

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
June 12, 2012

The Administrative Committee of the Grant County Board of Supervisors met on June 12, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 266 on Second Floor of the Administration Building.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Larry Wolf and a quorum was present. The County Clerk, Linda Gebhard verified that the meeting was in compliance with the open meeting law, published in the Herald Independent and posted in two places.

Members present: John Patcle, John Beinborn, Robert Scallon, Lester Jantzen, Vincent Loeffelholz, Mark A. Stead, Larry Wolf, Corporation Counsel Todd Infield and Wisconsin Counties Association Attorney Andy Phillips. Others present were Robert Keeney, Board Member, Todd Johnson Extension Comm. Resource Agent, Verda Nemo Child Support Director, Gayle Mason, ADRC Director, Mary Rasmussen, Health Department, Dave Timmerman, Herald Independent Editor, Grant Loy, Board Member, Carol Beals, Board Member, Vern Lewison, Board Member, Fred Naatz, Social Services Director and Bob Middendorf, WGLR Radio.

Agenda: Larry Wolf, Chair asked for approval of the agenda which prompted Mark Stead to read a letter that he had compiled regarding striking two line items from the agenda. Mark asked in the letter that the following line items be stricken:

- Discussion of issues surrounding conduct of particular persons in county board meeting, departmental meetings and committee meetings.

The Committee may consider a motion to convene in closed session under this agenda item pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(f) for purposes of considering social or personal histories, disciplinary data of specific persons and/or preliminary investigation of personnel problems which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse impact upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems.

Mark Stead made a motion, seconded by Robert Scallon to strike these two line items for the agenda. Discussion followed with Attorney Andy Phillips stating that if in fact these line items are stricken there can be absolutely no discussion that would name any particular person in discussion. This line item was placed on the agenda for the purpose to protect the County and any person named from doing so in an open meeting. If the situation arose that it was apparent that a closed session was needed, the committee could then convene to the closed session. Corporation Counsel Todd Infield agreed that the closed session was placed on the agenda to help protect the reputation of any person that may be named which could only happen in closed session and no votes would be called for on this issue, the purpose was for discussion only.

John Patcle voiced his opinion that it was not fair that discussion could take place about a person who is not present to defend themselves. John did not feel comfortable being part of a "kangaroo court" he felt this discussion should take place before the full County Board. Larry Wolf and Robert Scallon objected to this meeting being called a kangaroo court.

Larry Wolf stated that the purpose of this meeting was to talk about the problems that the present County Board is having. Larry stated that there are so many bad feelings among the board members that it is slowing down the policy making process. When there are board members who will not speak to each other, there is a big problem. He feels that these serious issues need to be addressed so the County Board of Supervisors can start working together again. With the attorneys present, Larry felt that this would help to direct the board which way to handle this issue, if restructuring is necessary or what alternatives they have. A roll call vote was called with the following results: (A no vote means not to strike the two line items regarding the closed session, a yes vote means to strike the items from the agenda)

Vince Loeffelholz	No
Robert Scallon	Yes
Lester Jantzen	No
John Beinborn	No
John Patcle	Yes
Mark Stead	Yes
Larry Wolf	No

“No” votes were 4; “Yes” votes were 3, therefore the motion failed. The items will be left on the agenda.

Minutes: Lester Jantzen, seconded by John Beinborn, made a motion to approve the minutes of the last Administration meeting.

Administrative Coordinator: Because of a decision by Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen stating that a County Board Supervisor should not hold the post of Administrative Coordinator also; the person designated should be separate from a county board member whose prime duty is to set policy. The position was given to Nancy Scott, Finance Director first and then to the County Clerk, Linda K. Gebhard but no specific duties have been assigned to the position. Larry Wolf stated that naming someone the coordinator without giving them any duties does not correct the issue.

Attorney Andy Phillips told the committee that with the unique structure of county governments and the attorney generals opinion has presented this same problem in many counties. Andy Phillips stated that county government is complex and when you run to be elected to the board your only qualifications are that you live in the district you are running in; you are voting age; but you do not have to have any other expertise in any of the departments in a county.

Vern Lewison stated that he was on the board when the Administrative Coordinator was first talked about and in his recollection the Personnel Director was to take on that title. Andy Phillips answered that each of those titles holds very different duties and he would not like to see that happen in Grant County.

Types of County Organizational Structure: Larry Wolf asked Andy Phillips what forms of government structure would work for a county such as Grant. Andy stated that there are different forms of county government, such as the committee structure which Grant County has at this time. Andy was very surprised to the level of involvement that some of the committees have regarding the Department functions. He said that State Statue allows for the county to designate someone as Administrative Coordinator, create a County Executive elected by the voters, or create an Administrator that would answer to the board. He stated that there could be a

lot of flexibility as to how the board would want to set the duties up and that position would answer to the board.

Duties of Department Heads: Andy Phillips reiterated that the function of a Department Head is to run their department. The Board should rely on the department head as an administrator to deal with the issues of their departments and the board is to set policy. They should make the choice as to how much copy paper they need to purchase and if they want to blow through their budgets then that would be on their head.

Duties of County Board Supervisors: Andy Phillips stated that at this time for Grant County the committee structure allows for a large amount of oversight as part of the county board structure. The committees are acting as the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the county government, which is inefficient because there is no one in charge. Andy stated that no other business would function that way. Andy stated that with the nature of county government some form of administrator or coordinator can act as a sounding board for the resources of the county and that would leave the county board with the policy making. Another reason that the county may want to find an alternative to the committee structured government is that as collective bargaining ceases the county has a number of issues it needs to handle to make sure workers rights are protected or the county could face legal actions.

