



**MARATHON COUNTY  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
AGENDA**

Date & Time of Meeting: **Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 2:00 pm**

Meeting Location **WebEx/Courthouse Assembly Room, (B105), Courthouse, 500 Forest St., Wausau**

Committee Members: Matt Bootz, Chair; Brent Jacobson; Vice-Chair, Jennifer Bizzotto; Bruce Lamont; Jean Maszk; Allen Oball; Vacant

**Marathon County Mission Statement:** *Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business. (Last updated: 12-20-05)*

**Committee Mission Statement:** *Provide leadership for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, monitoring outcomes, reviewing and recommending to the County Board policies related to public safety initiatives of Marathon County.*

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Public Safety Committee members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. Instead of attendance in person, Committee members and the public may attend this meeting by **telephone conference**. If Committee members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the **telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

**Phone#: 1-408-418-9388**

**Access Code: 146-159-7938**

The meeting will also be broadcast on Public Access or at <https://tinyurl.com/MarathonCountyBoard>

When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Public Comment** *(Any person who wishes to address the County Board, or one of its committees, during the "Public Comment" portion of meetings, must provide his or her name, address, and the topic he or she wishes to present to the Marathon County Clerk, or chair of the committee, no later than five minutes before the start of the meeting.)*
3. **Approval of the May 5, 2021 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**
4. **Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination**
5. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**
  - A. Recommendation to Amend the 2021 Capital Improvement Program to add Regional Forensic Science Center Project – Facility Acquisition and Design (Jessica Blahnik), to be forwarded to the Capital Improvement Committee for consideration
  - B. 2022 Capital Improvement Program request for Regional Forensic Science Center Project – Construction
6. **Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**
  - A. Forensic Science Center Project Update, including Autopsy Service Constraints (Jessica Blahnik)
  - B. System Budgeting Update – (Bootz and Jacobson)
7. **Next Meeting Time, Location, Announcements and Agenda Items:**
  - A. Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion
  - B. Next meeting: **Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 2:00 pm**
8. **Adjournment**

*\*Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 261-1500 or e-mail [countyclerk@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:countyclerk@co.marathon.wi.us) one business day before the meeting*

**SIGNED** /s/ Matt Bootz  
Presiding Officer or Designee

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE

FAXED TO: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages, and  
FAXED TO: Other Media Groups  
FAXED BY: T. Ranallo  
FAXED DATE: 5/28/2021  
FAXED TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: T. Ranallo  
DATE: 5/28/2021  
TIME: \_\_\_\_\_



# MARATHON COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 2:00 pm

WebEx/Courthouse Assembly Room, (B105), Courthouse, 500 Forest St., Wausau

| Members                      | Present/Web-Phone | Absent |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Chair Matt Bootz             | X                 |        |
| Vice Chair Jennifer Bizzotto | Phone             |        |
| Brent Jacobson               | W                 |        |
| Bruce Lamont                 | W                 |        |
| Jean Maszk                   | W                 |        |
| Allen Opall                  |                   | Absent |
| Vacant                       |                   |        |

**Also Present:** Kurt Gibbs, Lance Leonhard, Jason Hake, Theresa Wetzsteon, Chad Billeb, William Millhausen, Laura Yarie, Judge Huber, Molly Lawrence and Toshia Ranallo.

**VIA Web or Phone:** Craig McEwen, John Robinson, Ruth Heinzl, Kelly Schremp, Pam Steffen and 2 unidentified callers.

## 1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bootz at 2:00 p.m.

## 2. Public Comment (15 Minutes) – None.

## 3. MOTION BY BIZZOTTO; SECOND BY MASZK TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2021 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

## 4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination

A. Review of Past Discussions of County Event Policy and Discussion of Next Steps

### Discussion:

Administrator Leonhard gave a brief background on previous discussions initiated in 2019 resulting in policy drafts. Work on the policy continued into early 2020 but attention to this matter was quickly diverted to COVID-19 priorities. More work to the policy is still needed to encompass smaller events, emergency planning, garbage control, etc. Staff capacity and roles of individuals in leadership will need to be defined if this committee and the Executive Committee feel it should be prioritized over other Workplan projects.

### Follow-Up:

Chair Bootz suggested he, Administrator Leonhard, and Vice Chair McEwen create something more formal to be presented to this committee in the future.

B. DOJ Requests a Letter of Support be sent to Legislators for Treatment Alternative Diversion (TAD) Program Funding

### Discussion:

Justice Alternatives Coordinator Laura Yarie explained TAD funding. It is intended to support county efforts to provide treatment and diversion programs to non-violent adult offenders with substance abuse being a contributing factor to their criminal activity. Currently, \$7.2 million is dispersed by competitive grants. Marathon County is in its fourth year to receive \$150,000 in grant funds. The letter of support request is to advocate for additional positions specifically a grant specialist and research analyst. Currently, the DOJ receives 54 grant applications and have only five staff positions. Due to limited staffing resources, the county receives less analyzed data. In addition to adding positions, the DOJ is considering to eliminate some of the local match requirements and to revise the restrictive language so that other types of diversions and mental health programs can be included. They also expect to give additional funding to help sustain or enhance existing programs.

### Action:

**MOTION BY MASZK; SECOND BY LAMONT TO SEND THIS DISCUSSION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. MOTION CARRIED.**

### Follow-Up:

Forward to Executive Committee.

## 5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

A. CIP Request for Replacement of the Jail Radio Infrastructure (William Millhausen)

**Discussion:**

William Millhausen explained the jail radio infrastructure is long overdue and in need of replacements and upgrades. The cost estimate is \$437,000.

**Action:**

**MOTION BY MASZK; SECOND BY TO BIZZOTTO TO FORWARD THE REQUEST TO REPLACE THE JAIL RADIO INFRASTRUCTURE TO THE CAPTIAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (CIP) COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Follow Up:**

Forward to CIP Committee.

**B. CIP Request for Replacement of Jail Flooring**

**Discussion:**

Chief Deputy Chad Billeb reported the jail flooring is over 30 years old and in need of replacement. There is a potential trip hazard due to many cracks and separations but they would only replace high traffic areas. The estimated cost is \$150,000.

**Action:**

**MOTION BY MASZK; SECOND BY LAMONT TO FORWARD THE CIP REQUEST FOR REPLACEMENT OF JAIL FLOORING TO THE CIP COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Follow Up:**

Forward to CIP Committee.

**C. CIP Request for Court Hearing Room B**

**Discussion:**

Judge Huber explained the need for a replacement hearing courtroom. Judge elect Scott Corbett will be taking over the existing hearing room in August. This room has been used by court commissioners, Register in Probate, and visiting judges. Court commissioners have been using the existing hearing room for preliminary hearings in order to help judges focus on the backlog due to the pandemic. If the hearing room isn't replaced, the court commissioners' work would be placed back on judge's calendars. The construction would encompass a remodel of the Register of Deeds office which would not negatively impact their operations. The estimated cost is \$186,538.

Administrator Leonhard reported they are waiting to identify if the American Rescue Plan dollars would be a viable funding source for this project.

**Action:**

**MOTION BY BIZZOTTO; SECOND BY MASZK TO FORWARD THE CIP REQUEST TO CREATE A NEW COURT HEARING ROOM B TO THE CIP COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Follow up:**

Forward to CIP Committee.

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

**A. Update from Justice Alternatives Coordinator (Laura Yarie) on effort to Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Justice Alternatives Programs**

**Discussion:**

Justice Alternatives Coordinator Laura Yarie explained she receives data and statistics each month for justice programs. Prior to participating in Evidence Based Decision Making meetings, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) met on a regular basis where she would provide them with cumulative and comparison reports that tracked program usage and value. Currently, a lot of data is being collected but the CJCC needs to meet to discuss what is being measured, what matters, and if the data is being used effectively. Yarie is working on a handout to present to the CJCC that will be a helpful resource to stakeholders explaining the following below:

- Description of Programs.
- Programs using tax levy dollars and grant funds.
- How much was done and how well the program is working.
- Is there anyone better off from the program?
- What would it look like if the program ceased?

**Follow-Up:**

Discuss with the CJCC

**B. Update on Pretrial Case Management**

**Discussion:**

Justice Alternatives Coordinator Laura Yarie gave a brief Pretrial Case Management update. She has been collecting data on people in the community who are failing to make their initial court appearance. Three full-time case managers may be needed to manage this population. Full grant funding is being received for an assessor position. Some of the justice program services and budgets are being rearranged to make the existing pre-trial position into full-time status, as well as bringing in another full time case manager.

**Follow-Up:**

There will be a Q & A stakeholder meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup> to review the process and program goals.

**C. Marathon County Shelter Home update**

1. What is it, current financial operations, and long-term does Marathon County address this need in some other manner?

**Discussion:**

Chief Deputy Chad Billeb explained our shelter home is mandated and overseen by the Division of Children and Families but managed by the Sheriff's Department. The children are referred by Marathon County Social Services Dept. and by other contracted counties. The typical daily census is 2-3 kids and an average stay is 15 days. Annual operation costs for the shelter is \$550,000. Marathon County receives \$80,000 in revenue from other entities we serve, and the rest derives from tax levy dollars. In order to keep the facility in operation, it is estimated to cost Marathon County \$748 a day. We charge \$50 a day to other counties who use our facility. This is an annually agreed upon amount because not all shelters are managed by government agencies but private entities as well. During Priority Based Budgeting meetings, this program was reviewed and discussion arose to consider placing kids in another county or private entity shelter which would result in a substantial cost savings. Billeb indicated he has engaged with the District Attorney and law enforcement on the issue but have not contacted stakeholders, partners, or social services.

The Sheriff's office needs to make a decision by January of 2022 on whether or not it desires to renew its license with the Division of Children and Families.

**Follow-Up:**

Begin to engage stakeholders in discussion on options.

**D. Update on Criminal Justice System Budgeting**

**Discussion:**

Chair Bootz gave a brief update and indicated he and Supervisor Jacobson will prepare information to be presented to the County Board in June.

**7. Next Meeting Time, Location, Announcements and Agenda Items:**

- A. Supervisor Lamont mentioned the Marathon County Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony will be held at Marathon County Shooting Range Park on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.
- B. Next meeting: **Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 1:30 pm**

**8. Adjournment**

**MOTION BY JACOBSON; SECOND BY LAMONT TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:05 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted by  
Toshia Ranallo

## Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center

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Jessica Blahnik  
Marathon County Medical Examiner

Jessica.Blahnik@co.marathon.wi.us  
715-261-1199

## Coroner and Medical Examiner Offices

- Role of the Coroner/Medical Examiner
  - State mandated positions
  - Determine cause and manner of death
    - Sudden, unexplained, suspicious or non-natural deaths
  - Determine need for forensic autopsy
- Forensic autopsies help determine:
  - Cause and manner of death
  - Underlying undiagnosed medical conditions
  - Heredity conditions
  - Injury interpretation
  - Evidence identification and collection



# Forensic Pathologists

- Dane County
- Fond du Lac County
- Milwaukee County
- Waukesha County
  - Does not do referral cases
- University of Wisconsin Madison



Madison: 145 miles

# Pathology Services



Wisconsin Pathology Services Map

## Mass Fatality Management

- Types of mass fatality
  - Criminal, accidental event
    - Mass shooting, vehicle crash, etc.
  - Environmental
    - Tornado, flooding, etc.
  - Epidemic
    - Flu, plague, Ebola, COVID-19 etc.
- Coroner and Medical Examiner responsibilities
  - Body storage
    - Short and long term
  - Body transportation
    - From scene to holding area to morgue
  - Facility to conduct autopsies
- Marathon County capacity
  - Ability to store 10 decedents
    - Most resources in region



## Attending Autopsy

- No local provider
  - All providers are in southern Wisconsin or Minnesota
  - Travel over two hours to attend (5 hours of drive time per case)
    - Further commute for northern counties
- Transportation of decedent
  - Marathon County: 3 vans
  - Majority of counties rely on funeral homes and livery services
    - Additional expenses
- Difficult to arrange autopsies
  - Pathologist increase case load
  - Unable to get in same day
    - Delay autopsy
      - Toxicology not as accurate
      - Law Enforcement and District Attorney want results
    - Delay releasing decedent to family
      - Delay providing family answers
      - Embalming issues for viewing
- Most cases require Law Enforcement representative
  - Difficult to coordinate representative to be gone 8 plus hours
  - Drive time takes away from investigation time









## Regional Community Benefits

- Mass fatality preparedness
  - Ability to refrigerate 20 plus decedents at a time
    - Refrigeration designed for mass fatality response
    - Freezer availability as needed
    - Bio Seal services as needed
  - Willing to assist in mutual aide requests
    - Scene response
    - Body transportation assistance
    - Body coordination
    - Autopsy services
    - Family updates
  - Goal to be a regional asset
  - Secondary decontamination area
- Short and long term body storage
  - Maintain chain of custody
  - Assist with unideal cases



## Where are we with the Regional Forensic Science Center project?

Steps taken since 2017 to move the Regional Forensic Science Center project forward

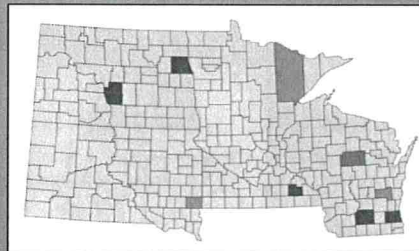
## Space Needs Assessment

- Somerville
  - Complete by June 30, 2021
    - Space needs analysis
    - Construction cost for remodel and new construction
    - Design fee structure
- Angus Young Architecture Firm
  - Completed preliminary analysis in 2019
    - Gross area: 14,024 square feet
    - Net area: 11,271 square feet
  - Needs have slightly changed since 2019



## Comparable County Analysis

- Similar population counties with forensic pathologist
  - Saginaw County, Michigan
  - Olmsted County, Minnesota
  - St. Louis County, Minnesota \*\*\*
  - Burleigh County, North Dakota
  - Grand Forks County, North Dakota
  - Minnehaha County, South Dakota \*\*\*
  - Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin \*\*\*
- Wisconsin counties with forensic pathologists
  - Dane County
  - Milwaukee
  - Waukesha
- Data obtained
  - Financials
  - Staff structures
  - Community partners
  - Advice



