

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
County Administrator's Office

*****Approved 5/9/12*****

The County Board met as a Committee of the Whole on April 4, 2012 at 3:13 PM in the County Administrator's office.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, James Furlong

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call was taken with the following in attendance:

Present: Commissioners Furlong, Lang, Pearson, & Jasper

Absent: Commissioner Meintz

Approval of the Agenda: Com. Lang approved the agenda, supported by Com. Pearson.
Motion carried 5/0.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes: There are no previous minutes

Public Comment: None

Department Head Reports/Comments: None

Presentations: None

Business:

1. A joint Discussion of Menominee County's "Space Needs" ~ Furlong, the reason why I called this meeting is because the county for as long as I can remember, has been struggling with space needs. There are some areas that desperately need help. I asked Brian to check out a few things for me. Who actually needs space? **1.** Emergency management coordinator, currently her office is in the cold storage shed and she has no restroom available. **2.** Equalization department – last year we did some moving and changing with office space. FOC and Administration are happy now, but that left equalization short, they are now the trolls under the stairs. There is not efficient room for patrons to view maps in their office. **3.** Veterans affairs was moved into the administrative office. I can't tell you how many times I've gone into the admin. office and there are people coming in and out of the admin. office for the veterans affairs. (Charlie enters the meeting 3:18 pm) Space for the veteran's affairs office is not sufficient. The waiting space for the veterans is inadequate, and not private. **4.** Juvenile probation officer is in a "closet". Her office is extremely small. **5.** Prosecuting Attorney's office, the assistant prosecutor is in an office that you would have difficulties fitting two people into; just outside the Asst. PA is the investigator. She interviews people with matters of a sensitive nature right there in front of god and everyone. She needs her own space for interviewing clients. **6.** Private Conference Room – Brian was discussing today, a place for private conversations during contract negotiations. We try to schedule department head meetings on Friday mornings so we have either the Jury room or Law Library available. **Lang:** What we have to look at now is these six needs. How important are these six items? **Jasper:** Emergency Management, is that full time? **Furlong,** yes that is full time.

