

2023 Annual Reports



**Submitted By:
Columbia County
Departments**



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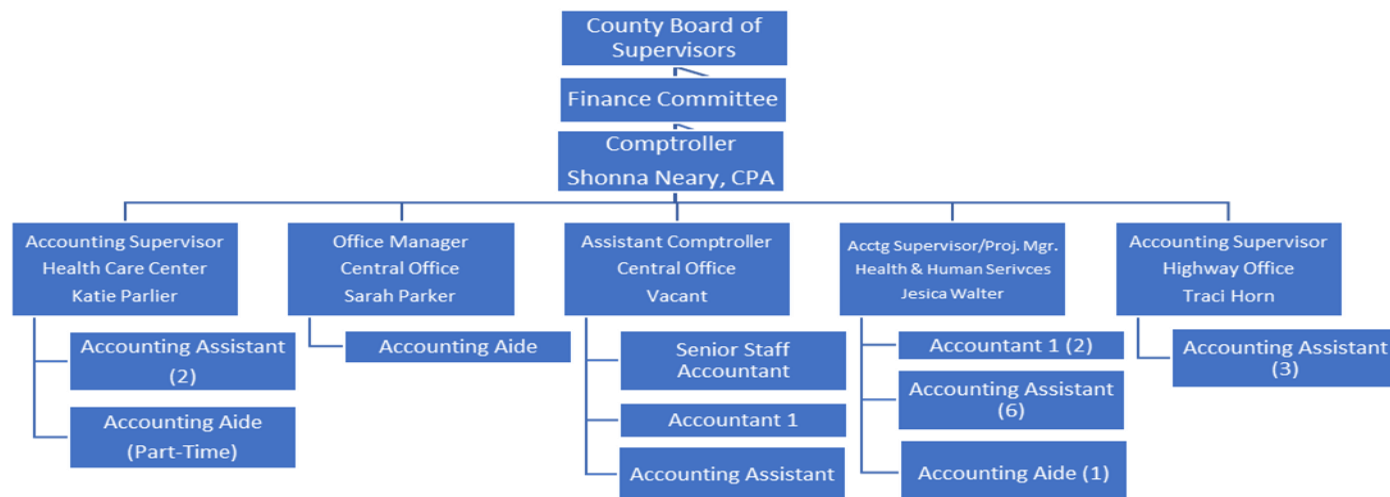
Accounting Department

Department Overview:

Under the direction of the Finance Committee, the Comptroller completes duties of County Auditor as defined in Chapter 59.47 of the Wis. Stats. The Accounting Department maintains the County's financial reporting system and all department subsystems in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and governmental accounting, auditing, and financial reporting guidelines. This department is directly responsible for all accounting related activities and the supervision of operations for the following departments: Columbia County Jail, Health & Human Services, Health Care Center and the Highway Department.

Major responsibilities include: development of accounting systems; debt management; preparation and execution of County budget under Finance Committee review; vendor relations, including processing and payment of all invoices; purchasing, including requests for proposals and securing bids; internal auditing; grant reporting and compliance; preparation of necessary county, state and federal fiscal reports; provide necessary communication to any person(s) regarding County fiscal matters; receipt and journal entry processing; maintenance of County fixed asset system; administration of the Southern Housing Region Program; provide training and assistance to all County departments regarding accounting or budgeting; allocate insurance to County departments and reconciliation of all County accounts; coordinate County independent audit and prepare the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR).

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

RLF/CDBG/Housing Program

	Loans
RLF Close Program	2
Housing Program	
Southern Housing Region	366
Columbia County	40
CDBG	47

Transactions:

Transaction Type	2022	2023
Receipts Processed	7,273	7,194
Journal Entries Posted	3,416	3,398
Bids Posted	50	52
Requisitions Issued	455	468
Voucher Payments Processed	10,284	10,376

Financial Activity:

Fund/Account Name	2022	*2023
Total Revenues/Financing/Transfers In	\$98,529,293	\$101,571,674
Total Expenditures/Transfers Out	\$93,234,781	\$93,584,661
Total County Capital Assets, Including Infrastructure	\$307,340,974	\$309,752,451
Total County Debt	\$44,100,000	\$40,450,000

*County Books are not yet closed for 2023. Statistical information has been estimated.

*2022 and 2023 activity includes COVID and ARPA revenues and expenditures. As a result, 2022 and 2023 totals are higher than normal.

Summary:

The Accounting Department continued to be challenged with staff changes and vacancies throughout 2023. Current staff have taken on additional responsibilities and training opportunities to ensure compliance with all policies/regulations.

In 2023, Accounting completed the following projects/goals in addition to normal daily tasks:

- Developed county-wide training plan. Topics will include procurement, fraud, grant management, and accounting systems navigation.
- Completed research for bid requirements and process.
- Updated policies and procedures as changes occurred. This is an ongoing process.
- Implementation of new GASB statement for Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements-required for 2023 financials.

- Completed long-term capital planning. This will be an ongoing working document to assist with future planning.
- Completed change to tax levy for the transfer of services for the WI Dells dispatch to the County.
- Completed accounting for new grants as well as ongoing grants.

The Accounting Department was awarded GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the third year in a row (2020-2022). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. The program was created to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare annual comprehensive financial reports that evidence transparency and full disclosure.

In 2024, the Accounting Department established the following goals:

- Complete updates to financial forecasts.
- Review and update Procurement Manual for maintenance expenditures.
- Implement accounts payable worksheet for the Highway Department.
- Begin cross-training staff on Highway and Health Care Center operations.
- Complete final ARPA requests, commitments, and reporting.
- Reevaluate the Comprehensive Community Services MA billing.

Presented by: Shonna Neary, Comptroller

Reviewed and approved by: Finance Committee, March 13, 2024



Child Support Agency

Department Overview:

The Child Support Agency is a division of the Corporation Counsel Office. Corporation Counsel Joseph Ruf, III, is the Agency's Department Head. Selina L. Hooker is the Administrator for the Agency. Attorney Jessica Hale is the Assistant Corporation Counsel who handles the majority of legal work for the department. Although the Corporation Counsel Office and Child Support Agency are located in separate buildings, they work closely together contributing to the success and effectiveness of the County's child support program.

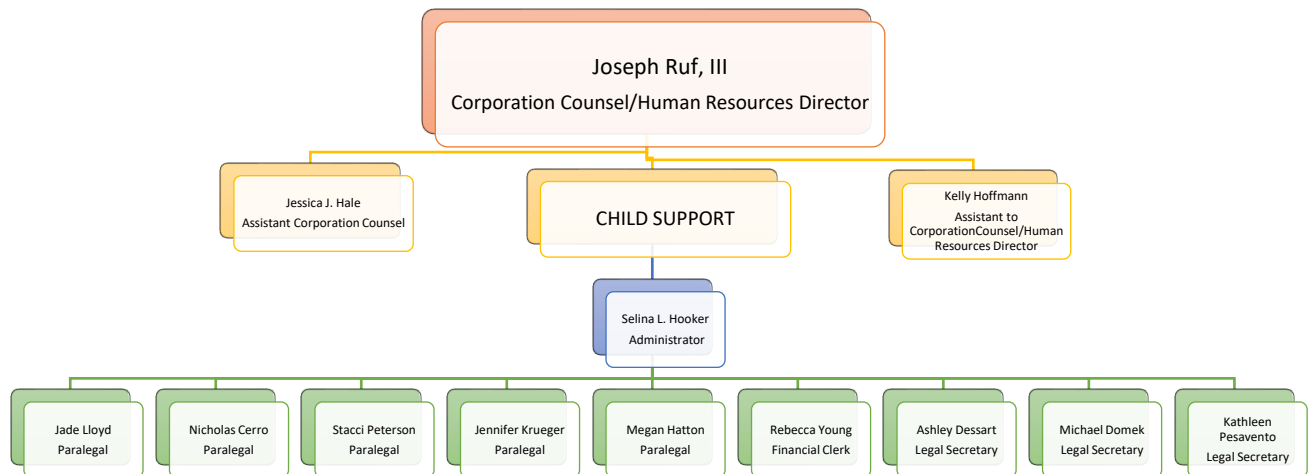
The child support enforcement program is referred to as the IV-D program. It was created by the passage of Title IV-D of the Social Security Act in 1975. All states and US territories are required to operate a child support enforcement program. The program functions through the cooperative efforts of federal, state and local government. The Child Support Agency assists families in becoming self-sufficient and financially independent and helping to ensure that children have the financial support of both of their parents. The Agency actively works on IV-D cases. The Agency also provides limited services on Non IV-D cases. Some of the IV-D services provided by the Agency include:

- Set and enforce child support and health insurance orders for separated parents through court actions such as Actions to Compel Support and Temporary Orders in pending divorce matters.
- Establish paternity and set and enforce orders for child support, health care coverage and birth cost recovery, when appropriate, on behalf of children whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth.
- In cases where the children are in out-of-home placement and have been referred to the Child Support Agency, establish paternity when appropriate, establish and enforce child support and health insurance orders.
- Initiate Intergovernmental actions when one of the parents is living out of state or in some instances when the noncustodial parent is living in another country and the United States or the State of Wisconsin has a reciprocal agreement with that country.

The Child Support Agency uses judicial and administrative processes to manage its caseload. In 2023, the Agency had Cooperative Agreements with the Clerk of Courts and the Family Court Commissioner. Those Cooperative Agreements allow the County to receive direct reimbursement for costs incurred by those departments in the performance of their duties relating to child support matters.

The Agency's principal funding is through Federal reimbursement of allowable administrative costs at the rate of 66%. The Agency also receives incentive funding based on its performance for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) from October 1 through September 30.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

The Child Support Agency had a slight decrease in its IV-D caseload that went from 2,397 cases in 2022 to 2,341 cases in 2023. Staff in the Agency continue to review files thoroughly and close cases as appropriate. Staff send out child support applications on our Non IV-D cases to customers asking if they would like the Agency to enforce their child support order. If they complete the application and return it to the Agency, we are able to open a new IV-D case which boosts our IV-D case count.

Child support agencies receive performance incentives that are partially contingent upon meeting specific performance targets set by the State and Federal Government. The four (4) performance targets for the Federal Fiscal Year are as follows:

- Paternity Establishment Rate 90%
- Court Order Rate 80%
- Current Support Collection Rate 80%
- Arrears Collection Rate 80%

At the Director's Dialogue in 2024, the State Bureau of Child Support will announce those agencies who have earned the 2023 Certificate of Excellence Award in meeting or exceeding Federal performance measures. At the end of the Federal Fiscal Year (September of 2023), the Agency once again met the performance criteria.

- Columbia County Paternity Establishment Rate 105.82%
- Columbia County Court Order Rate 92.44%
- Columbia County Current Support Collection Rate 85.19%
- Columbia County Arrears Collection Rate 86.01%

The Child Support Agency utilizes various judicial and administrative means to collect child support. These include income withholding, real and personal property liens, bank account seizures, passport denial and State and Federal Tax refund intercepts.

SUPPORT COLLECTIONS FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2023	
Current Support Due	\$5,541,439.62
Current Support	\$4,720,732.50
Difference	\$820,707.12

Summary:

The Child Support Agency continues to strive to provide great levels of service to our customers. The Child Support Agency continues to work extremely well as a team, and as such was again able to achieve the federal performance measures to retain all of our County funding.

Presented by: Joseph Ruf, III, Corporation Counsel/Human Resources Director and Administrator Selina L. Hooker

Reviewed and approved by: Judiciary Committee on March 12, 2024



Clerk of Court

Department Overview:

The Clerk of Circuit Court is an elected position with a four-year term. The Clerk's duties are governed primarily by Section 59.40 of the Wisconsin Statutes, as well as numerous other cites throughout the Statutes, Supreme Court Rules, County resolutions, and local court procedures. The primary duties of the office include serving as the official custodian of the Columbia County Circuit Court records, case management, implementation of court automation, jury management, oversight of the court finances and budget including collection of court ordered financial obligations, and court administration. The office serves as an administrative link between the State, the judiciary, the county board, and the public in a manner that is professional, courteous and efficient. Our goal is to provide quality justice-related support services to all participants and the public in an easily accessible and respectful environment. The Clerk of Court office processes passport applications, responds to open record requests and appeals, participates in educational settings for the youth in our communities, and is the liaison with multiple public and private agencies involved with the legal lives of our citizens through the court system.

Organizational Chart:

Julie Kayartz - Elected Clerk of Circuit Court

Katena Stilson - Chief Deputy appointed by Clerk of Court

Terri Schmidt – Deputy-Financial Clerk

Criminal/Traffic

Melissa Bescup, Deputy Clerk

Rebecca Bolgrien, Deputy Clerk

Heather Budka, Deputy Clerk

Crystal Saucedo, Deputy Clerk

Family/Civil

Tammy Gorman, Deputy Clerk

April Whaley, Deputy Clerk

Nicole Saley, Deputy Clerk

Amy Jenatscheck, Deputy Clerk

Due to the workload in the clerks' office, a job share arrangement for scanning/filing purposes was instituted with the Register in Probate in 2012. The juvenile clerk, Dawn Lowrey, assists in the clerk's office for 50% of the workday.

Judicial Assistant
Jennifer Nawrot, Branch 1
Joni Busse, Branch 2
Brandy Langsdorf, Branch 3

The judicial assistants are under the supervision of the judges, but they work very closely with the clerk staff in managing the judicial calendars and caseload.

Statistical Performance:

Comparison of Cases Filed:

Type of Cases:	2021	2022	2023	Difference from Previous Year
Family	247	264	279	15
Paternity	34	59	73	14
Civil	327	340	394	54
Small Claims	831	778	928	150
Inmate Petition	7	5	3	-2
Complex Forfeiture	2	2	3	1
Transcript of Judgment	51	62	57	-5
Foreign Judgment	5	2	3	1
Construction Lien	4	3	8	5
Other Lien	24	45	37	-8
Tax Warrant	168	159	180	21
John Doe	8	2	7	5
Felony	740	730	717	-13
Misdemeanor	630	516	558	42
Criminal Traffic	394	350	184	-166
Civil Traffic	7748	7848	8726	878
Juvenile Ordinance	53	20	42	22
Forfeiture Ordinance	1235	939	1220	281
Totals:	12508	12124	13419	1295

Passports Processed:

	2021	2022	2023
Totals:	231	313	471

*** Columbia County receives \$35 for each processed passport.

Jury Trial Summary:

	2021	2022	2023
Total number of jury trials for which a summons was mailed:	10	46	80
Total number of jury trials completed:	9	20	24

*** Every calendar year, 800-1,000 cases are scheduled for jury trial, some being scheduled solely specific dates but most case are stacked.

Revenue Collected:

	2021	2022	2023
State	\$ 1,732,521	\$ 1,897,392	\$1,966,089
County	\$ 607,223	\$ 664,307	\$681,706
Totals:	\$ 2,339,744	\$ 2,561,699	\$2,647,795

*** All revenue collected and disbursed is set by legislation/Wisconsin Statutes, Supreme Court Rules, or county ordinances. Revenue collected is split between Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin at various percentage rates depending on the type of revenue.

Additional Revenue Collected:

	2021	2022	2023
Totals:	\$ 255,821	\$ 345,132	\$462,960

*** Retained solely by Columbia County, such as passport fees, payment plan fees, copy fees, attorney fees, etc. Any past-due accounts have whatever collection action(s) are available for the unpaid financial obligations attached to them, whether they are payment plans, suspension of licenses, tax intercepts, civil judgments, and/or collection agency actions.

Payment for Circuit Court Costs:

	2021	2022	2023
Totals:	\$ 320,868	\$ 323,677	\$335,732

*** Pursuant to 758.19(5)(b), Columbia County also received court support payments from the State of Wisconsin in two installments, based on a statewide formula. Those payments are not specifically itemized in the Clerk of Court, Register in Probate, nor in the Court Operations budget, other than the interpreter portion of fees which are reflected in the Clerk of Court budget.