\*\*\* Comparable Counties surveyed



## Aspirus, Marshfield Clinic and Ascension

- Supportive of initiative
- Interested to form partnership
- Benefits
  - Local medical autopsies
  - Livery service
  - Additional body storage
  - Mass fatality preparedness
  - Family viewing area
  - Student/resident teaching
- Partnership
  - Histology slide preparation
  - Culture analysis
  - Some hematology work



## Business Plan

- Completed November 2020
- Cash flow positive
- Update in 2021
  - Location
  - Construction costs
  - Updated financials
  - Partnerships





## Final Steps

- Space needs analysis
- Determine location and facility design
  - Easily accessible, close to resources
  - Ideal to be close to existing county structure
  - Facility to meet current and future needs
- Update business plan/financials
- Continue to explore funding options
- CIP approval
- County Board approval fall 2021



## Questions or Comments???





# Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Project Request Form

|   |   |              |                                   |
|---|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Date of Request</b>  | 05/14/2021  |              |                                   |
| <b>Department</b>   | Medical Examiner  |              |                                   |
| <b>Contact Person</b>   | Jessica Blahnik   |              |                                   |
| <b>Phone</b>  | 715-261-1199  | <b>Email</b> | Jessica.Blahnik@co.marathon.wi.us |
| <b>Project Title</b>  | Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center- Facility Design   |              |                                   |
| <b>Location</b>   | Anticipated: 1900 Westwood Drive, Wausau, WI 54401 (Aspirus Property Condominium)   |              |                                   |
| <b>Is the project new, a repair/replacement or a continuation of an existing project?</b> | New <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Repl <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br>(see below) |              |                                   |

**If continuation, fill in below:**

Planning 75% complete      Design/engineering 0% complete      Construction/installation 0% complete

|   |                              |  |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Has this request been approved by the appropriate Standing Committee or Board?</b> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|------------------------------|--|

|  |        |                                     |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |       |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| <b>Departmental Priority</b><br><small>(check a different priority for each project)</small> | (High) | 1                                   | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        | 8                        | 9                        | 10                       | (Low) |
|  |        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Description Summary / Scope</b> | <p>This project request is one of two parts for the expansion of the Medical Examiner's Office to create a Regional Forensic Science Center. This expansion would include hiring up to two forensic pathologists (and support staff) and building a morgue facility where we would be able to conduct local forensic autopsies, store decedents, and have an appropriate area to meet with families. Currently, the medical examiner staff and law enforcement need to travel for autopsy services, which causes many obstacles that includes scheduling the autopsy, finding a pathologist to conduct the autopsy, and traveling to the morgue despite weather, staffing and lack of sleep.</p> <p>Our current facility is not meeting our needs as well. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to purchase a cooler for our office, which has helped with the issue of decedent storage and maintaining chain of custody. Despite having the cooler, we still do not have a dedicated location to conduct body examinations, an appropriate area to meet with families, and a long term plan for the future. In the County's long-term future plans, there are plans to use the West Street land to expand Marathon Park, which would displace our office. There is currently no future plan or identified location where our office will move. As our case load continues to grow, the need for additional space and morgue facilities only becomes more evident.</p> <p>The goal of the Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center will be to offer high quality forensic pathology services (autopsies) and educational offerings to North Central Wisconsin and the Northern Michigan counties; not only a Marathon County asset. This is a brand new type of facility for the region that will offer new services that are currently not offered. All of the surrounding county coroner/medical examiner officers, law enforcement agencies, health care systems, and related agencies have expressed a need for these services and are hopeful for the approval of the project to have a local autopsy provider.</p> |
|------------------------------------|--|



# Capital Project Request Form

By having a local forensic pathologist, we will be able to provide a higher quality, more professional level of death investigation not only to Marathon County, but to the entire North Central region in Wisconsin, as well as Northern Michigan. We would be able to provide enhanced forensic and medical training to community partners (law enforcement, emergency medical providers), along with outside agencies (coroner/medical examiner offices, law enforcement agencies, healthcare workers), and colleges/universities (Medical College of Wisconsin and health care related programs). We could also improve upon our prevention measures by conducting more forensic autopsies and having the local expertise of the forensic pathologist.

This particular CIP request is for the following services: preliminary design/study, schematic design, design development fee, construction documents, bidding/negotiations, and purchasing the condo space from Aspirus. There is also an optional program validation study that could be completed to determine the accuracy of the business plan projections. The cost of this study has been added into the request, however if it is determined not necessary by administration and County Board, it can be removed.

Our office had worked with the Facility and Capital Management Department for the costing of all studies in this particular CIP request and the construction costs in the other CIP request. We were provided with a range for some of the studies, along with two separate construction quotes. We had decided to use the highest numbers for each area that reflects the current increased construction and material costs, and future projections. We had estimated our facility to be 10,000 square feet, which is larger than what we will probably need, however we have not completed an updated space needs analysis for the Aspirus location. Once that is completed and we have a rough idea of the facility square footage, we would be able to reduce the cost of all facility design documents and the construction costs. These numbers are on the high end and will most likely come in lower than what is being requested. The condo purchase price may also be lower, depending on the actual amount of square footage that we will purchase.

## **Relation to Other Projects (if applicable):**

We have been working on this project over the past few years and are finally to a place where we are ready to move forward.

In 2017, the County Board approved the creation of the Morgue Task Force to oversee the development of the business plan and studies related to the project. The Morgue Task Force reports directly to the County Board Public Safety Committee and is chaired by the former Public Safety Committee Chair, Craig McEwen. The committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, as needed, to advise the next steps needed for the project.

In 2018, Marathon County hired WIPFLI Consulting Firm to complete a feasibility study to evaluate the regional need for a forensic science center, and determine whether or not the facility would be able to become cash flow positive. After the initial feasibility study was completed, it was clear that the facility would be operations neutral and cash flow positive. The regional need for the facility was evident by the overwhelming support from the surrounding coroners and medical examiners, law enforcement agencies, hospital systems, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and numerous other community organizations.

In January 2019, Angus Young Architecture Firm conducted a space needs analysis for the facility and provided estimated construction costs for both new construction and renovation based upon our facility needs. These





# Capital Project Request Form

figures were used to determine construction costs and space needs at the time. Throughout 2021, additional work was completed on the feasibility study and we tried to identify potential funding sources as well.

In March 2020, County Administration authorized for WIPFLI to develop a business plan for the project. The business plan clearly outlined all aspects of operations, including expected expenditures, revenue sources, staffing structures, and facility services. Their figures were all obtained through county interviews, comparable county budgets and staffing structures, Marathon County staffing costs, and various other reputable sources. The business plan was finalized November 6, 2020.

Over the past few months, we have been in discussions with Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic regarding forming a partnership and potential location for the facility. Both Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic expressed interest in forming a partnership and both have identified a potential location for the facility on their campus. We have identified the space at Aspirus Wausau Hospital Campus as best meeting our needs moving forward. We are currently in negotiations with Aspirus to determine the purchase price and yearly maintenance fee structure for a condo unit located at their Liberty Mutual Building; 1900 Westwood Drive, Wausau, WI 54401.

We are currently working to identify an architectural firm to work with for the space needs analysis. We have identified a few firms that had previous experience working on morgue facilities. Facility and Capital Management Department is involved and assisting in the initial discussions with all firms and will be involved with the project moving forward.

**This project request is for the facility design fees that includes the preliminary design/study, schematic design, design development fee, construction documents, bidding/negotiations, and condo purchase. An optional validation study is also included in the request if County Board and administration feel it is necessary. There is another CIP request submitted for the construction costs.**

## Alternatives Considered:

1. Continue to use the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department pathology services for all autopsies, and use the Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office as an alternative site.
2. Utilize alternative forensic pathology services, such as the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office; along with the potential to have to utilize out of state pathology service providers, such the Hennipen County Medical Examiner's Office.
3. Utilize local clinical pathology services.

## Reasons Alternatives Rejected:

1. Traveling to Madison and Fond du Lac is time consuming and results in an extensive amount of unproductive work hours for the Medical Examiner's Office and law enforcement. As part of the IDEAS Academy, we were able to map the time savings by having a local autopsy provider. Currently, at 55 autopsies per year, our office spends an additional 506 unproductive work hours traveling for autopsy; at 75 autopsies this is 717 unproductive work hours per year. Law enforcement also spends an additional 272 unproductive work hours per year at 55 autopsies and 371 unproductive work hours per year at 75 autopsies. This is a significant amount of time that could be used more efficiently with a local facility and pathologist.

We are also having increased issues scheduling autopsies, and it is only becoming more difficult. The added stress is taxing to our staff and the families we serve because we are delaying the investigation and releasing the decedent to loved ones. There are also concerns for the traveling to autopsy in inclement weather and on limited sleep, which puts the investigator and county at risk for a worker's comp injury. Lastly, there is an increased strain on all staff members having an investigator out of the office all day and forces other staff members to work when they were originally scheduled off.



# Capital Project Request Form

UW Madison will be short a forensic pathologist in June 2021, which will require one pathologist to manage a large case volume for at least six months until they can recruit another forensic pathologist. This will result in longer wait times to schedule the autopsy and an increased refusal rate for medical cases that greatly benefit the families we serve and our office feels is necessary to accurately determine the cause of death. We are also concerned that the pathologist will become overwhelmed while managing the case load independently, as UW Madison typically completes over 400 forensic autopsies per year.

Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office only has one pathologist that manages a large case load already. Last year he completed 350 autopsies, which is above the maximum for the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) standards by 100 cases. He will not be able to accept many of our cases, as he is typically booked out days in advance from Fond du Lac County's cases and from referral counties that he exclusively serves. He has agreed to be a back-up for our cases; however, he cannot take on our entire case volume.

With these new constraints, our staff is worried how we are able to complete autopsies and adequately serve the community. We will have prolonged wait times for the autopsy, which will result in a negative family experience, increased overtime with law enforcement on suspicious cases, and longer waits to receive the final autopsy results. Families will be forced to wait additional weeks to months for the completed death certification, which will delay in the family's closure and result in issues, such as receiving life insurance and dealing with the estate.

2. We are struggling to find an alternative autopsy provider. Currently, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office will be down a pathologist starting in June and is struggling to stay current with their case load. There is uncertainty they could assist with any of our cases and had informed us that they may refuse cases. Traveling to Milwaukee would result in an additional two hours travel time per autopsy; which will be over 110 additional unproductive hours per year at 55 autopsies and 150 unproductive hours per year at 75 autopsies.

If the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office is unable to assist, we would be forced to go to out of state autopsy providers, which will have an even longer commute and increased issues scheduling since we have never worked with the offices before. Many of these counties have high autopsy volumes, which can cause uncertainty in scheduling and long report turnaround timeframes. They may refuse our cases altogether based upon their current case volumes.

3. There are currently no local autopsy providers in Marathon County. Associates in Pathology, based out of Aspirus Wausau Hospital, has not conducted in-house autopsies for the last several years; all of Aspirus' medical autopsies are being performed at the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department.

Marshfield Medical Center changed their internal autopsy policy and they are no longer willing to perform outside autopsies for coroners/medical examiner offices or families; they will only conduct autopsies of patients who die in one of their hospitals. They are no longer an option for our office.

Lastly, Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire conducts a limited amount of non-criminal, straight forward medical autopsies; however, there is still over a five hour commute and they frequently deny coroner and medical examiner cases, making them a non-reliable provider.

## PROJECT PURPOSE(S) - Check all that apply and please explain below:

- This project is required to meet legal, mandated or contractual obligations?



# Capital Project Request Form

- This project will result in the protection of life and/or property and maintain/improve public health and safety?
- This project will result in reductions in expenditures (save money)?
- This project will result in a positive return for Marathon County?
- This project repairs/replaces an important existing physically deteriorated or functionally obsolete county facility, system, service or equipment?
- This project provides a new service, facility, system or equipment?
- This project would generate sufficient revenues to be essentially self-supporting in its operations?
- This project would make existing facilities or personnel more efficient or increase their use with minimal or no operating cost increase?
- This project will benefit and/or be utilized by other Marathon County departments?
- This project is consistent with an overall County plan, policy, or goal; and is necessary to complete a project that has begun or under construction?

## Please explain all checked boxes below:

Currently our office, along with all of the other counties in North Central Wisconsin have to travel to the southern part of the state for forensic pathology services, as there are no local autopsy providers for our region. This causes many obstacles for our office, in addition to all of the surrounding counties. There are increased delays when scheduling autopsy, which hinders our ability to release a loved one to a family sooner and may hinder the funeral home's ability to properly prepare the decedent for funeral services.

As part of the IDEAS Academy, we were able to map the time savings by having a local autopsy provider, please see above. In addition to the time saving, the cost savings that would come for having a local autopsy provider include the following. At conducting 55 autopsies per year, our office will save \$34,839.42 per year; with law enforcement saving \$18,294.44 per year. At 75 autopsies, our office will save \$47,503.73 per year; with law enforcement saving \$24,946.45 per year. This demonstrates only part of the increased efficiency and productivity that a local facility would accomplish. All surrounding counties will have similar time and cost savings, along with increased productivity and improved customer service to all the agencies we interact with.

According to our financial calculations, we will be operations neutral with additional revenue that will offset some aspects of our current budget and county tax levy. The project will expand our ability to generate additional revenue. We would be able to charge for our forensic pathology services, which includes forensic and medical autopsies, x-rays, organ extractions, expert testimony, etc. We would also be able to charge for livery service and facility rental fees to tissue procurement organizations. The newly generated revenue will off-set all of the new expenses and some of our current county tax levy, making our facility operations neutral and in the future, we will be able to reduce some of our county tax levy support. Please refer to the business plan for additional information on charges and revenue streams.





# Capital Project Request Form

The project will improve the quality of life for the general county population and the families we serve. By having a facility within Marathon County, we will be able to further consider the cultural practices of the families of our decedents, allowing them to have a better experience with the death process. Our office would have the ability to conduct more autopsies. This will lead to more accurate cause and manner of death determinations, and an improved chance of incidental medical findings that could be beneficial for family medical history. By having the expertise of local forensic pathologists, we would be able to enhance our local prevention measures for preventable and premature deaths and better identify hereditary conditions for survivors. We would also have the opportunity for the pathologist to conduct forensic consultations, which will assist in law enforcement medical-legal investigations, improving the legal outcome on violence related cases; such as cases of living victims of child abuse, domestic violence, assault, etc.

