

**MINUTES
OF
PINE COUNTY BOARD MEETING
Special Meeting – Strategic Planning
Thursday, January 30, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Pine County Courthouse, Pine City Minnesota**

Commissioner Hallan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Josh Mohr, Steve Chaffee, John Mikrot, Jr., and Matt Ludwig. Also present was County Administrator David Minke.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Commissioner Ludwig to approve the Agenda. Second by Commissioner Mohr. Motion carried 5-0.

1. Review Progress on 2019 Goals

Commissioners reviewed 2019 goals.

- Fund agricultural educator through U of M Extension
- Marketing the county/economic development “sell the county” as a great place to live, work, and play
- Consider the establishment of a wetland bank
- Recognize achievements of Pine County/Pine County employees
- Improve recycling
- Improve communication to the public
- Continue to develop the relationship with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Housing—work with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to increase the role of the HRA
- John Wright Building—phase out county use
- Levy 3 percent or less
- Outdoor recreation

2. Brainstorm Strategic Issues for 2020

The commissioners identified the following issues for consideration:

- Marketing the county/economic development
- Wetland bank
- Recognizing the achievement of employees
- Recycling
- Outdoor recreation
- Housing/HRA/Lakes and Pines
- Communication with the public
- Space planning and facilities
- Sales tax for transportation
- Assessing
- East Central Regional Juvenile Center (JPA)
- SWCD levy

- Legislative issues
- Out-of-home placements/Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- Labor relations/health insurance
- Merit System/HR management
- CIP budget/planning
- Increased civic engagement/board and committee appointments

Chair Hallan called a recess for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

The board reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

3. Rank Strategic Issues/Develop Goal Statements

The following items were identified as priorities/goals for 2020:

- Assessing
 - Gather information and analyze data
 - Public outreach
 - Establish direction by December 2020
- Wetland Bank
 - Continue to explore options with Army Corp of Engineers
 - Identify/consider alternate sites if necessary
- Outdoor Recreation
 - Identify recreation opportunities on existing land
 - Complete the Oberstar segment of the Munger Trail
 - County park
 - Land sale proceeds up to 20% for parks and trails [MS 282.08 (4) (ii)]
- Space Planning and Facilities
 - Develop a long-term plan for office space in Pine City/courthouse for county board review
- Sales tax for Transportation
 - Develop long-term road plan with sales tax for transportation to present to Transportation Committee
- Legislative Issues
 - Funding for out-of-home placements under ICWA
 - State bond funding for Oberstar segment of Munger Trail
 - SWCD levy
 - County share of casino sales tax
 - Probation funding
 - County Program Aid (CPA)
- Merit System/HR management
 - Consider option to leave the merit system and provide in-house Human Resources (HR) services

Commissioners will continue to identify and refine priorities and goals throughout the year.

4. Parks, Trails, and Outdoor Recreation

Commissioners discussed the desire to continue to develop the Oberstar segment of the Munger Trail. Because it is a state trail, the consensus was to continue to work with the Department of

Natural Resources (DNR) to get DNR support for the trail. Potentially a bonding request for the remainder of the trail could be made in the 2022 legislative session.

5. Minnesota Merit System

Pine County is a part of the Minnesota Merit System. The merit system is established by Minnesota Statute 256.012 and covers most employees working in county health and human services. The purpose of the merit system is to ensure that each county is using a personnel management system that conforms to federal merit standards for hiring, promotion, etc. Counties have the option of participating in the state merit system or administering their own personnel management system that complies with federal merit system requirements.

The merit system budget is about \$800,000 per year and the costs are split among the participating agencies using a formula. There are 59 agencies (counties or county joint powers associations) participating in the merit system. This number is a decrease from 64 agencies in 2015. Six agencies have applied to exit the merit system at the end of 2020. These six agencies include over 1,000 employees which will reduce the number of participating employees by 25%-- from approximately 4,000 to approximately 3,000. Since costs are shared among the counties, this decrease in members will result in a cost shift to the remaining counties.

The consensus of the commissioners was to explore the option of exiting the merit system and consider adding a human resources staff person to assist with existing workload and the transition.

6. Identify 2020 Special Meeting/COW Meeting Topics, Dates and Locations

A. Possible Topics

- Highway Plan with renewed sales tax
- Presentations by partner organizations
 - East Central Regional Juvenile Center
 - Initiative Foundation
 - Agricultural Society (fair board)
 - PHASE
 - Lakes and Pines (Nicole Klosner)
- Sturgeon Lake water level
- One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

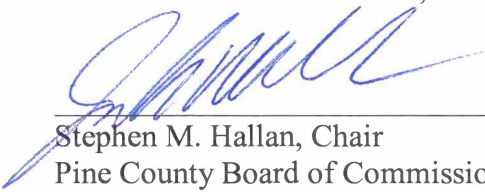
B. Possible Locations

- Nemadji Research
- Windemere Township

Commissioners will continue to consider possible topics and locations throughout the year.

7. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.


Stephen M. Hallan, Chair
Pine County Board of Commissioners


David J. Minke, County Administrator
Clerk to the Pine County Board of Commissioners