



MARATHON COUNTY REGIONAL MORGUE TASK FORCE MEETING AGENDA

Friday, May 5, 2023, at 10:00–11:00 am
In-person and Virtual through WebEx

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair Craig McEwen	P	
Greg Bean	P	
Dr. Michael Clark	P	
Dr. Lisa Grill Dodson	P	
Phil Rentmeester	P	
Scott Rifleman		X
Kimm Weber	W	
Mark Westen	W	
Greg Zorowski	P	
Dr. Jeannie Worden	P	

Present in person: Marathon County Medical Examiner Jessica Blahnik, Rob Elliott NTC Facilities

Also Present via Web: Deputy Administrator Chris Holman, County Board Chair Kurt Gibbs

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair McEwen 10:00.

2. **Public Comment** – None

3. **MOTION BY WORDEN; SECOND BY ZOROMSKI TO APPROVE THE MINTUES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2023 MORGUE TASK FORCE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. **Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

A. Informational updates, including funding, planning, and partnership updates

Discussion:

Chair McEwen provided a project update. Senator Baldwin preliminary allocated \$2 million of Congressionally Directed Spending funds toward the Regional Forensic Science Center (RFSC) project. The funding allocation still needs to go through the formal budget process, which last year was completed towards the end of the year. In addition, the Joint Finance Committee has tentatively allocated \$10.6 million towards the RFSC Project. State legislators have drafted legislation that would award Marathon County the funding.

According to County Board Chair Gibbs, the Wisconsin County's Association (WCA) has been instrumental to assist with the funding. Dan Bahr, WCA Government Affairs Associate, has been a huge advocate for the project and worked directly with legislators to help move the project forward. After the legislation is finalized, it will go forward to committee hearings, then it would be voted on in the Senate and House of Representatives. Finally, Governor Evers will be able to enact the legislation, so it can be funded by the state budget. Dan Bahr has also met with Senator Baldwin on numerous occasions to explain the project needs, which has helped with the federal funding allocation. Marathon County is fortunate and grateful for the support of WCA and Dan.

County Board Chair Gibbs stated that the proposed legislation also contained language that would allow the Medical Examiner's Office to change their current fee structure. Medical Examiner Blahnik explained that in 2016, legislation was adopted that limited Coroner and Medical Examiner's Office's ability to create and increase fees over the consumer price index each year. The problem for Marathon County was

that they implemented a death certification signing fee that went into effect January 2016, however, when the legislation came out in April of 2016, it back dated all Coroner and Medical Examiner's Office fees to the rate in 2015, so Marathon County needed to abolish the death certification signing fee. Marathon County is one of the few counties in the state that does not have a death certification signing fee, which would generate roughly \$50,000 in revenue per year. The state legislators are proposing an amendment to the legislation to allow Marathon County the ability to create a death certification signing fee and increase the cremation authorization fee. This would greatly help with the increased costs of operating a RFSC.

Chair McEwen shared that Somerville architectural firm was able to provide an updated construction cost of \$14.8 million, which included technology upgrades for the NTC partnership and a lodox. The facility floor plan was updated to reduce the size of the conference room based upon NTC no longer needing a large teaching space at the facility. The facility is now at 16,600 square feet.

Chair McEwen stated that Marathon County is still working with NTC to better define the partnership and logistics of being located on the Wausau Campus. Marathon County representatives met with NTC on March 29, 2023, and will be meeting again on May 10, 2023. NTC was able to provide Marathon County an initial MOU that better defined the partnership. Marathon County reviewed the MOU and met internally to discuss how the partnership would work from the county's perspective. There have been initial discussions about the land purchase, however all plans are preliminary at this time. Marathon County is excited for the partnership and looks forward to working with NTC, as there are numerous benefits for both organizations. Dr. Worden agreed and expressed how excited she is about having the facility on campus and that it would enhance the student's educational experience.

Chair McEwen explained the project next steps. On roughly May 1, 2023, a facility design request for proposal (RFP) was released. Deputy Administrator Holman explained that on May 4, 2023, there was a pre-proposal workshop to discuss the design RFP. Representatives from Somerville, Agnus Young, IMEG, and Venture were present. Marathon County was excited for the project interest. The RFP should be finalized by the end of May. Marathon County hopes to start the facility schematic designs June 2023 to be able to stay on schedule. The architectural designs are estimated to take 5-6 months, which would have them completed in December 2023. That would allow the construction RFP to be released in either December 2023 or January 2024, which is the ideal timeframe. If the FRP is released later in the year, contractors typically bid higher, as many have projects already lined up. If the FRP is held until 2025, the entire project will be at least 5% higher in cost with inflation.

Follow Up:

None

5. Policy Issues Discussion and Committee Determination to the County Board for its Consideration

A. Recommendation of next steps to Public Safety Committee, HR/Finance Committee, and County Board

Discussion:

Chair McEwen stated that Marathon County had drafted a resolution that would move forward to the Public Safety Committee, Human Resource/Finance Committee, and ultimately to the County Board of Supervisors. The resolution has three asks, which includes: extending the timeframe for the ARPA funds to be held for project funding from July 2023 to December 2023; amend the capital improvement program (CIP) plans to include the RFSC in the 2023 plan; and to utilize \$179,000 of the ARPA funds to start the schematic designs in June 2023.

Action:

MOTION BY WORDEN; SECOND BY ZOROMSKI TO SUPPORT STARTING THE SCHEMATIC DESIGN IN JUNE 2023 AND TO MOVE THE RESOLUTION FORWARD TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AND HUMAN RESOURCE/FINANCE COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED.

Follow Up:

The Resolution will be brought forward to the Public Safety Committee and Human Resources/Finance Committee.

6. Scheduling of Future Meetings and Identifying Agenda Topics

Dr. Dodson inquired if at a future meeting Marathon County would like to further explore a partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin. Blahnik stated that Marathon County would love to have a partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin and would like to further discuss as soon as the preliminary planning process is completed. Dr. Dodson stated she will start reaching out to Aspirus Health Systems and Marshfield Clinic Health Systems regarding Pathology Residency opportunities.

Chair McEwen stated that after the state budget has been passed, we would schedule the next meeting.

7. Announcements

None

8. Adjournment

MOTION BY WORDEN; SECOND BY DODSON TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 1027 AM. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted by
Jessica Blahnik