Summary:

In 2023, brought a transition to the Clerk of Court's Office with new elected Clerk of Court, appointment of a new chief deputy, and retirement of a deputy clerk with over 25 years of experience in the traffic area. With the transition, procedures and record management were and are in the process of being reviewed. The staff has been challenged with changes and processes of record management, which includes documents and exhibits. With new and newer staff, the deputy clerks have to learn and train, all the while, continuing to staying current with processing of cases and clerking all the hearings.

In review, court case filing were up for 2023 and more specifically in the areas of traffic, ordinances, and small claims. Court personnel and staff in our justice partner departments continued to work through scheduling and disposing of pending and current cases while still dealing with staffing issues. Although staffing was better for the second half of 2023, the challenge is new attorneys in the District Attorney and Public Defender offices still need to be trained. In 2023, 24-jury trial were held. This included a 6-day homicide trial and several other multi-day civil and criminal trials. Another area that saw a significant increased was the processing of passport application. In 2023, 158 more applications were processed than the previous year. The main reason for the increase is surrounding counties clerk's office are no longer processing passport applications.

Collections of court cost, fines/forfeitures, court appointed attorney and guardian ad litem fees continues to be a major effort for the Clerk of Court's office. Court appointed attorney billing was significantly higher for 2023. This was due to number of criminal cases that was completed in 2023 and the issue of Public Defender's office finding attorneys. In July, we collaborated with Department of Revenue (DOR) to participate with the State Debt Collection (SDC) program in the collection efforts of the outstanding debt owed of these costs. Finally, we are preparing for a transition of the financial process in CCAP, which will be coming in 2024.

Presented by: Julie Kayartz, Clerk of Courts

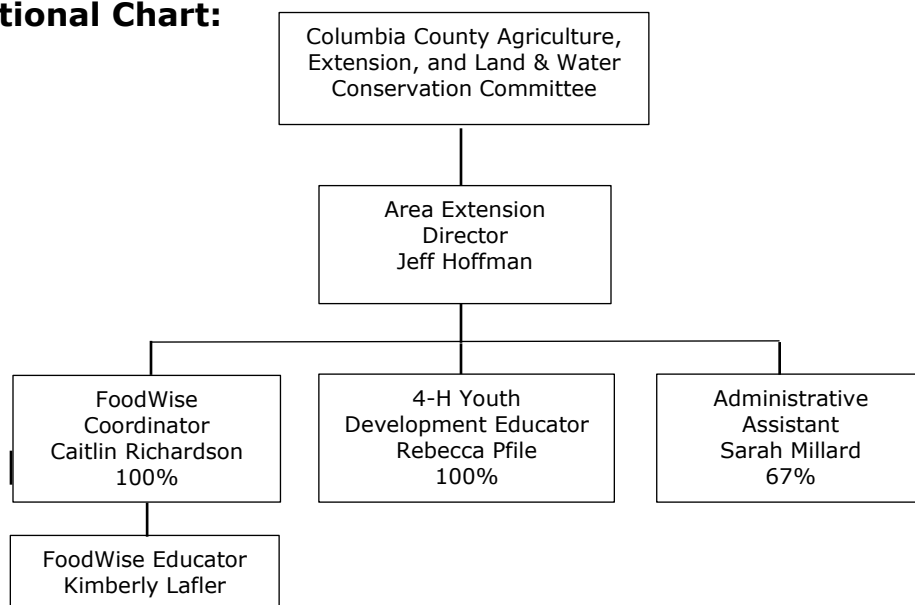
Reviewed and approved by: Reviewed and Approved by Judiciary on March 12, 2024

Columbia County Extension

Department Overview:

Columbia County Extension operates under the direction of the Agriculture, Extension, and Land & Water Conservation Committee with authority under Chapter 59.56 (3) of Wis. Statutes. Under the direction of an Area Extension Director, the office staff consists of two full-time educators, one part-time educator and one part-time support staff. Education in areas include: 4-H Positive Youth Development and FoodWise Nutrition Education.

Organizational Chart:



Department Programs & Partners:

- Pesticide Applicator Training
- FoodWise Nutrition Education
- Portage Summer Lunch Program
- 4-H Club Membership Program
- 4-H Special Projects
- Youth Development Programs – Dodge & Sauk County
- Columbia Healthcare Center
- Columbia County Fair and Lodi Agriculture Fair
- Columbia County Master Gardener Volunteers
- MacKenzie Center
- Wisconsin Department of Ag, Trade & Consumer Protection
- Columbia County ADRC

Portage Public Library
City of Portage
Portage Youth Center
Portage Presbyterian Church
Wisconsin Dells School District

Statistical Performance:

- 1) The Portage Summer Lunch Program** - was a collaborative effort of Columbia County Extension, Portage Public Library, City of Portage, Portage Presbyterian Church, community volunteers, School District of Wisconsin Dells, and more. It provided food to children 18 years and under on weekdays during the summer months when school lunches were not available and snack packs for the weekends when lunches were not available. The program offered lunches at four sites in Portage, Monday through Friday with a final count of 4,009 lunches served and 1120 snack packs distributed.
- 2) FoodWise Nutrition Education** - seeks to empower Columbia County (CC) residents with limited incomes to live healthier lifestyles. CC FoodWise taught 751 participants during the 45 program activities that were held at sites such as elementary schools and subsidized housing.
- 3) StrongBodies Exercise Program** - Two 8-week sessions were offered in collaboration with the Columbia County FoodWise and the Columbia County ADRC. The free StrongBodies strength training exercise program is for middle-aged and older adults. A total of 14 participants took part in the program. Equipment required was provided with the assistance of FoodWise funding.
- 4) Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT)** - Columbia County farmers attended Pesticide Applicator Trainings in 2023 as required for certification by the Wisconsin Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The training sessions provided 3.5 hours of training and then the farmers completed a 70-question exam in order to be certified to purchase and use restricted use chemicals on their farms. The in-person training at the Arlington Agricultural Research Station provided 60 farmers with information to safely handle, mix, and apply pesticides to protect their own health and the environment we live in. Columbia County farmers participated in the Zoom trainings and take the exam at the Columbia County Extension office. Columbia County Extension also proctored the exams of 27 farmers that came to the office who chose the self-study option.
- 5) Columbia County 4-H Youth Development Programs** provided educational opportunities in 2023 for the 266 youth who enrolled, with the support of 43 enrolled adult volunteers and numerous other adults who contributed their time and talent (e.g. parents/caregivers, fair board members, project specialists, etc.). Programming continued to be offered in-person and virtually. Youth participated in Wreath Making at Miller's Tree Farm, Cupcake Wars, Planter Night with the Columbia County Master Gardeners, and a Clothing Review prior to the fair. 4-H clubs resumed fully in-person meetings. 4-H clubs continued to foster a sense of belonging and worked hard to increase their club enrollment and retention numbers. Youth shared demonstrations about their projects and continued to learn by trying new project areas to find ones that ignite a spark of interest. Columbia County 4-H collaborated with Sauk and Dodge County 4-H programs to offer a 3-night, 4-day summer camp experience at Camp Lakotah in Waushara County. Columbia County youth participated in the county fair, and other statewide educational travel experiences that resumed post

covid. Cloverbud day camp resumed for the youngest 4-H members and was held at the MacKenzie Center in the fall. Cloverbuds also enjoyed virtual educational series tailored to their age and stage of learning. Much of the programming was made possible through the partnership with the 43 approved Columbia County 4-H volunteers. These individuals were devoted to providing quality youth programming and facilitating positive youth development in their clubs.

- 6) The **4-H Weekly Update - Becky's Bulletin** - is one of many means of communication for the 4-H Youth Development program and was shared to 368 recipients. Families embraced this communication tool and got involved in many 4-H and youth educational events and activities. This electronic newsletter keeps youth and their families informed of breaking news and opportunities.
- 7) The **Columbia County Fair and Lodi Agriculture Fair** were held in 2023--the Columbia County Fair during the last full week of July and the Lodi Agriculture Fair during the first week of July. Youth and adults alike exhibited their project work and county residents attended as in years prior to the pandemic. The objectives of the county fairs were met!

Summary:

Columbia County Extension strives to improve the overall quality of life for Columbia County residents. Our purpose is to teach, learn, lead and serve by connecting Columbia County citizens with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities. Our educational programming includes the areas of 4-H Positive Youth Development and FoodWise Nutrition Education.

Presented by: Jeff Hoffman

Reviewed and Approved by: Agriculture, Extension, and Land & Water Conservation Committee

Date: 2/5/2024



Columbia County Library System Board

Department Overview:

Columbia County maintains a library service under the authority of Wisconsin Statute 43.57(3), to serve the residents of the County who do not live in municipalities that have established libraries or to improve the library services of the municipal libraries. The Columbia County Library Board (CCLB) is composed of one school district administrator (or designee), two County Board supervisors, and four at-large members from throughout the County.

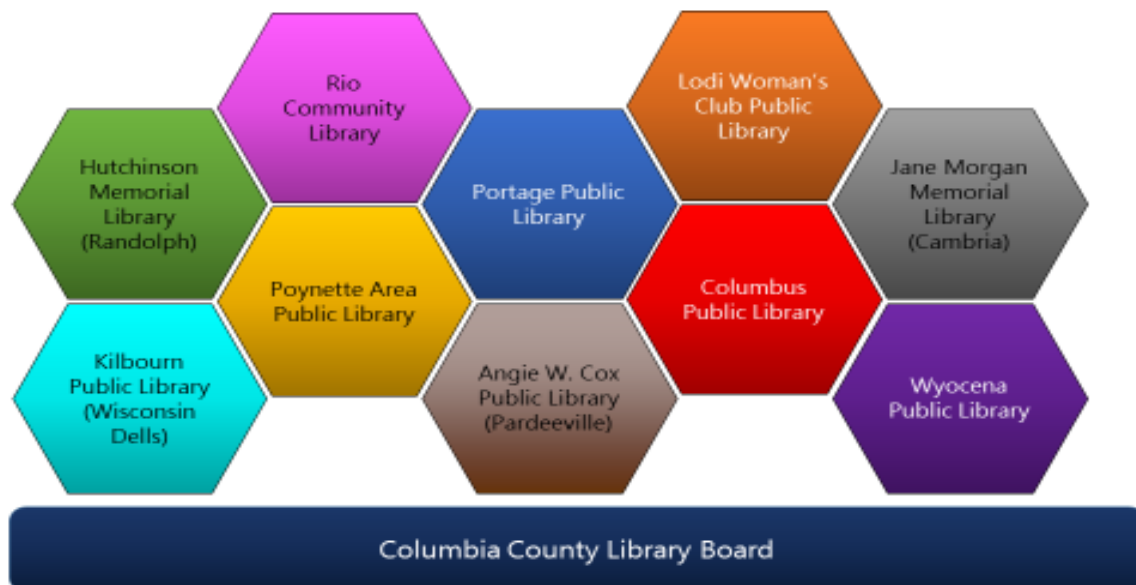
The CCLB tries to meet bimonthly at each of the ten County public libraries on a rotating basis. Library service to County residents, both rural and municipal, is provided by the libraries in Columbia County with assistance from County funds.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Columbia County Library Board is to advocate for public libraries and to ensure quality library service for all residents of Columbia County.

2023 Goals:

- I. Build partnerships and develop cooperative programs that support local community needs.** Public libraries are valued assets and are places that connect citizens to community resources and add to the quality of life in Columbia County communities.
- II. Provide high quality technology services and increase access to digital resources.** The CCLB acknowledges the importance of access to quality technology services and digital resources to Columbia County residents.
- III. Enhance information resources available at the County's public libraries and develop innovative ways to increase their use and reach new audiences.** At the heart of any library are the information resources and services it provides. The CCLB encourages additions to collections in all its libraries and the development of creative ways to enhance their use.
- IV. Continue to support/advocate for increased funding resources both public and private.** The Board acknowledges that the operational costs of libraries such as building collections, SCLS delivery services, library resource payments, et al, increase just as they do for any other program.
- v. Continue an ongoing planning process, which responds to the changing library service needs of County residents.**

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance: (10 libraries combined)

Total Circulation:	379,921 items (books, audio, video, other) checked out (nearly a 2% increase from last year) Circulation continues to climb.
Electronic Circulation:	87,927 (e-books, e-audio, e-video) checked out (nearly a 12% increase from last year) Overdrive circulation continues to climb.
In-Person Programs:	2,218 unique programs (14% increase in programs offered) 45,318 participants (35% increase in those attending)

County Funding of the Library Services Program

Columbia County contributes funds to its ten libraries for services that these libraries provide to its "rural residents" (County residents who live in communities that do not have a local library). The amount paid to each library is based on usage:

Columbia County Payments to its Own Libraries 2023 **Total=\$589,210**

Cambria	\$26,980	Poynette	\$61,734
Columbus	\$91,572	Randolph	\$35,123
Lodi	\$78,268	Rio	\$58,303
Pardeeville	\$47,735	Wisconsin Dells	\$24,864
Portage	\$158,143	Wyocena	\$6,488

Columbia County must also pay the libraries in adjacent counties for their use by Columbia County rural residents:

Payments to Libraries in Adjacent Counties 2023 **Total=\$153,753**

Columbia County provides base level funding to the County Resource Library for consultation services to other County libraries, administrative planning and meeting attendance, research and reporting, printing and support for the County Library Board for all County residents. In 2023, five thousand dollars was distributed equally among the ten libraries, used to offset delivery service fees, totaling \$46,963 (less than 11%).

Resource Library (Portage) **Total=\$9,000**

Advocate of the Year:

Lori Bongert, teacher at the Rio Elementary School, and strong library supporter was selected in 2023 as the Library Advocate of the Year. Lori brings her fourth grade class over to the Rio Community Library weekly for reading time. In addition, Lori is a personal library user. She encourages teachers to get involved with their local library, to see the value of the services provided and promotes the library—generating interest for children, educators and the community. The Library Advocate of the Year award has evolved into a traveling plaque, which is presented to the recipients at their home library by the CCLB and the local director. The plaque is displayed at the home library until the award is passed on to the next year's recipient.

Operating Expenses **Total=\$0**

Library Advocate of the Year Award	\$100
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Summary:

The role of libraries is changing. As part of the South Central Library System (SCLS), our smallest Columbia County libraries serve a population of approximately 750 residents, while our largest city is serving a population over 10,500 people. Collectively, 267,774 people entered through our front doors in 2023. Each library has a tale to tell. Each community is unique.

What do our libraries have in common?

- **Story times** for children are available in most of our public libraries. Some libraries offer programs for toddlers and infants. The **Summer Library Program**—our most widely recognized program, works to combat summer slide, a situation brought on during the months, when there is no school. However, most Summer Library Programs are no longer designed just for children, but also teens and adults. All ages participate in summer reading and enjoy activities and incentive programs to keep reading and learning. In Columbia County, some of our communities have very few children, while others are comprised primarily of young families. Serving the very young, supporting the elderly are occurring simultaneously.
- **Friends organizations** for many of our libraries help fill gaps, supplementing programming, collection and technology needs. Friends often answer the call to volunteer and raise funds for toys, equipment and furniture.
- **Homeschooling** is a growing need in our communities. Since the pandemic home schooling has increased. Our residents are requesting programs that improve social peer interaction, growth, learning and stimulating opportunities that teach and bring more families together.
- **Monthly book clubs** encourage exploration of new writing styles, discussion on topics of particular interest, opportunities for socializing with neighbors.
- **Social services** has never before taken such a prominent role in libraries. **Assistance** with housing, tax services, job applications and resumes, food assistance, mental health, alcoholism, drug dependency, and Alzheimer and dementia support are just some of the fundamental needs requested by residents.
- **Literacy and tutor training** is increasing through volunteer literacy networks. Meeting at libraries, using educational manuals to aid tutors and immigrants that are struggling with the English language helps bridge the divide between cultural understanding and communication skills.
- **Technology literacy skills** is as necessary as reading literacy in this country. Librarians are tasked with assisting residents with everything from setting up email addresses, teaching texting skills, providing “how-to” tutorials for navigating smart-phones, helping patrons print messages and attachments, solving laptop malfunctions and instructing users on basic computer skills.
- **Genealogy and Historical Research** is commonly requested in libraries—sharing stories, exploring the past using collection materials. Columbia County is rich with historical significance—authors, inventors, activists, leaders and discoverers. Many libraries provide historical and genealogical data and first edition texts.
- **Free information, free programming, free use of collections and services** are offered to everyone that steps foot inside the library. Needs range from using the copier to reader’s advisory, creating a will, sitting down at a computer and providing a warm, safe place to relax.