The families we serve would have the opportunity to meet directly with the forensic pathologist to discuss the investigative findings and obtain answers to their questions. We would also have an appropriate space for families to meet with our team at the facility that meets trauma informed care standards. Having a local autopsy provider will allow us to release a decedent to a loved one faster and improve the chances that the decedent will qualify for tissue donation. Lastly, we plan to create a strong partnership with the local tissue procurement organizations and allow for tissue recovery to occur at our facility. Many times, decedent wishes for donation cannot be granted due to logistical issues, which is upsetting to families and not an ideal outcome. Versiti and American Tissue Service Foundation has expressed interest in developing a regional tissue recovery program that would transport decedents to our facility to better streamline the tissue procurement process, similar to Versiti's existing set-up in Milwaukee County. This will improve tissue donation qualifications, which will improve the number of successful tissue donors in our region. Each tissue donor could impact over 50 people through their gift of life.

The project will offer numerous educational opportunities, as we hope to become a teaching facility. We plan to form a partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin where our forensic pathologists would have the opportunity to provide lectures to medical students, allow medical students the opportunity to observe autopsies, and allow for gross anatomy teachings within our facility. This will improve the medical student's training and the overall program outcomes. We would also partner with other healthcare systems and allow for training opportunities, autopsy observation, and medical autopsies. This could help with training and retention of medical professionals within our community. We hope to offer education/training to regional coroners/medical examiners, law enforcement agencies, and emergency medical service providers to improve the quality of death investigation and evidence preservation. Lastly, we would form partnerships with local colleges/universities and health care systems to allow individuals in the health care or criminal justice program to observe autopsies for educational purposes.

## PROJECT COST



# Capital Project Request Form

| Estimated Cost Components                                     |                  | Cost Allocation Per Fiscal Year  |   |
|---|------------------|--|---|
| Preliminary Design / Study                                    | \$15,000         | If project funds can be allocated over more than 1 year, please indicate the amount to be allocated for each year below: |   |
| Schematic Design  | \$73,260         |  |   |
| Design Development  | \$86,580         | Fiscal Year 2021   | Amount \$837,960  |
| Construction Documents  | \$106,560        | Fiscal Year 2022   | Amount \$0.00   |
| Bidding/Negotiations  | \$16,650         | Fiscal Year  | Amount \$0.00   |
| Condo Purchase  | \$500,000        | Fiscal Year  | Amount  |
| Optional: Program Validation                                  | \$40,000         | Fiscal Year  | Amount  |
| <b>Project Budget</b><br>(total of estimated cost components) | <b>\$837,960</b> | ←----- (sum of above should equal) -----!  |   |
| Is this project to be funded entirely with CIP funds?         |                  |  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Total CIP Funding Requested</b>                            |                  | <b>\$822,960 **includes optional Program Validation</b>  |   |

| If not funded entirely with CIP funds, list below any other (non-CIP) funding sources for this project   | Funding Amount       |
|--|----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are able to reconfigure a few things in our budget to cover the initial \$15,000 preliminary design/study fee</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul> | \$15,000<br>\$<br>\$ |

## ASSET LIFE, RECURRING COSTS AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| If an existing asset (facility or equipment) is being renovated or replaced, what is the age of the existing asset in years? | NA            |
| Expected service life (in years) of the existing asset, based on applicable industry standards?                              | NA            |
| Estimated Service Life of Improvement (in years)   | NA            |
| <b>Existing Estimated Costs</b>  |               |
| Annual Operating Costs   | \$0.00        |
| Repair / Maintenance Costs   | \$0.00        |
| Other Non-Capital Costs  | \$0.00        |
| <b>Existing Operating Costs</b>  | <b>\$0.00</b> |



# Capital Project Request Form

|  |                               |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Future Estimated Costs</b>                    | Annual Operating Costs        | \$0.00   |
|  | Annual Maintenance Costs      | \$0.00   |
|  | Other Non-Capital Costs       | \$0.00   |
|  | <b>Future Operating Costs</b> | <b>\$0.00</b>                                    |
| <b>Estimated Return on Investment (in years)</b> |                               | Please see business plan for financial forecasts |

**Explain any other annual benefits to implementing this project:**

There are additional benefits to Marathon County. We would be able to create well paying full-time and part-time positions by increasing the services the Medical Examiner’s Office provides; the total new county positions will range from 6-9 positions, all depending on the case volume. There would also be increased travel to Marathon County by coroners and medical examiners, along with law enforcement agencies for our forensic pathology services. While in town, many will stop for lunch, fuel, etc. We also plan to host educational offerings to related agencies, which again, will result in additional travel to Marathon County and would include hotel rental. There would be numerous decedents coming into Marathon County, which would increase the potential for funeral home trade calls.

Additionally, the local health care systems are also looking for a local autopsy provider to assist with their medical autopsies. Currently, Aspirus Wausau Hospital does not conduct any autopsies in house; they are all transported to the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department. This causes many issues in scheduling the autopsy, arranging for transportation to and from Aspirus Wausau Hospital to Madison, and there is an increased cost to having the autopsy completed out of town and a delay in releasing the decedent to their family. Marshfield Clinic had reduced the number of interal autopsies that they are currently completing. They are looking for a new regional autopsy provider to assist with their medical cases as well. It is imperative that both health care systems have a reliable autopsy provider, as they need to have medical autopsies conducted to maintain their hospital accreditation, determine an accurate cause and manner of death, improve health care standards/procedures, and lastly, provide answers to the families they serve.

**5 YEAR FORECASTED PROJECTS (if you want a project considered please put on this list)**







# Capital Project Request Form

**NOTES:**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Number</b> | <i>(Do NOT fill in – for use by F&amp;CM Department)</i> |
|-----------------------|--|

**COMPLETION DATE:**

*OR*

**CONTINUE NEXT YEAR:**

**DATE APPROVED BY HRFPC:**

**DATE APPROVED BY COUNTY BOARD:**



# Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Project Request Form

|   |   |              |                                   |
|---|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Date of Request</b>  | 05/14/2021  |              |                                   |
| <b>Department</b>   | Medical Examiner  |              |                                   |
| <b>Contact Person</b>   | Jessica Blahnik   |              |                                   |
| <b>Phone</b>  | 715-261-1199  | <b>Email</b> | Jessica.Blahnik@co.marathon.wi.us |
| <b>Project Title</b>  | Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center- Facility Design   |              |                                   |
| <b>Location</b>   | Anticipated: 1900 Westwood Drive, Wausau, WI 54401 (Aspirus Property Condominium)   |              |                                   |
| <b>Is the project new, a repair/replacement or a continuation of an existing project?</b> | New <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Repl <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br>(see below) |              |                                   |

**If continuation, fill in below:**

Planning 100% complete    Design/engineering 100% complete    Construction/installation 0% complete

|   |                              |  |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Has this request been approved by the appropriate Standing Committee or Board?</b> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|------------------------------|--|

|  |        |                                     |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |       |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| <b>Departmental Priority</b><br><small>(check a different priority for each project)</small> | (High) | 1                                   | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        | 8                        | 9                        | 10                       | (Low) |
|  |        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Description Summary / Scope</b> | <p>This project request is the second request of two parts for the expansion of the Medical Examiner's Office to create a Regional Forensic Science Center. This expansion would include hiring up to two forensic pathologists (and support staff) and building a morgue facility where we would be able to conduct local forensic autopsies, store decedents, and have an appropriate area to meet with families. Currently, the medical examiner staff and law enforcement need to travel for autopsy services, which causes many obstacles that includes scheduling the autopsy, finding a pathologist to conduct the autopsy, and traveling to the morgue despite weather, staffing and lack of sleep.</p> <p>Our current facility is not meeting our needs as well. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to purchase a cooler for our office, which has helped with the issue of decedent storage and maintaining chain of custody. Despite having the cooler, we still do not have a dedicated location to conduct body examinations, an appropriate area to meet with families, and a long term plan for the future. In the County's long-term future plans, there are plans to use the West Street land to expand Marathon Park, which would displace our office. There is currently no future plan or identified location where our office will move. As our case load continues to grow, the need for additional space and morgue facilities only becomes more evident.</p> <p>The goal of the Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center will be to offer high quality forensic pathology services (autopsies) and educational offerings to North Central Wisconsin and the Northern Michigan counties; not only a Marathon County asset. This is a brand new type of facility for the region that will offer new services that are currently not offered. All of the surrounding county coroner/medical examiner officers, law enforcement agencies, health care systems, and related agencies have expressed a need for these services and are hopeful for the approval of the project to have a local autopsy provider.</p> |
|------------------------------------|---|



# Capital Project Request Form

By having a local forensic pathologist, we will be able to provide a higher quality, more professional level of death investigation not only to Marathon County, but to the entire North Central region in Wisconsin, as well as Northern Michigan. We would be able to provide enhanced forensic and medical training to community partners (law enforcement, emergency medical providers), along with outside agencies (coroner/medical examiner offices, law enforcement agencies, healthcare workers), and colleges/universities (Medical College of Wisconsin and health care related programs). We could also improve upon our prevention measures by conducting more forensic autopsies and having the local expertise of the forensic pathologist.

**This particular CIP request is for the following services: construction, construction administration fee, furnishings, and equipment.**

Our office had worked with the Facility and Capital Management Department for the costing of all studies in this particular CIP request and the construction costs in the other CIP request. We were provided with a range for some of the studies, along with two separate construction quotes. We had decided to use the highest numbers for each area that reflects the current increased construction and material costs, and future projections. We had estimated our facility to be 10,000 square feet, which is larger than what we will probably need, however we have not completed an updated space needs analysis for the Aspirus location. Once that is completed and we have a rough idea of the facility square footage, we would be able to reduce the cost of all facility design documents and the construction costs. These numbers are on the high end and will most likely come in lower than what is being requested.

## **Relation to Other Projects (if applicable):**

We have been working on this project over the past few years and are finally to a place where we are ready to move forward.

In 2017, the County Board approved the creation of the Morgue Task Force to oversee the development of the business plan and studies related to the project. The Morgue Task Force reports directly to the County Board Public Safety Committee and is chaired by the former Public Safety Committee Chair, Craig McEwen. The committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, as needed, to advise the next steps needed for the project.

In 2018, Marathon County hired WIPFLI Consulting Firm to complete a feasibility study to evaluate the regional need for a forensic science center, and determine whether or not the facility would be able to become cash flow positive. After the initial feasibility study was completed, it was clear that the facility would be operations neutral and cash flow positive. The regional need for the facility was evident by the overwhelming support from the surrounding coroners and medical examiners, law enforcement agencies, hospital systems, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and numerous other community organizations.

In January 2019, Angus Young Architecture Firm conducted a space needs analysis for the facility and provided estimated construction costs for both new construction and renovation based upon our facility needs. These figures were used to determine construction costs and space needs at the time. Throughout 2021, additional work was completed on the feasibility study and we tried to identify potential funding sources as well.

In March 2020, County Administration authorized for WIPFLI to develop a business plan for the project. The business plan clearly outlined all aspects of operations, including expected expenditures, revenue sources, staffing structures, and facility services. Their figures were all obtained through county interviews, comparable





# Capital Project Request Form

county budgets and staffing structures, Marathon County staffing costs, and various other reputable sources. The business plan was finalized November 6, 2020.

Over the past few months, we have been in discussions with Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic regarding forming a partnership and potential location for the facility. Both Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic expressed interest in forming a partnership and both have identified a potential location for the facility on their campus. We have identified the space at Aspirus Wausau Hospital Campus as best meeting our needs moving forward. We are currently in negotiations with Aspirus to determine the purchase price and yearly maintenance fee structure for a condo unit located at their Liberty Mutual Building; 1900 Westwood Drive, Wausau, WI 54401.

We are currently working to identify an architectural firm to work with for the space needs analysis. We have identified a few firms that had previous experience working on morgue facilities. Facility and Capital Management Department is involved and assisting in the initial discussions with all firms and will be involved with the project moving forward. After we are able to complete the preliminary studies and final design and engineering, we will have a good understanding of the construction costs and plan to update the figures in the CIP request. We wanted this request to be submitted early to ensure there are no delays in the project if everything is approved by County Board. We hope to have all of the studies and architectural designs completed in 2021 and start construction in 2022.

**This project request is for the construction, construction administration fee, furnishings, and equipment. There is another CIP request submitted for the preliminary design/study, schematic design, design development fee, construction documents, bidding/negotiations, and condo purchase.**

## Alternatives Considered:

1. Continue to use the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department pathology services for all autopsies, and use the Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office as an alternative site.
2. Utilize alternative forensic pathology services, such as the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office; along with the potential to have to utilize out of state pathology service providers, such the Hennipen County Medical Examiner's Office.
3. Utilize local clinical pathology services.

## Reasons Alternatives Rejected:

1. Traveling to Madison and Fond du Lac is time consuming and results in an extensive amount of unproductive work hours for the Medical Examiner's Office and law enforcement. As part of the IDEAS Academy, we were able to map the time savings by having a local autopsy provider. Currently, at 55 autopsies per year, our office spends an additional 506 unproductive work hours traveling for autopsy; at 75 autopsies this is 717 unproductive work hours per year. Law enforcement also spends an additional 272 unproductive work hours per year at 55 autopsies and 371 unproductive work hours per year at 75 autopsies. This is a significant amount of time that could be used more efficiently with a local facility and pathologist.

We are also having increased issues scheduling autopsies, and it is only becoming more difficult. The added stress is taxing to our staff and the families we serve because we are delaying the investigation and releasing the decedent to loved ones. There are also concerns for the traveling to autopsy in inclement weather and on limited sleep, which puts the investigator and county at risk for a worker's comp injury. Lastly, there is an increased strain on all staff members having an investigator out of the office all day and forces other staff members to work when they were originally scheduled off.

UW Madison will be short a forensic pathologist in June 2021, which will require one pathologist to manage a large case volume for at least six months until they can recruit another forensic pathologist. This will result in



# Capital Project Request Form

longer wait times to schedule the autopsy and an increased refusal rate for medical cases that greatly benefit the families we serve and our office feels is necessary to accurately determine the cause of death. We are also concerned that the pathologist will become overwhelmed while managing the case load independently, as UW Madison typically completes over 400 forensic autopsies per year.

Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office only has one pathologist that manages a large case load already. Last year he completed 350 autopsies, which is above the maximum for the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) standards by 100 cases. He will not be able to accept many of our cases, as he is typically booked out days in advance from Fond du Lac County's cases and from referral counties that he exclusively serves. He has agreed to be a back-up for our cases; however, he cannot take on our entire case volume.

