

Menominee County Executive Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
September 18, 2015

\*\*\*\*\*Approved 10.21.15\*\*\*\*\*

The Executive Committee met on September 18, 2015 at 8:00 AM at the Menominee County Annex Building, Stephenson, MI.

Others present at the meeting were Brian Bousley, Charlene Peterson

**Call Meeting to order:** Com. Meintz called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

**Pledge of allegiance:** was recited by all

**Roll Call:** Coms. Meintz & Nelson & Furlong were present.

**Agenda** was approved by Com. Furlong and supported by Com. Nelson to approve the agenda as written. Motion approved 3/0.

**Previous Meeting minutes:** April 1, 2015 – moved by Com. Nelson and supported by Com. Furlong to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2015 Executive Committee meeting. Motion approved 3/0.

**Public Comment:** None

**Business Items:**

- A. Discussion of Employee Drug Testing:** - Bousley: We don't have a drug testing policy the only thing we do have a drug free workplace. I did want to try to do something a few years ago, but a couple of commissioners didn't want to do that. Meintz: I brought this up to Brian. With all the workplaces that do drug testing and liability issues. Also if there'll be differences in our insurance if there was drug testing in place because of liability issues. My concern is if something happens, and someone is tested they have drugs in their system, even if there is no connection to what happened, I know how that operation can work, you can get sued for that situation. Furlong: Would we get a break on our worker's comp if we have a drug testing policy? Bousley: They said we might, they'd have to see our policy. He said he'd send me a sample of a policy that we can model one after. Furlong: I'm a firm believer that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. If we're going to have a policy, it should be one that's been time tested and court approved rather than one we invent ourselves. Nelson: We had one for years. We had a drug policy, we didn't have a testing policy. Do we have to go through the union to look at that? I would like to see a random test unless the supervisor has a suspicion that is justified. I think it would be the right thing to do. Furlong: I don't think it would apply to the unions because that would be part of

negotiations. But we have a lot of non-union employees, we can come up with a drug testing policy for the county and as the contracts are negotiated, add the policy in.

Nelson: Cost. It was pricy. We have a policy for testing “new” employees already. As long as it’s not abused, the cost can be minimal. I think we’re all in agreement. Furlong: I don’t have a problem with it being a drug free workplace. Nelson: This current policy, we don’t have a testing policy. It does allow for testing. In a way they already have to sign this. What’s our next step? Bousley: Let’s see what the workers’ comp guy gets, a couple policies there. We’ll read through them and come up with something. Meintz: I know you can sometimes get discounts by having record keeping of a drug free work place. If we can’t get any savings then we’re going to have to look at this. We’re going to have expenses. My biggest concern is a lawsuit. Consensus is to gather information and bring it back to the Exec. Committee for discussion. Furlong: I think we should mention at the board meeting in case some other commissioners may have more information or problems. Meintz: we can bring this up at the next board meeting to have some discussion on it. All commissioners concur.

**B. Discussion of Employee Training Policy:** - Nelson: I asked for this. There’s a couple of issues there, especially in light of what came up at the Cedar River board meeting. Brian you can approve expenditures up to \$5,000 including training? Bousley: Yes. We have two different policies on training. One we have in the bylaws that says the County will pay the cost of seminars, educational classes, computer training or other employee training to perform the duties of the employee’s job description...Personnel Manual says, Conferences, Conventions, or seminars: Attendance at a meeting, convention, conference or seminar shall have the prior approval of the County Administrator. So basically department heads can approve training. I can only approve meetings, conventions, conferences or seminars. That’s training isn’t it? Nelson: Yes, the question that comes up on this is when equalization wanted to send someone to training that was directly related to their job, the board had to approve that. All the other ones whether it’s an issue that just came up was getting the assessor license or keeping their 16 hours which is not required in their job, and there’s others. I’m wondering with the expenditures we have going out, if trainings unless required by law should be approved by the board. If not required, the approval appears routine. Do we pay for someone to keep their private license? I have difficulty with this if we’re paying for someone, and it’s not part of their job and they wish to go because they can do whatever they want, but should we pay for it? Meintz: over the past years, we’ve had multiple questions from time to time when going over the bills. We’ve had questions about large food bills for employees going to training. I agree with John a little bit. By the time we see them from the board standpoint they’ve already been to the conference and the bills have been paid. If we don’t approve them, it doesn’t matter because they’ve already been paid. I don’t know how we’d get our money back. Nothing against Brian, but the administrator gets in a tough position has to work with the individuals within the offices at the county. They bring him information and it puts him in the hot seat, that’s what his job should be, to say yes or no. I think the information on travel can be brought to the board for approval or disapproval. So we understand what our individuals are going to where, why, what’s the reason? There is a fair amount of money that gets spent monthly on travel. If it’s state mandated...Nelson: if it’s directly