Columbia Health Care Center

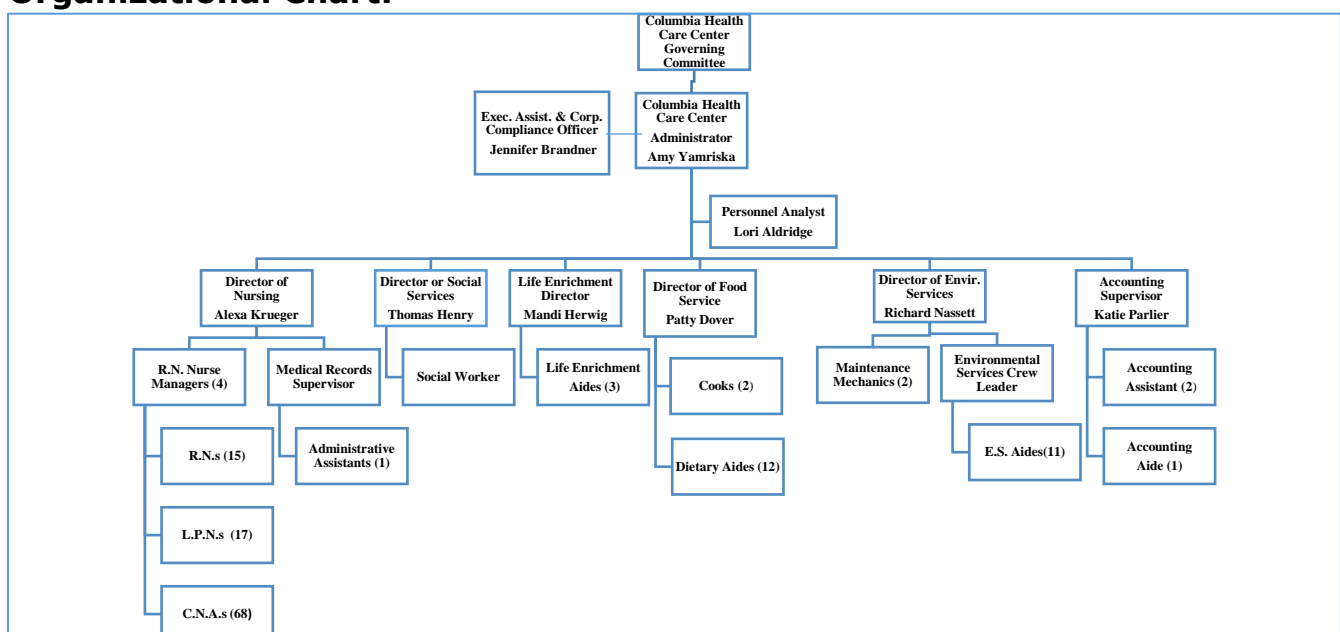
Department Overview:

The Columbia Health Care Center is a 95-bed skilled nursing facility (SNF) located in Wyocena and licensed by the State of Wisconsin. This facility is governed by the Columbia Health Care Center Committee to ensure quality care within budgetary means and compliance with State and Federal Regulations.

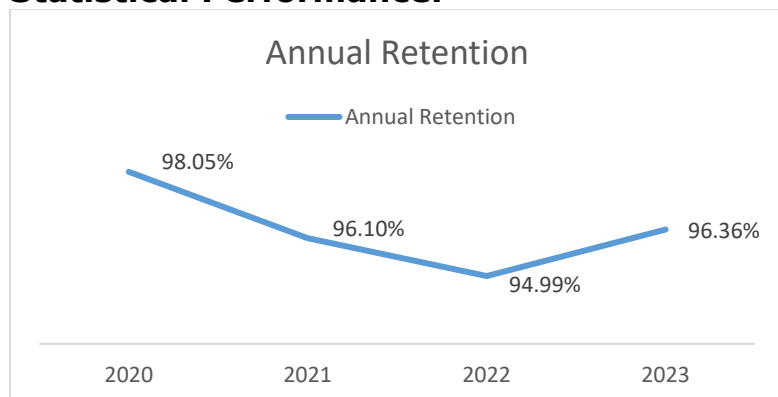
Columbia Health Care Center is dedicated to being a leader of providing high-quality care to Columbia County residents. We continue to strengthen our reputation by providing innovative resident centered post-acute and long-term care. Columbia Health Care Center offers the following services: 24-hour supervision by licensed nursing staff, dietary monitoring, occupational/physical/speech therapy, social service intervention, and recreational therapy. The facility has 25 beds specially designated for the care and behavioral programming of residents diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia related diseases.

Columbia Health Care Center's primary funding sources are Medicare, Medical Assistance and Private Pay. Medicare is a federal program which pays up to 100 days in a nursing home; residents who qualify for Medicare often have extensive nursing and therapy needs. Medical Assistance (Medicaid) is a state program.

Organizational Chart:

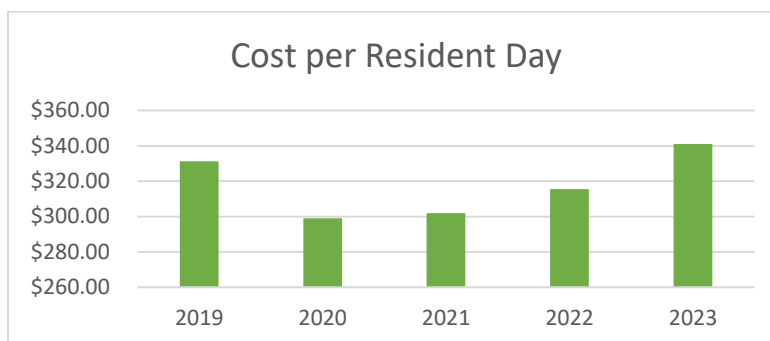


Statistical Performance:



Columbia Health Care Center employs 115 full and part-time employees who provide excellent care, purposeful living, and a quality lifestyle to our residents in a caring and efficient manner. 66% of the health care center's staff have been employed for less than five years. Five nursing assistant classes were held to increase direct care workers.

The 2023 average daily cost of providing care to one resident at the health care center was \$342.82. Costs have increased due to labor, food, utility, and supply costs. Employees' salary and fringe expense makes up 77% of the health care center's operating expenses.



(Lower Percentages are Better)	CHCC	State	National
Percentage of high-risk residents with pressure sores	2.8%	7.8%	8.0%
Percent of residents with a urinary tract infection	1.3%	3.2%	2.2%
Percentage of residents who have depressive symptoms	0.0%	5.9%	8.7%
Percentage of residents whose ability to move independently worsened	11.4%	18.6%	18.3%
Percentage of residents who lose too much weight	1.7%	5.6%	6.0%
Percentage of residents who received an antianxiety or hypnotic medication	7.8%	15.6%	19.4%

Columbia Health Care Center is a Five-Star rated facility by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). A Five-Star rating is given when a nursing home provides care that is well above average quality.

Summary:

The COVID Public Health Emergency ended on May 11, 2023. However, the health care center still has several COVID requirements set by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Center Disease Control that must be met. The health care center is also required to treat one positive COVID test of a staff and/or resident as a COVID outbreak requiring masking and follow-up testing of exposed staff and residents. The health care

center is also required to educate, offer and track COVID vaccines for all residents and staff. The health care center's resident Up to Date COVID vaccination rate is 90%; the national resident average is 40.4% and state average is 51.7%. Staff Up to Date COVID vaccination rate is 10%; the national average is 13.1% and state average is 11.3%.

2023 Accomplishments and highlights:

- Columbia Health Care Center celebrated **165 years** of caring on December 30, 2023.
- For the 20th year in a row Columbia Health Care Center utilized **ZERO** Columbia County tax levy dollars.
- The 2024 budget was submitted utilizing **ZERO** Columbia County tax levy dollars, for the 21st year in a row.
- Columbia Health Care Center was identified as a High Performing Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) for long-term care by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- Columbia Health Care Center's year-end operating expenses were \$1,253,382 under budget. Each department is committed to managing expenses and \$681,204 was returned to Health Care Center's reserve fund.
- The average Medical Assistance and Family care reimbursement to Columbia Health Care Center was \$290.09. Columbia Health Care Center loses an average of \$52.73 per Medical Assistance/Family Care patient day.
- Columbia Health Care Center received \$72,200 in Supplemental Payment (SP) from the State of Wisconsin to offset the M.A. losses at a rate \$5.43/Medical Assistance Day.
- The accounts receivable write off was \$1,138.62, which is .01% of total operating revenue.
- Columbia Health Care Center's average occupancy was 66%. 8% of residents were Medicare, 27% were private pay, 51% were Medical Assistance and Family Care, 4% were Medical Assistance Hospice/insurance and 10% were VA contract.
- A new Veteran Care Agreement (VCA) was signed with the Veterans Administration. Columbia Health Care Center has five veterans under a VCA.
- There were 23,031 in-house resident days. A total of 107 residents were admitted, 86% came from an acute care hospital. 105 residents were discharged, over 54% of discharged residents returned home or went to a lesser restrictive environment.
- Several employees celebrated milestones this year: one employee retired; five employees celebrated over 30 years with Columbia Health Care Center and nine staff had perfect attendance.
- Columbia Health Care Center's nursing assistant training program was approved by the State of Wisconsin. The health care center held five classes and trained 34 nursing assistants; 24 were still employed at the end of the year.
- Columbia Health Care Center partnered with Madison College for training Registered Nurses in rural long-term care settings to become Department of Health Services nurse aide trainers. This program will allow a health care center Nurse Manager to provide the clinical training component of the nursing assistant program at the facility.

- Columbia Health Care Center achieved the status of Dementia Capable through the LeadingAge Wisconsin Dementia Care Designation System. This achievement acknowledges that the health care center provides specific approaches that support and care for persons living with dementia.
- The dietary department returned to offering weekly staff specials and salad bar and had total sales of \$10,016.
- Two dietary staff completed the ServSafe exam and became ServSafe certified.
- The back parking lots were chip coated. New parking stripes and signage were applied to the back parking lots.
- Willow Ct. was re-sided with composite siding and new aluminum soffits were installed.
- All four water softeners for the facility failed and were replaced.
- A tabletop exercise was completed through coordination with South Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (SCWHEREC) regarding a prolonged winter storm. A planned drill was completed regarding loss of computer access and network. These drills are a required federal regulation.
- The Environmental Services department maintained 95,708 sq. ft., cleaning and disinfecting in accordance with state and federal regulations.
- Columbia Health Care Center's Life Enrichment Department was able to host several events that have been on hold since March 2020: community Easter egg hunt, facility family picnic and community trick or treat.
- The Columbia Health Care Center Foundation, Inc. partnered with Links Greenhouse and held two plant sales raising \$670. The Foundation partially funded cable TV services for the residents and purchased supplies for new resident "Welcome Bags".
- The Columbia Health Care Center Foundation paid for install and monthly support of the resident wi-fi in the center lobby. The residents may now use their personal devices to access email, Facebook, etc.
- The resident council group hosted a few craft/bazaar and bake sales to raise funds to pay for volunteer lunches during outings. The council also published a recipe calendar and raised \$115 toward purchasing two apple trees for Columbia Health Care Center.
- The Life Enrichment Department provided bus outings to area businesses such as Sassy Cow Creamery, Carols Cones, Lapaceks and Ski-Hi Apple Orchards, International Crane Foundation, local greenhouses and restaurants and Thursday night band concerts.

Facility goals for 2024 are: Continue the tradition of not utilizing county tax levy; Expand recruitment of Certified Nursing Assistants (C.N.A.s) through facility's training program and WisCaregivers; Maintain a 5-star rating on CMS's care compare website.

On behalf of the residents and staff, thank you for your continued support of the Columbia Health Care Center.

Presented by: Amy E. Yamriska, Administrator
 Reviewed and approved by: Health Care Center Committee on March 5, 2024



Corporation Counsel

Department Overview:

The Corporation Counsel is the County's attorney and serves as the managing attorney in the County's law office. The primary function of the Department is to provide advice, legal counsel and opinions to the County Board and its committees, elected officials, and related agencies. In addition to serving as the County's legal advisors, Department staff draft resolutions and ordinances and Department attorneys represent the County in all disputes including those with other counties and units of government. As the County's civil trial attorneys, the Corporation Counsel and Assistant Corporation Counsels research and draft legal pleadings, correspondence, briefs and other memoranda, and represent the County in motion hearings, court trials, civil jury trials, and administrative tribunals.

In addition to serving as the County's managing attorney, the Corporation Counsel is also the Department Head for the Child Support Agency, which has ten (10) employees. The 2023 Child Support Agency Annual Report will be presented separately.

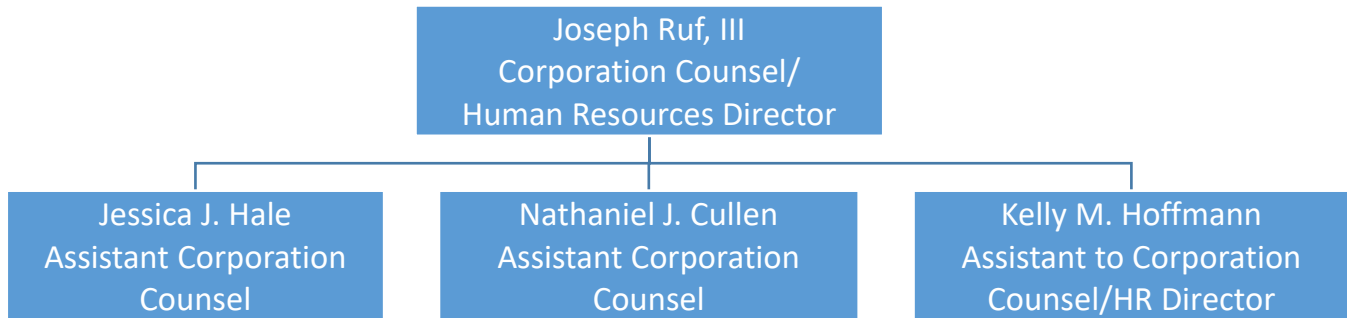
The Assistant Corporation Counsels and Corporation Counsel regularly appear in court in all cases involving the County, most frequently in civil commitments, guardianships, protective placements, child support, paternity matters, and delinquent tax and debt collection cases.

Assistant Corporation Counsel Nathaniel J. Cullen is the trial counsel and primary legal advisor for county departments including Clerk of Courts and Circuit Courts System, Columbia Health Care Center, District Attorney, Health and Human Services, Land Information, Planning and Zoning, Land and Water Conservation, and UW-Extension.

Assistant Corporation Counsel Jessica J. Hale is the trial counsel and primary legal advisor for county departments including Child Support Agency, County Clerk, Facilities Management, Highway, Management Information Services, Medical Examiner, Sheriff's Office, and Solid Waste and Recycling.