And the Veterans? Yes, that's full time too. **Jasper:** It comes down to, is there any more shuffling that we can do here? The Health Department is privatizing some of their services, so they'll be downsizing. That may leave some room at that building. **Furlong:** The point of this meeting today is to come to some sort of consensus...do we need the extra space, do we want the extra space, can we afford the extra space, and where do we want the extra space to be? **Lang:** Do we know how much extra space we need? As you free up these problems, you're also freeing up some space. Discussion ensued with flip flopping the six offices. One scenario, if you take equalization out, you put #1 in there (emerg. Serv.). If you move the Juv. Prob. Officer out, that could free up space for #5, the PA investigator. Pearson: Ultimately it's obvious we have a space needs problem. **Lang:** Maybe we could look at some modifications of some of the plans we had from years ago. There was a plan to connect the jail to the courthouse, it included space for offices, and would eliminate the bailiff walking the prisoners across the parking lot, it's all enclosed. **Furlong:** Charlie presented a plan last month, with the annex. That was a 2000 sq. ft. addition. That's a good plan, but now we no longer have a consolidation of services. Now we're running up to Stephenson for one thing and to Menominee for another. **Meintz:** I live in Stephenson, I can get something from there, maybe I still have to drive down here, but if there are services there, it's there for me. People in Powers, Hermansville, Harris, whatever services are there, they only have to drive to Stephenson then. When I talked to Peggy about having an office up there, that didn't seem to be a problem with her, she said she doesn't worship that; this was maybe a month ago. **Bousley:** Peggy told me that she would like to stay here because her office works pretty closely with the ROD and the Treasurer's office. It would make more sense to keep that office here. **Jasper:** All of these departments pretty much work closely together...**Lang:** This is the Menominee County Courthouse; this is where the majority of the population lives. I don't think there are any good reasons to fragment services. Of the people I represent, not one person has come to me and said "Bernie, I think it's time for us to start fragmenting the courthouse services." Until I hear that, I intend to hold pretty tight, that we maintain our services on or near this campus. **Jasper:** The Health Dept. budget is shrinking, they're cutting personnel. Before we jump the gun too much, I think we should look to see if there's any room over there. **Pearson:** There's a lot of private information being stated across the counter at the Health Dept. do we want people from the courthouse or commissioners overhearing medical concerns? That could be an issue. **Smith:** What about the old hospital building, don't they have space available? **Meintz:** How many sq. ft. is the health dept.? I believe that with 2000 sq. ft. we can get a few offices and maybe a small conference room. The annex already has engineered plans, so you already have everything to go. That's cheap construction building, 2x6 walls. It's less expensive to build. **Furlong:** to move some of the offices up to the annex, in my opinion, when all of the offices are basically contingent upon one another. It doesn't make sense. The needed office space should be in Menominee. One stop shopping and customer services is number one. To drive all over the county, I think we're doing a dis-service to the customers in the county. I'm firm that we should stick to the campus and provide services here to everyone! With the use of electronic data, it doesn't matter where you are, if you have internet access, people can get the services and forms that they need via the internet. So what the topic of conversation is; trying to find some small space for some of these offices that are in dire need of increased space. **Mark:** Brian do you see anything that's practical to move/fix anything right now? **Brian:** No, there is no immediate fix. **James:** Overview of previous plans (Gunlach Champion plans 2005) proposed justice center with the L shape with the corridor to transport prisoners. Roughly the 2012 cost (w/4% inflation rate) is 1.5 million and another \$725,948 for the corridor. How about expanding in front of the jail a little bit? Maybe not the whole project as proposed, but we can adjust these plans. **Charlie:** What do we all feel comfortable with as far as dollar figures? So we can come to some kind of consensus. **James:** Well the project you proposed is a half mil. So I think there's some consensus with that amount. We do have a consensus that we do have a space problem, that campus is where it will stand, check the Health dept. for possibilities there, doing something with the front of the jail. **Charlie:** It's been brought up about the Daggett School; I think we can have a reasonably priced storage center there. **James:** with electronic records, a lot of those records can be gotten rid of. Some records have to be kept indefinitely. **Smith:** The state does supply record retention policies for most offices. On any

given day, FOC office/Clerk office, have a list of files that they have to go out there to find. So it wouldn't work to put those files in another part of the county either. **Mark** I think we're on the right track; this is going take some brainstorming. Is there any space left in this building that can be accomplished by putting up a wall? **Bernie:** We spend well over 50% of our budget. Over half of that is for Juvenile justice. **Bernie:** Would we consider running a millage. How would we consider paying this back? **James:** USDA does have some grants offered at low interest rates. **Jim:** So where are we at? We have a consensus that we have a space needs problem. We have a consensus that we think it's probably best suited in one centralized area. Where do we go from there? **James:** I think we should check out the health department, see what shape their in as far as space. Start our administrator on exploratory mission; how much space are we looking at? What part of the Justice center can be scaled back to the square footage that we need. Then coming up with some ballpark figures. **Jim:** can we get a consensus on that part? All commissioners agree. **Meintz:** I think 5 to 6 hundred thousand is a good figure we will be able to pay back without asking the people for a millage. **Smith:** Should we be looking at "future" expansion, for instance when the mining project takes effect. Will we need to hire more people? If so, that would mean more offices. **Charlie:** We have to remember, anything with the mines is short term. **James:** Consensus is to have Brian take a look at square footage, how much do we need, and how can we incorporate this amount into the plans for the front of the jail?

Any Other matters that may be properly presented: None

Correspondence: A letter from Dickinson County asking for our support against the Kingsford Mail processing facility deemed to be closed. Consensus is to send a letter to the Michigan State Reps on behalf of Menominee County in support of keeping this office open.

Public Comment: Diane Lesperance: Good to hear the Commissioners are looking into space needs. Want the board to know that the PA123 money is growing, so that may be a payment option.

Bernie, how about the DTRF, that's over funded? Diane: Yes, but it is used for taxes.

Adjournment: Moved by Comm. Meintz, supported by Comm. Lang to adjourn this meeting at 4:38 PM. Motion carried, 5-0.