

Legislative Committee
August 27, 2012
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, James Kozokowski, Tom Ellis, Kathy Lennon, Nancy Barker, Tim Hamblin, Chuck Farrey, Tom Konezke, Larry Smith, and Dave Albrecht

Also

Present: Representative Spanbauer, John Casper – Chamber of Commerce, Barry Busby – Winnebago County Coroner, Mark Harris – Winnebago County Executive

Excused: J. Finch

Absent: Patrick O'Brien

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ken Robl motioned to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2012 meeting. This motion was seconded. Carried by voice vote.

UPDATE FROM EXECUTIVE MARK HARRIS

Mr. Harris discussed with the committee the equalized value numbers from the State. Net new construction is about 2/3 of 1%. That will allow for an increase in the budget of approximately \$400,000. The budget that is being worked on will be within those limits. There is no movement on the rate limit. That has been suspended for two years. The suspension will be up next year.

Executive Harris told the committee that county finances are the best they have been. Reserves grew quite a bit last year. County spending is continuing to be reduced.

Sheriff's Department is the largest consumer of the levy. Human Services' budget has suffered the most cuts, mostly because of money promised from the state that isn't paid. Lost money from revenue sharing from the state has been part of every budget since Mr. Harris has become executive. We have lost \$12,000,000 in intergovernmental aide.

Real estate is looking like it is starting to bottom out. We are unlikely to have this kind of drop in equalized value when the budget is done next year.

10 counties are very close to their levy limits. Columbia County is already over their limit and is slashing their budget. They will have many tough decisions this year. Fond du Lac County is in trouble. They adopted a sales tax and applied it to everything but operations. Manitowoc and Rock counties are close to their levy limits. LaCrosse County is the lowest taxing county. They adopted a sales tax in 1990 or 1991 and cut their property tax. When the freeze came in, they were frozen well below any other county.

When Mr. Harris became executive, Winnebago employed 1,111 people. At this time, we are about 100 below that number. We will be adding 6-11 people to save money, most in the Human Services. Placement in State Institutions has gotten so expensive. We have added staff to provide services to people in their homes and keep juveniles out of placement. The state rates go up every budget.

UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT HEAD - Barry Busby – Winnebago County Coroner

Mr. Busby told the committee that there were 24 suicides in Winnebago County last year. By mid-July of this year there have been 20. There has been an increase in overdoses. In 2011, there were 19 overdoses by the end of June.

130 does of Narcan have been used by the fire department and Gold Cross Ambulance. Narcan reverses the effects of heroin. Narcan is being handed out at needles exchanges after a short course on how to employ it to a friend that may have over dosed. Narcan is non-addictive.

Winnebago County is on pace for 200 + cases of Narcan use this year.

There have been 7 vehicle accidents with deaths so far in Winnebago County.

There are several good programs that Winnebago County is involved in regarding prescription drug abuse.

In 2001, 7 teenagers committed suicide in Winnebago County. Community of Hope was started for prevention of teenage suicides and survivors program. Suicides did drop.

The coroner's office is also very involved with the Child Death Review Team. This is to help prevent child and infant deaths in the future.

re: THINK is one of the best organizations in prevention. This is an award winning preventative program.

Mr. Busby talked about his involvement at the State level regarding the Good Samaritan Law. This group works with District Attorneys, Department of Justice, and police officer to put into law to save lives and still give law enforcement the tools to arrest people who are doing drugs. Winnebago County is one of best and first counties to come up with a Drug Court.

Mr. Busby discussed with the committee the concept of preventative medicine. It is the possibility of working with genetics, and people's body make up to help people before they become ill. If testing can be done and the participant shown that they have the signs of having a heart attack or cancer in the future, hopefully this tool would help the participant to change lifestyles.

The coroner's office does 350 – 400 death cases a year. ¼ of these cases should not have died. People ignore chest pains or lumps that could have been dealt with when discovered.

Smoking is less in high school children, however those who are smoking, are smoking more. Alcohol and smoking are long term killers. Death by drugs is normally sudden.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Representative Spanbauer told the committee that at this time not much is happening in Madison. He is still keeping office hours and dealing with any problems that his constituents may have.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2012. Please get anything you would like on the agenda to Chairman Kline as soon as possible.

It was moved by Chuck Farrey and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 am

Respectfully Submitted By:
Bill Wingren
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office