Since October 2004, the Office of Corporation Counsel and Human Resources Department have operated as a combined department under a single department head - Corporation Counsel/Human Resources Director. With a total staff of four (4) full-time employees, the Corporation Counsel Office continues to provide high quality legal services to all County departments while rigorously controlling costs and without the need for outside counsel in most cases.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

The Department continued to handle a large number of increasingly complex court cases in 2023, including child support matters that are detailed separately in the 2023 Child Support Agency Annual Report. In 2023, the Department represented the County in the following cases, other than child support matters consisting of:

COMPARISON OF CASES				
TYPES OF CASES		2022		2023
Small Claim Proceedings/Civil Proceedings		13		9
Planning & Zoning Ordinance Violations		81		0*
Settlement Agreement (Mental Commitments)		25		32
Change of Venue to Another County (Mental Commitments)		4		3
Involuntary Mental Commitments		9		6
Voluntary/Dismissed Mental Commitments		35		38
Extension Orders (Mental Commitments)		15		20
Return to More Restrictive (Mental Commitments)		4		6
State at Large (Mental Commitments)		2		0
Guardianship/Protective Placements		36		38
Protective Placement Reviews (Uncontested)		70		71
Miscellaneous Guardianship/Protective Placement Reviews (Contested)		19		19
Order for Special Administration (Medical Examiner's Office)		0		3
TOTAL CASES:		313		245

*Planning & Zoning Ordinance Violations, in particular Sanitary Ordinance Citations, were not pursued in 2023 due to staffing shortages and caseloads. These violations have recommenced for 2024 and are expected to return to normal caseload numbers.

Throughout 2023, there were also a number of complex cases for which the Corporation Counsel's Office does not maintain statistics for including minor guardianship cases, probate, bankruptcy, substantiation appeals, Board of Adjustment appeals, tax foreclosures, Chapter 980 placements, grievances, complaints, disallowances of claims, and several others.

The Department is also required to review all contracts, memorandums of understanding, and bids for the County. This includes all contracts and bids related to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and the submission of memoranda when necessary.

The Department is also required to review and respond to records requests throughout the County. Throughout 2023, the number of records requests has been steadily increasing.

Throughout 2023, Columbia County was involved in various types of litigation that required either direct representation by the Corporation Counsel and Assistant Corporation Counsels or substantial involvement and management of litigation handled by insurance defense counsel. When outside legal counsel is provided through the County's liability insurance company, the Corporation Counsel works as a litigation manager to protect the County's interests while controlling the costs of necessary legal services. Significant events in 2023 that affected many County departments required a significant amount of legal services from the Department, although no case filings were required. Similarly, the work of Departmental attorneys in the role of defense counsel is not reflected in 2023 case filing statistics.

The Department also handled a number of employment law matters that are listed separately in the 2023 Human Resources Office Annual Report. Based on the continuing budgetary challenges that all units of Wisconsin government will face in 2024, it is a virtual certainty that a significant amount of the Department's focus and resources will continue to be dedicated to employment law matters during 2024.

The Department also conducted a significant amount of interviews that are listed separately in the 2023 Human Resources Office Annual Report.

While a number of collection cases were filed in 2023, improved account management and debt collection efforts by County departments reduced the need for legal action in many situations. The continued use of private debt collection agencies and aggressive collection techniques including tax refund intercepts also reduced the need to pursue many debt collection files through court cases. In 2023, the Department continued its practice of not pursuing cases where the filing and service fees would exceed the original amount owed.

A summary of the Department's 2023 collections activity is as follows:

COMPARISON OF COLLECTIONS				
TYPES OF CASES COLLECTED ON		2022		2023
Human Services		\$30,264.08		\$5,087.00
Sheriff/Jail		\$13,901.31		\$13,292.87
Medical Examiner		\$0.00		\$3,930.20
TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED:		\$44,165.39		\$22,310.07

Summary:

2023 Departmental operations continued at or near expected caseloads and within approved budget limits. Department staff can continue to meet the increasing need for legal services including policy development and improvement for the foreseeable future provided that current budget and staffing levels are maintained.

In 2024, the Department will continue to provide the County with high quality legal services in the most cost-effective manner possible. The combined Corporation Counsel and Human Resources Department makes it possible for internal staff to handle all litigation and other legal services related to labor relations in-house without reliance on outside legal counsel. Efficient management of increasing workload continues to be successfully accomplished with no increase in legal support staff and law office management staff. In 2024, the Department will continue to emphasize child support and other debt collections as well as continuing to prosecute the full spectrum of zoning and other ordinance violations.

The combined seven (7) member Corporation Counsel Office/Human Resources Department will continue to provide the highest quality professional legal services to all County departments in 2024. The Department's highly skilled and dedicated professional legal and HR staff make it possible for the combined department to provide an increased level of service to County departments at a controlled cost to county taxpayers.

Presented by: Joseph Ruf, III, Corporation Counsel/Human Resources Director

Reviewed and Approved by Judiciary on March 12, 2024.



County Clerk

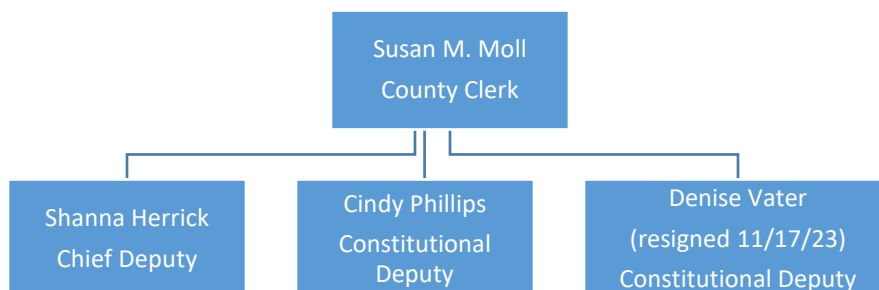
Department Overview:

The County Clerk is an elected position, serving a 4 year term. The duties and responsibilities of the County Clerk and staff are governed by Section 59.23 of the Wisconsin Statutes, along with numerous additional cites throughout the Statutes. The Columbia County Clerk also serves as Administrative Coordinator and Clerk for the County Board. The duties of the Administrative Coordinator assure communication between the Board, its committees and County Department Heads. The governing committee for this office is the Executive Committee. County Clerk duties and responsibilities include:

- County Board - Coordinating and working cooperatively with the Columbia County Board of Supervisors. Publishing meeting notices and minutes of committee and board meetings, committee appointments, proceedings book, county directory, ordinances and resolutions.
- County Departments – Insurance contact for property and liability claims and renewal notification, coordinate bid opening for proposal requests, manage outgoing mail process, call accounting system and other quarterly billings, and meeting room scheduling.
- Municipalities - The most visible statutory responsibility of the office of the County Clerk is the administration of all elections held in Columbia County. This department is responsible for the programming of the election equipment, providing ballots and supplies to polling locations and canvassing election results. Maintaining the Statewide Voter Registration System and providing services to municipalities.
- Public - Services provided to the public include the issuance of marriage license applications, DNR hunting licenses and recreational vehicle renewals, DMV automobile license plates (including temporary plates) and renewal stickers. The County Clerk's Office is the "information hub" for all public inquiries.

Additional statutory responsibilities include administering the dog license fund, wood cutting requests and issuance of maintenance checks for veterans' graves.

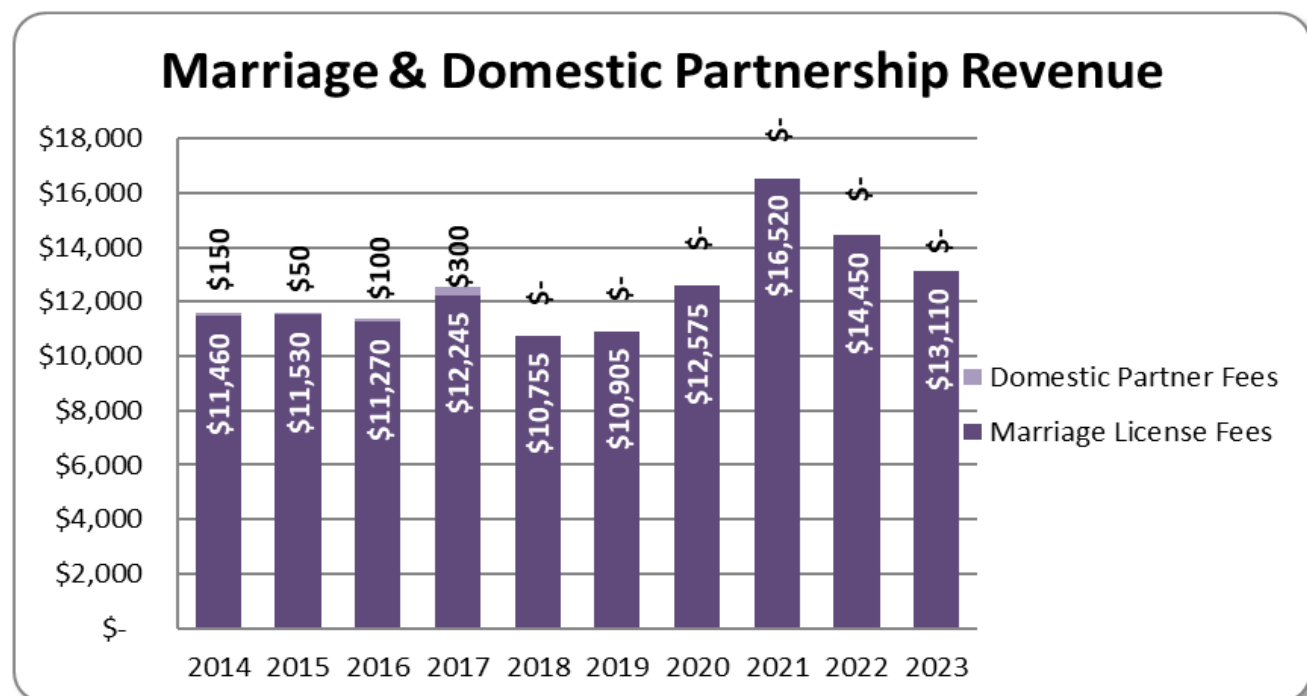
Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

This office issued a total of 321 marriage licenses in 2023, which is a decrease from 2022 when 337 applications were issued. Same-sex marriage applications became legal on October 6, 2014. The 2023 total includes 5 same-sex marriage applications, down 6 from 2022. The County Clerk approved 10 waivers of the 3-day waiting period. There was 1 marriage application that was reissued. The total revenue was able to exceed projections by \$1,610.00 for the year.

Recent legislative changes were made to the marriage application process. Previously, couples who were Wisconsin residents needed to apply in the county in which they resided, and couples from out of state applied in the county in which the marriage was to take place. Columbia County benefited from out of state couples due to the number of wedding venues in the county (i.e. Dells Bells, Harvest Moon Pond). There was a 5-day waiting period and the marriage application was valid for 30 days. Effective on July 1, 2022, 2021 Wisconsin Act 84 became effective. This Act has made some changes to the marriage application process. Besides changing the waiting period to 3 days and the marriage application being valid for 60 days, couples can now apply in any county in Wisconsin, regardless of where they live or where the marriage ceremony takes place. This may have a financial impact on the marriage revenue for Columbia County. For example, couples from Illinois, planning to get married at Dells Bells in Columbia County, could apply across the state line in Rock County instead of driving to Columbia County. Also, couples could apply at a county with lower marriage application fees, or that provides a remote application process (as Dane County currently does).



Note: As of April 1, 2018, domestic partnership applications were no longer available (per Wisconsin Act 59). Effective on January 1, 2020, the marriage license fee increased from \$75.00 to \$85.00 (per Columbia County Ordinance 205-19). The County retains a portion of the fees. Currently, the County retains \$40.00 for every marriage license application processed; \$25.00 for every waiver; and \$20.00 for reissuance fees.

The County Clerk's Office provides in-person customer service as a third-party vendor for DMV services, offering renewal stickers and temporary license plates for vehicles. In March of 2012, this office began offering vehicle title transfers and metal license plates to customers in addition to the DMV services already provided. Offering these services provides a revenue source to help offset the County Clerk budget. In 2023, this office processed 262 renewal stickers, 161 metal plates, 38 title transfers, and 5 temporary license plates. Compared to 2022 when this office processed 325 renewal stickers, 187 metal plates, 43 title transfers, and 5 temporary license plates. The total revenue did not meet projections and fell short by approximately \$2,895.00 for the year.

This office provides in-person customer service as a third-party vendor for DNR services, to include licenses (i.e. hunting, fishing, etc.) and the renewal of recreational vehicles (i.e. snowmobiles, ATVs, boats). In 2023 there were 47 transactions processed, which was a decrease from 2022 and 2021, when there were 54 transactions processed. In 2020, there were 40 transactions processed, and in 2019 there were 79 transactions processed. The County Clerk's Office receives an agent fee 50 cents per transaction in addition to an agent commission based on the services provided. The total fees collected for DNR services, to include commission and transaction fees, was \$55.35, a little over half of the projected revenue for 2023. DNR revenue continues to decrease as most services are now done through a full service DNR, online, or by mail. The Executive Committee, at the committee meeting held on June 15, 2023, approved continuing to offer the DNR sales service to the public.

General Duty Highlights

The J Mauel Municipal Pet Licensing software used by municipal treasurers to record the issuance of dog tags/licenses was being retired in October and no longer supported by the vendor. After collaboration with the County Treasurer, Land Information, MIS and the County Clerk, the Dog Licensing Program was converted and is now part of the County's Ascent Land Records program. The conversion will aid municipal treasurers who are already familiar with the program used for the property tax portion of their duties. The program will also benefit the Sheriff's Office allowing deputies and dispatchers "view only" access to assist in locating owners of stray dogs.

This office handles all property and liability claims for the County. Two significant fires at the Solid Waste Facility have greatly increased staff time processing invoices, filing claims with the insurance company, and continued communication between Accounting, Solid Waste and the insurance representatives coordinating requested information and follow up on reimbursement of the losses.

The County Clerk's Office continues to see a huge increase in bid openings as a result of the Community Development Block Grants and several other COVID related funding grants being offered. In 2023, there were thirty-two (32) bid openings from various county departments. In 2022, there were thirty (30) bid openings, and in 2021, there were thirty-three (33) bid openings from various county departments, compared to eleven (11) bid openings in 2020, and nine (9) bid openings in 2019. In previous years, the average number of bids was approximately three (3) bids per year.

County Clerk staff worked with MIS staff on a project to update the CCBoard internal website and streamline the posting of meeting notices and the scheduling of meeting rooms.

Elections & Election Equipment

The County Clerk's Office programmed and supported a total of three (3) elections in 2023. This included the Spring Primary Election in February, which included the statewide Supreme Court contest, one (1) municipal contest, and two (2) school board contests. Voter turnout based on eligible voters was 22%; the Spring Election in April, with 43% of eligible voters participating (for a comparison to a similar election in 2021, 21% of eligible voters participated); and a Recall Election in July for a County Supervisor-District 10 contest. By the County Clerk's staff programming the election equipment and providing support to polling locations, the County was able to save several thousand dollars in programming and contracted service fees previously paid to an outside vendor.

A major project targeted for 2023 was the upgrade of election hardware equipment and software. In order to proceed with the upgrade project, municipalities with older equipment needed to upgrade from AutoMarks to ExpressVotes. After several discussions back and forth with the vendor and municipal clerks, a discount was offered by the vendor and the end result was 100% conversion to the ExpressVote throughout all polling locations in Columbia County. Four (4) training sessions were offered by the County to municipalities who purchased the new ExpressVote equipment. There was 30+ participants who attended the trainings. The equipment arrived and training was held just in time to be implemented at the Spring Election in April. This office coordinated election equipment maintenance and battery replacement for all municipalities in October. In November, the election network hardware and software were upgraded at the county level to conclude the upgrade project, on target as we begin preparation for the upcoming presidential contests in 2024.