With these new constraints, our staff is worried how we are able to complete autopsies and adequately serve the community. We will have prolonged wait times for the autopsy, which will result in a negative family experience, increased overtime with law enforcement on suspicious cases, and longer waits to receive the final autopsy results. Families will be forced to wait additional weeks to months for the completed death certification, which will delay in the family's closure and result in issues, such as receiving life insurance and dealing with the estate.

2. We are struggling to find an alternative autopsy provider. Currently, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office will be down a pathologist starting in June and is struggling to stay current with their case load. There is uncertainty they could assist with any of our cases and had informed us that they may refuse cases. Traveling to Milwaukee would result in an additional two hours travel time per autopsy; which will be over 110 additional unproductive hours per year at 55 autopsies and 150 unproductive hours per year at 75 autopsies.

If the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office is unable to assist, we would be forced to go to out of state autopsy providers, which will have an even longer commute and increased issues scheduling since we have never worked with the offices before. Many of these counties have high autopsy volumes, which can cause uncertainty in scheduling and long report turnaround timeframes. They may refuse our cases altogether based upon their current case volumes.

3. There are currently no local autopsy providers in Marathon County. Associates in Pathology, based out of Aspirus Wausau Hospital, has not conducted in-house autopsies for the last several years; all of Aspirus' medical autopsies are being performed at the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department.

Marshfield Medical Center changed their internal autopsy policy and they are no longer willing to perform outside autopsies for coroners/medical examiner offices or families; they will only conduct autopsies of patients who die in one of their hospitals. They are no longer an option for our office.

Lastly, Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire conducts a limited amount of non-criminal, straight forward medical autopsies; however, there is still over a five hour commute and they frequently deny coroner and medical examiner cases, making them a non-reliable provider.

## PROJECT PURPOSE(S) - Check all that apply and please explain below:

- This project is required to meet legal, mandated or contractual obligations?
- This project will result in the protection of life and/or property and maintain/improve public health and safety?



# Capital Project Request Form

- This project will result in reductions in expenditures (save money)?
- This project will result in a positive return for Marathon County?
- This project repairs/replaces an important existing physically deteriorated or functionally obsolete county facility, system, service or equipment?
- This project provides a new service, facility, system or equipment?
- This project would generate sufficient revenues to be essentially self-supporting in its operations?
- This project would make existing facilities or personnel more efficient or increase their use with minimal or no operating cost increase?
- This project will benefit and/or be utilized by other Marathon County departments?
- This project is consistent with an overall County plan, policy, or goal; and is necessary to complete a project that has begun or under construction?

## Please explain all checked boxes below:

Currently our office, along with all of the other counties in North Central Wisconsin have to travel to the southern part of the state for forensic pathology services, as there are no local autopsy providers for our region. This causes many obstacles for our office, in addition to all of the surrounding counties. There are increased delays when scheduling autopsy, which hinders our ability to release a loved one to a family sooner and may hinder the funeral home's ability to properly prepare the decedent for funeral services.

As part of the IDEAS Academy, we were able to map the time savings by having a local autopsy provider, please see above. In addition to the time saving, the cost savings that would come for having a local autopsy provider include the following. At conducting 55 autopsies per year, our office will save \$34,839.42 per year; with law enforcement saving \$18,294.44 per year. At 75 autopsies, our office will save \$47,503.73 per year; with law enforcement saving \$24,946.45 per year. This demonstrates only part of the increased efficiency and productivity that a local facility would accomplish. All surrounding counties will have similar time and cost savings, along with increased productivity and improved customer service to all the agencies we interact with.

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# Capital Project Request Form

death determinations, and an improved chance of incidental medical findings that could be beneficial for family medical history. By having the expertise of local forensic pathologists, we would be able to enhance our local prevention measures for preventable and premature deaths and better identify hereditary conditions for survivors. We would also have the opportunity for the pathologist to conduct forensic consultations, which will assist in law enforcement medical-legal investigations, improving the legal outcome on violence related cases; such as cases of living victims of child abuse, domestic violence, assault, etc.

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The project will offer numerous educational opportunities, as we hope to become a teaching facility. We plan to form a partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin where our forensic pathologists would have the opportunity to provide lectures to medical students, allow medical students the opportunity to observe autopsies, and allow for gross anatomy teachings within our facility. This will improve the medical student's training and the overall program outcomes. We would also partner with other healthcare systems and allow for training opportunities, autopsy observation, and medical autopsies. This could help with training and retention of medical professionals within our community. We hope to offer education/training to regional coroners/medical examiners, law enforcement agencies, and emergency medical service providers to improve the quality of death investigation and evidence preservation. Lastly, we would form partnerships with local colleges/universities and health care systems to allow individuals in the health care or criminal justice program to observe autopsies for educational purposes.

## PROJECT COST

| Estimated Cost Components                                     |                    | Cost Allocation Per Fiscal Year  |                             |
|---|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Construction, furnishings and equipment                       | \$3,700,000        | If project funds can be allocated over more than 1 year, please indicate the amount to be allocated for each year below: |                             |
| Construction Administration Fee                               | \$59,940           |  |                             |
|   |                    | Fiscal Year 2021   | Amount \$0                  |
|   |                    | Fiscal Year 2022   | Amount \$3,759,940          |
| <b>Project Budget</b><br>(total of estimated cost components) | <b>\$3,759,940</b> | ←----- (sum of above should equal) -----!  |                             |
| <b>Is this project to be funded entirely with CIP funds?</b>  |                    | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Total CIP Funding Requested</b>                            | <b>\$3,759,940</b> |  |                             |





# Capital Project Request Form

| If not funded entirely with CIP funds, list below any other (non-CIP) funding sources for this project    | Funding Amount |
|---|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are still exploring other funding sources.</li> <li></li> </ul> | \$TBD          |
|   | \$             |

## ASSET LIFE, RECURRING COSTS AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

|  |                                 |  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| If an existing asset (facility or equipment) is being renovated or replaced, what is the age of the existing asset in years? |                                 | NA   |
| Expected service life (in years) of the existing asset, based on applicable industry standards?                              |                                 | NA   |
| Estimated Service Life of Improvement (in years)   |                                 | NA   |
| <b>Existing Estimated Costs</b>  | Annual Operating Costs          | \$0.00   |
|  | Repair / Maintenance Costs      | \$0.00   |
|  | Other Non-Capital Costs         | \$0.00   |
|  | <b>Existing Operating Costs</b> | \$0.00   |
| <b>Future Estimated Costs</b>  | Annual Operating Costs          | \$0.00   |
|  | Annual Maintenance Costs        | \$0.00   |
|  | Other Non-Capital Costs         | \$0.00   |
|  | <b>Future Operating Costs</b>   | <b>\$0.00</b>                                    |
| Estimated Return on Investment (in years)  |                                 | Please see business plan for financial forecasts |

## Explain any other annual benefits to implementing this project:

There are additional benefits to Marathon County. We would be able to create well paying full-time and part-time positions by increasing the services the Medical Examiner's Office provides; the total new county positions will range from 6-9 positions, all depending on the case volume. There would also be increased travel to Marathon County by coroners and medical examiners, along with law enforcement agencies for our forensic pathology services. While in town, many will stop for lunch, fuel, etc. We also plan to host educational offerings to related agencies, which again, will result in additional travel to Marathon County and would include hotel rental. There would be numerous decedents coming into Marathon County, which would increase the potential for funeral home trade calls.

Additionally, the local health care systems are also looking for a local autopsy provider to assist with their medical autopsies. Currently, Aspirus Wausau Hospital does not conduct any autopsies in house; they are all transported to the University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department. This causes many issues in scheduling the autopsy, arranging for transportation to and from Aspirus Wausau Hospital to Madison, and there is an increased cost to having the autopsy completed out of town and a delay in releasing the decedent to their family. Marshfield Clinic had reduced the number of interal autopsies that they are currently completing. They are looking for a new regional autopsy provider to assist with their medical cases as well. It





# Capital Project Request Form

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***Do NOT fill out page below – for use by FCM Department***

- NO CIP Funds requested – Informational Only       Bring request back to CIPC next year  
 Outlay (small caps) < \$30,000 or Use Budget       CIP Funds – move forward to HRFPC >\$30,000

**NOTES:**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Number</b> | <i>(Do NOT fill in – for use by F&amp;CM Department)</i> |
|-----------------------|--|

**COMPLETION DATE:**

*OR*

**CONTINUE NEXT YEAR:**

**DATE APPROVED BY HRFPC:**



# Capital Project Request Form

**DATE APPROVED BY COUNTY BOARD:**





**STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:  
Marathon County Regional Forensic  
Science Center**

November 6, 2020

# Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center

## Introduction

The Marathon County Medical Examiner's Office ("Medical Examiner's Office") is charged with investigating and determining the cause, circumstances, and manner in each case of sudden, unexpected, or unusual deaths. The Medical Examiner's Office is also responsible for determining final disposition for all remains, mass fatality preparedness, death prevention initiatives (highway safety, suicide, infant/child, overdose), community awareness and education (emergency medical services, law enforcement, drug prevention, public safety, high school and college students), close follow-up with affected families, and collaboration with other agencies involved in death investigations.

Wisconsin Statute (section 979.01) requires that any person having knowledge of an unexplained, unusual, or suspicious death shall report such death to the medical examiner for investigation. These deaths may include homicide, suicide, accidents whether the injury is or is not the primary cause of death, death without a physician in attendance, or death in which the attending physician refuses to sign the death certificate. Investigations are conducted by the medical examiner's office for certifying the cause and manner of death. Often, an autopsy is needed to meet the state requirements.

Furthermore, if a death appears to be a result of unlawful means, it is reported to the District Attorney pursuant to §979.04 (2), as well as the appropriate local law enforcement agency, for further investigation and possible criminal prosecution. Additional investigative responsibilities described in §979.10 direct the medical examiner to view the decedents and make an investigation into the cause and manner of all deaths in which the next of kin selected cremation for disposition.

Overall, the quality and capacity of the medical examiner system is closely linked with the quality of the other systems it interacts with, namely the public health system, the public safety system, and the judicial system. Thorough, high-quality death investigations by well-trained personnel ensure the cause and manner of death are correctly identified, recorded, and reported. Standardized reporting of deaths and death-related data allows for more accurate identification of risk factors, health concerns, and mortality trends across the state. Accurate data on cases of infant mortality, suicides, communicable and chronic diseases, fatal injuries (both intentional and unintentional), and drug-related deaths or overdoses can be used to inform public health efforts and vie for or justify the use of funds and activities aimed at prevention and health promotion in these areas. The resulting data could also be used to inform judicial proceedings that can impact the overall safety of the community.

Currently, Marathon County must outsource its autopsy cases to providers located in southern Wisconsin. This arrangement presents some challenges, including but not limited to delayed autopsies, delayed results, travel for law enforcement and death investigators, transportation of the decedent, lack of refrigeration/storage space, and a poor experience for family members. The counties of central and northern Wisconsin face similar challenges.

## **Project Description**

The creation of the Marathon County Regional Forensic Science Center (“Forensic Science Center”), located in Wausau, will focus on enhancing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of death investigations in Marathon County and central and northern Wisconsin.

Vision: To provide enhanced forensic pathology services for the citizens of Marathon County and the central and northern Wisconsin regional counties. The Medical Examiner’s Office will operate and function as a highly respected regional forensic science center.

Mission: To provide high-quality medico-legal death investigations and forensic science center services to the citizens of Marathon County, along with consultation, forensic pathology, and educational opportunities to central and northern Wisconsin regional counties.

The Forensic Science Center will improve the quality of the death investigation process not only for Marathon County but also for the central and northern Wisconsin regional counties. In addition to providing forensic pathology services, the Forensic Science Center will focus on education. This will be accomplished by offering training and continuing education opportunities to coroner and medical examiners, law enforcement, district attorney offices, emergency medical service providers, and other related agencies/organizations. The pathologists and staff will also be available for consultations, on an as-needed basis, to offer guidance on standards and best practices.

After establishing successful operations, the Forensic Science Center will strive to become accredited through the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and the College of American Pathologists (CAP). The accreditation process is known to be challenging; however, it clearly outlines best practice guidelines and ensures internal operations are meeting established industry standards. All of the internal policies and procedures that will be created for the facility will be based on the standards set forth by NAME and CAP.

## **Services**

Due to Marathon County being centrally located in the state and ease of access via Interstate 39, Highway 51, and Highway 29, there is a unique opportunity to improve forensic pathology services for the central and northern Wisconsin regions. Currently, all forensic pathology providers are located in southern and southeastern Wisconsin, and these providers have an overwhelming caseload.

Regional challenges such as (1) delayed autopsies and reporting, (2) lengthy transportation and the related cost, (3) the travel burden on law enforcement, (4) lack of refrigeration, (5) unpreparedness for mass casualties, and (6) prosecutorial delays and poor family experience can all be improved with achieving the vision of the Forensic Science Center.

