



MARATHON COUNTY SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Date & Time of Meeting: **Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.**

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

Committee Members: Kurt Gibbs Chair; Craig McEwen, Vice-Chair; Matt Bootz; Tim Buttke; Randy Fifrick; Sara Guild, Jacob Langenhahn, Alyson Leahy, John Robinson, E.J. Stark

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)*

Executive Committee Mission Statement: *The Executive Committee of the Marathon County Board exists for the purpose of implementing the County's Strategic Plan by coordinating policy formation among the Committees, and providing leadership for all County Board policies through supervision of Administrative staff.*

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 Executive 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: 269 940 263

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

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
- 2. Public Comment**
- 3. Policy Issues for Discussion and Possible Action**
- 4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance, or Resolution**
 - A. Resolution - Opposition To The Recommended Changes Relative To The Federal Metropolitan And Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards
- 5. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**
- 6. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location, Announcements and Future Agenda Items:**
 - A. Next Meeting: **Thursday, April 8 2021, at 4:00 p.m.**
- 7. 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 715-261-1500 one business day before the meeting.*

SIGNED Chair Kurt Gibbs
Presiding Officer or Designee _____

FAXED TO: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages,
FAXED TO: and Other Media Groups
FAXED BY: T. Ranallo
FAXED DATE: 3/15/2021
FAXED TIME: _____

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE
BY: T. Ranallo
DATE: 3/15/2021
TIME: _____

RESOLUTION # R-_____
OPPOSITION TO THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES RELATIVE
TO THE FEDERAL METROPOLITAN AND MICROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA STANDARDS

WHEREAS, on January 19, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget posted a recommendation, received from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee to increase the minimum population threshold from 50,000 to 100,000; and

WHEREAS, the Wausau-Weston region currently is considered a metropolitan area under existing federal population thresholds; and

WHEREAS, the proposed population threshold change would result in 144 areas across the country losing their metropolitan statistical area (MSA) status, including the Wausau-Weston area; and

WHEREAS, the change could have significant implications for federal programs related to housing, transportation, and Medicare, while also potentially impacting the classification practices relative to hospitals and the specificity of data gathering efforts; and

WHEREAS, Marathon County is comprised of a mixture of metropolitan and rural areas and the success of each is integral to Marathon County's goal of being the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, without greater explanation of the potential impacts of this administrative change, Marathon County cannot support the proposal.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Marathon County Board of Supervisors urges the Office of Management and Budget to reject the proposal from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee to increase the minimum population threshold from 50,000 to 100,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Marathon County Board authorizes the appropriate officers and officials to disseminate this resolution to our Congressional Representatives.

Dated this ____ day of March, 2020 in Wausau, Wisconsin.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Fiscal Impact to the County: None

Wausau Daily Herald

LOCAL

Federal proposal threatens Wausau's metro status, and money to pay for housing, streets, playgrounds, facilities

Allison Garfield Wausau Daily Herald

Published 12:06 p.m. CT Mar. 12, 2021

The Wausau-Weston region could lose its status as a metropolitan area under a new proposal from the U.S. government, potentially threatening the community's federal funding and economic development.

The proposal from a federal committee suggests a community would need at least 100,000 people in its urban area to count as a metropolitan statistical area, or a MSA. That would double the 50,000-person threshold that's been in place for 70 years.

Wausau's urban-area population at the core of the wider metropolitan region totaled 74,632 in 2019, according to U.S. Census data, leaving the metro area 25,000 short of the proposed new standard.

The city of Wausau's population is around 40,000, but the city is able to draw on populations of neighboring communities to define the urban area that counts for the MSA.

RELATED: COVID-19 slowed Rib Mountain development. Can Wausau mall stores, new subdivision, TIF district turn that around?

RELATED: Village officials say Weston will see small-business growth in 2021 despite pandemic

RELATED: COVID-19 made for a dark 2020 for businesses of all sorts in the Wausau area, but hope still remains

The federal proposal would change 144 cities to "micropolitan" statistical areas instead of metros, and in Wisconsin that includes the Wausau, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Oshkosh and Janesville areas. The change would affect more than a third of the current 392 MSAs.

The shift could be more than a matter of semantics. Several federal aid programs tied to housing, transportation and Medicare are connected to communities with MSA designations.

A committee of representatives from federal statistical agencies recently made the recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget, saying the proposal is for statistical purposes and not to be used for funding formulas. As a practical matter, however, that is how MSA designations are often used.

"We've all used the term micropolitan to talk about Wausau. Semantically, that's fine, we can live with that," Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg said. "We're a Community Development Block Grant entitlement city and we have been since the '70s. If this designation were to affect that, it could really change how we fund some important programs in our city."

Community block grants go to metropolitan areas to fund human services programs. In Wausau for 2021, \$600,000 in grants are helping to pay for housing rehabilitation, street and playground reconstruction, improvement of public facilities in low-income areas and assistance to local nonprofits .

"If that gets cut, its just less we're able to give to the community," Rosenberg said.

She believes the intention of the proposal is "housekeeping," and said that federal policy language changes frequently. The problem is when that language is tied to funding.

Wausau officials plan to officially register the city's opposition to the proposal next week. Rosenberg has also talked to local officials in Oshkosh, Janesville and Sheboygan about forming a coalition moving forward. The state's congressional representatives are aware of the proposed change in MSAs but haven't expressed an opinion yet, she said.

Statisticians say the change in designations has been a long time coming, given that the U.S. population has more than doubled since 1950. Back then, about half of U.S. residents lived in metros defined as 50,000 or more people; now, 86% do.

Contact Allison Garfield at 715-351-9799 or agarfield@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter @aligarfield_.

READ MORE: Sheboygan could lose its status as a metropolitan area under a new federal proposal that some fear could have consequences