



MARATHON COUNTY RULES REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date & Time of Meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

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

Committee Members present: Kurt Gibbs (Temporary Chair), David Baker, Chris Dickinson, Kody Hart, Jacob Langenhahn, Rick Seefeldt, John Robinson arrived at 8:49am. **Other Supervisors:** Stacy Morache, Jean Maszk *(w)

Supporting Staff: Lance Leonhard, Michael Puerner, Kim Trueblood, Toshia Ranallo

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Gibbs called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. Public Comment (not to exceed 15 minutes) - None

3. Approval of the Minutes of the August 15, 2023 Rules Review Committee Meeting

Correction to #10.

With that correction, **DICKINSON MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY SEEFELDT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Topics for Discussion and Possible Action

- A. Review and consideration of existing Marathon County Board Rules*, discussion of potential revisions, and next steps for the Committee
(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)

Chair Gibbs reported he received feedback from ten supervisors who responded to the survey.

A comprehensive discussion resulted on the following three topics, leading to a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints.

1. Consideration of Changing Full Board Meeting Time from 6pm to 7pm:

- Two individuals contacted Chair Gibbs expressing concerns about scheduling conflicts if meetings were moved to 6pm.
- The suggestion to schedule the Educational meeting at 6pm and the Voter meeting at 7pm was put forth. However, this proposal raised concerns about potential confusion among citizens who traditionally expect meetings to convene at 7pm.

2. Exploration of Combining the Educational Meeting with the Voter Meeting:

- The idea of consolidating the Educational meeting with the Voter meeting to create a single monthly board meeting was discussed.

3. Feedback on the Continuation of Virtual Meeting Attendance:

- Concerns were raised about the public's perception of virtual attendance. Constituents expect to be appropriately represented.
- Discussion revolved around the engagement levels of members during virtual meetings, with some expressing concerns about potential disengagement.
- The challenges of managing meetings with a mix of in-person and virtual attendees were discussed, highlighting potential disparities in participation.
- It was noted that broadband speed issues can hinder video participation for rural members, emphasizing the need to address this issue.
- There was a suggestion to impose a limit on the number of virtual meetings an individual can attend.
- There was consensus in favor of in-person attendance for voting, but a preference for keeping a virtual option for standing committees.

- A question was raised about the cost of using Webex for virtual meetings. Further investigation may be required.
- A suggestion was offered relative to include language in the Rules that might imply a preference for in-person attendance.
- Some members supported allowing a percentage of attendance virtually.
- Members acknowledged that, post-COVID, it is now an expectation to have an option for virtual attendance and viewing of meetings.
- Suggestions included leaving the decision regarding virtual attendance to the Standing Committee Chair or all committee members.
- The challenge of ensuring uniformity in attendance rules was discussed.
- The question of how to tighten attendance at voter meetings was raised.
- It was proposed to clarify and enhance Rule 13h, specifically addressing removal from committees.
- There was a suggestion to use the Open Meetings voter app for voting instead of telephone calls, with exceptions allowed for technology failures.
- An opportunity was noted to explain engagement and expectations during the onboarding process for newly elected County Board Supervisors.
- Suggestions included allowing individuals to attend up to three virtual meetings per year, after which they would only have the option to watch recorded meetings, unless discretionary approval is granted by the Chair.
- Discussion included the possibility of allowing non-committee members to attend virtually for educational purposes.
- It was recommended to enhance language in the rules and clearly define exceptions.
- A comparison was drawn with the City of Wausau's policy, which restricts voting for non-attendees. Differences in board sizes and travel considerations were noted.
- Members suggested taking a gradual approach, beginning with defining rules and exceptions for voter meetings.
- The committee agreed to table the discussion for further consideration, with the aim of defining language, rules, and exceptions.

5. 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

*(w) – Webex Attendee

Minutes prepared by Toshia Ranallo, County Administration