



MARATHON COUNTY RULES REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date & Time of Meeting: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

Meeting Location: Courthouse Assembly Room, B-105, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI

Committee Members Present: David Baker, Chris Dickinson, Kody Hart, Jacob Langenhahn, John Robinson, Rick Seefeldt, and Kurt Gibbs (ex officio member).

Others: Stacy Morache (county board), Kim Trueblood (County Clerk), Valerie Carrillo

Staff: Lance Leonhard, Michael Puerner, Toshia Ranallo

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Corp. Counsel Michael Puerner, who conveyed that Supervisor Craig McEwen was unavailable to preside over the committee and no Vice Chair was presently designated. Per Roberts Rules, when the presiding officer is absent, the body can elect a temporary chair. Langenhahn put forth a nomination for Kurt Gibbs, County Board Chair and ex officio member of all committees, to act as the temporary Chair. No other nominations were offered, therefore, Gibbs accepted role of temporary chairperson to be in effect until the return of Committee Chair McEwen.

2. Topics for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Review and Recommend Marathon County Board Rules* Suggested Changes

(Committee members are asked to review all sections of Chapter 2 and Section 4.20 of the Marathon County Code of Ordinances prior to the meeting to bring ideas for future discussion – see below for link to rules)

- i. What existing rules do members believe should be considered for revision?
- ii. What, if any, new rules do members believe should be considered for addition?

Discussion:

- Chair Gibbs sought topics from members for discussion at later meetings regarding potential rule changes, receiving the following initial list:
 1. Recording Meetings: Options, Challenges, and Costs.
 2. Virtual Meeting Attendance and Clarification for Voter Meetings.
 3. Consider Changing Co. Board Meeting Time from 7pm to 6pm.
 4. Integration of Educational Meeting with Voters Meeting.
 5. Streamlining Motions, Call the Question Process, 2/3 vs. ¾ Voting Requirements.
 6. Review and Update Closed Session Processes, Including Recording, Attendance, and Virtual Voting.
 7. Standardized Public Comment Specifications.
 8. Appoint Vice-Chairs to all Subcommittees.
 9. Chairperson Selection for Other Boards/Committees (Rule 2.01).
 10. Empowerment of Committee Members in Agenda Setting.
 11. Review and Clarify Subcommittees' Reporting Relationships.
 12. Flexible Committee Meeting Times and End Times for Efficiency.
 13. Standardized Notice Period for Appointments to various boards, commissions, task forces.
 14. Executive Committee Membership and Roles.
 15. Expectations Document for the Executive Committee.
 16. Co. Board Chair and Vice Chair Appointments to Standing Committees.
 17. Co. Chair Responsibilities Document and Annual Workload Review.
 18. Guidelines for Board Chair, including Ex Officio Role and Voting Rights.
 19. ERC Committee Membership in Accordance with Revised State Statute.
 20. Incorporating Budget Process into Rules.
 21. Clarify Election Administration Clearance (Rule 2.02).
 22. Expense Reimbursement Policy and Timely Submittals.
 23. Addition of Metallic Mining Committee
 24. Identification of Task Force Sunset Dates.
 25. Grammar and Formatting Errors Review.

- Specific discussion was had regarding the following:
 - Recordings of Rules Review and other committee, commission, board meetings
 - Members discussed the importance of maintaining recorded meetings as official records, concerns regarding storing recordings for a retention period of 7 years, transparency benefits, whether certain entities should be prioritized for recording (e.g., NCHC) based on perceived importance or whether there should be consistency in the approach to recording to avoid selective recording, and what criteria could be used for recording meetings (e.g., taking into account priorities and public interest, was referenced by one member as essential due to the numerous subcommittees).
 - A comparison was suggested between the current cost of recordings versus recording all meetings to assess financial implications.
 - The City of Wausau's approach to recording meetings was referenced, and its policy was suggested for review due to their active recording practice.
 - Concerns were raised about the level of detail provided in minutes, especially if the decision was made not to record meetings; it was suggested that more comprehensive minutes would compensate for this.
 - Members were advised to consider the costs associated with recording multiple subcommittee meetings and allocate necessary funds in the budget.
 - The absence of NCHC minutes on the county website was noted, and the possibility of requesting the NCHC Executive Board to address this was discussed. However, the existing process within the NCHC intergovernmental agreement was mentioned, requiring approval from all three county boards for changes.
 - Exploring alternative recording options and their implications was suggested.

Follow up:

1. Send out specific topics and questions identified to all board supervisors for feedback
2. Create survey for Standing Committees
3. A recommendation was put forth to furnish potential County Board candidates with information about the roles and responsibilities of Standing Committees, ensuring their understanding of the expectations.

Follow up to be assigned at future meeting on topic of recording meetings:

1. Collect data on the amount and frequency of additional meetings.
2. Investigate various methods for storing and archiving recorded meetings for a minimum of 7 years.
3. Assess the potential costs and benefits of recording additional meetings versus recording all meetings.
4. Evaluate costs and budgetary requirements associated with recording multiple subcommittee meetings.
5. Review the City of Wausau's policy on recording meetings for possible insights.
6. Explore alternative recording options and their feasibility.

3. Future Meeting Dates and Times

- A.** Discussion to schedule future meeting dates, times, and virtual attendance options
Virtual Attendance of all sub-committee meetings/task forces; or all meetings;

Discussion:

Virtual Attendance of Sub-Committee Meetings/Task Forces

- Current rule allows virtual attendance for unforeseen emergencies; Chair's discretion for voting meetings.
- Concerns raised about lower participation in virtual meetings compared to in-person attendance.
- In-person guest presenters during virtual meetings could create negative perceptions for the audience.
- Challenges expressed for virtual engagement of supervisors and potential impact on future Board members.
- Some members were in favor of maintaining the current meeting format.
- The concern of potential abuse of virtual participation was addressed, suggesting that the expectation should be for physical presence, with narrower criteria for virtual attendance.
- The challenge of rural supervisors facing broadband issues and their subsequent inability to attend virtually was mentioned.
- Multiple meetings per month in rural areas were seen as obstacles.
- It was proposed to seek feedback from the full board on this matter.
- Staff appreciates virtual presentation and Administrator Leonhard advocates for their active camera use.

Follow up:

1. Collect feedback from the full board regarding virtual attendance policies.

The Rules Review Committee meetings are scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 8:00 am starting in September thru March. While virtual participation is available for members, a strong encouragement is extended for in-person attendance.

4. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Marathon County Code of Ordinances can be found online at the link below:

https://www.municode.com/library/wi/marathon_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=12551

Minutes prepared by T. Ranallo