



## MARATHON COUNTY REGIONAL MORGUE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 1, 2022, at 9:30 am-10:30 pm  
In-person and Virtual through WebEx

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

**Present in person:** Marathon County Medical Examiner's Office personnel Jessica Blahnik, Christina Wimmer, and Cortney Drake Heck

**Present via Web or Phone:** Administrator Lance Leonhard, Supervisor Jean Maszk, and Aliyah Cratsencerg, community member

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair McEwen at 9:30 am.

2. **Public Comment** – None

3. **MOTION BY DODSON; SECOND BY BEAN TO APPROVE THE MINTUES OF THE NOVEMBER 16, 2021, MORGUE TASK FORCE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

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

A. Informational updates, including state grant application and other funding options, business plan, ongoing discussions with potential stakeholders, and pathologist utilization update

**Discussion:**

Blahnik shared that Marathon County applied for the Neighborhood Investment Grant in November 2021. Unfortunately, Marathon County was not selected to receive grant funding; the project did not meet the grant criteria. Blahnik, Wimmer, Administrator Leonhard and Chair McEwen met to discuss the next steps to bring forward to this committee. Administrator Leonhard shared that he had continued discussions with state legislators, primarily Senator Petrowski, who had been an advocate for the project. Senator Petrowski will continue to explore state funding options.

Administrator Leonhard proposed a plan for the county to allocate \$2 million of the county's ARPA funds towards the project, with the rest of the funding coming from a capital campaign and/or state funding. He shared that in 2019 North Central Health Care conducted a capital campaign for their warm water therapy pool and it was exceptionally successful, especially after funding was already allocated from the county. To allocate the county's ARPA funds, Blahnik would have to complete an application for the funding, which would need to go to Public Safety Committee, then to Finance/Human Resources for approval.

Chair McEwen and Supervisor Maszk both expressed that community foundations are more supportive of county initiatives once the county has allocated funding towards the project. Both also felt this was a good plan.

Administrator Leonhard explained further that he would still like to engage with Senator Petrowski for state funding, including meeting with Governor Evers, as there is federal ARPA funding available that may be applied towards the project. As for the county APRA funding, all of the funds need to be allocated by December 31, 2024, and expended by 2026. There will need to be a deadline in place for the capital campaign to ensure county can utilize the funding. The next step would be to bring the APRA funding request forward to the Public Safety Committee for the April meeting.

Blahnik shared that WIPFLI Consulting Firm is currently working to update the business plan; it should be completed in May 2022. Administrator Leonhard stated he also would like to continue discussions with the health care systems; Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic.

Administrator Leonhard questioned the Task Force if there was value to engage with other counties for funding towards the construction costs as part of the capital campaign. Rifleman stated that Portage County has always been supportive of the project and should be approached. Sheriff Westen stated that Langlade County was allocated far less ARPA funds than Marathon County, however it would not hurt to reach out. Administrator Leonhard explained that the Marathon County could do a five-year cost saving projection for the other counties of having a closer facility and ask for half of the cost savings. It will not be a lot of money; however, it shows commitment and support from all the agencies. Chair McEwen said it may be beneficial to approach the municipalities for small amounts of funding to show support of the project. Sheriff Westen added to include the police departments.

Bean asked the Task Force how to move forward with requesting donations from organizations and who will lead those efforts? Administrator Leonhard stated that Marathon County will need to come up with a strategic capital campaign plan and needs to identify potential community stake holders and foundations. Members of the Task Force could help with the capital campaign. He would continue discussions with the state legislators. Sheriff Westen offered to support the capital campaign and had requested a letter be drafted, along with talking points for the project. He also mentioned to reach out to the Badge Sheriff's Association for support, along with local police departments. Zoromski suggested to obtain letters of support from the local funeral homes. Blahnik reminded the Task Force that for the Neighborhood Investment Grant application, Marathon County had received roughly 20 letters of support from key community partners and could work on obtaining additional letters. Administrator Leonhard stated that the next plan of action is to have an internal meeting to discuss the capital campaign.

Blahnik shared that University of Wisconsin (UW) Madison Pathology Department had their new forensic pathologist start in February, however one of their clinical pathologists will be retiring. Dane County also had a pathologist resign; however, they will be having a new pathologist starting after her fellowship in 2023. The Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner continues to be booked out for up to one week at a time, however UW Madison has been assisting additional counties on an as-needed basis to help with the backup of autopsies.

**Follow Up:**

None

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

**A. Recommendation of next steps to Public Safety Committee**

**Discussion:**

Administrator Leonhard and Chair McEwen both stated this topic was discussed during 4A. Administrator Leonhard reiterated the timeframe for approval of allocating ARPA funding towards the project; it would not be until mid-year.

**Action:**

**MOTION BY BEAN; SECOND BY RIFLEMAN TO BRING THE RECOMMENDATION TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH AN APPLICATION TO ALLOCATE \$2 MILLION OF THE COUNTY'S ARPA FUNDS TOWARDS THE REGIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER PROJECT. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Follow Up:**

Forward recommendation to Public Safety Committee for consideration.

**6. Scheduling of Future Meetings and Identifying Agenda Topics**

Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion.

**7. Announcements**

None

**8. Adjournment**

**MOTION BY BEAN; SECOND BY RIFLEMAN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:15 A.M. MOTION CARRIED.**