WisVote Statewide Voter Registration System

Columbia County provided WisVote support to 27 municipalities in 2023. (WisVote was implemented in 2016, replacing the former voter registration system, known as the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS), which was activated in 2006.) County staff hours dedicated for this service included the entry of all new voter registrations and name or address changes; setting up contest and candidate information for each election; printing of poll books; entering voter history; reconciling the election; maintaining existing records; reviewing duplicate, death and felon matched records for accuracy; providing requested reports; electronic filing of the Election Voting and Registration Statistics Report for each reporting unit; and tracking provisional ballots.

Summary:

As the roles and responsibilities of the County Clerk's Office keep changing, we will continue to review the duties performed by the staff and determine which tasks are necessary and prioritize these jobs with the obligations mandated by the state, additional burden generated by the WisVote Statewide Voter Registration System, and continued changes of the election process. It will be an ongoing test to balance the work with the limited resources available. However, with the support of the County Board of Supervisors and county departments, these challenges could be overcome as new practices are introduced and implemented.

Presented by: Susan M. Moll
Reviewed and approved by: Executive Committee on March 14, 2024

County Treasurer

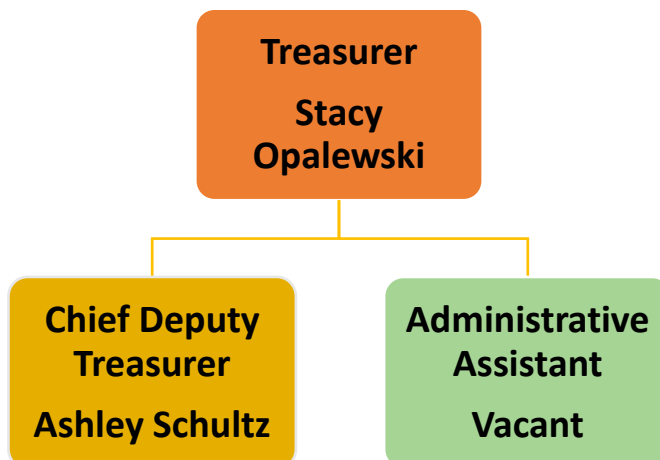
Department Overview:

The County Treasurer is an elected position serving a 4-year term. The primary duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer are defined in Sec 59.25 of the Wis. Stats. The Columbia County Treasurer's Office operates under the direction of the Finance Committee of the County Board of Supervisors and in addition works closely with the Information Services & Property Committee.

The Treasurer is the custodian of money paid to the County. Upon proper authorization, the Treasurer disperses said money for debt payments, expenses incurred and the County's payroll. The Treasurer must maintain sufficient cash flow and evaluate opportunities for the short-term investment of funds. The Treasurer must also ensure sound management of public funds and maintain security while achieving maximum return.

With respect to property taxes, the County Treasurer provides services to clerks and treasurers of the taxation districts by compiling summary reports, tax rolls and preparing real estate and personal property tax bills on an annual basis. The Treasurer's Office also serves as a resource and liaison for these municipalities, the general public and other governmental units when dealing with tax roll matters, tax billing information and tax payment detail.

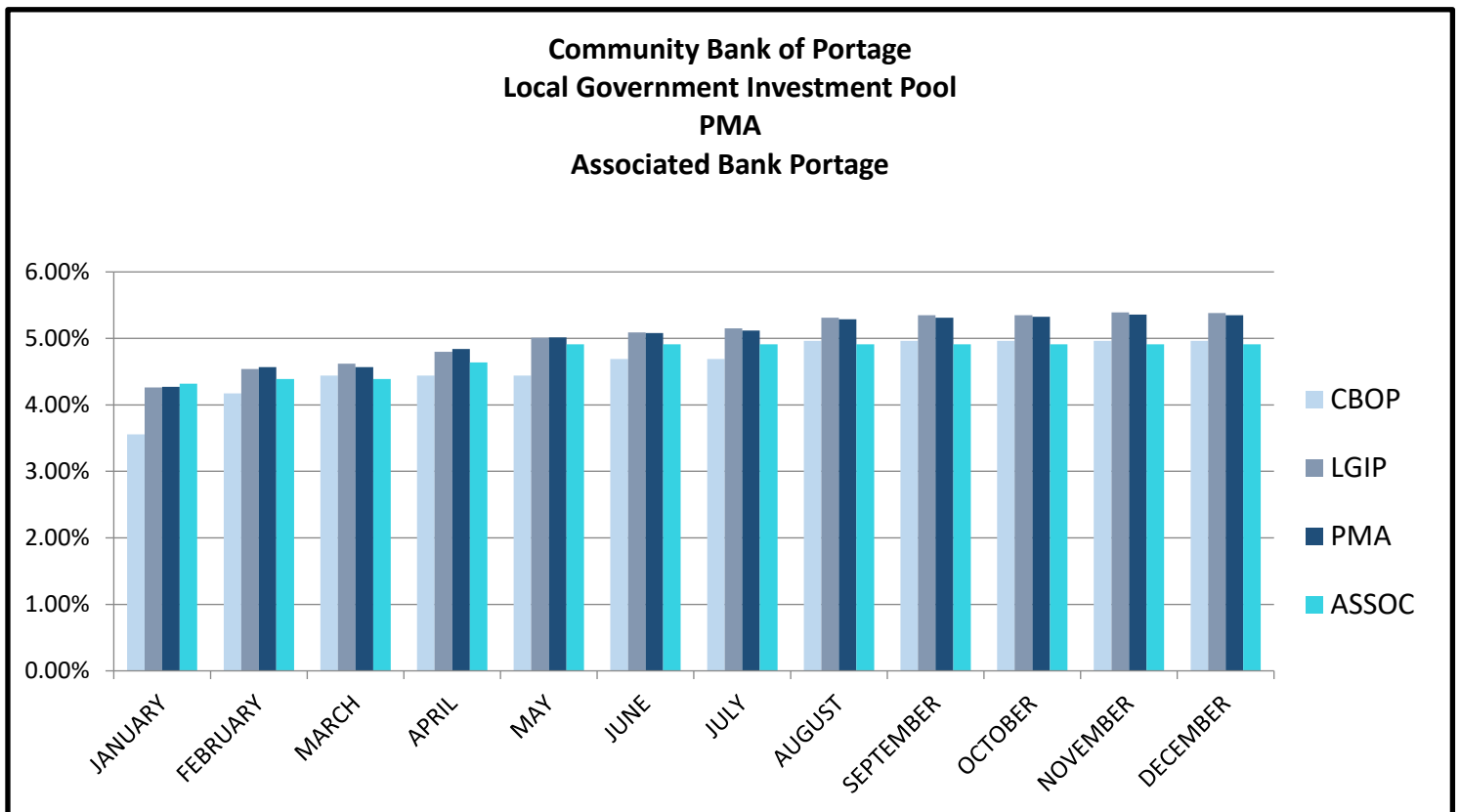
Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

Revenue	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Property Taxes Collected	19,409,552	19,752,762	18,790,263	19,043,485	19,633,290
Total Delinquent Taxes	1,262,100	1,233,800	989,600	852,240	929,330
Interest on Delinquent Taxes	284,177	256,370	283,400	250,650	216,617
Penalty on Delinquent Taxes	142,129	129,940	145,100	127,220	109,970
Interest on Investments	1,533,900	765,035	98,800	196,400	3,051,580
Returned Check Fees	180	200	300	500	300
In Rem Foreclosure Fees	9,100	12,425	10,525	9,970	8,065

The following graph shows the variations in interest rates of all 4 of our main accounts for liquid money for the year 2023.



Summary:

Tax Foreclosures:

On October 11th, 2023 the Treasurer and Corporation Counsel appeared in front of Circuit Court Judge Troy D. Cross for the Matter of the County's Foreclosure of Tax Liens for the Tax Year 2019. Columbia County was granted title to 7 parcels and 4 parcels requested a 60-day extension that all paid in full.

- 6-Small Remnants of Land
- 1-House Non-Occupied House

Sale of County Owned Property:

The office held two property sales in 2023 for a house in Wisconsin Dells and an uninhabitable house in the Village of Doylestown. We will be having a County Land Sale in 2024 to get some parcels back on our tax roll. Also, possibly deeding land lock parcels to adjacent owners to get those back on the tax roll.

Goals:

- To sell at least 10 parcels of County Owned Property at a County Land Sale in 2024 and each year after that.
- To deed 10 adjacent owners' remnants of land in 2024 to get back onto tax roll and each year after that.
- Continue to work on updating the Investment Policy with the help of the Comptroller.
- Continue working on updating the Treasurer's Department Policy and Procedure manual.
- To continue with training of staff regarding internal controls with a strong emphasis on fraud detection and prevention.

Presented by: Stacy L Opalewski, County Treasurer

Reviewed and approved by: County Finance Committee, March 13, 2024



District Attorney

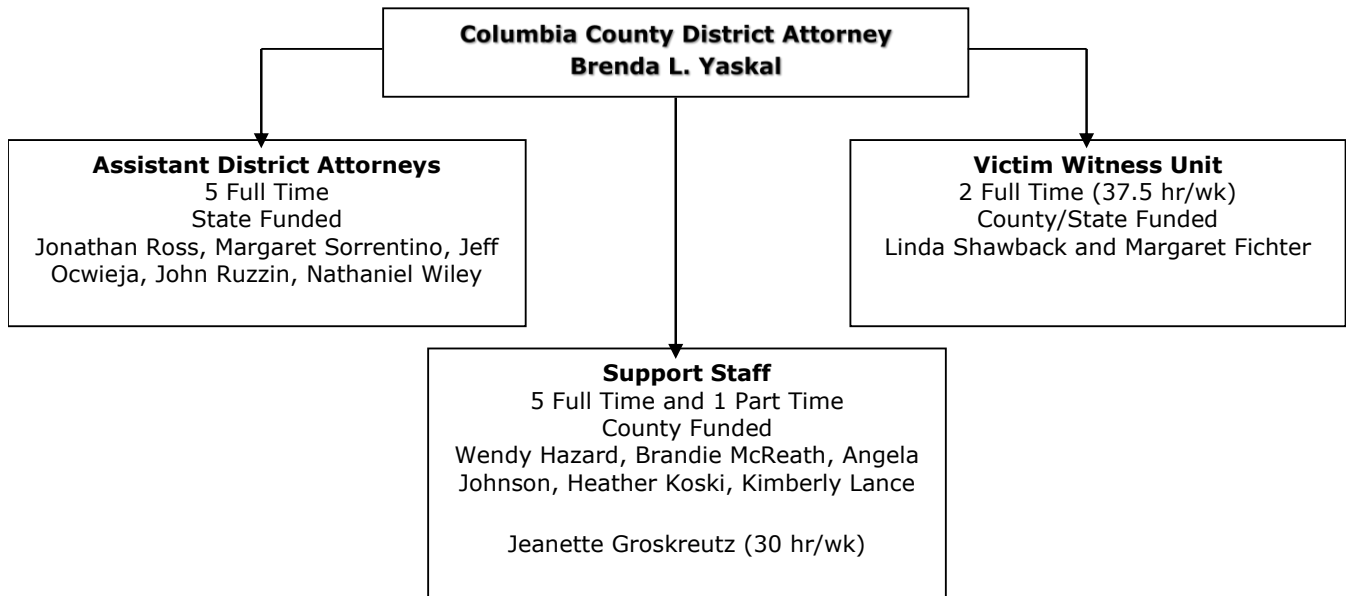
Department Overview:

The District Attorney shall prosecute all criminal actions; all state forfeiture actions; county traffic actions; and actions concerning violations of county ordinances which are in conformity with state criminal laws; participate in John Doe proceedings when requested by a grand jury, assist the grand jury; assist in welfare fraud matters; handle criminal appeals under the supervision and direction of the Attorney General; and handle various civil and special actions as directed by state statutes. Section 978.05(1)-(6), Wis. Stats.

In addition, the District Attorney is responsible for the administration of the District Attorney's Office and for supervision of the expenditures of the District Attorney's Office. Section 978.05(8), Wis. Stats.

The Victim/Witness Program, which in Columbia County is supervised by the District Attorney, provides a variety of services to victims and witnesses in criminal and juvenile delinquency matters as mandated by the State of Wisconsin Constitution and by state statutes. Victims of crimes must be notified of their rights and be given an explanation of the criminal justice/juvenile delinquency system. If a victim requests, s/he must be notified of all court proceedings as well as given the opportunity to confer with the prosecutor and to make a statement to the court. The responsibility for providing these notices to victims falls on the Victim/Witness Unit in addition to contacting and informing witnesses of their rights, coordinating meetings between victims/witnesses and prosecutors, advising victims about benefits available from the State Victim Compensation Program, and acting as a liaison between victims/witnesses, the courts and police agencies.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

Actions Handled By The DA's Office	2021	2022	2023
Felony	740	730	717
Misdemeanor	630	516	558
Criminal Traffic Cases	394	350	184
Civil Traffic and Ordinance Cases	9,038	8,755	9,988
Immunization Cases	0	0	0
Child in need of Protection/Services (CHIPS)	27	21	27
Extension of CHIPS Cases	7	11	16
Juvenile Delinquency Cases	47	32	29
Total Legal Actions	10,883	10,415	11,519
New Criminal Cases	1,764	1,596	1,459
Jury Trials	8	20	24

Summary:

In 2023, the Columbia County District Attorney's Office had its highest staffing levels ever. We were able to fill all of our Assistant District Attorney positions, which we had not been able to do since 2020. This was not a problem unique to Columbia County, as DA offices across the state continued to struggle with keeping their ADA positions filled. The State increased the pay for ADA's, which helped the issue, but it's not a quick fix and attorneys continue to make more money in other government jobs and in the private sector.

In addition, the stress of this type of work is very real so it takes a special kind of attorney who is dedicated to public service and community safety to work in my office. Fortunately, I believe that we have found a good group of attorneys who are dedicated to those values and who work hard on a daily basis to keep Columbia County safe and the criminal justice system functioning.

Columbia County continued to hold jury trials this year at a record pace. The preparation time for these events are extensive and include late nights and weekends for the attorneys. Time spent in trial is time away from day-to-day duties in the office, which requires significant time after to make it up. While jury trials are a necessary part of the criminal justice system, they continue to strain the resources of this office.

Full implementation of electronic discovery in 2023 has made a huge difference in productivity in the DA's Office. It takes the Legal Secretaries less time to prepare discovery and costs less to reproduce it for the defense. Instead of having to download media onto our computers and then transfer it to a disc or USB in every case, we can simply share a link to a cloud drive, which gives the defense access to the media so they can download it themselves. That way we only have to spend the time to download media that we actually need for motion hearings or jury trials and we don't have to purchase thousands of discs and USB's to give to the defense. I believe that this will greatly affect (in a positive way), the DA's Office budget for 2024, as well as the workload for the dedicated county employees in this office.

Finally, in an attempt to better allocate the resources of this office, I made the decision to stop prosecuting some lower level criminal traffic cases, instead having law enforcement issue them as civil traffic tickets. You can see this shift in our case numbers from 2022 to 2023: criminal traffic filings went from 350 to 184 which civil traffic filings were up from 8,755 to 9,988. This has multiple benefits not only for this office but also for law enforcement agencies across the county. My office can instead focus on more serious criminal cases and law enforcement does not have to take the time to create a report and send a referral. Meanwhile, all agencies except the sheriff's office can file their citations in their own municipal court, keeping the revenue from these tickets in their own budget. Tickets from the sheriff's office continue to be processed by the county, with the money staying in the county coffers. I believe that this is a win-win across the board.