The Forensic Science Center will offer the following services:

- Forensic autopsies
- Medical autopsies
- Livery service
- Decedent refrigerated storage
- Space for tissue procurement
- Expert forensic testimony
- Forensic consultation
- Education
- Regional mass fatality preparedness
- Assistance with medical research

### **Market Assessment**

Assumptions for the future utilization of the Forensic Science Center were based on an analysis of the following factors that may affect autopsy volume:

- Location of other forensic autopsy providers
- Surveys of various counties
- Surveys of local hospitals and health systems
- Demographics and other societal factors
- The ability to develop quality operations and services
- Projected autopsy needs for the state

### **Forensic Autopsy Providers**

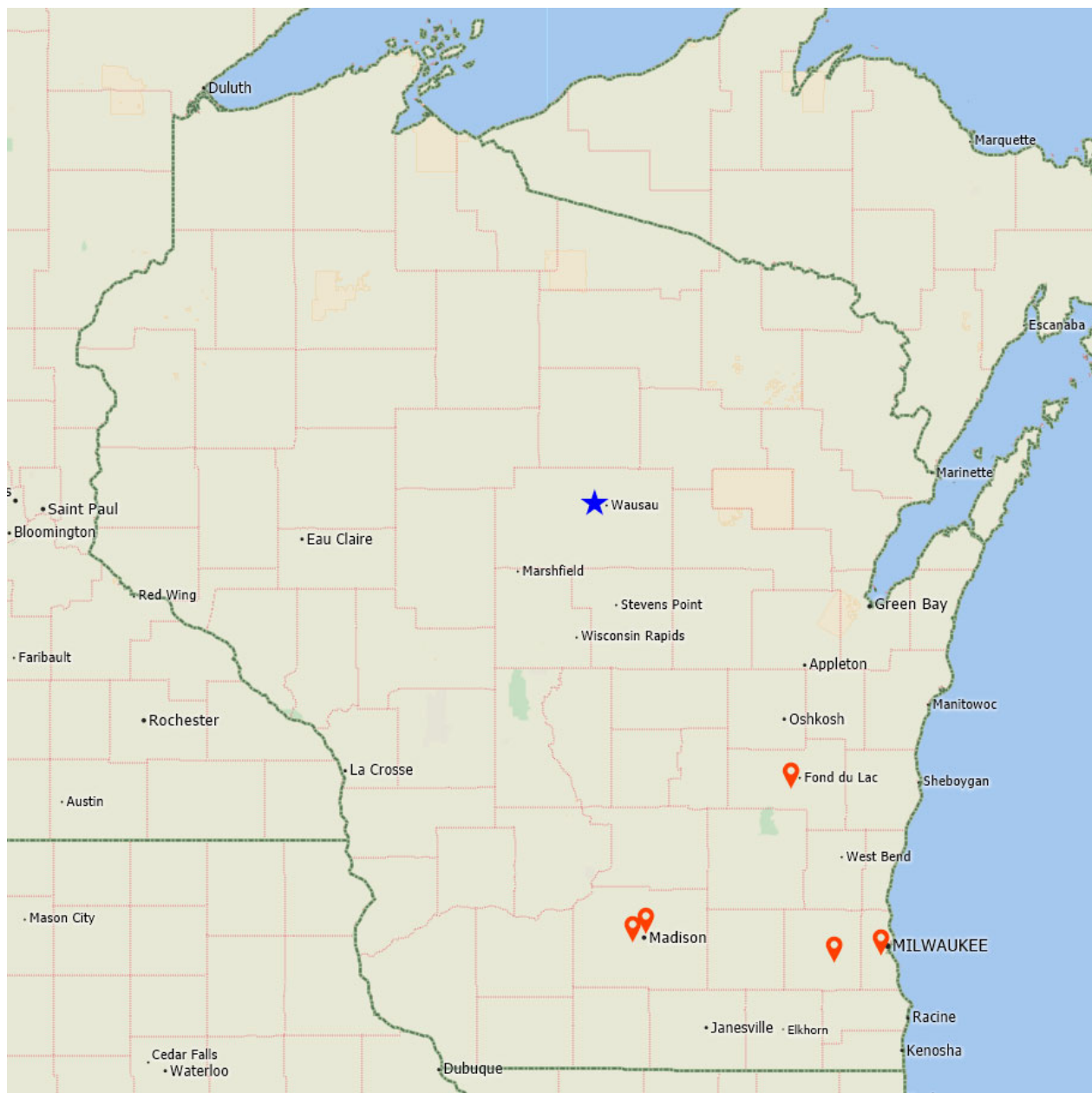
There are currently five providers of forensic autopsy services in Wisconsin:

- Dane County
- Fond du Lac County
- Milwaukee County
- Waukesha County (does not serve other counties)
- University of Wisconsin-Madison

Brown County is currently constructing a new medical examiner facility that is planned to be completed sometime in 2021. Publicly available records indicate it is planned to serve the forensic pathology needs of Brown County, Door County, and Oconto County and will be operated by the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office. At this time, it is unclear if they plan to serve other surrounding counties.



Although four of the five providers are open to serve the state as a whole, it is important to note they are all located in southern and southeastern Wisconsin. The following map depicts the location of the forensic autopsy providers:



## County Surveys

To obtain an understanding of the interest in utilizing Marathon County for autopsy services and the related potential caseload, 35 counties in northern and central Wisconsin were surveyed. Survey questions included the following:

- Would you have interest in utilizing Marathon County for autopsy services?
- How many forensic autopsies have you completed per year over the last three years?
- In the future, do you expect autopsy volume to remain similar to past experience, or do you have any indicators or foresee any reason that volume would increase/decrease?
- Would you have any interest in utilizing a Marathon County livery service?
- Do you foresee any barriers that would prevent you from utilizing Marathon County's services?

Based on the survey responses, an estimate for three caseload volume scenarios was developed and includes low volume, mid volume, and high volume. Volumes for scenarios were based on factors including (1) historic autopsy volume, (2) any anticipated changes in autopsy volume, (3) the range of the historic volume levels, (4) whether Marathon County would be considered as a primary or secondary provider, and (5) the interest level of the responding county (i.e., a definite interest or an interest level with certain contingencies such as pricing or the ability to attract a quality pathologist). The three caseload scenarios are presented in a financial model found on page 15 of the business plan.

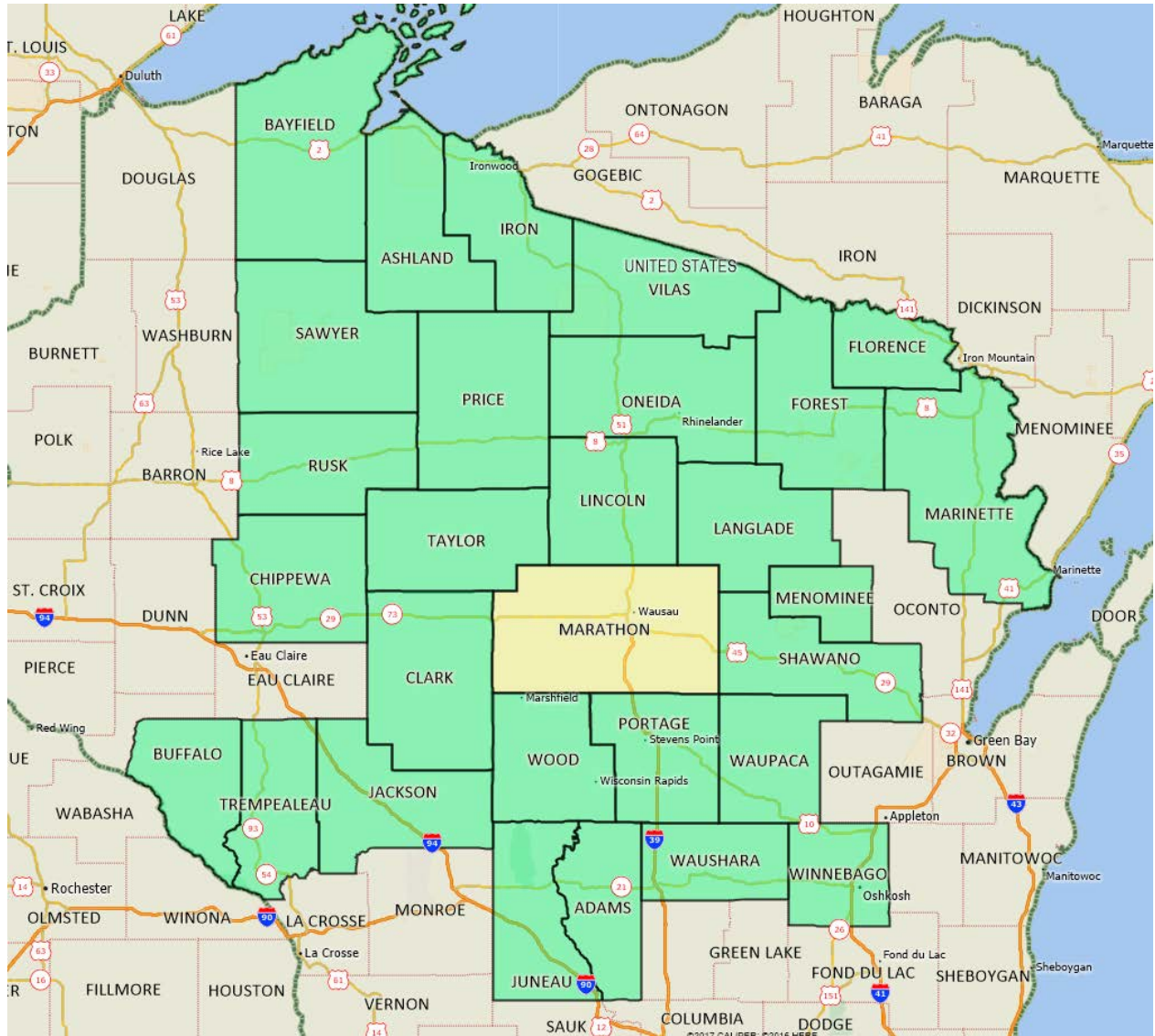
Counties were surveyed to assess volume in 2019, 2018, and 2017, and a portion of these counties were also surveyed in 2015 and 2014. Trends in the responses were assessed, and a majority of respondents reported consistent volumes. A select number of counties (five) that had variations in the reported volumes were resurveyed in 2020. The following table summarizes the estimated volume levels based on the assessment of survey responses:

| <b>Wisconsin County Surveys <sup>(1)</sup></b>     |            |            |             |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|
|  | <b>Low</b> | <b>Mid</b> | <b>High</b> |
| <b>Number of Forensic Autopsies <sup>(2)</sup></b> | <b>133</b> | <b>235</b> | <b>317</b>  |

(1) 28 of the 35 counties surveyed indicated a level of interest in utilizing Marathon County for services.

(2) Marathon County autopsy volume is not included.

The following map depicts the counties that indicated they have a level of interest in utilizing Marathon County for services:



### Upper Peninsula of Michigan

Certain counties located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan were also contacted as part of the survey process, including Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Mackinac, Marquette, and Ontonagon. Many of these counties reported forensic autopsy access issues similar to the feedback provided by Wisconsin counties. There was also reported interest in utilizing Marathon County as a pathology provider.

Due to staffing changes within some of the surveyed medical examiner’s offices, there was some inconsistency in reported interest and volume levels over the survey period, and therefore volume from Michigan was not included in the aforementioned financial model. These results are disclosed for informational purposes regarding the opportunity to increase volumes by serving areas outside the identified Wisconsin counties.

Local Health System Surveys

To obtain an understanding of the interest in utilizing Marathon County for medical autopsy services and the relating potential caseload, the following health systems were surveyed:

- Aspirus
- Ascension
- Marshfield Clinic

Each health system expressed interest in utilizing the Forensic Science Center to some extent. The following table summarizes the estimated volume levels based on the assessment of survey responses:

| <b>Hospital/Health System Surveys</b> |            |            |             |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
|                                       | <b>Low</b> | <b>Mid</b> | <b>High</b> |
| Number of Medical Autopsies           | 20         | 27         | 48          |

Demand for Services

The demand for forensic pathology services fluctuates with the death rate, the number of homicides and other unnatural events, changes in population size and makeup, and the number of unidentified bodies. While some projections can be made in general based on the average number of cases in the previous years, the exact number and types of deaths cannot be predicted with certainty.

The following table summarizes historic death and autopsy trends for the state:

| <b>Wisconsin Historic Autopsy and Death Data</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             | <b>Percent Change</b>    |                     |                     |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|  | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>Compounded Annual</b> | <b>2013 to 2018</b> | <b>2009 to 2018</b> |
| Number of:                                       |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |                          |                     |                     |
| Autopsies  | 3,378       | 3,315       | 3,408       | 3,468       | 3,611       | 3,791       | 3,906       | 4,218       | 4,301       | 4,241       | 2.55%                    | 17.45%              | 25.55%              |
| Deaths   | 45,598      | 47,212      | 48,101      | 48,225      | 49,917      | 50,137      | 51,251      | 51,788      | 52,679      | 53,680      | 1.77%                    | 7.54%               | 17.72%              |
| Autopsies as a                                   |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |                          |                     |                     |
| Percent of Deaths                                | 7.41%       | 7.02%       | 7.09%       | 7.19%       | 7.23%       | 7.56%       | 7.62%       | 8.14%       | 8.16%       | 7.90%       | 0.66%                    | 9.21%               | 6.65%               |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services



Based on the state’s death and autopsy trends and population projections, the following table estimates the future autopsy needs of the state:

| <b>Wisconsin Autopsy Projections</b>             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | <b>2020</b> | <b>2025</b> |
| Deaths as a Percent of Population <sup>(1)</sup> | 0.92%       | 0.94%       |
| Total Population <sup>(2)</sup>                  | 5,905,751   | 6,033,804   |
| Projected Deaths                                 | 54,417      | 56,582      |
| Autopsies as a Percent of Deaths <sup>(1)</sup>  | 8.12%       | 8.18%       |
| Projected Autopsies                              | 4,420       | 4,626       |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services and ESRI

(1) Based on historic data and trends

(2) Wisconsin total population estimated for 2020 and projected for 2025

**Strategy**

Partnerships are needed to make a regional morgue work operationally and financially. The Forensic Science Center will continue to build working relationships with the local health systems to provide not only autopsy services, but also educational opportunities. During preliminary partnership discussions with the health systems, it was identified that many health systems that previously provided autopsy services (for internal autopsies and for coroner/medical examiner offices) are no longer providing those services. Furthermore, it was discovered that many physicians were unaware of their ability to order autopsies after receiving family consent. Due to the lack of understanding, additional information has been provided to the health systems, clarifying how to order an autopsy and the benefits autopsies can provide to their physicians and patient care.

The Forensic Science Center will partner with Versiti and the American Tissue Services Foundation (ATSF) to increase the number of successful tissue donors and provide a consistent local place for the tissue procurement process to take place. This will not only benefit the recipient of the donated tissue but also provide the family grief support services and the knowledge that their loved one had a significant impact on another person’s and family’s life.

Another potential for partnership was identified with the Medical College of Wisconsin. The Forensic Science Center would create a partnership to provide educational opportunities to the medical students. The educational services would include the ability to observe autopsies and participate in gross anatomy lab. The forensic pathologist would also be able to provide in-person lectures and case studies. These opportunities have been identified as a current need to enhance medical student training.