related where it enhances the county...In looking at the budget, we just talked about putting in courthouse windows, \$500,000, we're doing the vestibule, we're putting a chiller in, but the problem is the building. We're at \$100,000 surplus this year, if we're lucky. Next year with the raises and insurances and that, that's gone. Anyone we've put on this year I don't see how, with our current budget, we can go forward with it. So to reduce our costs now, it might help us in the future to maintain a position. Unless we get a windfall somewhere, I don't know where it's going to come from. We have to serve the customers in our county first. If the money is available for fringe things, then fine, but if it's not available...I think the board has to look at this. Furlong: I would hate to see the board micromanage the daily operations of the county. I do understand the concern of people just going off to frivolous training. To go back and have the County board approve all training I think is going to be counterproductive to basically micromanage the administrator. I do think during the budget process, I'm a firm believer the budget is not a blueprint, the budget is basically a document that says here's how we're going to spend the county's money. When you look at a training budget for individual departments, they have to stay within that budget. It should be up to the finance committee, if someone's going to training and it's not budgeted, then it has to go to the finance committee to get money. We just can't move money around from this account to that account and say the budget's balanced for that department, that's counterproductive to the budget process. If we have \$1,000 for training and the department goes over that, then the department head has to answer for that. Or if they need additional training money, then they have to go to the finance committee to find out where that money is coming from so we can do the budget adjustment. But just to move money around and say "we didn't budget enough for training this year so we're just going to take some from office supplies and put into the training" to me that's not how we told the public that we're spending their money. As far as training goes, during the budget meetings, we should sit down with the department heads and say, how much money do you plan on spending for training...and they have to live within that budget. If they can't, then it falls on the administrator to explain the need for additional training to the finance committee. Nelson: There are training conferences, \$500-800 it's not required, the person wants to go. The training is lumped in one area. I don't want the County Board to approve every training...mandated or required training anything over and above that...example the only one we've ever done is Kandace. That was actually for a level three training process in equalization which is a direct benefit to us, if Peggy's out, we have to hire someone to come in to sign everything at a level three. That was, and it could "not" be a benefit, because she could take that license and move forward. I do think when we go to conferences/trainings, do we say, do you have to go to that, is it required, even though it's in the budget. When it's lumped in, we don't know where they go. I do think we should restrict our expenditures non-essential for the county or for personal gain. Furlong: I'm not disagreeing with you, we look at job descriptions, we didn't hire Kandace to be a level three assessor we hired Kandace to be the map person and the help in the office because the help went someplace else. Now we're sending her off to school to be a level three assessor the same as the equalization director. That came on the county's dime, which could benefit the county later on. The county paid for her schooling and she can use it to benefit the county or benefit herself someplace else. It's up to the department head to say how much training

