer go to the County Administrator. The County Veterans Services officer must follow the County Handbook regarding policy and hiring practices.

8. **Review & Discuss Richland County Handbook Policy on Hiring:** Clint Langreck reviewed the policy regarding hiring in the Richland County Handbook as a result of questions that were raised regarding the procedure that was followed for filling the vacant Veterans' Benefits Specialist position. After review of the policy discussion was held to determine if recommendations for amendments should be made to the Finance and Personnel Committee. Tim Gottschall stated he was not in favor of making any amendments and feels the current policy gives the County Administrator and department heads the ability to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.
9. **Approve Behavioral Health Services Unit Restructuring Plan:** Trisha Clements explained that with the large number of vacancies, an opportunity was taken to review the structure of the Behavioral Health Unit and several changes were identified to ensure that the best services are being provided to the community in the most

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efficient way possible. Due to the difficulty in filling vacant positions, it was suggested that the three masters level Mental Health Therapist positions be converted to bachelor level Mental Health Case Manager positions. It was explained that Comprehensive Community Support programs are fully funded by Medicaid and are a source of revenue for the department. Therefore, if Service Facilitators are in house revenue generated assists with the areas of administration and finance as well. Trisha Clements noted it is also being requested that Corey Kanable, a current contracted Service Facilitator, receive one of the three Mental Health Case Manager positions. Dr. Jerel Berres questioned if there are currently any duties being performed by these positions that require a master's level position. It was explained that Service Facilitators may have either a master's level or bachelors level degree, however the recoupment level from the state differs.

Further discussion was held regarding transitioning currently leased staff into county positions and difficulties this has presented in the past. Tim Gottschall discussed the option of hiring Corey Kanable into one of the county positions, eliminating the need for the language regarding an employee appointment from the resolution. Discussion was held regarding the loss of benefit time that leased employees face when they transition from a leased position to a county position, and this would need to be resolved by resolution. Further discussion was held involving Attorney Michael Windle regarding how to address the lost benefit time for a long term leased employee who is hired into a county position without appointing them into the position. Michael Windle shared the concerns that were raised regarding appointing an individual into a position by resolution and advised a full County Board action be taken where a policy is created addressing the ability for a department head to request the County Administrator waive the standard benefit package for a long term leased employee being hired into a county position. Ingrid Glasbrenner suggested moving forward with the recommendation to restructure the positions with the issue of the appointment to be addressed separately. Motion by Tim Gottschall seconded by Lee Van Landuyt to approve a restructuring of the Behavioral Health Services Unit to include the elimination of three Mental Health Therapist positions, with the positions to be replaced by three Mental Health Case Manager positions for forward the recommendation onto the Finance and Personnel Committee and County Board for approval. Motion carried.

Motion by Tim Gottschall, seconded by Ken Rynes to approve a revision to the Richland County Handbook of Personnel Policies and Work Rules-Hiring and Employment Considerations section as noted below, and forward the recommendation onto the County Board for approval.

HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS (page 19-20)

1. Hiring for Long-Term Vacancies (90 days or longer):

- h. Department Heads shall have the ability to make a recommendation to the County Administrator requesting a variance from the hiring practices established in order to recognize leased or contracted staff by awarding them Richland County's standard benefit package for their accredited years of service in a similar or same position at the time when hired into a full-time county position. Motion carried.*

Tim Gottschall and Ken Rynes left the meeting.

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Action Items:

10. 2022 Veterans Budget Summary: Derek Kalish provided an overview of the Veterans Services Office operating budget, and the expenditure guideline document which includes budgeted line items, month to date posted expenses, year to date posted expenses, and remaining balances for each budgeted line item. The report is generated and provided to department heads each month.

Karen Knock noted that an annual payment was made this month for computer software support. Ingrid Glasbrenner questioned an unbudgeted line item for unemployment insurance showing \$145.58 in expenses. Karen Knock explained this was most likely for the previous Benefit Specialist whose employment ended on March 1st.

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11. Approve Resolution Supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans: Karen Knock discussed the history of Operation Green Light, an initiative to shine a light on the plight of veterans in counties across the country who are having a hard time connecting with benefits after serving their country. It was requested that a resolution be forwarded to the County Board that in observance of Operation Green Light, Richland County encourages it's citizens to recognize the importance of honoring all those who made immeasurable sacrifices to preserve freedom by displaying a green light in a window or their place of business or residence November 7th -13th Motion by Don Deep, seconded by Lee Van Landuyt to approve to approved the Resolution Supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans as presented. Motion carried.