Presented by: Brenda L. Yaskal, District Attorney
Reviewed and approved by: Judiciary Committee



Emergency Management

Department Overview:

The Emergency Management Office is under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff and reports to the Public Safety Committee. The staff is made up of one full-time director and one full-time deputy director/planner. The Emergency Management Office reports directly to the Sheriff.

The Emergency Management Office's primary responsibility is to coordinate the planning, training, exercising, response, and recovery from natural or manmade disasters.

The Emergency Management Office is required to comply with the SARA (Superfund Amendments Reauthorization Act) a/k/a EPCRA (Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act), a federal law. The result of this is that emergency response plans have been developed for 36 large facilities and six farms that currently use or store extremely hazardous chemicals throughout Columbia County. These facility plans are reviewed and updated as required. All plans are sent to the local fire department in which the facility is located, and the county-wide Portage Hazmat Team.

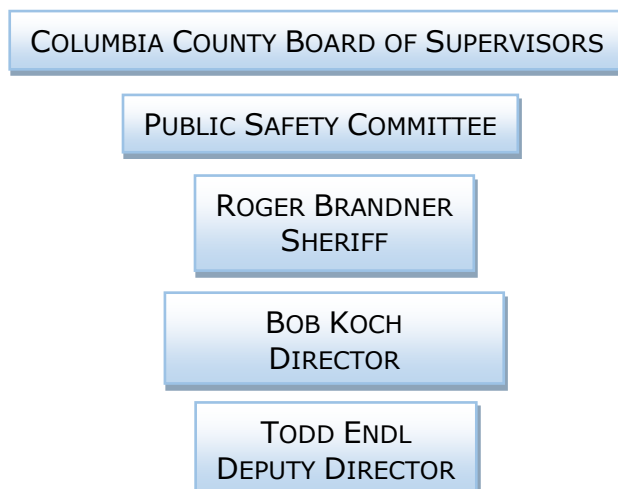
Currently, there are 112 facilities in Columbia County that are required to file tier two chemical reports depending on the chemical/s and amount of those chemicals that they retain on site. All chemical reports are reviewed annually to ensure required plans are created. Per county ordinance, the office invoices hazmat response costs associated with hazmat spill incidents to the responsible spiller.

The Emergency Management Office also manages all of the following: county-wide ID card system, programming of all ID cards to all Columbia County building doors, create/updates Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government Plans, and emergency response plans for the Columbia County Courthouse, Administration, Health & Human Services, Solid Waste, and Highway Department buildings. We create training exercises for first responder agencies, oversee the Project Lifesaver program, school access for the Sheriff's Office, and the KeyWatch (key security system) program.

We responded to multiple significant emergencies to assist our emergency response agencies last year. Most common assistance in 2023 is coordinating Red Cross support for displaced residents as the result of fire or flooding. Significant responses: flooding assistance, two MABAS calls at the same time, Mother's Day 2023, and Solid Waste multi-day fire late May.

River gauge modems (3) were replaced in 2023. We assisted the Sheriff's Office with the Wisconsin Dells 9-1-1 dispatch consolidation, Public Safety Answering Point Grant of over \$600,000, and the GIS Grant for 9-1-1 mapping.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

SARA/EPCRA ACTIVITY	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Facility Plan Updates:	15	14	17	15	11
Farm Plan Updates:	5 (Closed 3)	2	2	2	1
New Facility Plans:	0	0	0	1	0
Reporting Facilities:	104	101	108	108	112

- ❖ Emergency Plan updates are required to be updated every three years unless major changes occur. New plans are written as required.

GRANT ACTIVITY:	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
SARA (EPCRA)	\$26,370	\$25,752	\$23,394	\$23,390	\$19,744
EMA (EMPG)	\$47,186	\$37,227	\$47,780	\$47,020	\$68,907
HAZMAT Equipment	\$6,877	\$7,335	\$7,530	\$7,530	\$7,235
OTHER ACTIVITY:	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Wisconsin Disaster Fund	\$61,370	\$153,488	\$3,500	\$4,850	\$77,350

Summary:

WEATHER INCIDENTS

- ❖ July 28, 2023 wind storm – Ten municipalities hit the threshold to claim reimbursement from the Wisconsin Disaster Fund. The claims are still being paid out to the municipalities.
- ❖ Ninth highest crest on record for the Wisconsin River at Portage, April, 2023. Flooding in the Blackhawk Development and low areas of County Highway V.
- ❖ Record drought the remainder of 2023, after June.

EVENTS

- ❖ Multiple Public Presentations, Press Releases, Public Outreach Events

EXERCISES/TRAINING/COMMUNITY OUTREACH/MEETINGS

EXERCISES

In September we attended a CCI (Columbia Correctional Institute) tabletop exercise. Throughout the year we attended a regional exercise at the Wisconsin Emergency Management Association Conference. We concluded the year with taking the lead planning and executing a full-scale exercise in Fall River at EK Machine. Over 80 emergency responders attended, and participated in the after-action review meeting which is crucial. Kudos to the Columbia County emergency responders for making it a successful exercise.

TRAINING

In March, we attended the Governor's Conference on Emergency Management. MABAS Conference, Wisconsin Basic Emergency Manager Certification, Active Threat Conference Training.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Columbia County continues to provide an active outreach program which included: statewide tornado awareness week, winter, flood, heat, slow no wake orders, sandbag availability, well water test kits, clean-up kits, tornado/severe weather campaign to all schools, church emergency planning and site evaluation, EPCRA (Emergency Planning Community Right-To-Know Act) awareness, Columbia Correctional Community Relations meetings, flooding and slow no wake order press releases.

NEW EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Interviews conducted late 2023, Todd Endl to replace Robert Maier who resigned.

MEETINGS

Public Safety Committee, Finance Committee, Budget Hearing, County Board; Department Head, Columbia County LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee), National Weather Service weather conference call/webinars, Emergency Management Southwest Regional meetings, Portage Emergency Planning Committee, Wisconsin Emergency Management/Emergency Police Services, Columbus/Fall River Emergency Planning Committee, Columbia County Police, Fire, and EMS Associations; Traffic Safety Commission, Courthouse Safety/Security Committee; Castle Rock, Kilbourn, Petenwell, and Prairie du Sac Dam Emergency Action Plan updates; Portage School District Safety Committee, CCI (Columbia Correctional Institute) emergency plan overview, EPCRA (Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Planning Webinar), SCWIHERC (South Central Wisconsin Healthcare Coalition, Wisconsin Emergency Management webinars, as well as many other miscellaneous and planning/briefing meetings that occurred during the year with the state and first responders, municipalities and surrounding counties.

Presented by: Bob Koch, Emergency Management Coordinator

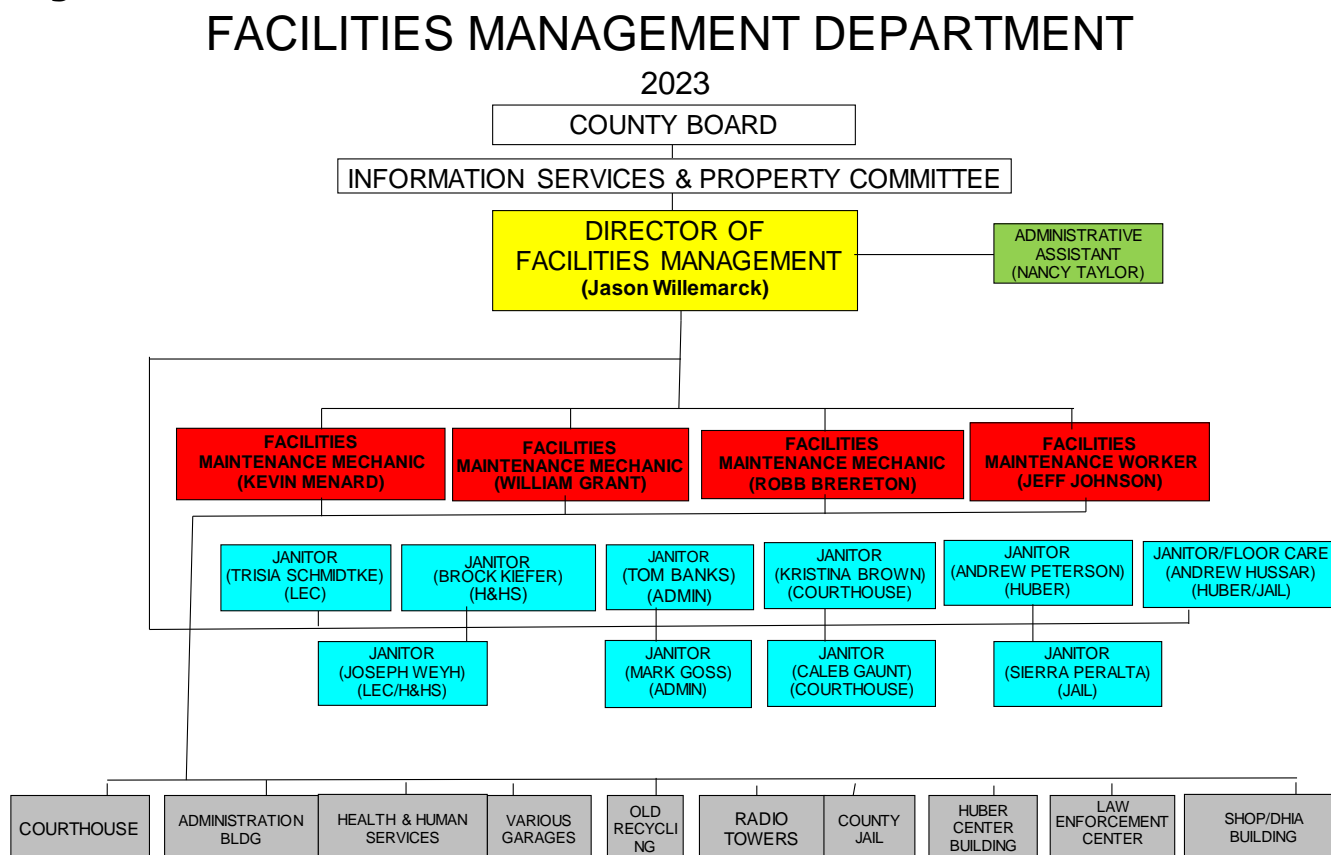
Reviewed and approved by: Public Safety Committee, March 11, 2024

Facilities Management Department

Department Overview:

Facilities Management strives to maintain clean, safe, attractive, and functional facilities and grounds in a professional manner, as well as provides support services to other government departments, in support of the County's strategic vision. Duties include maintaining County buildings and adjoining grounds in a clean and orderly condition; repair of utilities which include electric wiring and controls, heating, and ventilation systems; repair plumbing and repair of physical structures of the buildings. In addition to the above, the department must record monthly power, gas, and water expenses, maintain supplies for building and grounds use and inspect/collect fixed assets and maintain in storage areas. As well as oversee various outside contractors and maintain code compliance with NFPA, OSHA, EPA, ADA, and ANSI to name a few.

Organizational Chart:



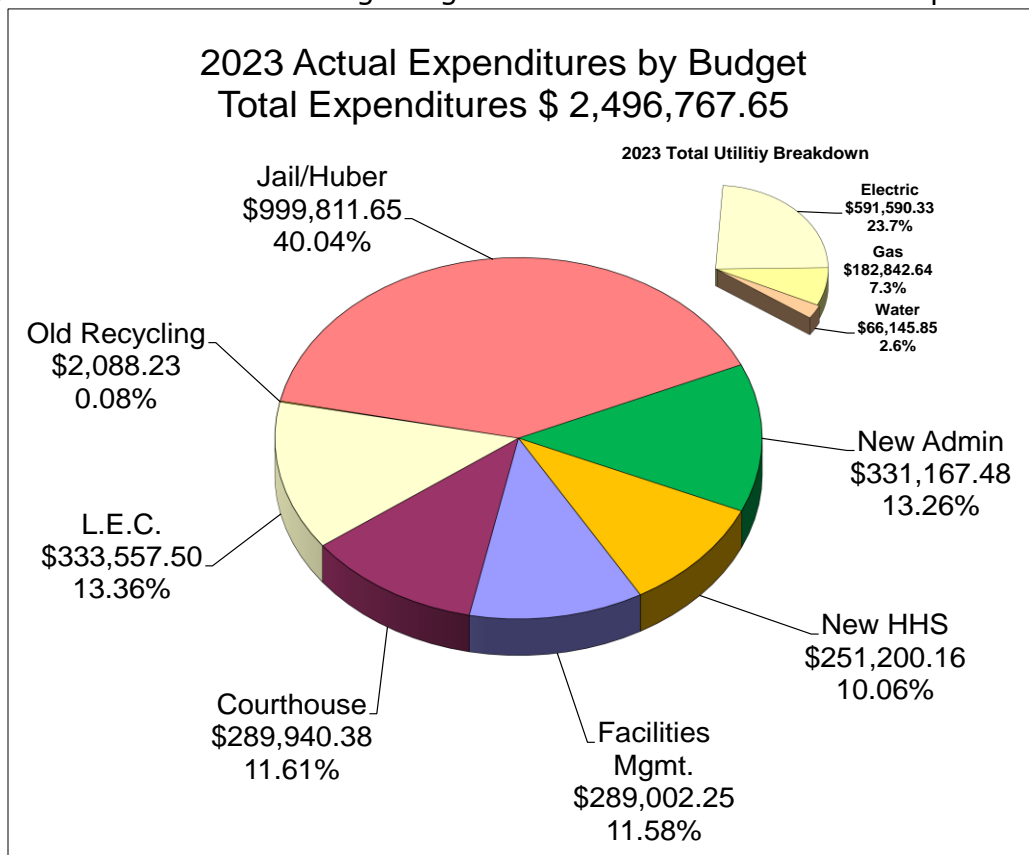
The following is a list of the buildings under the responsibility Facilities Management.

Main Areas of Responsibility

Buildings	2023 SQ. FT.
Courthouse	69,038
Law Enforcement Center	47,000
County Jail	52,059
Huber Center	76,000
Health & Human Services	46,060
Administration Building	69,070
DHIA/Shop	2,160
Maintenance Garage (Garage#2)	1,024
Storage Shed (Garage#1)	200
Sheriff's Garage (Garage#3)	4,800
Sheriff's Radio Towers	524
Old Recycling Center (Garages#4,5, & 6)	9,988
Total	377,923

Statistical Performance:

In 2023 expenditures came in approximately \$290,612 under the requested budget. This was due to Salaries and Fringe Benefits were under budget by \$52,387. Utilities as a total are under budget by \$88,901 due to natural gas being 22% lower overall. Other major adjustments to systems created significant reductions in usage which reduced costs even with rate increases. Snow removal was under budget by \$23,909 due to a lack of snow in early winter months. In the following charts you can see the percentage breakdown of the annual departmental expenditures, as well as the further breakdown of utilities since they make up 33.6 % of the overall expenditures. (Total dollars per line item compared to the total budget and individual building budget breakdown charts available upon request.)



2023 works orders are up by 174 total work orders in comparison to 2022. The job function hours chart is only a high-level major area of comparison. The number of work orders per building have increased as we utilize the work order system more effectively to capture hours and other functions.

Below you will see a comparison of completed work orders, by building, covering the last four years.

Completed Work Orders by Year

Buildings	2020	2021	2022	2023
Administration Building	718	530	463	529
Courthouse	588	298	368	406
Health & Human Services	513	384	220	265
Huber Center	791	974	1018	1041
Jail	957	1012	1012	1002
Law Enforcement Center	834	869	840	852
Total	4401	4067	3921	4095

In addition, by reviewing the work orders we can retrieve various statistical data. Below you can see a comparison of Work Orders over the last four years.