Discussion: Larry Wolf asked for other comments from the people present at the meeting.

Robert Scallon stated that it is time to go forward, the board members needed to leave the child antics home just because they didn't get their way. He felt the committee structure was doing the best it could to get things done for the good of the county but the committees needed to follow the proper chain of command. He stated that last year the same thing had happened and the county had to bring in lawyers to try to talk to the board members, he felt that was sad. Robert also felt that with the state of the board at this time; the employees have the feeling that the board members are out to get them. Robert felt that this was the wrong message to spread among the employees because it was not true. Todd Infield, Corporation Counsel stated that the employees may be getting mixed messages from the board because of all the problems within the board and that maybe it would be worth looking into a County Administrator position at this time.

John Beinborn felt that the county board should pull together as an organization and put their differences behind them and go forward and work together.

Larry Wolf stated that he felt that for some reason some people felt that because they were on the County Board that this gave a feeling of power. No individual person has any power on their own, the board should work together, and the full county board is the power as a whole. Larry felt that there were too many unfounded rumors being spread around the county and most of the rumors were being circulated for personal reasons.

Carol Beals felt the problem is in the communication between board members. There should be some form of respect and consideration between the members in order to work as a whole.

Vince Loeffelholz wished the harassment would stop. If you do not feel the same as some members on an issue, there tends to be harassment against that member and then you don't feel you can voice your opinion.

John Patcle and Mark Stead had no comments.

Vern Lewison felt that he was elected to service the people in his district for the good of the county and not for the benefit of personal reasons. He takes his job very seriously. John Beinborn asked if he felt that was working for him. Vern replied that he felt is worked very well; if someone came to him with an issue he could direct them to the appropriate department head or committee to help them.

Lester Jantzen felt that directing the issues to the proper channels was the way to go and that the board needed to put their personal vendettas behind and start working together for the good of the people and employees.

Verda Nemo, Child Support Director stated that she would appreciate the fact that her department was not being micro managed. She felt that Grant County had hired her to run the Child Support Department and if there were issues then she knew she could bring them before the committee and board.

Dave Timmerman, Herald Independent Editor felt the problems may be based on the lack of communication between the members, their perceptions of different issues and hidden agendas. He felt that there could be some structural issues also. The committees agenda's sometime are not specific to the topics being discussed. There should be more detail in the structure of the agenda items so there is no question on the topic being presented at the meeting.

Todd Johnson, Extension Comm. Resource Agent, felt it was hard to define the problem. There may be different motives and passions that drive the members. He suggested that instead of asking for opinions in an open meeting, a survey type agenda my work better to get a better feel from the members on the issues.

Fred Naatz, Social Services Director, said it may be hard to define the problem until the real hidden issue is exposed. The Board is made up of all leaders; it may be beneficial to hold a training session to tap into that resource for help.

Gayle Mason, ADRC Director, felt that if the Board members had a good understanding on the source of funding for all the departments, where the money comes from, different pots that it goes to, how the departments programs are impacted and the different budgeting for each program; may help.

Robert Keeney, stated that he felt the lack of communication was the key to things not getting done.

Todd Infield, Corporation Counsel stated that he felt it may help to supply better definition of the duties for County Board. That the Department Heads should be trusted to run their own departments and there should be bolder language as to the responsibilities of the committees to define their roll.

The Code of Conduct Resolution was brought up and the question was asked why that resource hadn't been used in this issue. Andy Phillips helped the board implement this code in 2010 when

there were similar issues with the board. Andy stated that to use this a board member would have to initiate the procedure and that obviously was not happening. Andy did not know what the problem was with this concept, whether it is lack of trust among the board or communication. Carol Beals stated she felt that was the problem that a board member had to initiate the issue. She said when a board member brings an issue to the Code of Conduct which relates to an issue between an employee and a board member the issue gets resolved and things move forward. But when you initiate an issue between the differences of two or more board members those members feel threatened and nothing gets resolved. Andy Phillips stated that the Code of Conduct was implemented in the first place so those issues could get discussed in hopes that would ward off bigger issues, but he does not see this happening in Grant County.

Larry Wolf asked if there were any more comments to share and asked the committee if they felt a closed session was needed or should he call for adjournment. Carol Beals stated that the closed session was the purpose of this meeting to get to the bottom of the board members issues and that the committee had requested the presence of Attorney Andy Phillips and Attorney Todd Infield just for the reason to go into closed session. It would be a big injustice to waste everyone's time and not hold a closed session at this time.

Convene to Closed Session: A motion was made by Vince Loeffelholz seconded by John Beinborn to go into Closed Session. Roll call vote was called as follows:

Mark Stead	No
Vince Loeffelholz	Yes
Lester Jantzen	Yes
Robert Scallon	Yes
John Beinborn	Yes
John Patcle	No

Vote resulted in 2 "No" votes and 4 "Yes" vote, therefore motion carried.

Closed Session: Wis. State .19.85(1)(f)

Reconvene to Open Session: Mark Stead, seconded by Lester Jantzen made a motion to reconvene to open session. Motion carried

Adjournment: Mark Stead, seconded by Lester Jantzen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.