## County Surveys

During the county survey process, certain questions were asked to assist with completing the financial projection. Questions included the following:

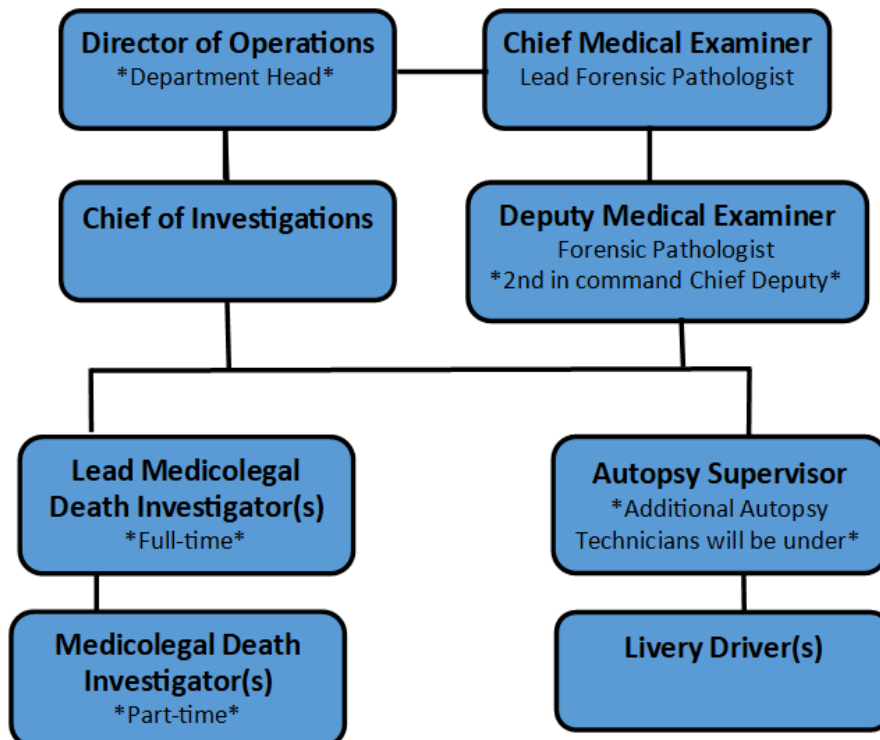
- What has been your annual “all in” cost relating to autopsies?
- What portion of the cost is related to transportation?
- Do you have a preference how you are charged for autopsy services—a la carte or all-inclusive?

The Forensic Science Center incorporated this feedback when setting the rate structure. Another theme from the county surveys was that the quality of the service provided will be a significant driver of volume. This feedback was considered with the salary that was established for the head pathologist and the desire to attract a highly capable provider. Overall, the Forensic Science Center will focus on becoming a highly respected and valuable regional provider.

## **Management and Organization**

The Medical Examiner’s Office is a department within Marathon County government. The medical examiner is appointed by the administrator for Marathon County and works in collaboration with trained medicolegal death investigators, forensic pathologist(s), autopsy support staff, and the director of operations to provide postmortem examinations, comprehensive death investigations, and educational offerings and to identify prevention measures to reduce the number of premature deaths. Through a partnership with the North Central Wisconsin Hospital Emergency Response Coalition, the Medical Examiner’s Office has been identified as a regional asset for mass fatality preparedness.

The following summarizes the planned organizational chart for the Forensic Science Center:



The Marathon County Finance Department and County Treasurer will be responsible for assisting in the billing process for services provided and processing the invoices for expenses incurred. The Employee Resources Department will be tasked with assisting in the recruitment efforts for new employees. There will need to be a discussion between the Forensic Science Center and related departments to determine cost-effective solutions such as position sharing for certain administrative tasks.

### **Community and Regional Impact**

In addition to improving the death investigation process, the Forensic Science Center will provide additional local and regional benefits.

#### Marathon County Impact

Marathon County is known for offering enhanced professional services to its residents. Expanding the Medical Examiner's Office to include the Forensic Science Center will offer another premier service to the citizens of Marathon County and help it to be considered a regional asset. Benefits the Forensic Science Center will offer to local government and residents include the following:

- Improved prevention initiatives
- Increased accuracy of death investigations due to the ability to conduct more autopsies
- Ability for interested agencies to attend autopsies (law enforcement/district attorney's office)
- Educational opportunities and training
- Easier direct access to the forensic pathologists for related agencies
- Decreased dependence on county tax levy
- Significant reduction in travel for staff and law enforcement

The local Forensic Science Center will also improve public safety within the community. When there are suspicious death scenes, the forensic pathologist will have the opportunity to respond directly to the death scene and witness firsthand the investigator's findings. In situations when the victim is still alive, the forensic pathologist expertise in trauma and injury identification will be available for consultations to law enforcement agencies and healthcare providers. This additional resource will be ideal in situations of child or elder abuse, domestic violence, assaults, gunshot wounds, or other types of violence. There will also be education and training opportunities for law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and others involved in investigations on forensic pathology, injury identification, and investigative techniques.

There will also be improved efficiency and productivity within the Medical Examiner's Office as well as local law enforcement agencies. The Forensic Science Center will significantly reduce travel when there is the need for forensic pathology services. Law enforcement agencies attend roughly 60% of all of the autopsies conducted and must travel with the Medical Examiner's Office to Madison, Wisconsin, for the autopsies. The lead detective assigned to the investigation will also be able to attend autopsies, which will result in improved case outcomes. For deaths that require the scene to be held by law enforcement until the autopsy is completed, having a local forensic pathologist will result in the release of the death scene in a more timely matter which will also free up law enforcement staff for other duties.

There are additional unproductive time constraints in regard to not having a local facility. Based on a process improvement analysis, 506 unproductive hours per year will be eliminated from the Medical Examiner's Office, assuming 55 autopsies are conducted. This equates to annual savings of approximately \$23,000 in unproductive wages. Another \$13,000 in expenses relating to travel and outsourcing will be eliminated.

Efficiencies will also be gained for local law enforcement agencies relating to eliminated wages for unproductive travel time and travel expenses, which are estimated to total approximately \$18,000 of annual savings. Based on the process improvement analysis, assuming 55 autopsies are conducted, annual savings are estimated to total \$53,000.

### Regional Impact

The Forensic Science Center will be an asset to the central and northern Wisconsin regional counties by providing the following:

- Improved regional emergency/mass fatality preparedness
- Improved working relationships with other counties
- Training, education, and support
- Easier access to forensic pathology services and consultations
- Ability to increase the number of autopsies conducted
- Increased opportunity for tissue donation
- Increased forensic consultation opportunities for law enforcement agencies
- Enhanced educational opportunities and the ability to view autopsies
- Ability to assist in medical research
- Medical autopsy provider to health systems throughout the region
- Enhanced preventative services

### Economic Impact

The Forensic Science Center will have a positive effect on the local economy. As a regional resource, there will be increased travel to the Wausau area, which will increase business for gas stations, restaurants, and hotels. Funeral homes will also see an increase in business due to more decedents coming into Marathon County for pathology services and tissue donation. Through collaboration with interested partners, the Forensic Science Center will provide teaching services for local universities, colleges, and healthcare institutions. Providing enhanced educational opportunities will also improve the likelihood of retaining highly skilled professionals in the region. Lastly, the Forensic Science Center will create new jobs.

## Family Impact

One of the most significant benefits the Forensic Science Center will offer is the improved service and experience for families of the decedents. Benefits include the following:

- Improved ability to honor religious and cultural requests/practices
- Dedicated family room (viewing/meeting area) that meets trauma-informed care standards
- Quicker release of the decedent to the funeral home for final disposition
- Ability to meet with the forensic pathologist to discuss case results
- Enhanced qualifications for tissue donation
- Greater opportunity to identify incidental findings that relate to family medical history (hereditary conditions)
- An option for families to have private autopsies conducted (cases that do not qualify for forensic)

## **Pandemics**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, regional counties and healthcare organizations turned to the Medical Examiner's Office for assistance and advice on best-practice standards. The Medical Examiner's Office was identified as a key community stakeholder for fatality management and response. As part of this responsibility, the Medical Examiner's Office, with the assistance of Emergency Management, secured a refrigerated trailer that was donated by a local business and purchased a stationary walk-in refrigerator with a racking system. The decedent storage capacity allowed Marathon County to support only the local and immediate surrounding counties for a decedent surge. In the event the pandemic were to escalate or be combined with any other surge in deaths, the Medical Examiner's Office would not be able to handle the increased deaths with the current decedent storage option.

In partnership with the National Guard and the Hospital Emergency Response Coalition, a Marathon County-owned refrigerated storage facility has been identified as a state-wide asset for a mass surge of deaths related to the pandemic. The National Guard has been charged with running the operations in the event the facility is opened, with the Medical Examiner's Office assisting. This Marathon County asset will not be available long term; however, the creation of the Forensic Science Center will include a dedicated multi-decedent storage space that will increase the ability to manage mass fatalities in the region.



## Other Key Factors

### Demographics

Population growth will likely be a factor in the increased need for autopsy services. The following table summarizes the long-term population projections for Marathon County:

| <b>Long-Range Population Trends</b> |                |                |                |                |                |             |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                                     | <b>2015</b>    | <b>2020</b>    | <b>2025</b>    | <b>2030</b>    | <b>2035</b>    | <b>2040</b> |
| Total Population                    | 136,510        | 142,200        | 146,595        | 150,130        | 152,120        | 152,790     |
| Population by age:                  |                |                |                |                |                |             |
| 20-64                               | 79,010         | 79,170         | 77,970         | 77,280         | 77,260         | 77,850      |
| 65+                                 | 21,380         | 25,350         | 29,745         | 33,650         | 35,800         | 36,470      |
| 75+                                 | 9,510          | 10,590         | 12,705         | 15,660         | 18,630         | 20,890      |
| 85+                                 | 3,160          | 3,220          | 3,485          | 4,110          | 5,200          | 6,590       |
| <b>% Change Trends by Age Group</b> |                |                |                |                |                |             |
|                                     | <b>'15-'20</b> | <b>'20-'25</b> | <b>'25-'30</b> | <b>'30-'35</b> | <b>'35-'40</b> |             |
| Total Population                    |                | 4.2%           | 3.1%           | 2.4%           | 1.3%           | 0.4%        |
| Population by age:                  |                |                |                |                |                |             |
| 20-64                               | -              | 0.2%           | -1.5%          | -0.9%          | 0.0%           | 0.8%        |
| 65+                                 | -              | 18.6%          | 17.3%          | 13.1%          | 6.4%           | 1.9%        |
| 75+                                 | -              | 11.4%          | 20.0%          | 23.3%          | 19.0%          | 12.1%       |
| 85+                                 | -              | 1.9%           | 8.2%           | 17.9%          | 26.5%          | 26.7%       |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

### Drug-Related Deaths

Drug overdose deaths have risen sharply in the past five years. County survey respondents consistently indicated they expect this trend to continue and to lead to increased autopsy needs. The following table summarizes the drug-related death statistics for Wisconsin:

| <b>Wisconsin Historic Drug-Related Death Data</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             | <b>Percent Change</b>    |                     |                     |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|   | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>Compounded Annual</b> | <b>2013 to 2018</b> | <b>2009 to 2018</b> |
| Number of:  |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |                          |                     |                     |
| Opioid-Related Deaths <sup>(1)</sup>              | 396         | 373         | 582         | 467         | 544         | 579         | 575         | 783         | 876         | 802         | 10.25%                   | 47.43%              | 102.53%             |
| All Drug-Related Deaths <sup>(2)</sup>            | 631         | 625         | 687         | 714         | 843         | 843         | 872         | 1,031       | 1,117       | 1,075       | 7.04%                    | 27.52%              | 70.36%              |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services

(1) Includes unintentional and undetermined overdose deaths.

(2) Includes intentional, unintentional, and undetermined overdose deaths.

## **Marketing and Competitive Advantage**

The Forensic Science Center will benefit from the following competitive advantages in comparison with the other providers in the state:

- Ease of access
- Shorter transport distance and time for many counties
- Livery services
- Improved turnaround times
- High-quality local health systems
- Competitive pricing/rate structure
- State crime lab branch (located in Wausau)
- Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) office (located in Wausau)

## **Facility Needs and Costs**

Marathon County engaged Angus Young, an architectural, engineering, and interior design firm, to provide an estimate of space needs and construction costs for the Forensic Science Center facility. Construction cost figures were provided for a newly constructed facility and the renovation of available space at a county- or partner-owned facility.

Total square footage of the facility is estimated to be 13,843, broken down as follows:

- Office and general-use areas – 4,333
- Autopsy rooms – 3,447
- Toilet and wet facilities – 1,489
- Storage and equipment – 1,457
- Garage (conditioned) – 1,573
- Garage (unconditioned) – 1,544

Total cost of construction to renovate space at a county- or partner-owned facility is estimated to be \$3,065,800, broken down as follows:

- Site improvements – \$252,100
- Building construction – \$1,680,800
- Project development – \$152,900
- Furniture and equipment – \$796,600
- Construction contingency – \$183,400

Total cost of construction for a new facility is estimated to be \$3,697,400, broken down as follows:

- Site improvements – \$312,500
- Building construction – \$2,083,300
- Project development – \$210,800
- Furniture and equipment – \$774,800
- Construction contingency – \$316,000

Assuming construction begins in the spring, Angus Young estimates a seven- to eight-month construction period. Marathon County currently owns several parcels of land that may be suitable for the construction of a new facility. There has also been discussion about renovating and leasing space, potentially at one of the local hospitals; however, other options may present themselves.

### Financial Plan and Projections

To assess the financial viability of the Forensic Science Center, financial projections were developed. Due to the range of autopsy volumes reported during the surveys of Wisconsin counties and the various levels of reported interest, three volume level scenarios were developed. Earnings from operations will be highly dependent on the volume of autopsies and the total number of autopsies conducted by each pathologist. Industry standards suggest one pathologist should handle a maximum of 250 autopsies per year. Ideally, the Forensic Science Center would operate as close to a ratio of 250 autopsies per pathologist as possible.