Administrative Report:

12. Veterans Services Office Director, Karen Knock: Karen Knock Reported that the Veterans Services Office will have a booth at the Richland County Fair and this typically is a very successful outreach event. Upcoming events were discussed and the new Benefit Specialist were introduced on the morning show last week.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Consent Items:

13. HHS Expenditures Report (Vouchers and Expenditures over \$2,000 but less than \$10,000): No discussion held.

14. 2022 HHS Budget Summary & Richland County Placement Report: No discussion held.

15. 2022 HHS Contract Monitoring Report: No discussion held.

Karen Knock left the meeting.

Action Items:

16. Approve HHS Contracts, Agreements and Amendments:

RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 2022 AMENDED HHS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT/MOU APPROVALS (9-8-2022)		
IMPACT COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP, LLC	Name change from Wisconsin Community Health Alliance, LLC.	
LORI KNSPP, INC.	Due to an increased need for respite and personal supports for children with disabilities being served by the Behavioral Health Unit. (Prairie du Chien)	<i>Original Agreement Amount: \$9,000</i> To a total amount not to exceed \$11,000.

Motion by Lee Van Landuyt, seconded by Dr. Jerel Berres to approve the amended 2022 contracts. Motion carried.

RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 2022 NEW HHS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT/MOU APPROVALS (7-14-2022)		
THE RICHLAND HOSPITAL, INC.	To provide respite to ADRC consumers. (Richland Center)	For a total amount not to exceed \$3,000.

Motion by Dr. Jerel Berres, seconded by Lee Van Landuyt to approve the new 2022 contract. Motion carried.

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17. Approve the Application and Acceptance of an Employee-Sponsored Blood Drives Grant:

Rose Kohout discussed the Employee-Sponsored Blood-Drive Grant that would provide the Health and Human Services Department with \$25 for every voluntary blood donation through a blood drive for employees only who would be able to donate during work time. Motion by Cindy Chicker, seconded by Francis Braithwaite to approve the application and acceptance of an Employee-Sponsored Blood Drives Grant, allowing all Richland County employees to give blood through the Richland County sponsored blood drive on work time, and forward the recommendation onto the Finance & Personnel Committee for approval. Motion carried.

Administrative Report:

18. Director, Tricia Clements: Tricia Clements provided highlights and program updates for each unit of the agency including staffing updates, trainings, events, and updates on new and ongoing initiatives.

Personnel:

19. HHS Personnel Updates: Angie Rizner announced the hiring of Sydney Meeker, Economic Support Specialist, effective September 19, 2022; Caylie Wolf, Economic Support Specialist, effective September 19, 2022; and Teresa Nundahl, LTE Behavioral Health Services Clinical Supervision Consultant, effective August 22, 2022.

There were two resignations reported, including Toni Cabrera, Economic Support Specialist, effective September 7, 2022; and Kyla Luther, Substance Abuse Counselor, effective September 8, 2022.

Advertising or interviewing is occurring for the 10 vacant positions including the Behavioral Health Services Manager, Adult Protective Services Worker, Substance Abuse Counselor, Comprehensive Community Services Supervisor, 5 Mental Health Therapists, and a Child & Youth Services Case Manager. Vacant positions listed as “on-hold” are positions that are currently not being budgeted for.

20. Quarterly Review of HHS Organizational Chart: Angie Rizner discussed the changes that have occurred in the organizational chart since it was last reviewed. Angie Rizner also explained the color coding system and key codes. All vacancies and new hires were highlighted in each of the units as well.

Closing:

21. Future Agenda Items: Items requested to be placed on the next agenda included overview of 2023 Health and Human Services budget and the Veterans Services Office Budget, review advantages and disadvantages of housing the Veterans Services Office at the Community Services Building, beginning each committee meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, and moving the meeting start time back to 9:30 am.

22. Adjournment: The next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2022 at 10:30 a.m. in the Richland County Board room and via WebEx. Motion by Lee Van Landuyt, seconded by Dr. Jerel Berres. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meghan Rohn
Confidential Administrative Secretary