do we need and how much is it going to cost? I'm afraid it could be political. This office, in the majority of the County Boards opinion is more important than that office so they can go to the seminar, but you guys you're not as important, so you don't get to go. It should be left up to the administrator falling within the budget. Nelson: But we did and the budget provided for it in equalization yet came to the county board, and no one said, why is it at the county board? Furlong: I don't remember her being at the county board. Nelson: Yes she came up to the count board. What we ended up doing was if she didn't pass the course, she'd have to refund the full money. Furlong: I don't remember that at all, I must have missed a meeting. Meintz: It was up in Hermansville. Nelson: That is the only one that has come to us, ever. I don't understand if it was under \$5,000 why it wasn't approved at the county level. Unless like he said, we don't want politics involved in this. My question is, that came up and no one had a problem with it coming up there. So now we end up with other people on. Why is it one and no one else? Our policy is inconsistent. If you're going to have someone in an office, the more they know the better they can serve the county. So any training required by law or show a direct benefit to the position the person has, its fine, but if it's outside of those parameters', what do we do then? Because once they've gone, it's paid for. We don't know where they're going beforehand. Furlong: But let's hope that our Administrator knows where our employees are going. Bousley: Yah, I usually do. Nelson: But are they required or do they go just because they want to go? Because we don't reject. Bousley: The big ones are the conferences, treasurers have their conference, the clerk has their conference, the sheriff dept. is different, they have some for road and some for corrections those are paid for, and they are special revenues they have their own funding for those. The majority of the time I know where everyone is going. They have to ask prior because they have to get reservations, county vehicle, things like that. Furlong: John let me ask you about training in the budget process. The sheriff dept. has the 301 & 302 funds for training that comes from the state which can only be used for certain things. Nelson: We never get a breakdown of how the traveling will be spent. If we ask for a breakdown from each dept. for their training, where they're going, how they're going to spend that. I will ask Brian for a breakdown of the training part of the budget. Furlong: If it's not required for the job, then we shouldn't have people going to the training. Somewhere down the line there has to be some trust, we have to work together. Instead of having the whole county board waiting to have a meeting, I think the finance chair can make a decision on whether we have the money for employees to go to a seminar. Nelson: I'm sure with the new Prosecutor and Asst. prosecutor there will be some training that will need to be done, that wasn't budgeted for. (to Brian) would you ask them to give us an estimate on what will be needed for their training?

- C. Review of Menominee County Board of Commissioners Bylaws:** - Bousley: There are a few adjustments that need to be made. We need to add the Northcare Network negotiating team in there. Nelson: Do we need to add SUD too?? That's different than Northcare. Bousley: Page 4, Northcare Network, SUD and Negotiating committee. Meintz: What about the airport, we need to change that now that it's a committee, right? Bousley: That one needs to be cleaned up. Page 14, Department heads, we used to have the extension director. That is no longer the case. We need to change that to regional director. Meintz: I think he's worked very hard to try to get

things back on track. Bousley: Page 17, Petty cash – we need to add \$50 for petty cash in the Admin office because we have to sell park passes and boat passes. And \$50 at the annex that's not in there. Page 23, Fax policy needs to be rescinded because that's within the FOIA law now. Furlong: what about for faxing for the public? Bousley, we don't do it. Furlong: Then we should put that in our fax policy...that we don't do it. Meintz: Yes, we should have something that says we don't do it. Bousley: Pg. 27 public records fee. Resolution 2011-07 needs to be changed to 2015-10. That's the FOIA thing. Fee structure needs to be changed again to 2015-10. Just housekeeping issues that need to be taken care of. Furlong makes a motion to make those changes and bring it to the county board, Nelson seconds it.

**Public Comment:** Charlene Peterson, Lake Township. Brian brought this up. I suggest video conferencing as much as possible, that saves expenses and travel. I know the library does almost everything via video. She has to go to one conference a year. Equalization, Kandace has told me when you do those assessing classes you have to go take a test. Some of the classes you have to go in person, so in that particular department the video won't work. She gets grants, maybe that's a way to help subsidize the costs. I recommend the department heads should be the first POC. I think you should have some kind of follow up on why the class or conference was necessary. FOC has an awful lot of seminars to go to. What are those seminars for? Re drug testing: There are employees that are not fulltime. Seasonal employees, I understand are tested each year they come back. If you have people transporting juveniles, those people should be drug tested too. I think the idea of random testing is great.

**Commissioner Comments:** I apologize for my lack of judgement in one of the words I used in the meeting. Nelson: We all do it.

**Adjournment:** Moved by Com. Nelson supported by Com. Furlong to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 AM. Motion approved 3/0.