The following table summarizes the results of the financial projections:

#### Projected Statement of Cash Flow

|   | Volume Scenarios    |                     |                   |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|   | Low                 | Mid                 | High              |
| Operating revenue:  |                     |                     |                   |
| Autopsy revenue:  |                     |                     |                   |
| Forensic  | \$ 212,800          | \$ 376,000          | \$ 507,200        |
| Medical   | 60,000              | 81,000              | 144,000           |
| Livery services   | 48,500              | 71,300              | 102,100           |
| Other operating revenue   | 75,500              | 95,000              | 122,300           |
| <b>Total operating revenue</b>  | <b>396,800</b>      | <b>623,300</b>      | <b>875,600</b>    |
| Expenses:   |                     |                     |                   |
| New expenses:   |                     |                     |                   |
| Salaries and wages  | 303,000             | 503,000             | 524,500           |
| Employee benefits   | 95,100              | 150,300             | 147,400           |
| Administrative  | 8,000               | 8,000               | 8,000             |
| Supplies and other  | 27,800              | 43,500              | 56,000            |
| Livery  | 25,600              | 39,100              | 56,600            |
| Utilities   | 26,000              | 26,000              | 26,000            |
| Avoided expenses:   |                     |                     |                   |
| Outsourcing autopsy   | (93,000)            | (116,500)           | (140,000)         |
| Travel  | (13,000)            | (13,000)            | (13,000)          |
| Sheriff's and police department                                       | (18,000)            | (18,000)            | (18,000)          |
| <b>Total impact on expenses (excluding depreciation and interest)</b> | <b>361,500</b>      | <b>622,400</b>      | <b>647,500</b>    |
| <b>Earnings before depreciation and interest</b>                      | <b>35,300</b>       | <b>900</b>          | <b>228,100</b>    |
| <b>Less: Debt payment</b>   | <b>230,600</b>      | <b>230,600</b>      | <b>230,600</b>    |
| <b>Net increase (decrease) in cash</b>                                | <b>\$ (195,300)</b> | <b>\$ (229,700)</b> | <b>\$ (2,500)</b> |

The projections were based on survey results (counties, hospitals, and tissue procurement organizations), interviews with other pathology providers, operational data from other pathology providers, and actual Marathon County expenses. The projections were developed to estimate cash flows for one year of full, ramped-up operations. The projections do not include assumptions relating to any potential partnership or available grant funding. Finally, the projections were based on financial data provided in the years 2019 and 2020; future year results may vary based on factors including, but not limited to, autopsy and other service rate increases, wage rate increases, and inflation in general.

The financial projections were based on the following assumptions:

### Revenue

- Forensic and medical autopsies: Based on volume and an all-inclusive rate per autopsy of \$1,600 and \$3,000 for forensic and medical autopsies, respectively; based on market rates.
- Livery services: Flat rate for each trip less than 20 miles of \$150; for each trip greater than 20 miles, an additional fee of \$1.25 per mile; based on market rates. Mileage was calculated from Wausau to the most centrally located population center for each county that responded as being interested in utilizing a livery service. Volume based on survey responses.
- Other operating revenue: Includes expert testimony, tissue procurement facility rental fees, body storage, bioseal, x-rays, body intake/release, hardware extraction, and brain extraction. Volumes fluctuate based on autopsy volumes, and fees are based on market rates.

### Expenses

- Salaries and wages:
  - Head forensic pathologist – Salary set at \$260,000 based on other providers in the state and Midwest. One FTE is assumed for all scenarios.
  - Pathologist – Salary set at \$200,000 based on other providers in the state and Midwest. One FTE is assumed for mid- and high-volume scenarios; position is excluded from the low-volume scenario.
  - Autopsy technician – Salary set at \$43,000 based on Marathon County salary structure. One FTE is assumed for low- and mid-volume scenarios; 1.5 FTEs are assumed for high-volume scenario.
- Employee benefits: Based on Marathon County benefit package.
  - Projected at approximately 26% of salaries for the pathologists.
  - Projected at approximately 69% of salaries for other employees at the low- and mid-volume scenarios.
  - Projected at approximately 49% of salaries for other employees at the high-volume scenario. This is lower than the low- and mid-volume scenarios because a part-time FTE who does not receive full benefits is added to this scenario.
- Administrative: Includes training and education and office supplies.
- Supplies and other: Includes supplies utilized for conducting autopsies and related expenses including histology, x-rays, software, waste disposal, equipment, supplies, and insurance.

- Livery: Includes wages, benefits, gas, maintenance, insurance and miscellaneous supplies. Wages are based on round-trip drive time to the most centrally located population center for each county that responded as being interested in utilizing a livery service and are set at \$17 per hour. Gas is based on round-trip mileage to the most centrally located population center.
- Utilities: Based on estimates provided by Angus Young and the Marathon County Facilities and Capital Management Department.

#### Avoided Expenses

- Outsourcing autopsy: Actual expense to Marathon County based on the volume of autopsies and imaging services needed.
- Travel: Mileage reimbursement expense, assuming 55 outsourced autopsy trips.
- Sheriff's and police department: Elimination of unproductive travel time and travel expenses, based on the process improvement analysis.

#### Debt Payment

- PFM Financial Advisors provided a schedule of estimated debt service assuming tax exempt general obligation (GO) bonds with a 20-year amortization period, 2.0% average interest rate, costs of issuance of \$82,600, and the cost of new construction, which resulted in an average annual debt payment estimated to be \$230,600; under a renovation scenario, the average annual debt payment is estimated to be \$191,850.
  - Taxable GO bonds for new construction are estimated to result in a 2.3% average interest rate and average annual debt payment of \$237,500; under a renovation scenario, the average annual debt payment is estimated to be \$197,600.
- The specific interest rate that will be applicable to any borrowing conducted will be based on the desirability of the bonds on the public market and whether the specific borrowing would be eligible for tax exempt status.

#### **Conclusion**

The Medical Examiner's Office has carefully considered the viability of the Forensic Science Center project, including challenges relating to the current system of outsourcing autopsies; local and regional needs; the estimated demand for pathology services; opportunities to expand operations, partnerships, management, and organization of the Forensic Science Center; the positive impacts to Marathon County and other regional counties; financial implications; and other key factors such as pandemics, population growth, and the opioid epidemic.

The Forensic Science Center has the opportunity to become a highly respected pathology provider by significantly improving the quality of the death investigation process in Marathon County and northern Wisconsin regional counties. The Forensic Science Center is also poised to become a valuable partner to regional health systems and tissue procurement organizations. Ultimately, the Forensic Science Center will become a valuable addition to Marathon County and the region as a whole for many years to come.



# FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER

## Marathon County Regional

### Why Marathon County?

Coroners and Medical Examiners are state mandated positions; each county in Wisconsin has one. Their role is to determine the cause and manner of death for any sudden, suspicious or non-natural death. They are also responsible to determine the need for an autopsy.

**Centrally located in Wisconsin**

*Highway 51 and 29 intersection*

**Crime Lab of Wisconsin Northern Office**

*Other locations: Dane and Milwaukee County*

**Department of Criminal Investigation Office**

*Other locations: Appleton, Eau Claire, Madison, Milwaukee, Milwaukee Region, Lake Winnebago*

**Largest County in the region**

**Largest Medical Examiner's Office in region**

**Medical College of Wisconsin**

*Other locations: Milwaukee and Green Bay*

**Numerous colleges and universities**

Forensic autopsies help determine:

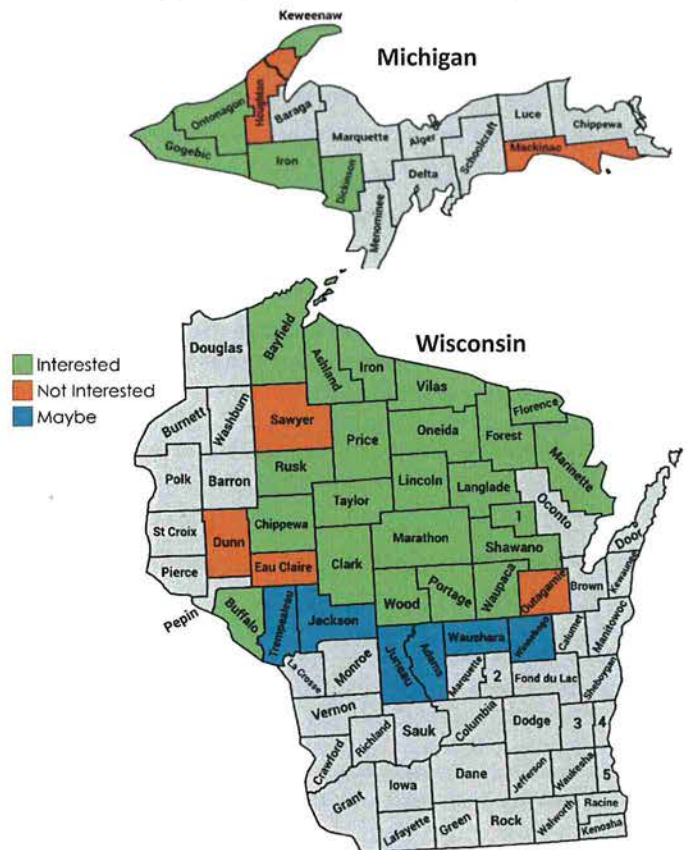
- Cause and manner of death
- Underlying undiagnosed medical conditions
- Heredity conditions
- Injury interpretation (ex: gun shot wounds)
- Evidence identification and collection

Regional partners complete **over 400 autopsies** per year, with a desire to complete even more having a local provider. Counties that may be interested in utilizing autopsy services complete 173 autopsies per year.

### Regional Benefits

- Improved service to families and community
- Faster release of decedent to funeral home
- Local autopsy provider (reduction in travel)
- Ability to preform more autopsies
- Improved death investigation services
- Improved death certification accuracy
- Regional mass fatality preparedness
- Forensic consultations to local departments
- Reduced interferences with tissue donation
- Enhanced educational opportunities
- Enhanced preventative services

### Coroner/Medical Examiner County Interest



### Wisconsin Forensic Autopsy Providers

- Dane County Medical Examiner's Office
- Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office
- Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office
- University of Wisconsin Madison Pathology Department
- Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office (no referral counties)



## Current Issues Faced By Regional Coroners and Medical Examiners

| Current State  | Regional Forensic Science Center  |
|--|---|
| <b>Inability to handle mass fatality of any size</b> for body storage, coordinating autopsy, scene management; local and regional need   | <b>Additional regional resources for mass fatality;</b> ability to store 20 plus bodies with racking system to handle a mass fatality, additional staff for mutual aide requests, county facilitated body livery service  |
| <b>Lack of refrigerated body storage in region;</b> no county owned refrigeration in region  | <b>Regional refrigerated body storage;</b> open to regional counties, available 24 hours per day  |
| <b>No long-term body storage;</b> criminal cases held by law enforcement/district attorney, cases pending identification   | <b>Ability to store bodies long term (freezer);</b> open to regional counties, available 24 hours per day   |
| <b>Physically no area to store remains with extenuating circumstances</b> (ex: extensive postmortem changes or insect activity)  | <b>Ability to store all human remains despite extenuating circumstances;</b> open to regional counties, available 24 hours per day  |
| <b>Difficult to maintain chain of custody</b> for suspicious/criminal cases without having county owned refrigeration  | <b>Secured facility with refrigeration, ability to maintain chain of custody;</b> open to regional counties, available 24 hours per day   |
| <b>No local forensic autopsy provider</b> (located in Southern Wisconsin and Minnesota); long commutes, inconvenient   | <b>Regional center in Central Wisconsin;</b> reduced travel for partners, more convenient, cost savings   |
| <b>Limited hospital based autopsy providers in region;</b> very limited ability for regional medical autopsy for hospitals or private family autopsy                                 | <b>Regional local autopsy provider;</b> complete autopsies for local hospital systems and private family autopsy, as requested  |
| <b>Difficult for coroners/medical examiners to conduct autopsies up to national standards;</b> travel, time out of the office, cost and inconveniences                               | <b>Ability for coroners/medical examiner to conduct more autopsies;</b> convenient, less travel/time away from the office, reduced cost   |
| <b>Nowhere for individuals to observe autopsies for teaching purposes</b> (ex: Medical College of Wisconsin medical students, health professionals, etc.)                            | <b>Teaching facility;</b> allow students and professionals to observe autopsy, multiple teaching opportunities to medical students and practicing professionals   |
| <b>Difficulty scheduling autopsy</b> due to pathologist large case load; delayed autopsy, overworked pathologists  | <b>Provide additional 1-3 forensic pathologists in Wisconsin</b> to share state case load; improved autopsy availability  |
| <b>Difficult for law enforcement and district attorney to attend autopsy;</b> time commitment 8 plus hours   | <b>Regional autopsy provider in Central Wisconsin;</b> reduced commute and time commitment for district attorney and law enforcement, easier to attend autopsy  |
| <b>Difficult for regional partners to coordinate body transportation</b> to and from autopsy   | <b>Marathon County will offer a full, reduced cost livery service to regional partners;</b> body transportation to and from autopsy, as requested   |
| <b>Limited interaction with forensic pathologist</b> due to distance constraints   | <b>Local forensic pathologist;</b> in person consultation, ability to meet with families, ability to respond to suspicious death scenes, closer for expert testimony  |
| <b>No designated area for body examinations,</b> ability to take x-rays or prepare body for family viewing; mercy of local hospital and funeral homes                                | <b>Designated area for body examinations,</b> x-ray services and body preparation; open to regional counties, available 24 hours a day  |
| <b>No formal family viewing or consultations area;</b> room utilized for family interviews, spending time with decedent (cultural, religious or closure) and identification purposes | <b>Dedicated family viewing/meeting room</b> that meets trauma informed care standards for sensitive meetings; open to regional counties and partner agencies (social services, district attorney, law enforcement, etc.) |
| <b>No formal location dedicated to tissue donation;</b> reduced qualification and lengthened body release time, at the mercy of hospitals and funeral homes                          | <b>Formal area dedicated to tissue donation;</b> reduction in rule-outs and faster release to funeral home, available 24 hours per day  |
| <b>No decontamination areas</b> (ex: no showers, laundry, changing areas)  | <b>Locker rooms with shower and laundry facilities;</b> open to regional counties   |



# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Chief Deputy Chad Billeb  
CC:  
Date: May 17, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)

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## **Background**

The management of digital evidence has become an extremely challenging process for the Marathon County District Attorney's Office. The District Attorney is expected to manage a plethora of digital evidence platforms from across multiple law enforcement agencies in Marathon County. Evidence can include: body cameras, squad cameras, digital photos, recorded telephone calls, surveillance video, recorded interviews, downloads of cellular phones and computers and tablets, etc. The evidence that is collected from these devices can come in different formats and platforms which causes significant delay in processing by the district attorney and her staff. This delay in turn impacts defense attorneys when they request discovery, the court system and ultimately victims looking for a resolution to the cases they were involved in. Long-term it has a significant financial impact on Marathon County due to inefficiencies within the courts.

By addressing all digital evidence with a sole tool for the storage, review, redaction and analysis of this evidence you remove the need for the district attorney and her staff to maintain multiple pieces of software and storage. In addition to this a simple tool for releasing discovery materials to the defense bar could be realized through a single piece of software. The end result would be more efficient management of digital evidence across the entire criminal justice system in Marathon County. This would likely result in efficiencies within the court system as well.

