

Menominee County Executive Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
October 21, 2015

\*\*\*\*\***APPROVED 12.14.15**\*\*\*\*\*

The Executive Committee met on October 21, 2015 at 10:00 AM at the Menominee County Administration office.

Others present at the meeting were Brian Bousley, Charlene Peterson

**Call Meeting to order:** Com. Nelson called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

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

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

**Agenda** was approved by Com. Furlong and supported by Com. Nelson to approve the agenda as written. Motion approved 2/0.

**Previous Meeting minutes:** September 18, 2015 – moved by Com. Furlong and supported by Com. Nelson to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2015 Executive Committee meeting. Motion approved 2/0.

**Public Comment:** Peggy Schroud: I would like to have the ability to speak during a couple of the agenda items. Unless you rather I say what I have to say now. Coms agree they don't have a problem with it.

**Business Items:**

- A. Discussion of Employee Drug Testing:** - Bousley: The last time we talked about Employee Drug testing, we do have the drug free workplace policy that all of the employees sign off on. We also have the contracts that have the language of any suspicious or have any reasonable suspicion of an employee, we can have them drug tested. Furlong: What about the personnel manual for the non-union people. Would that state the same? Bousley: Yes, everything states the same. I did talk to the union, they said if we do something with the contract, it has to be negotiated. I spoke to our workers' comp carrier and they won't give us any kind of a break in costs, but it is something that could be looked into. He sent us what we already have here...suspicion. Nelson: Do we do any random testing, or any testing at all? Bousley: They get tested at their pre-employment physical. From there we have the ability to do it if there is reasonable suspicion. Furlong: Based on experience, I do know the "reasonable suspicion" clause works. So if we're not getting any kind of break on our workers comp carrier, I think we're just opening up a big can of worms. Provided that it is spelled out in the contracts and spelled out in the personnel manual to cover non-union employees.

Nelson: So basically we have the ability under suspicion only and that's excepted and new hires. Changes can be made at contract negotiations for "random testing". Bousley: Yes. Peggy Schroud: Who decides if there's suspicion? Bousley: The department head or elected official. I can send you what's in the contract. It outlines everything. Nelson: We're not really passing anything; so we just include this for informational to the board. I can send that out.

**B. Discussion of Employee Training Policy:** - Bousley: We had a lengthy discussion about this last time to include what is in the bylaws and what is in the personnel manual. Nelson: The question to be focusing on is, we are going to be doing a lot of additional expenditures and we're looking at other positions. And our surplus is such that it's minimal at best. We're looking at a contract for animal control, with no deduction. We increased the hours for Emergency Services, some of which is reimbursed. We had a couple of positions vacant that we've so far filled two. We have that and insurance that'll be about an 8% increase, and over the next two years we have two 2% pay increases and probably we can expect insurance costs to go up. Plus work on the building that has to be done; and we're going to get hit by MERS. We have to look at where we can reduce costs for non-essential services (not required). Bousley: This year, revenues were up \$455,000, everyone was under budget by at least another \$400,000. Nelson: So we're looking at \$855,000 in surplus? Furlong: So where does that revenue go? Bousley: Last year we added our surplus to the building fund. So once the audit is done, we'll come back to discuss what we'll do with our surplus...whether it goes into the General fund or if we earmark it for something else. Nelson: Projects this year, if we move with GIS, BS&A, chiller, windows...we're going to eat up quite a bit of that. Bousley: With BS&A - \$100,000; Windows - \$225,000; Chiller - \$90,000; GIS is coming from the DTRF fund; Jail emergency door and fencing - \$50,000; Vestibule - \$105,000. Furlong: Just because we have a windfall, doesn't mean we take it away from the training policy. I shouldn't say windfall, it's not our money, it's the taxpayers' money. Just because we have the money, I don't think we should deviated from fact that frivolous training should still be looked at. I do have to credit department heads for coming in under budget. Last year the training issue wasn't even an issue. If the department heads came under their budget with training, then in reality, I don't think we have a big issue other than the fact that it's not mandatory for the job or job description. Then some of them shouldn't be going. Nelson: And that's how I think we should look at it. Bousley: We haven't had a department go over their budget for the last five or six years. The department heads are very fiscally responsible with their budgets. Nelson: If we're over that much on Budget then that falls on the finance because we should be closer on that. Furlong: I don't think us politicians should be involved with the day to day operations of the county. Our Administrator should be the one to oversee what department heads are doing. Instead of concentrating on micro-managing the department heads, I think we ought to concentrate more on keeping track of the budget. I'm a firm believer that the budget is a document. It's an agreement with the public saying "this is how we're going to spend your money"; if we're using it as a blueprint and moving money around all over the place, well, that's not what we're telling the public. As far as the training goes, Brian is the one that

