

WINNEBAGO COUNTY
ARPA Strategy and Outcomes
Commission Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, January 17, 2024

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: David W. Albrecht Administration Building
112 Otter Avenue
Oshkosh WI 54901
Susan T. Ertmer Conference Room 120

PRESENT: Co-Chair Tom Egan, County Board Chairman
Co-Chair Jon Doemel, County Executive
Morris Cox, Personnel and Finance Chair
Chuck Farrey, County Board Vice-chair
Tom Borchart, County Board Member
Tom Belter, Public Member
Beth Oswald, Public Member
Tim Galloway, Public Member

ABSENT: Andy Buck, County Board Member
Paul Kaiser, Director of Finance (non-voting member)

ALSO PRESENT: Cassie Smith-Gregor, Deputy County Clerk
Mary Anne Mueller, Corporation Counsel
Victoria Kinderman, Corporation Counsel
Lara Vendola-Messer, Sheriff's Office
Tim Eichman, Sheriff's Office
Supervisor Douglas Nelson
Supervisor Kay Horan
Supervisor Shanah Zastera
Jane Lang, City of Neenah Mayor
Don Merkes, City of Menasha Mayor
Jeff Bernice, Neenah Police Department
Vicky Rasmussen, City of Neenah
Joel Rasmussen, Town of Algoma
Rich Heath, Town of Algoma
Paul Williams
Aaron L. Olson, Neenah Police Department
Ryan Zastera, Oshkosh
Jim Peglow, Neenah Menasha Fire Rescue
Shane Krueger, Neenah Menasha Fire Rescue
Travis Teesch, Neenah Menasha Fire Rescue
James Fluette, Village of Winneconne
Brenda Kubasta, Village of Winneconne
Sam Schroeder, City of Menasha
Tony Daley – Journalist – The Omro Herald

via **ZOOM**
Supervisor Rachael Dowling
Supervisor Bryan Stafford
Supervisor Conley Hanson
Nick Thorn, Menasha Police
Department
Lu Scheer
Dana Bain, Child Care
Resource & Referral
Jessica Schneider
Todd's iPhone

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Jon Doemel called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Co-Chair Jon Doemel reported that Supervisor Andy Buck and Paul Kaiser are excused for today's meeting and Beth Oswald will arrive a little late.

2. Public Comments

Lara Vendola-Messer, Sheriff's Office, spoke on behalf of Sheriff John Matz who was unable to be there, at the request of County Executive Jon Doemel. Ms. Vendola-Messer gave an update on the current status of the Sheriff's Office

owned airboats. They own three of them and they're all about 20 years old and slated for replacement at the 20-year mark. They are on the list for congressional direct spending to come to the county. It's in the fiscal year 2024 budget and that appropriation piece is still pending and needs to be voted on and looks like it might be extended until March. When the Feds finally approve that packet, it will be in the Commerce Science and Justice Section of the Bill. Winnebago County is going to have \$990,000 deposited for these three airboats to be replaced. The three airboats are currently housed at the Neenah Menasha Fire Department, Oshkosh Fire Department and the Winneconne Poygan Fire Department. The Sheriff's Office is fully intending to replace them. If for some reason there is no federal budget, there are plans in the current county Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is a 5-year plan for 2025, 2026, and 2027 for those boats to be replaced.

Supervisor Chuck Farrey requested an agenda item for the next meeting to revisit the request from the Winneconne Poygan Fire District to purchase their own airboat. This was on the original list. Mr. Farrey believed it was pulled because of a misunderstanding of intent. He requests that it be an agenda item for discussion by the commission to determine whether they want to put it back on the list and then go from there.

County Board Supervisor Shanah Zastera read a letter that she sent to the County Executive because residents at the southern part of the county need and deserve to have adequate parking for lake access. Black Wolf Boat Launch is the county's most used boat landing. Ms. Zastera spoke with Adam Breest, Winnebago County Parks Director, and was informed that in the past, the county owned more land at the park and sold it thinking they didn't need it. That money went back to the county. This is an opportunity to replace that land that was sold for additional parking with Federal Spirit Fund dollars and it wouldn't cost the taxpayers. They would appreciate your support in bringing this need up before the commission.

County Board Supervisor Kay Horan spoke about the value of life. The Sheriff's Office STAR program, Solutions Recovery, Christine Ann Center, Human Services, Health Department and Fire Departments are all in the job of saving lives. Ms. Horan believes we all need to be aware that saving a life goes from the beginning of life to the end of life.

