

WINNEBAGO COUNTY
ARPA Strategy and Outcomes
Commission Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, January 31, 2024

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: David W. Albrecht Administration Building
112 Otter Avenue
Oshkosh WI 54901
Susan T. Ertmer Conference Room 120

PRESENT: Co-Chair Tom Egan, County Board Chairman
Co-Chair Jon Doemel, County Executive
Morris Cox, Personnel and Finance Chair
Chuck Farrey, County Board Vice-chair
Tom Borchart, County Board Member
Tom Belter, Public Member
Beth Oswald, Public Member
Tim Galloway, Public Member (arrived at 2:14 pm)
Paul Kaiser, Director of Finance (non-voting member)

ABSENT: Andy Buck, County Board Member

ALSO PRESENT: Cassie Smith-Gregor, Deputy County Clerk
Mary Anne Mueller, Corporation Counsel
Victoria Kinderman, Corporation Counsel
Adam BellCorelli
Sheriff John Matz
Tim Eichman, Sheriff's Office
Doug Gieryn, Public Health Director
Alana Erickson
Dr. Bill Topel, Human Services Director
Supervisor Kay Horan
Brandon Hennes, City Administrator, City of Omro
Steve Jungwirth, City of Omro Mayor
Steve Bilkey, City of Omro Public Works Director
Pete Hennes, City of Omro Council Member
Dan Rammer
Ryan Krings, Fire Chief, Winneconne Poygan Fire District
Dr. Phillip Florek, DDS
Sandy Drexler
Beth Clay
Tony Daley – Journalist – The Omro Herald

via **ZOOM**
Supervisor Conley Hanson
Tracy Gehrke
Karen Schneider
Barb Tengesdal
Candy Hall
Deb Martin
Beth G.
Allison Lartery Montag
Todd's iPhone
Nancy

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Tom Egan called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Co-Chair Tom Egan reported that Supervisor Andy Buck is excused for today's meeting and Tim Galloway will arrive a little late.

2. Public Comments

Brandon Hennes, City Administrator for the City of Omro, introduced himself and the team he brought with him: Pete Hennes, City of Omro Council member; Dan Rammer, engineer from MSA; Steve Bilkey, City of Omro, Director of Public Works; and Steve Jungwirth, City of Omro Mayor. Mr. Brandon Hennes looked forward to the discussion and possible action taken by the ARPA commission meeting regarding agenda item number 7; the resolution regarding the project request to update water and sewer lines under the Fox River in the City of Omro. He stated the whole city is behind this entire project. It is a project in dire need.

Dr. Bill Topel, Winnebago County Human Services Director, felt the need to speak on a couple of the items on the agenda today that will be discussed later in the meeting. Mr. Topel stated that NOVA Counseling Services will be doing the only female residential 28-day service in the area. There is only a handful of providers left in the state that even provides 28-day residential services for alcohol and drug abuse. Mr. Topel voiced his full support of the commission adopting the NOVA Counseling Services request.

Mr. Topel voiced his support for the Pillars Inc. project request. He clarified that the service Pillars Inc. is talking about enhancing with the \$50,000 request is actually in Winnebago County Neenah Menasha area even though Pillars Inc. is located in Appleton.

Mr. Topel asked the commission to consider a one-month postponement of the First Five Fox Valley proposal. There is a brand new program in the State of Wisconsin that is doing navigator services for children much like First Five Fox Valley is proposing in their request. Mr. Topel just wanted to make sure there is no duplication of service.

Beth Clay is the Executive Director of the Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Mental Health Connection. Ms. Clay stated that the N.E.W. Mental Health Connection is a tri-county coalition, a membership coalition that works on system change issues in mental health and suicide prevention. She discussed the importance of the service they provide; what this project request would entail and how this will benefit and impact individuals in the community.

Dr. Phillip Florek, DDS and Sandy Drexler, Executive Director for Tri-County Dental thanked the commission for considering their project request. Dr. Phillip Florek discussed the increasing demanding need for dental care for the Medicaid and low-income population that they serve and what this project request all entailed. They take their mobile clinic out to 24 schools in the Neenah and Oshkosh school districts. They are working hard to provide care to the people and to the kids who are in our community that qualify or need dental care. Ms. Drexler mentioned they have a walk-in clinic for people who are in pain and a veteran's program.

