

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RICE COUNTY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Commissioner's Room / Government Services Building
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 8:30 AM**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(At each Committee of the Whole Work Session meeting, the floor will be open to solicit public comments on items on the Agenda after they are presented. A Comment Card will need to be filled out in order to speak about any of the items. Public comments will be limited to (3) minutes for each person, subject to the discretion of the County Board Chairperson)

II. PUBLIC HEALTH/NURSING: Deb Purfeerst

- A. Josh Ramaker and Deb Purfeerst gave a brief presentation of the discussion of the Tobacco Retailer Ordinance. Data was provided from some southern counties. More updates to follow at later Committee Meeting.

III. SOCIAL SERVICES: Chris Sammon

- A. The Sauer Family Foundation's Family Resource Center Grant has awarded \$20,000 to the Rice County Family Services Collaborative for the Year 1 Community Assessment and Exploration activities. The grant has awarded \$130,000 to the Collaborative to support Year 2 activities upon the completion of the community assessment.

The time frame of Year 1 is determined by the amount of time it takes to complete the community assessment and is not tied to a pre-set length of time. The Collaborative has set a time frame of having a report prepared by the end of June 2024 to pull down Year 2 funding to begin the work of enhancing and further supporting current efforts. Program hubs in Rice County are providing families with the remaining \$130,000 of the grant.

This grant will be brought to the next Rice County Board meeting to be voted on March 26, 2024.

- B. In January 2024, a new allocation was announced by the Department of Human Services begin to support efforts related to the development and/or expansion of prevention services related to the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Funds will be allocated to counties and federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota to provide prevention and early intervention services. [Minnesota Statutes, section 260.014]

These are primarily prevention funds intended for preventing entry into the child welfare system, preventing further involvement with the child welfare system, or family preservation (supports necessary to maintain children within their families.) At least 10% of the allocation must be used to provide concrete support and services directly to families (including the kin or relatives that the child may be residing with, but this does not include foster placements).

Funds received must not be used to supplant current county or Tribal expenditures for these purposes.

Rice County's allocation for 2024 is \$41,339. It is anticipated this amount will be slightly lower in 2025 and then stabilize over coming years, according to the Department of Human Services.

IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES: Angela Brewer

- A. A presentation by department probation officers Chelle Marquardt, Aaron Osborne, and Willow Schafer to inform the Board and the public of currently utilized cognitive-based and trauma-informed curricula for client skill building and intervention.

V. PARKS & FACILITIES DEPARTMENT: Samantha Schwartz

- A. On March 5th, Matthew Verdick, previous Director of Parks & Facilities, provided the board with a department update which included:

- introduction of team members and duties
- overview of past, current, and future projects

- department organizational chart
- priority and goals
- department responsibilities: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, seasonal, and as requested
- increase in square footage from 2018 to end of 2024
- pictures of mechanical areas at Rice County facilities, which included a brief overview from Verdick, listing of duties at the parks and campground
- 0-5 year timeline as listed in the parks plan for park updates

staffing options included the necessity to carry on operations without contracting services and an option to include the desired position to carry forward the parks plan

VI. HIGHWAY: Dennis Luebbe

- A. Dennis Luebbe, gave an overview of what is happening within his department and some updates on upcoming road construction projects. April 1st will be the first date of the 6-legged round about. This moved up from the middle of April.
- B. The County Board acts as the County's Drainage Ditch Authority to manage the activities within the county ditch system pursuant county policy and state statute. The Transportation & Ditch Committee has explored ways to increase the level of services being provided to the landowners within the various ditches. The current services are provided under contract with the Rice County Soil and Water Conservation District as a ditch inspector. This has operated as a part-time position. A full-time Ditch Manager position is proposed to address a backlog of maintenance and administrative needs, and to develop better management and operations practices. The Transportation & Ditch Committee, and the Personnel Committee have reviewed the proposed position and are in support of moving forward. By leveraging the Highway Department's technical staff to provide assistance and support, the new position is proposed to be housed within the Highway Department. Budget control, public notices, and related administrative requirements will be maintained by the Finance Department. If there is consensus to move forward, the next steps are to address the current contract cancelation clauses and advertise for the position.

VII. HOUSING: Joy Watson

- A. Joy Watson gave a presentation and some updates as to what's happening within her department.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Galen Malecha, seconded by Steve Underdahl, to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Steve Underdahl, Galen Malecha, Jeff Docken, Jim Purfeerst, Gerry Hoisington, NAYS: None