



LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING – Thursday, December 11, 2014

The Legal Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Gobel, at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 11, 2014 in room 309 of the Courthouse Annex.

Members Present: Kevin Gobel, Jerry Cade, Cade Cary and A. Richard Brose. Dennis Brault was excused.

Others in attendance were Gregory M. Lunde, Tena Fredrickson, Herb Cornell, and Michele Engh.

Motion by Cade/second by Brose to excuse Dennis Brault from the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Affirmed proper public notice of meeting.

Review of the October 9, 2014 meeting minutes:

Motion by Brose/second by Cade to approve the minutes as written. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next was Review of vouchers and Corp. Counsel Budget status: Lunde stated that overall, his department looks to come in slightly under budget, as some line items are a little over, and some are quite a bit under budget, and doesn't foresee any upcoming additional expenses. Lunde stated his department transferred their entire computer budget to the IT Department per the agreement that they would cover all computer charges from now on, and so far, he's been lucky that there hasn't been any expenses due to malfunctions.

Gobel inquired as to whether the fees for obtaining grants was ever straightened out in regards to Engh's time when obtaining grants for various departments and Engh stated that basically, yes, however her time on writing the grants has not yet been determined. She stated if she only wrote grants that supported her administration, that would eliminate a lot of grants for other areas of the County, so she wonders if there is some way they could ask the department for an administrative fee that would pay for the costs associated with writing the grant, or if it is just looked at as an overall benefit to the county budget, and offset her time involved with the grant. Lunde stated that if a specific grant comes with administrative fees, then his department is getting it, but not all grants have administrative costs factored in. Cade asked if the administrative fees they were obtaining were enough to take care of Engh's salary, and she stated in 2014, no, but in 2015, yes. Lunde stated 2014 wasn't as high because they were just in the application process, but once the ball gets rolling, it will be regulated. Gobel asked if all the department heads now know who to call and Engh stated yes, that she is getting quite a few calls for grants now.

Gobel suggested a short presentation to the County Board on a regular basis just to keep them abreast of how her position with the county is working out. Lunde stated they were thinking of a June or August report to the County Board; prior to drafting budgets.

Motion by Cary/second by Cade to approve the vouchers/transfers. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next was Audience to Visitors: None

Motion by Cary, Second by Cade, to enter into closed session §19.85(1)(c) WI Stats. Regarding Legal Counsel and potential litigation at 11:12 a.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Brose/second by Cade to reconvene into open session at 11:57 a.m., pursuant to WI Stats. §19.85 (2). All in favor. Motion carried.

Next were Committee member's reports/questions: Gobel stated he'd like to approach all the County Supervisors in regards to bell ringing on behalf of the Salvation Army. He stated anyone interested should contact Karen Dahl.

Brose stated he had an issue that recently arose whereby a committee member participated at his committee meeting via telephone. Lunde stated he spoke with the parties involved as well, and the member involved was out of town so he attended the meeting by phone. Lunde stated there is nothing that prevents doing that in the statutes, and although he cannot charge mileage because he was not physically present, he is entitled to a per diem for participating in the meeting. Cary stated the Chairman could sign any vouchers, so as long as there was a quorum, what's wrong with that. Gobel agreed and noted how the Legal Affairs committee has only had meetings as necessary for years in an attempt to save taxpayer dollars, and noted that there are a lot of other committees that could follow their example. Brose stated there has to be a policy or something put into place as to how many could do that or else the whole committee would be calling in by telephone, and Lunde and Gobel agreed, stating there needs to be a physical quorum, but the exception could call in and be present via speakerphone for the duration of an "open" meeting. Lunde noted that many companies are doing more and more conference calls by video conference, but that the costs of doing a conference call with the entire committee would be higher than what is currently being paid out in mileage.

Cary stated he has been approached about holding County Board meetings at night and stated that he knows some counties like La Crosse, Monroe, Sauk, and Crawford that do hold their meetings in the evening. Brose stated some members of the Board will not like that because they do not care for night driving. Gobel stated he personally doesn't see a problem with that and stated that they tried it once during the summer months. He stated it could be started around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. instead of waiting until 7:00 p.m. Cade stated 5:00 p.m. is pretty hard for many people to attend a meeting if they are farmers however. Gobel stated he'd also be ok with holding meetings on Saturday afternoons if that was more convenient for the group as a whole. Cary stated he was planning to bring it up for discussion to the full County Board.

Cade inquired as to when performance evaluations were due, as he believed they were due by March. Lunde stated looking ahead, he doesn't foresee the need for a meeting in February. It was decided to do evaluations at the January meeting then since it looks to be a short meeting.

Next was Corporation Counsel activity update: Lunde stated the committee has been briefed on what has been going on in his office throughout the meeting during discussion of agenda items. He noted that guardianships and mental health cases have still not slowed down. Lunde also informed the committee that he and Engh, Roger Niedfeldt, and County Board Chair Cornell, visited all the revolving loan businesses in Westby just to do a check-up and check in with them. The committee noted their approval and stated that was a good thing to do.

Next meeting date: The next meeting was set for January 8, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

Motion by Cade/second by Brose to adjourn the meeting at 12:09 a.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tena M. Fredrickson, Corporation Counsel Administrative Assistant.