Ryan Krings, Fire Chief for the Winneconne Poygan Fire District, stated he came today with the understanding that the chance of the Winneconne Poygan Fire District project request being reconsidered for allocation of Spirit Funds in the amount of \$300,000 to purchase a new airboat is highly unlikely. There is a potential of a federal grant hopefully coming in the near future which would provide a new airboat to each of the three fire departments that are currently housing and operating the current airboats. Mr. Krings politely asked the commission to set aside \$900,000 in Spirit Funds which is equal to the amount requested in the federal grant. This would be for the period of time it takes to receive notification of acceptance or denial of the federal grant. If the federal grant is awarded and funds allocated, the three new airboats should be immediately ordered to ensure availability for the Emergency Response as the 2024-2025 ice season would arrive in November or December. The set aside spirit funds could then be freed up and allocated for other projects at the discretion of the commission. If the federal grant is denied, the set aside spirit funds would immediately be utilized to order the three new airboats. Mr. Krings intent is for the commission to set aside some funds in the event that the federal grant does not happen and that there is still the availability to purchase these airboats this year.

Alana Erickson, Supervisor in the Winnebago County Public Health Department, commented and voiced her support for First Five Fox Valley Inc. and Child Care Resource and Referral.

County Board Supervisor Conley Hanson voiced his concerns regarding fiduciary responsibility to the county. Mr. Hanson stated the original intent of the ARPA funds was to replace lost revenue to the county.

Tracy Gehrke is the Board President of Child Care Resource and Referral and a Winnebago County Public Health Nurse. She voiced her support for the Child Care Resource and Referral project request. Ms. Gehrke stated we need childcare to have a prosperous work force and community. Children are the legacy of our community so we should invest in the children by making a statement that Winnebago County supports young families and childcare programs by starting a substitute program so they can keep their doors open. She thanked the commission for their time and consideration.

Candy Hall, Executive Director of Child Care Resource and Referral in Kimberly, Wisconsin, reiterated the need for sub programs and stated that by approving their project, it would allow them to create and sustain a sub program in Winnebago County and support our children, families, and childcare providers. She thanked the commission for their consideration.

Barb Tengesdal, First 5 Fox Valley (F5FV), strongly encouraged the commission to take a look at their application again. F5FV is an organization that is leveraging collective impact work and strategic partnership to cultivate communities that empower every family to build a solid foundation for children in their first five years. It gives the idea about how the depth of what they could actually do, if they had a navigator placed in the Winnebago County, Oshkosh and rural communities. It would be immense support to getting kids back on track. Ms. Tengesdal thanked the commission for their time.

Deb Martin, a resident of Oshkosh, mentioned how happy she was to see all of the items being considered on the agenda today. Ms. Martin appreciated that the money is getting out to people who need it in our community. She feels that the government has a responsibility to the children of our county and voiced her support for First Five Fox Valley and Tri-County Community Dental Clinic. These are young children and we should not abandon them for a building or for any other reason. The ARPA funds were to help recover from our pandemic and they should be spent that way.

3. Approval of January 17, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Cox, to approve the January 17, 2024, meeting minutes. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

4. Update/Discussion: Status of where Municipalities stand regarding the \$145,000 Spirit Funds distribution.

Paul Kaiser provided a brief update for the commission on where all the towns and municipalities are at in this process. The Town of Nekimi, Town of Vinland, and the Town of Wolf River are the only municipalities that have not received their funds yet. Mr. Kaiser stated he received the remainder of the documentation needed from the Town of Nekimi and that they will be receiving their \$145,000 on Friday by ACH. That will leave Town of Vinland and Town of Wolf River. Mr. Kaiser stated he believed he received information from the Town of Vinland that they have about \$38,000 of road work that was done in 2023 and they'll let him know what they're going to do in 2024.