Don Merkes, City of Menasha Mayor, stated the City of Menasha submitted several proposals and were disappointed that they were never contacted back to get more information about those proposals. He stated this has been a very difficult path to follow. They had found out a couple of days before the meeting that there were items for the City of Menasha on the agenda. Prior to that, they didn't know they were going to be on the agenda and that they're also being considered to be partially funded which means can they afford to do the other half of the project if they only receive partial funding from the county. Mr. Merkes highlighted two Menasha proposals that were on the list originally since it appeared to him that affordable housing is a big priority for this commission based upon some of the things that have been funded. He discussed both proposals, the Nicolet School and the Whiting site properties, and what the City of Menasha could do and what they need to make that happen if the commission would consider these two projects for Spirit Funding.

Jane Lang, City of Neenah Mayor, echoed a lot of what Mayor Don Merkes mentioned to the commission. She shared his disappointment in this entire process. She thinks they've all been a bit confused throughout the process and felt like there was a severe lack of communication to the municipalities, as far as what the commission's priorities were, how that was being accomplished and finally what was the criteria the commission was using to judge these projects. What were the commission's priorities and how were those reflected of what the intention of ARPA dollars originally was supposed to be addressing. That has been a source of frustration for the municipalities. Ms. Lang's understanding of ARPA funding was to address infrastructure and Public Safety. She also echoed Supervisor Kay Horan's statement on the value of life and feels that their project that they put forward relative to the police barricades will save lives.

Aaron Olson, Neenah Police Chief, echoed Mayor Jane Lang's comments. He strongly urges and asks for the commission's support for the Mobile Traffic Barriers in the full requested amount of \$300,000 to protect and keep their citizens safe.

Richard Heath, Town of Algoma Administrator, spoke in support of agenda item no. 8, to fund the south leg of a 2-lane roundabout at the intersection of Leonard Point Road and State Highway 21 in the Town of Algoma.

James Fluette, Director of Public Works for the Village of Winneconne, asked the commission to amend the Village of Winneconne's request to include an additional \$9,500 to help them get their comprehensive strategic plan for Marble Park. They have had a couple donors come forward and want to enhance the park but they need to come up with a plan first. If the commission helps to fund that, they can improve another park under the Spirit Funds.

Supervisor Douglas Nelson spoke in support for agenda item no. 13, to upgrade the Winneconne Parks including remodeling the barn and improving boat ramps and piers, fish cleaning stations, larger bulk heads, extended parking in the Village of Winneconne.

Supervisor Douglas Nelson also commented on the airboat issue. The Village of Winneconne just wants an airboat. Mr. Nelson doesn't know that they are that concerned who actually owns the airboat. They just want a good functional airboat in their firehouse that they can respond to. The Village of Winneconne never requested any money for radios because they wanted to make sure there was money so they could have an updated airboat.

Gregory Madaus also spoke regarding agenda item no. 13, to upgrade the Winneconne Parks including remodeling the barn and improving boat ramps and piers, fish cleaning stations, larger bulk heads, extended parking in the Village of Winneconne. Mr. Madaus stated that it was determined on September 7, 2004, at a County Board meeting that the county would transfer the county landing and park to the Village of Winneconne. At that time, it required that the Winnebago County taxpayers pay for improvements prior to the transfer. In the future, Winnebago County would be paying for maintenance and improvements. After the transfer, people had to purchase an additional pass for Winneconne when it was

already part of Winnebago County. Mr. Madaus respectfully asks that someone would make a motion to attach a contingency that for the funding that all county residents with valid permits and passes, the county landings be honored in their program.

Sam Schroeder, Community Development Director, City of Menasha, expanded on the City of Menasha's Mayor Jane Lang's comments. Mr. Schroeder stated there is a lot of projects going on, not only the City of Menasha but every single community. He stressed to really understand what these projects entail and that means communication, understanding the ins and outs of a project. When the City of Menasha received the application process at the end of August, it was shared to us that the county was looking at general ideas; what is the general ideas out in that community. Mr. Schroeder's concern was in no way shape or form did he look at that as actually an application for a grant. Grant writing is storytelling. It's not just the title or headline, it's what your return on your investment will be.

Supervisor Rachael Dowling stated she is very disappointed with the process of ARPA and more disappointed in the lack of communication and the prioritizing of pet projects that she has seen over the last couple of months. Ms. Dowling has heard and seen all of the requests from the communities and that is very disheartening. There are issues that need to be addressed, infrastructure issues that need to be addressed, housing issues that need to be addressed and she really feels like we spent away so much money. She had personally submitted four requests for ARPA dollars for the City of Menasha and feels very rejected and laughed at by what she submitted including the sidewalk project for Appleton Road.