Hours Worked Per Job Function

Job Function	2020	2021	2022	2023
Changing Light Bulbs & Ballasts	306	241	446	173
Drain issues	67	39	84	53
Electrical and cabling projects	491	295	74	30
Equipment Preventative Maintenance	1209	1040	1003	1018
Escorting outside techs. and inspectors	300	236	328	299
Filling in for Other Employees(janitor)	0	6	302	541
Floor Care	658	1400	408	185
Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning Problems	534	596	581	505
In House Painting	43	42	7	33
In House Vehicle Maintenance	99	41	34	30
Inmate and Visitation phone repairs	50	31	48	30
Kitchen /Laundry Repairs	180	84	126	112
Lawn and Grounds Care	596	506	351	245
Maintaining Inventory & Restocking	68	76	172	80
Moving furniture, files, equipment, etc.	204	216	25	10
Plumbing Problems	505	331	436	375
Processing Recyclables	69	61	91	61
Radio Towers	226	326	303	300
Snow Removal	268	292	318	276
Unclogging toilets at the Jail	29	31	67	39

Summary:

In 2023, we completed the elevator upgrade for the Courthouse Public Elevator. Completed the Courthouse evaporator plate module # 3 chiller repair and installed the transfer pump for the Jury room basement sink. At LEC (Law Enforcement Center) we installed new steps and hand railing, replaced Bobcat skid steer, replaced 14,215 sq ft of blacktop and relined new parking stalls. Replaced generator control panel for the LEC. Jail/Huber we completed the POD # 1 painting, plumbing, and electrical project. Installed new triple duty valve, replaced VFD's for Pump # 3 & # 4 in Huber. Jail we ordered a replacement Chiller Module # 3 due to heat exchanger failure. Install was scheduled for February 2024. Health and Human Services we completed a chiller compressor refurbish of circuit 2, seal coated blacktop and relined. Administration we replaced the Tool cat, seal coated and relined the parking lot.

Presented by: Jason Willemarck Director of Facilities Management Date: 3/6/2024

Reviewed and approved by: Information Services & Property Committee Date: 3/6/2024



Health & Human Services

Department Overview:

HHS administers over 100 programs to address human needs across the lifespan. All but a handful of these programs are mandated by Federal or State requirements. Examples:

- Prevention of illness and injury, and the promotion of public health;
- Prevention and protection of children, and the elderly, from abuse or neglect;
- Protection, education, and treatment related to youth justice;
- Administration of medical, food, and child care assistance;
- Supports for people with mental health challenges, substance abuse, disabilities, and the elderly.

Mission: To promote and protect the health and safety of our community.

Organizational Chart: **Health & Human Services Board** Heather Gove, HHS Director

ACCT	ADRC	BHLTS	DCF	DES	DOH	DSS
Accting Sup/Proj Mngr 9 FTE	Director 16.8 FTE 20 p/t Staff	Division Admin 16.6 FTE	Division Admin 17.86 FTE	Division Admin 10 FTE Staff	Division Admin & Pub Health Officer 9.20 FTE	Division Admin & Exec Sec 3 FTE

Statistical Performance:

ADRC: The mission of the ADRC is to provide older adults and people with physical or developmental/intellectual disabilities the resources needed to live with dignity and security and achieve maximum independence and quality of life. This is accomplished through our Information and Assistance services, Elder and Disability Benefit Specialists, Dementia Care Specialist, Elder Nutrition Program, National Family Caregiver Support and Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Programs, Supportive Services, Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs, Transportation, and Adult Protective Services. ADRC Transportation provided 3,365 rides totaling 142,385 miles to critical medical appointments, life sustaining treatments, and other essential needs. The four dining centers located within Columbia County, which offer both home-delivered meals and in-person congregate dining, served a total of 28,000 meals. The part-time Dementia Care Specialist offered 5 memory screening events throughout Columbia County, 18 support group meetings serving 45 individuals caring for someone with memory loss, 2 caregiver retreats, multiple community presentations, The Remember Project with 82 attendees as well as in-home and office visits providing individualized supports to caregivers and

individuals living with cognitive impairment. The Disability Benefit Specialist supported 360 cases in 2023, a 38% increase from the year prior while the Elder Benefit Specialist closed a total of 1364 cases-410 more than in 2022. The Elder Benefit Specialist also began offering Welcome to Medicare seminars and community outreach at multiple locations throughout the county, something that had been on-hold since 2020. Our Information and Assistance Specialists provided 203,438 minutes of phone assistance (8,439 calls) to county residents in 2023. These numbers equal the total numbers from the combined years of 2019-2022. The ADRC was also able to offer 5 distinct evidence-based health promotion programs through its Walk with Ease, Stepping On, and Mind Over Matter programs. Adult Protective Services ended the year with 231 assigned investigations of adult/elder at-risk reports, 38 new court cases (new petitions for guardianship) and 71 annual protective placement order reviews. The ADRC was also selected as a grant awardee in the Independent Living Supports Pilot to assist those who do not yet qualify for Medicaid services yet cannot afford to pay privately for services that if provided, would allow them to continue to live in the community.

BHLTS: The Division provides services through Crisis, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), MAT in the Jail, Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), Community Support Program (CSP), Children's Long Term Support (CLTS), Birth-3, Drug Court and OWI Court. The Division has struggled to manage the volume of need due to staff vacancies. Crisis handled 1,314 calls from Northwest Connections, 227 crisis contacts (walk-in, law enforcement, calls), 76 Emergency Detentions, 80 voluntary hospitalizations, 16 detox admissions, and case management to 51 individuals involved with the courts. The MAT and MAT in the Jail programs are person-centered models developed to provide treatment to those using heroin, opioid prescription drugs, or stimulants; these programs provided services to 31 individuals. The CCS Program, which provides for/arranges for psychosocial rehabilitation services for children and adults, served 205 individuals last year. CSP which provides intensive support programs for adults with chronic mental illness, supported 65 consumers. CLTS helps support children with a long-term disability and their families. At the end of the year, there were 193 open cases, 237 children total served, and 44 on the waitlist. The Birth-3 Program had 70 cases open at year end, serving 113 total children developing plans for speech, physical and occupational therapies. Drug Court and OWI Court served 38 individuals, 43 referrals received for eligibility/screened out, and 5 referrals pending for potential eligibility at year's end.

DCF: DCF received 1717 calls to the access office reporting concerns for child abuse and neglect, law enforcement referrals for youth that committed crimes, truancy referrals, truancy intervention reports, and requests for resources and services. There were 349 child protective services reports and 199 youth justice reports. Although these numbers were slightly lower than in 2022, the amount of concerns for caregivers' drug or alcohol use/abuse was only one case lower at 162. There were 36 youth justice reports that included drug or alcohol use by the youth. The need for alcohol and other drug treatment continues to rise. The effects of caregivers' drug and alcohol use while being the primary caregiver to children puts the children at an increased risk of harm. This is shown by impaired caregivers not meeting the children's basic needs and drugs being in reach of the children, which has led to children overdosing. This form of neglect is currently the main reason for removing children from their homes in Columbia County. There were 39 children removed from their family homes in 2023. This is up from 20 children in 2022 and 24 children in 2021. DCF started parent education, Skillstreaming, and truancy intervention services internally in 2023 to help support the success of children and families. The parent education service allows the DCF team to work extensively with

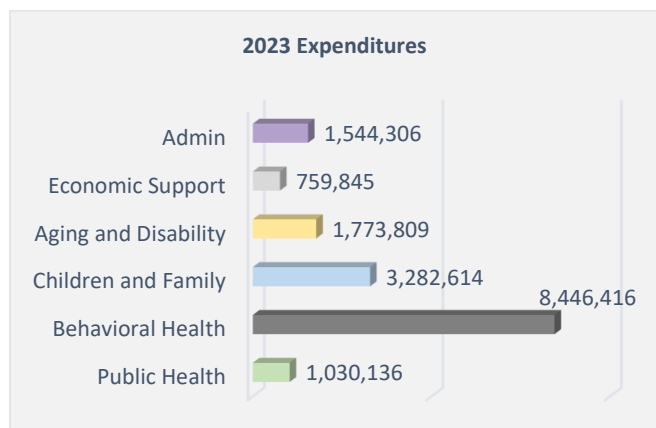
parents to guide them in building a solid foundation in parenting and teaching them the skills to be successful parents. Skillstreaming is a curriculum used to teach youth positive prosocial alternatives to handle real-life situations. The truancy intervention services provide families with the supports they need to improve attendance without being involved in the court system.

DES: The Division determines eligibility for BadgerCare, Medicaid, FoodShare, Caretaker Supplement, and Child Care assistance for the Capital Consortium, mandated under State Statute 49.78. DES investigates fraud and establishes overpayments. Workers are expected to meet performance measures established by State and Federal mandates, provide timely answers to client inquiries by processing online applications, mail in applications, semi-annual and annual reviews, answering inbound calls, researching wage discrepancies, complete investigative interviewing, accurately budgeting income, and recording notes in client files to achieve call quality and eligibility metrics to meet the IM performance standards. Staff took 15,754 calls, an increase of 5,306 calls, completed on average 55 tasks related to case management, 7 applications, and 9 recertifications per day all while being short staffed. The staff continued to meet all performance measures mandated by the state with an average caseload of 731. We continue to see caseloads go down, however; also continue to be at pre-pandemic levels even with all cases needing recertification during this unwinding period which will continue until June 2024.

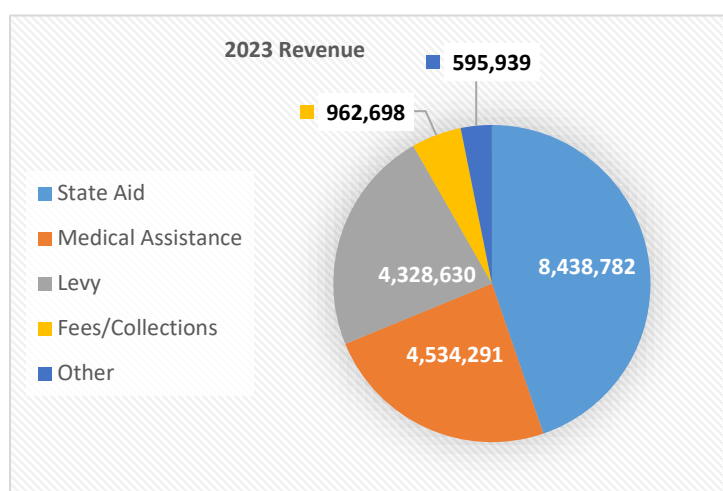
DOH: Public Health had a busy year with some notable highlights. We had a very successful Walk for Hope through our Prevent Suicide Coalition. This was the first Walk for Hope since 2018. We started offering reproductive health services in the fall. We also got an electronic charting system in place at the end of 2023. One of the public Health Foundational Capabilities is forming community partnerships; this is an area we focused on. We formed many new partnerships within the community and strengthened our existing ones. We also continued with our day-to-day work and completed the following: followed up on 147 sexually transmitted infection cases, and 152 non-Covid communicable disease cases; provided 247 vaccines; completed 68 TB skin tests; gave out 22 well water test kits; trained 124 individuals on Narcan (gave out 167 boxes of Narcan); had 42 Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC) referrals and 23 active PNCC clients; trained 90 people in QPR; performed 34 ASQ screenings; followed up on 33 lead cases of children with elevated results; provided safe sleep education to 15 clients; preformed 47 car seat checks; served 838 WIC participants; and participated in 10 community events.

DSS: HHS experienced a 21% increase in foot traffic through the front doors in 2023, assisting 8,861 visitors, as compared to 6,966 in 2022. Although some visitors make appointments, the vast majority, categorized as "walk-ins" are entering HHS with more complex, demanding, and intense issues, involving a high level of triage by clerical staff. Some of these visitors are arriving in critical distress, and under the influence of substances and in mental health crisis. The HHS Receptionist has a critical role in the influencing of clients, safety of everyone in the building, and satisfaction of the client and staff, in the resolution of the visit or call. They are often the first contact to help direct visitors to get the services they need. HHS Reception works hard to meet the needs of visitors all the while continuing to perform daily clerical functions of State mandated data entry, client file maintenance, records releases, background checks, mail prep, official meetings support, maintenance of internal and external websites, social media accounts, BrightSign monitors in our waiting rooms, and creating and distributing communication products for the public such as the Department's newsletter and Community Resource Guide.

Summary:



Numbers are preliminary as closing is not complete - 2023 expenditures total \$16,837,126. The chart on the left details the breakdown of expenditures amongst divisions. Division of Health had approximately \$185,270 of COVID-related expenditures; Behavioral Health had a placement for one child totaling \$333,050, and 200 additional institutional days over 2022; the Division of Children and Families experienced an increase in placements from 2022 by 710 days.



The majority of the funds Health & Human Services receives are from State Aid, providing funding for 45% of the Department's expenditures. Additional funding comes from Medical Assistance reimbursement, fees, collections, and other minor sources of revenue. County levy represents 23% of funding.

Health and Human Services continues to adjust and adapt to the everyday changing, shifting and growing needs of Columbia County. The trend continues to be complex, challenging situations with limited resources to meet the need. Staff work very hard to be resourceful and creative utilizing every resource possible to help the consumers we serve. We have hired many new staff in the last year. With many new staff brings training and growth, but also new ideas and ways to meet the needs of the community. The goals and focus remain the same, *promoting and protecting the health and safety of our community*, but what evolves is some of the efficiencies, new techniques, new energy to work alongside seasoned, resourceful staff in making change in the lives of the people we serve. Health and Human Services will continue to research, develop, and propose new ways to meet the ever-changing needs of the community in the most fiscally responsible ways.

Presented by: Heather Gove, Director

Reviewed and approved by: Health & Human Services Board, March 6, 2024



2023 Annual Report

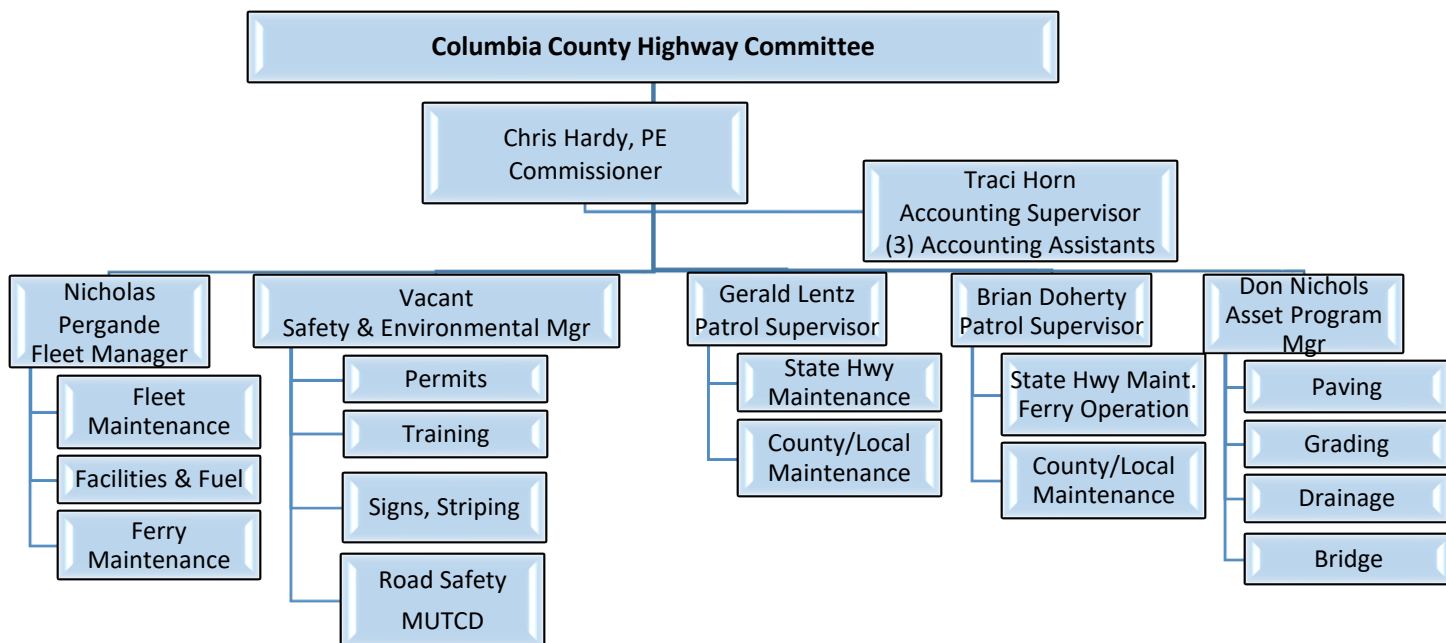
Highway and Transportation

Department Overview:

The Highway and Transportation Department's primary functions are the construction and year-round maintenance of the County Trunk Highway (CTH) system in Columbia County, which consists of 356 centerline miles of roadway. Furthermore, by contract with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), we maintain 801 lane miles of state roads (significant portion of which are multi-lane Interstate and USH 151) and the operation of the Merrimac Ferry. In cooperation with the Towns, we maintain approximately 820 centerline miles of Town Roads on the local system. We operate and maintain county parks (Wyona, Governor's Bend, Owen Park, Park Lake, Lake George, as well as roadside facilities).