## **What we have completed to this point:**

Thus far a Request for Information (RFI) was released by the Sheriff's Office in early May 2021. This RFI sought out vendors to provide information on technology that might exist to address the needs in the District Attorney's Office. We have already received questions and feedback from several vendors who intend to provide information on solutions that might work for Marathon County. A current vendor of the Sheriff's Office is currently developing such a tool and has asked that Marathon County be a partner in helping them finish development prior to going live. This company believes that our insight and needs could likely drive their development to make their product better and will likely help the county better understand what technology exists.

## **What are our next steps:**

At this time we are awaiting all responses to the RFI. We are also working to build a team across not only county departments but also municipal partners to review these RFI's help us determine what an effective tool might look like for the district attorney. In parallel we will also work with our current vendor to learn as much as we can about what an DEMS might look like for Marathon County.

## **Recommendations**

Encourage staff to continue researching DEMS vendors and tools to determine if those tools would be effective in assisting the district attorney and her office in managing all of the digital evidence they receive.

# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Chief Deputy Chad Billeb  
CC:  
Date: May 17, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – EXPAND ELECTRONIC MONITORING

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## **Background**

A part of the System Budgeting initiative was the review of our current Electronic Monitoring program and the potential to expand the program beyond its current application.

Upon reviewing the current status of our program we reported back that most if not all inmates who are eligible for electronic monitoring have been placed on the monitor program. At the time we evaluated the numbers we had two inmates who were currently held in the jail under the Huber Release program. Due to declining numbers of sentenced inmates in the Marathon County Jail we ended the use of the Huber Release program for a six month trial and moved these two inmates onto the electronic monitoring program. The hope was that by increasing the number individuals on electronic monitor we could create additional capacity within the jail. The benefit assuming there were enough sentenced inmates would be reduced costs as well as more capacity within the jail to house inmates, especially for short stays.

What we have known and what became very apparent is the challenge facing the jail related to the large number of persons held in the jail pre-sentence. These are people who are not eligible for electronic monitor and are awaiting the adjudication of their cases. These persons take up considerable resources while their cases are pending.

## **What we have completed to this point:**

At this point we have maximized the number of persons on electronic monitor. We will continue to utilize the program to the best of our ability and hope to see cases settled faster to allow for more use of the program. We are also hopeful that the new pre-sentence program spear-headed by the Justice Programs team becomes a reality and that there is potential to use electronic monitoring for some of those individuals.

## **What are our next steps:**

At this time we will remain status quo as we do not have additional sentenced inmates to expand the program.

## **Recommendations**

Encourage the Case Processing team through Evidence Based Decision Making (EBDM) to find ways to bring cases to a resolution faster. This will allow the numbers within the jail to improve to allow us more opportunities to use electronic monitor and other resources more effectively.



# **Memo**

**To: Jason Hake, Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson**

**From: Clerk of Courts Shirley Lang**

**Date: 5-19-2021**

**Re: System Budgeting – Electronic Calendaring**

## Background:

The impact of electronic calendaring on the efficiency of scheduling court proceedings and a best practice to using time management effectively. This is a benefit to the judges in that their calendar is the best use of their time during the day. This also benefits the defendants, the victims and essentially the community in the courts ability to schedule hearings and effectively move cases through the justice system.

## What we have completed to this point:

I happy to say that all the Judicial Assistants are now using electronic calendaring. The only problem that I can see at this point is that there are no back up calendars, when a jury trial falls off then there is nothing else scheduled and there is no court in that branch for what would be the length of the trial.

## Next Steps:

The next step to scheduling would be the scheduling of interpreters in the 6 Branches and the Court Commissioner. We need to become more efficient in scheduling interpreters.

# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Laura Yarie  
CC: Lance Leonhard  
Date: May 21, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – Pretrial Case Management

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## **Background:**

Through our participation with the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) EBDM Project, Marathon County became involved with a pilot project to implement an evidence based pretrial program. Our system mapping activities identified the pretrial decision point as an area in need of an evidence based screening tool to assist professional judgement in setting bond conditions for in custody defendants at their initial appearance. The tool selected for the project was the Public Safety Assessment (PSA). DOJ has provided funding for a fulltime assessor position. This position has been performing PSA's and tracking data on all defendants appearing for their initial appearance in custody since October 2019. The tool is a research based actuarial tool designed to predict the likelihood for a defendant to appear for future court dates as well as the likelihood of that defendant participating in new criminal activity while out in the community awaiting case disposition. The purpose of the pretrial program is to maximize pretrial release while ensuring future court appearances and public safety.

The second part of a pretrial program involves case management to mitigate the risk of new offenses and assist with court date reminders to ensure future appearances while defendants are in the community. The PSA recommends a tiered level of supervision based on the assessed risk of the defendant which assists in setting appropriate bond conditions. Case management supervises compliance with bond conditions, makes referrals to services to assist defendants in being successful on pretrial supervision and reports compliance back to the court system. Supervision consists of court reminder texts and calls, face to face meetings, coordination of service referrals, drug and alcohol monitoring and GPS monitoring if appropriate. These services are intended to reduce failures to appear and bail jumping charges for pretrial defendants in the criminal justice system. A reduction in failures to appear helps cases move to disposition more quickly and saves court time wasted on rescheduling of hearing dates. Many of the failure to appear incidents can be avoided by reminders to the defendants which in turn avoids unnecessary warrants that are currently issued for a nonappearance. Case management will also help prevent future criminal activity by addressing needs of individual defendants with mental health and addiction issues. Many of the new charges people currently acquire while out on bond are a result of continued substance use and untreated mental health. Pretrial services can assist those individuals with voluntary referrals to address their needs.

## **What we have completed to this point:**

Justice Programs has successfully implemented assessment and distribution of the PSA results within the current system. Data has been collected to show the current status of our failure to appear rate as well as the rate of new criminal activity. The current data is being utilized to assist in making decisions regarding case management time required for complete implementation of services. The risk level of each defendant drives the amount of supervision time required in the pretrial program model. Two full-time case management positions have been created currently within Justice Program contracts with ATTIC Correctional Services. These positions were created using the existing Condition of Bond position and a shifting of program resources within Justice Programs.

**What are our next steps:**

As of June 21, 2021 the program will go live within the court system and referrals will begin for case management services. This date was selected to coincide with the courts returning to in person court sessions.

**Recommendations:**

DOJ has verbally committed to continued funding of the full time assessor position through 2022. Our current approved grant ends December 31, 2021. There is no reason to believe this will not be continued as long as we continue our commitment to implementing a pretrial program.

Funding is currently set for the two case management positions through 2021 and will meet the needs of referrals through the end of this year.

In 2022 one of the positions is fully planned for through existing resources. The other position has been funded with current resources at a partial year rate for 2021 and would require an additional \$20,000 for 2022.

Local numbers trending before the pandemic indicated a need for 3 fulltime positions for pretrial case management. Since the pandemic the number of individuals that would be referred decreased, but the length of time the cases remain open have increased. It is difficult to predict how returning to "normal" will change predictions. It is assumed some new practices could continue after the pandemic and cases should begin to close more quickly.

To maintain the two positions would be an additional cost of \$20,000 in 2022 and 2023.

To add a third position in 2022 the additional cost would be \$90,000 in 2022 and 2023.

Justice Program will put out another RFP in 2024 for all service currently contracted that we wish to continue. If a 3<sup>rd</sup> position is not funded next year and numbers become too high to case manage there will be a need to restructure who receives services. This would be through stopping of referrals, wait list, stopping the supervision of level 2 defendants or reducing supervision after a timeframe of demonstrated compliance.

# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Chief Deputy Chad Billeb  
CC:  
Date: May 18, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – Remote Courtroom Access

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## **Background**

Throughout the pandemic the courts in Marathon County have relied upon video through Zoom to hold court appearances. These appearances allow defendants to appear from the jail without movement throughout the courthouse, appearances from other facilities across the state as well as holding mental health court appearances. The use of video court has saved Marathon County a significant amount of money by limiting the number of transports and creating efficiencies within the jail. Going away from this type of a system will have a significant and costly impact on the county. It has also been learned that many counties across the state have employed this type of technology for years and were positioned better than Marathon County heading into the pandemic. Although Zoom has served us well, it has also helped us realize several challenges that need to be addressed to allow us to effectively and efficiently use the tool going forward.

## **What we have completed to this point:**

The Sheriff's Office has taken the lead on this project. We have coordinated meetings with the Clerk of Courts, Judge Huber, City County IT as well as jail staff to talk about what is needed to improve the courts experience with Zoom. CCIT staff have taken the time to coordinate with two of the branches to assess the technology needs in the courtrooms. CCIT is working to develop an equipment list for outfitting the courtrooms with the appropriate technology that also addresses a court need for a new DAR system supplied by the state courts (digital court recording system). We have also provided a model policy to county administration for the courts to consider in how to best utilize the new hardware. A check of other counties revealed that most use Zoom or a product powered by Zoom. The plan for now is to stay with Zoom but to upgrade the hardware for a more professional and reliable experience.

## **What are our next steps:**

We are still awaiting official funding through the American Recovery Act. Once a funding source has been identified the project will move forward. The cost per courtroom varies but can be upwards of \$70,000 to \$80,000 based upon preliminary estimates. It is important that we be methodical about our approach and ensure we are addressing all of the needs as opposed to throwing something together haphazardly at the expense of tax-payers. In the meantime CCIT is working on temporary solutions to continue video court with the understanding that a long-term solution will be coming later in the year.

## **Recommendations**

Support County Administrations direction as it relates to the project plan and funding.

# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Chief Deputy Chad Billeb  
CC:  
Date: May 18, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – Securus Technology

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## **Background**

Sheriff's Office's and prisons all across the country offer telephone services to their inmates. These telephone services help those who are incarcerated stay connected with their attorney, family, friends and other support structures. Unfortunately as good as they are in assisting inmates and their support structures, they can also be used improperly. A concern brought to the Sheriff's Office was that of the volume of telephone calls that are being processed through our jail. The concern is not related specifically due to the cost to the inmate and their family (other than the concern over defendants not having money for attorneys, etc.) but rather the volume of calls that District Attorney staff have to go through as they prepare for trial.

## **What we have completed to this point:**

After learning of this concern, the Sheriff's Office initiated meetings with the District Attorney's Office as well as municipal police agencies in the county. What we learned was that a couple of things were happening.

- 1) Staff were not properly trained and were not using all of the functionality of the investigations tool in Securus.
- 2) The District Attorney's Office had been taking it upon themselves to review all calls related to ongoing cases.
- 3) A new platform was being launched by the vendor with enhanced capabilities.

With this information the Sheriff's Office worked with the vendor to complete the new upgrade to the technology. We then provided every agency that was involved with the Securus system to complete the new training and access the technology. We also received a commitment from municipal agencies that it would no longer be the expectation that the District Attorney's Office review all of the calls. The District Attorney's Office now notifies the investigating agency that they received a tip on the calls and the investigating agency is responsible for doing the follow up.

In addition to this work we also realized that another project was needed. This initiated the Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) project. With a new DEMS tool investigators will be able to examine digital evidence like Securus phone calls more efficiently. Searching keywords and sounds should enhance their ability to work with these types of calls.

## **What are our next steps:**

This project is closed out due to all we have learned and the Sheriff's Office addressing concerns where we can. It is now incumbent upon staff to follow through on the work we did.

## **Recommendations**

No action required by County Administration or the County Board.

# Memo

To: Public Safety Chair Bootz and Vice-Chair Jacobson  
From: Lance Leonhard, Administrator  
CC:  
Date: May 25, 2021  
Re: System Budgeting – (Social Services Information Sharing Review)

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## Background

The Department of Social Services, while not under the purview of the Public Safety Committee, is an integral partner in the delivery of services that both directly and indirectly impact the Criminal Justice System. Staff within the Youth Justice, Child Protection, and Child Support divisions interact on a daily basis with law enforcement, prosecutors, court staff, and judges. The effective sharing of information amongst these partners is critical to the successful functioning of our justice system and the experience of system-involved individuals.

During the initial brainstorming exercise completed as part our System Budgeting process, the current state of information sharing between justice system partners and the Department of Social Services, and whether there was an opportunity for further improvement, was identified for further evaluation.

## Efforts undertaken through the System Budgeting Process

Because the primary aim of this project was to evaluate opportunities for improved/additional information sharing from the Department of Social Services to justice system partners, a two-step process was employed. The first-step was to conduct a survey of system partners on a series of questions and the second step was for Administration to work with the Social Services Director to consider the information gathered.

## What we have completed to this point:

### - Survey Process

Justice System stakeholder representatives were asked to answer the following six (6) questions:

1. In general terms, what type of information, if shared from DSS, would be helpful to you?
2. When would it be helpful to have each type of information you referenced?
3. What are the costs (e.g., negative outcomes) of the suboptimal information sharing?
4. Please provide a couple of real-world (albeit de-identified) situations that show how these costs have been manifested?
5. What would improved information sharing look like from your perspective?
6. How would we know our efforts to improve information sharing were successful?

### - Evaluation

All information received through the survey was discussed with the Director of Social Services. Two important themes emerged from the responses. First, the communication between each of the three divisions within Social Services and the system stakeholders could be characterized



as strong. The Courts reported that *“information sharing between my department and child support, child protection and youth justice does not seem to be an issue. Information flows freely between us and our social services partners.”* Similarly, the Sheriff’s Office described the relationship with Child Protective Services as *“excellent,”* indicating that *“we work hand-in-hand with them routinely so we have a pretty good understanding of each other’s needs and how our actions affect their outcomes.”*

The second theme identified was the importance of building and maintaining a strong understanding across stakeholders of the specific roles, responsibilities, and work of the partners. For example, while the Sheriff’s Office reported a deep understanding of the work within Child Protective Services, they reported less understanding relative to Youth Justice, explaining that “Youth Justice, on the other hand, is more like the wizard behind the curtain.”

**What are our next steps:**

- **Youth Justice specific response** – lead worker to work with law enforcement to ensure that law enforcement is available in the event Youth Justice workers desire additional perspective when making intervention recommendations.
- **Social Service Department response** – Director to work with law enforcement to offer Social Services presence at law enforcement summits and other training opportunities to ensure that law enforcement understand current topics and answer questions on no less than annual basis or as otherwise requested.

**Recommendations** – no action necessary from Public Safety Committee on this point at this time.