5. Update/Discussion: Review of interest earned on the Spirit Funds.

Paul Kaiser, Winnebago County Finance Director, discussed and explained where the Spirit funds are at with the interest earned from those funds. A handout was previously prepared by Paul Kaiser for the January 17, 2024, meeting. This was included again as the figures did not change. This document shows the interest earned from the Spirit Fund; Spirit Fund Projects that have been presented and passed by the County Board; and what has been approved and spent at this time. Mr. Kaiser updates these calculations each month at the end of the month to reflect the most up-to-date information.

The interest through the end of the year was \$1,991,736.92. It's averaging about \$3700 per day so that would be about another \$116,000 for January. Mr. Kaiser did not have the payment to Christine Ann deducted out of that figure yet so that will affect the calculation when he completes the calculations through the end of January.

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Belter, to re-open Public Comments. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

2. Public Comments (Continued)

Supervisor Paul Eisen was having some issues trying to speak during public comments. Mr. Eisen attended the meeting via phone call. Co-Chair Egan and Supervisor Cox attempted to call his phone to put him on speaker. After several unsuccessful attempts, the co-chairs decided to close public comments and continue on with the meeting.

6. Discussion: Airboat Housed at Winneconne Poygan Fire Department, Oshkosh Fire Department and Neenah/Menasha Fire Departments

County Executive and Co-Chair Doemel discussed the purchase of new airboats for the current ones that are housed at Winneconne Poygan Fire Department, Oshkosh Fire Department and the Neenah/Menasha Fire Department. Mr. Doemel stated if the proposed federal grant is not approved, there would be an alternative. If the county would need to fund this project, this would be a request from the County Government Project category, the top 50% administration bucket. Mr. Doemel does not believe the commission should hold money for something from the Government Identified Community Projects category, the bottom 50% bucket, if the project would be funded through the Administration bucket anyhow.

Supervisor Farrey stated he had requested this to be on the agenda to clarify several issues. First, County Board Supervisor Nelson was concerned that Winneconne did not request radios and he thought they should be included. Mr. Farrey had discussions with the fire chief as to why the radios weren't on there in the first place and he indicated to him it was because they wanted to get the airboat. They considered that a priority. In his second discussion with the fire chief, he indicated it was for their own personal airboat for the Winneconne Poygan Fire Department. Mr. Farrey thought the commission needed to clarify that point since that was the original request. Mr. Farrey questioned if the funding does not come through from the Federal Government, how is the commission going to fund it and how quickly can we fund it.

Sheriff Matz stated it could be as short as 4 months but as long as 9 months to receive the airboats after purchasing them. It would depend on what company they decide to order the airboats from. Mr. Matz continued discussing the airboats and how extremely expensive they are to maintain. These boats are expensive, and they're used in the most extreme conditions so needed maintenance is usually not due to operator error, its due to the extreme conditions that they operate in.

Sheriff Matz stated that we're waiting for the funding to be voted on. The next vote will have to be before March 8, 2024, so they should know soon whether or not that congressional funding will occur. Mr. Matz is confident they can address any safety issues between now and the end of March or April with the three boats that they have. He also mentioned that they have an agreement with Fond du Lac County over the southern part of Winnebago County to help us out if needed. Winnebago County can respond right now to any

situations that may occur on the ice. The Town of Rushford and the Town of Omro have their own personal boats for the fire departments so those could be requested if needed. Mr. Matz stated if the federal funding doesn't pass, he will talk to the County Executive in March or April right away to get those boats ordered. This way they would arrive around November, no later than December.

County Executive Doemel reiterated that if the funding falls through, the Sheriff will give him a call and they will sit down together and talk about the request for airboats. Mr. Doemel reinforced where the funding would come from, the administration portion not the community project category which would be a recommendation by the commission.

Supervisor Farrey believes that the public is aware of the situation now and hopefully the commission will be able to address it quickly if they need to.

7. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$ _____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Update Water and Sewer Lines Under the Fox River in the City of Omro (Request \$500,000)

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Belter, to adopt the request to Update Water and Sewer Lines Under the Fox River in the City of Omro at an amount of \$300,000.

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Belter, to make an amendment to the resolution. On Line 11, amend the funding amount to \$343,000.