Supervisor Bryan Stafford echoed Mayor Jane Lang's and Police Chief Aaron Olson's comments. Mr. Stafford supports both agenda items, no. 7 and no. 6, to purchase mobile traffic barriers for the City of Neenah and the City of Menasha. He implores the commission to approve funds and bring it forward to the County Board. Mr. Stafford believes this is a great fit for the funds and it is something that will go a long ways in helping our community both remain safe and have an essential building block for us to thrive in the future.

Nick Thorn, Menasha Police Department, spoke in extreme support of agenda item no. 6, to purchase mobile traffic barriers for the City of Menasha.

Jessica Schneider is with the First Five Fox Valley. Her role is the Statewide Expansion Director for the HELP Me Grow Wisconsin. The Help Me Grow Program promotes collaboration across child serving sectors in order to build a more efficient and effective system which promotes healthy development of children. The Help Me Grow system connects families with developmental screenings, early childhood resources and ongoing supportive follow up until the child moves into the school system. Ms. Schneider stated at First Five Fox Valley, they continue to expand free developmental screening opportunities because they are hopeful that protective factors will be strengthened and resiliency will be built in order to prevent and buffer potentially adverse experiences. Their goal is to find children and families where they are and ensure equitable access to services for all families in the community.

Dana Bain, Child Care Resource & Referral Development Director, and I am sitting in for Candy Hall, Child Care Resource & Referral Executive Director. Last month, Ms. Hall presented to the commission the importance of supporting Winnebago childcare workforce employees while simultaneously serving young children and families. Child Care Resource & Referral is requesting Spirit Funds to implement a childcare substitute program for over 90 regulated group and family childcare providers in Winnebago County.

3. Approval of December 14, 2023, meeting minutes.

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Borchart, to approve the December 14, 2023, meeting minutes. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Motion by Belter, seconded by Doemel, to re-open Public Comments. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

2. Public Comments (Continued)

Supervisor Conley Hanson remains befuddled as a first-time supervisor. He has built, ran, and sold a very successful business. He is not yet able to divorce his thinking of fiscal responsibility from private to government by just increasing debt, increase a bond, sales tax, or property tax etc. Mr. Hanson listened to \$80-\$100 million dollars of need from Director Elder. They have the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and budgets before them. As of last night, prior to the vote between the current bond and cash available in the Spirit Fund, they are between 31-33% funded. Mr. Hanson stated it's great to have \$33+ million of funds available. Responsible allocation is his fiduciary responsibility to District 26 and the residents of Winnebago County and not increasing a tax or bond in three years or so to have to fund—now that's a legacy.

4. Discussion: Status of where Municipalities stand regarding the \$145,000 Spirit Funds distribution. A handout is included. Member Paul Kaiser will not be in attendance for this meeting.

A handout was prepared by Paul Kaiser and was included in the packet that showed the status of where the municipalities stand regarding the \$145,000 Spirit Funds distribution due to Mr. Kaiser being excused from today's meeting.

Co-Chair Doemel provided a brief update on this matter.

5. Discussion: Review of interest earned on the Spirit Funds. A handout is included. Member Paul Kaiser will not be in attendance for this meeting.

A handout was prepared by Paul Kaiser and was included in the packet that explained where the Spirit funds are at with the interest earned from those funds. A document was provided that showed the interest earned from the Spirit Fund; Spirit Fund Projects that have been presented and passed by the County Board; and what has been approved and spent at this time.

Co-Chair Doemel provided a brief update on this matter. Mr. Doemel also mentioned that Director Kaiser wanted to make sure that the commission wait until he gets back before the commission has any action on this. Mr. Kaiser is also working with the Personnel & Finance Committee and some others to come up with a Fund Balance Policy where they have something very clear where our general fund should be and where our balances should try to remain. Mr. Kaiser wanted the commission to pause on allocating any of these dollars or putting it anywhere until he gets a better grasp on where those should be.

Mr. Doemel stated hopefully the next meeting the commission can come back with a recommendation and the possible action for what to with that.

6. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Purchase Mobile Traffic Barriers for the City of Menasha (Request \$184,957)

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Belter, to adopt the request to Purchase Mobile Traffic Barriers for the City of Menasha at an amount of \$184,957.