should be making sure that people aren't going outside of their budget, or going to training that isn't associated with their job function. Nelson: You said a few meetings back, if we have this type of surplus, it isn't really our money; It should go back to the taxpayer. If we have budgets that aren't accurate, we're taking from somebody. Furlong: If we're still able to do the jobs that we need to and gaining on the pots, maybe we should lower the tax rates. Bousley should be the one that's micro-managing the employees. Nelson: I agree, maybe micro-managing isn't the way to go, but it would be nice to see a list of training required when we do the budget. Finance has to do a better job of getting accurate information. Peggy Schroud: I read some of the minutes of the last meeting and I saw that there was some concern of my employee receiving the next level of certification. For those of you who were not here when I was appointed equalization director, it was a very abrupt transition. The previous equalization director had a heart attack within a short period of time. Even though I had been within the department for seven years, I still did not feel like I had the knowledge and training. I needed to take over so I dug my feet in and learned by the seat of my pants. Ten years later and not without some miss-steps along the way, I feel that the department is in a good place. The state of MI requires that for someone to become an equalization director, he or she must be at the assessor level required based on the county's state equalized value and commercial and industrial state equalized values and to have had at least three years of experience working in an equalization department. There's not a lot of level three assessors out there especially in the U.P. It is in Menominee County's best interest to encourage and promote an employee to obtain the MI advanced assessors certification so that if and when I retire there is someone readily available to fill my shoes until a new director can be hired. 16 years ago my predecessor approached the County Board asking to be reimbursed \$100 for my training to become a level one and two assessor. The county board voted that request down. One or more of the commissioners stated that they voted it down because I can take the knowledge that I gained here to and use it to pursue other employment. Fast forward 16 years and I'm still here. When I leave, the knowledge that I gained working here will be lost to the county. However, while I am still here, I would like to pass that knowledge on to an employee in the department so that there is a smooth transition. Any employee who obtains training paid for with tax payer's dollars can take that knowledge to pursue other employment. I believe an example of that here is the sheriff department. My intent in approaching the board for the staff appraiser's training was purely to provide transparency. The personnel policy states limitations. I sought the administrator's approval and he suggested I bring it to the finance committee. I am a firm believer in following the rules as I am a taxpayer too and care where the dollars are spent. I would hope that other departments will treat the taxpayers' money with the same respect. I would hope that Menominee County would encourage employee training to promote employee satisfaction. We in the equalization department take a great deal of pride in the customer service we provide to the public. We thank the county committees and board for providing the money for training and or continued education needed to perform our jobs in a way that most benefits the taxpayer of Menominee County. Also Kandace prepared a spreadsheet of the money that was spent since she's been here. The cost is on there. We belong to three Organizations, UP Assessors Association; dues are \$15 for each of us, The MI

Assessors association; dues are \$75 each, MI equalization director's association. She got two scholarships for a total of \$600 that she pursued on her own. These scholarships are advertised through the organizations. Kandace pursued the application herself. Furlong: I think you're spending a lot of time on a non-issue. Schroud: There were a lot of questions. Furlong: Someone just threw a name out there when we were talking about training. It was meant to be used as an example. You spent an astronomical amount of time on a disposition and spreadsheets, and it's a non-issue. Nelson: That was because it was the one training that came to the board for approval. The conditions set were pass, you're reimbursed. Fail, you pay for it yourself. I agree with James, it's a non-issue.

- C. Review of Menominee County Board of Commissioners Bylaws:** - Bousley: A few housekeeping issues here. Section 1, pg. 4 – Add Northcare Network and Negotiations committee. Pg.17 adding a cash drawer for admin. \$50 and Building Code \$100. Page 23, P98-4 fax policy needs to be rescinded. Everything is covered in the new fee schedule we passed in June. Pg. 27 – public records fee. Change the resolution attached to the most recent 2015-10. Last one is the contractor's checklist. We've never had a formal one...approved. This just needs to be approved and added. Furlong recommends to send those changes to the CB and Nelson seconds that motion.

**Public Comment:** Sheriff Marks: In reference to the Training. All sheriff deputies are either licensed or certified now. The sheriff's office alone, has ten different revenue streams for training. One comes from our general fund. One is the road patrol millage, four are through grant programs where we are reimburse; three are from legislative acts (statutory). One source is through our ins. company, MMRMA. It is very important that the funds are being used for training, or the sheriff dept. can be sued. We have to be accountable for these funds...always. Only a portion comes from the general fund, the other comes from other sources. Schroud: Some of the money we save by belonging to organizations, we get a discounted rate for our continuing education, so that's another savings. I do feel that it is an issue, because it was brought up. I just want it on the record because I don't think a lot of people understand what the Equalization dept. does here in the county.

**Commissioner Comments:** Nelson: Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the fact that we had a bigger surplus than we anticipated. We do have some positions to fill and will need to spend some money, so we have to watch what we spend. If we have extra, let's give some back to the people who gave it to us.

**Adjournment:** Moved by Com. Furlong supported by Com. Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 10:35AM. Motion approved 2/0.