Vote on amendment to the resolution. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Vote on resolution as amended: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck.
PASSED.

8. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$ _____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Expand the Building of NOVA Counseling Services Facilities (Request \$500,000)

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Borchart, to adopt the request to Expand the Building of NOVA Counseling Services Facilities at an amount of \$500,000.

Vote on resolution: AYES: 7; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 1 - Farrey; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

9. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$ _____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category for:

- **People of Progression Inc. (Request \$50,000)**

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Cox, to deny the request for People of Progression Inc.

Vote on resolution request: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0;
ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

- **NEW Mental Health Connection (Request \$90,000)**

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Farrey, to adopt the request for NEW Mental Health Connection at an amount of \$75,000.

Vote on resolution request: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0;
ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

- **First 5 Fox Valley, Inc. (Request \$300,000)**

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Belter, to layover for discussion until the next commission meeting, the first meeting scheduled in March 2024. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

- **Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, Inc. (Request \$403,625)**

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Farrey, to adopt the request for Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, Inc. at an amount of \$403,625.

Vote on resolution request: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0;
ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

- **Child Care Resource and Referral (Request \$450,000)**

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Borchart, to adopt the request for Child Care Resource and Referral at an amount of \$450,000.

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Farrey, to amend the amount funded at an amount of \$250,000.

After further discussion, Farrey withdrew his second.

Back to the original motion.

Motion by Cox, seconded by Doemel, to amend the amount funded at an amount of \$350,000.

Vote on the amendment. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Vote on resolution request as amended: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

- **Pillars, Inc. (Request \$50,000)**

Motion by Doemel, seconded by Farrey, to adopt the request for Pillars, Inc. at an amount of \$50,000.

Vote on resolution request: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

10. Discussion/Possible Action: Begin process prioritizing, selection, and funding amounts for projects for Spirit Funding from the County Government Projects Category.

County Executive Doemel stated that they are working on a spirit plan to go with the outdoor comprehensive plan that the Park system did. They want to make sure that we're getting out to all areas of the county and come up with projects that are reducing maintenance cost and making it much easier and cheaper for the county to maintain what they have. Mr. Doemel mentioned that he has been working hard with Mike Elder on facility condition assessments. Mr. Elder would like to come and ask for a master plan space use. He had found out the condition of all our buildings and wants to know if we are actually maximizing our spaces.

Supervisor Farrey commented that County Executive Doemel provided a document outlining capital projects that this commission should address and it sounds like that needs to be put into a planning process which would simply delay the funding of the money from this commission. Mr. Farrey believes the commission needs to move forward. We have the aviation issue which hopefully they'll be reporting back to this commission seeking funding for the fire truck and other issues. Mr. Farrey is looking forward to that discussion so hopefully the commission can get some things going.

County Executive Doemel stated that the administrative 50% is so important, he does not want to rush it. He wants to give Paul and Mike the time to sit down and really look at the plan. The next thing that he would like to bring to the commission is the outdoor comprehensive plan spirit ask. Director Mike Elder is preparing his space study plan that he would like to do. He wants to see what our efficiencies are. Mr. Doemel does not want to rush this process.

Supervisor Farrey stated the commission has a list of all the projects in the County Government Project Category. Mr. Farrey suggested maybe the commission should just start with that list, discuss and go from there. We should not delay the expenditures of these funds. We should continue to appropriate the Spirit Funds. The intent was made clear by the commission that we need to pursue and get these funds out to where they need to go including capital improvements.

County Executive Doemel politely requested the commission for time to address projects in this category. We don't have to rush for a reason. He wants to make sure that we are doing the best that we can to accept and meet the challenge ahead of us.

Co-Chair Doemel stated for the next meeting, he will see if Mike Elder and Adam Breest are ready to begin discussion on the projects they've been working on.

11. Set next meeting date and time.

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at the David W. Albrecht Administration Building in the Susan T. Ertmer Conference Room (Room 120).

12. Adjournment.

Motion made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Doemel, to adjourn at 3:47 p.m. MOTION CARRIES.

Submitted by:
Cassie Smith-Gregor
Winnebago County Deputy Clerk