Vote on resolution: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

7. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Purchase Mobile Traffic Barriers for the City of Neenah (Request \$300,000)

Motion by Belter, seconded by Farrey, to adopt the request to Purchase Mobile Traffic Barriers for the City of Neenah at an amount of \$300,000.

Vote on resolution: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

8. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Fund the South Leg of a 2-Lane Roundabout at the Intersection of Leonard Point Road and State Highway 21 in the Town of Algoma (Request \$387,500)

Motion by Egan, seconded by Farrey, to adopt the request to Fund the South Leg of a 2-Lane Roundabout at the Intersection of Leonard Point Road and State Highway 21 in the Town of Algoma at an amount of \$387,500.

Vote on resolution: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

9. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Update Water and Sewer Lines Under the Fox River in the City of Omro (Request \$500,000)

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Borchart, to bring resolution to the floor for discussion without an amount.

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Egan, to adopt the request to Update Water and Sewer Lines Under the Fox River in the City of Omro at an amount of \$500,000.

Motion by Tim Galloway, seconded by Egan, to layover for discussion until the next meeting which will take place on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

10. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Build an Emergency Service Training Facility for the Neenah/Menasha Fire Department (Request \$750,000)

Motion by Egan, seconded by Belter, to adopt the request to Build an Emergency Service Training Facility for the Neenah/Menasha Fire Department at an amount of \$750,000.

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Belter, to make an amendment to the resolution and amend the funding amount to \$500,000.

Vote on amendment to the resolution. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Vote on resolution as amended: AYES: 7; NAYES: 1 - Doemel; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

11. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Develop a 55-Unit Low-Income Mixed-Use Development Project by the Commonwealth Development in the City of Oshkosh (Request \$750,000)

Kelly Nieforth, Community Development Department Director, formally requested to remove the two City of Oshkosh's Spirit Fund application resolutions that were on the January 17, 2024, meeting agenda. The City is withdrawing the two applications that were submitted to the County for Spirit Fund funding. Therefore, this resolution was pulled by the City of Oshkosh.

12. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category for Affordable Workforce Housing in the City of Oshkosh (Request \$995,000)

Kelly Nieforth, Community Development Department Director, formally requested to remove the two City of Oshkosh's Spirit Fund application resolutions that were on the January 17, 2024, meeting agenda. The City is withdrawing the two applications that were submitted to the County for Spirit Fund funding. Therefore, this resolution was pulled by the City of Oshkosh.

13. Discussion/Action: Resolution – Approving \$_____ from the Spirit Fund's Government Identified Community Projects Category to Upgrade the Winneconne Parks including Remodeling the Barn and Improving Boat Ramps and Piers, Fish Cleaning Stations, Larger Bulk Heads, Extended Parking in the Village of Winneconne (Request \$315,000)

Motion by Farrey, seconded by Belter, to adopt the request to Upgrade the Winneconne Parks including Remodeling the Barn and Improving Boat Ramps and Piers, Fish Cleaning Stations, Larger Bulk Heads, Extended Parking in the Village of Winneconne at an amount of \$324,500.

Vote on resolution: AYES: 8; NAYES: 0; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 1 – Buck. PASSED.

14. Discussion/Possible Action: Continue prioritizing, selection, and funding amounts for projects for Spirit Funding.

The commission will continue to discuss the remaining projects; identify details of the project; cost of the project; requested amounts; and determine the amounts to be considered by the commission at the next meeting.

Supervisor Farrey requested that Paul Kaiser communicate with Beth Oswald and give the commission a definitive number before we proceed any further to next meeting. The commission also needs to decide on what to do with the interest.

Mr. Doemel stated Mr. Kaiser may need a little more time to prepare the information Supervisor Farrey requested. A couple of other reasons that Mr. Doemel has for that is that the commission has two projects that are pending; another project that's been pulled and he wants to explain the why on that; and we also have Nova coming back.

Supervisor Farrey stated that is why we need a very definitive number of the amount remaining to allocate and would like Mr. Kaiser to confirm that figure with Beth Oswald's figure on the working spreadsheet.

15. Set next meeting date and time.

The next two meeting dates will be Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. and Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at the David W. Albrecht Administration Building in the Susan T. Ertmer Conference Room (Room 120).

16. Adjournment.

Motion made by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Belter, to adjourn at 3:23 p.m. MOTION CARRIES.

Submitted by:
Cassie Smith-Gregor
Winnebago County Deputy Clerk