Some of the work activities that we perform include the following:

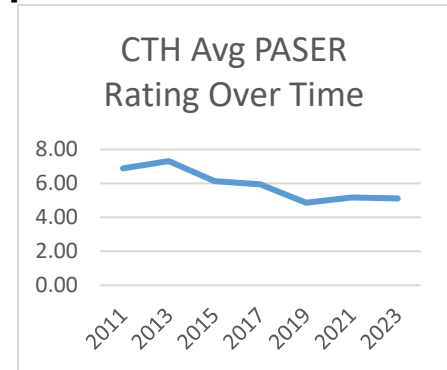
- Snow and ice removal for 3,160 lane miles of roads
- Asphalt pavement resurfacing and sealcoat application
- Mowing and vegetation management of 10,400 acres of right-of-way
- Maintenance, monitoring, and repair of 70 State and 86 County/local bridges
- Monitor and maintain over 3500 culverts and associated drainage ways
- Apply pavement striping over 180 miles (2,580,000 linear feet @ 4" wide)
- Sign repair, new installation, and monitoring over 20,000 road signs
- Incident response, posting of detours, and traffic control
- Responded to 848 requests for service (down from 1,100 in 2022)



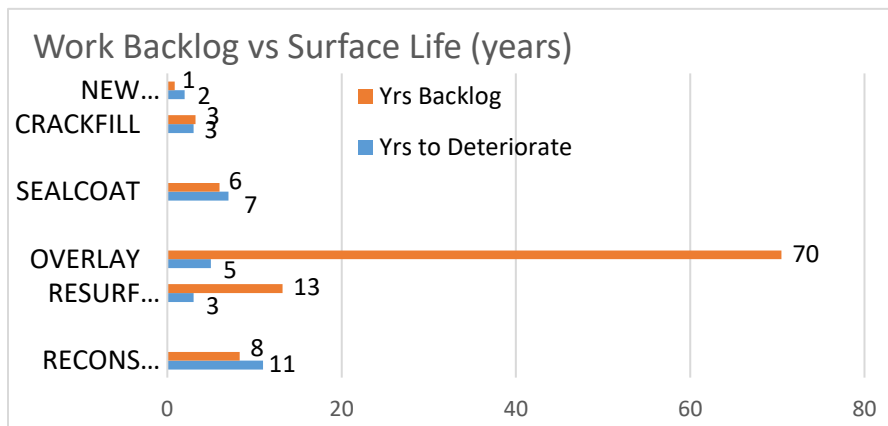
Statistical Performance:

Two-Year Summary of Road Maintenance and Repair

Inflationary pressures on commodity prices erodes our construction dollar value. Asphalt, oils, and gravel have increased 12%, 25% and 50%, respectively. Labor increases of 24%, equipment rate increases of 30%, and external contractor cost increases of 40% or more are making it difficult to sustain our traditional 8 miles of resurfacing per year. Under these conditions, it will be difficult to prevent our roads from deteriorating faster than we can maintain them; even with the increased ARPA investment dollars (adding 2 to 3 miles of resurfacing per year) thru 2026. Comparing costs since 2019; Sealcoat has increased 25% (\$20,000 per mile), overlays 25% to about \$100,000 per mile, resurfacing and reconstruct up more than 40%. Resurface and reconstruct complicated by increased demands for environmental considerations (wetland, endangered species, historical, etc). Generally, grant funding favors resurface or reconstruct level projects.



With these complications, the Department will continue to fall behind “industry accepted practice” with regards to number of miles repaired. We are struggling to keep up with road surface deterioration rates. Older pavements deteriorate past the point where



effective treatments can be implemented. Road surface conditions deteriorate to the next lower PASER level before we have the funds to be able to fix them (i.e., will take us 26 years to overlay our current backlog; but the backlog will have deteriorated to the level requiring resurface within 5 years).

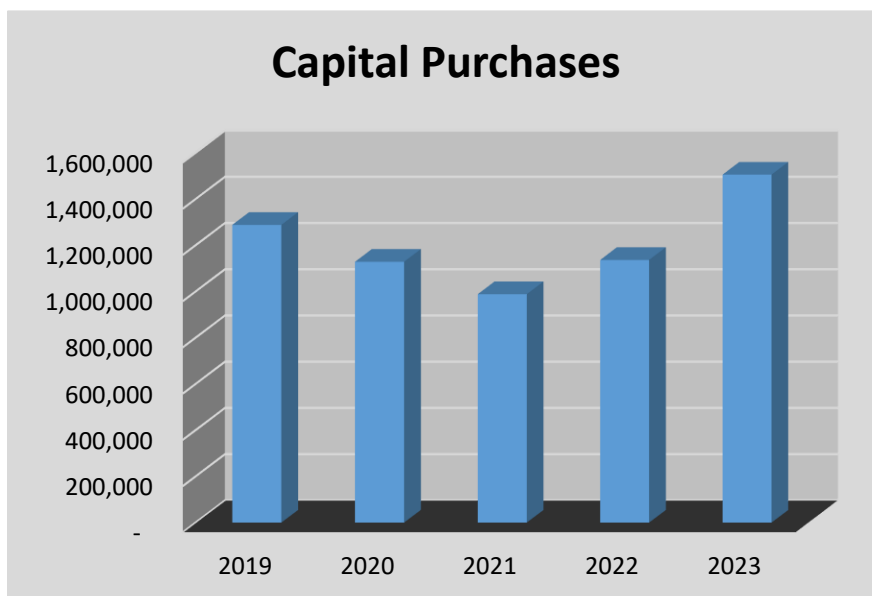
The table below compares maintenance and construction expenses for 2022 and 2023*.

*The financials for 2023 are not closed – the numbers reflected below are preliminary.

Department	2022	2023	Incr/Decr
CTH Maintenance	3,521,332	3,738,192	216,860
Road & Bridge Construction	4,853,217	3,961,258	(891,959)
Routine Maint on State Hwys	2,780,704	2,737,724	(42,980)
Snow & Ice Control on State Hwys	1,169,298	1,323,137	153,839
Road & Bridge on State Hwys	511,394	478,832	(32,562)
Town/Village/City Local Rd Maint	2,004,180	2,158,140	153,960
County Aid Construction	864,502	948,921	84,419
County Bridge Aid	54,230	12,469	(41,761)
Totals	15,758,857	15,358,673	(400,184)

Capital Outlay Purchases

Rapid inflation on the heels of the Covid Pandemic impacted capital expenditures and planning for the Department. Sustainable investment has been the goal for the past several years within Highway. Setting depreciation equal to investment, results in an average investment of about \$1.2 million on the department's more than \$24 million of assets. Equipment turn-over and facility upkeep require steady investment into well performing trucks, equipment, and technology. Since 2019, plow truck replacement costs have risen around 95%, demanding an additional \$450,000 per year. This is further complicated by equipment rate logistics where current hourly rates are determined by a 6-year average of costs which is 2 years in arrears. That means, maintenance costs from 8 years ago are still considered within the revenue stream for the current year. Revenue lags expense and will continue to do so for quite some time (revenue rates have only increased 30% over same timeframe). Capital investment has never been more critical than now due to ongoing inflationary pressure. The graph below illustrates the county's commitment to improving the Highway Department's equipment.



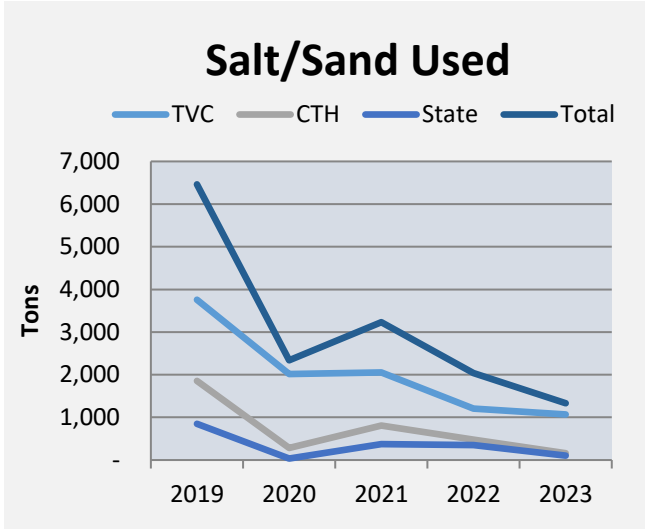
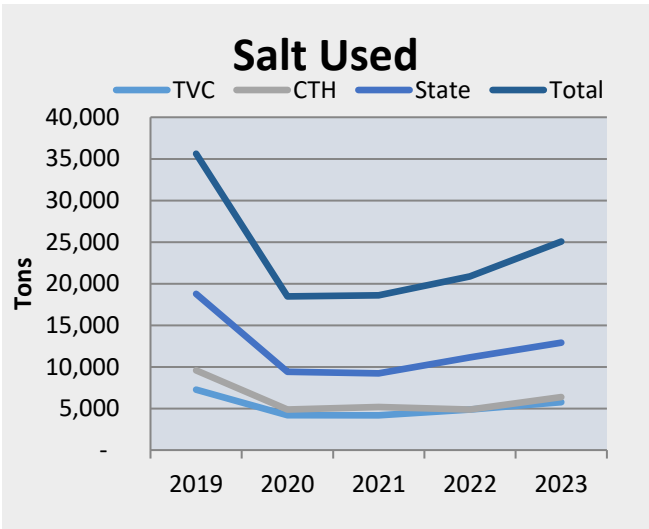
**County has generally budgeted a straight amount year to year for capital purchase. Carry overs occur from year to year due to the timing of equipment purchase and arrivals. Large trucks are currently taking about 20 months from order to delivery due to delays in supply chains.*

The Department is maintaining positive overall fleet outcome (revenue>expense) due to a variety of reasons; average unit hours are more than the averages for most other counties, demand problems for finding mechanics is resulting in fewer personnel working harder on our equipment (lower operating costs), multi-use implementations for trucks and equipment is beginning to yield results with a smaller fleet to maintain, switching to rental units for low-use and high capital cost equipment is helping cut demand for capital investment needs, and past investment in equipment is providing more reliable trucks and equipment.

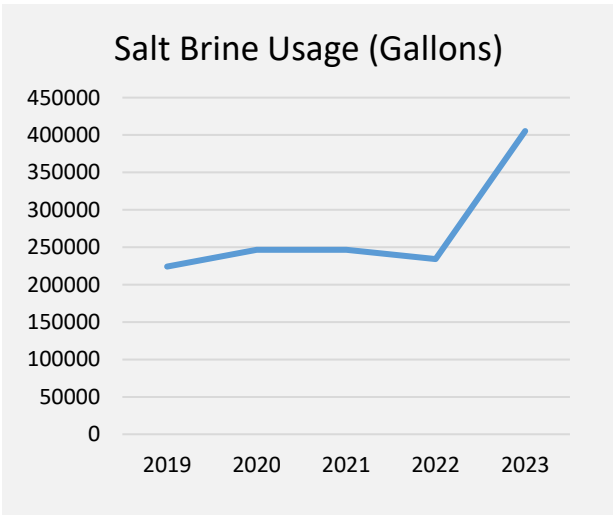
Supply strains continue to hamper some availability for parts and replacement units of some trucks and equipment. Replacement units are taking 10 months longer to receive in some cases, parts are delayed for 1 to 3 months or more (trucks sitting due to needed parts are not available). Both contribute to logistical issues from time to time as we have difficulty having enough trucks/equipment to suit the day to day needs of staff and workload. Staff levels are still about 10% lower since Department cannot fill positions which does help alleviate that problem from time to time. However, it also results in hiring outside trucking in order to complete work and comes at an opportunity cost with a longer timeline. Outside trucking generally costs more which is increasing cost to complete work.

Snow and Ice Control Material Usage

Rock salt, sand/salt mix, and salt brine are the predominant materials that we use to break the bond that occurs between snow/ice and road surfaces. These materials lower the freezing temperature of water and adhere to the road surface which in turn ensure safe winter travelling throughout the county. We have storage capacity for approximately 58,000 tons of salt/sand material throughout the county. The majority capacity of storage is located at the five domes in Wyocena with other facilities located in Lodi, Portage, Cambria, Columbus, and on CTH CS/J near the interstate. Salt brine is gaining in usage due to reduction of salt that it requires. Brine is now made in Wyocena and trucked to storage tanks at the other shops for use during winter activity. Anti-icing activity services the entire county from Wyocena as well. The graphs below illustrate how much solid material has been spread on different road types over the past five years.



The Department does apply liquid salt brine on the State system and some locations of



county roads as well. Salt brine is applied as “anti-icing” and “pre-wet” applications. “Anti-icing” means the deployment of salt brine in advance of storm events as a preventative maneuver. Salt brine dries and adheres to the pavement (in wait for snow, sleet, or freezing rain to fall), reacts to the introduced moisture, lowers the freezing point, and returns the precipitation to liquid form where it can run-off thereby not creating slippery road conditions. “Pre-wet” is a similar concentration brine that is added during rock salt deployment. Brine wets the salt prior to hitting the road which initiates an earlier dissolution of the rock salt and assists the salt to clump and adhere to the road/snow and reduce bounce and blow-off of

the rock salt. Both methods assist the Department with reduction in the use of rock salt. In 2023, we deployed 405,356 gallons of brine, mostly on the State system.

Summary of Pavement and Sealcoating Work in 2023:

We seal coated 12 miles of CTHs A, CS, DG, and E using 66,768 gallons of oil and 2,147 tons of chips. We resurfaced 8 miles of CTH G, V and CTH K (K with ARPA funds), placing 22,618 tons of hot mix asphalt. For Villages and Towns, we seal coated approximately 7 miles of roads in 6 different jurisdictions using 32,581 gallons of oil and 1,064 tons of chips. About 10.3 miles of roads in 16 different cities, villages, and towns were paved using 13,373 tons of hot mix asphalt.

Synopsis/Overview of the 2023 Highway & Transportation Annual Report

2023 expenses were higher across the board for most activities of the Department. Add to this, bridge failures on CTH K @ Robbins Creek, increased striping needs due to paint problems dating back to 2020, driveway issues on STP projects, and training demands for CDL needs (low staff levels resulting in CDL training program implementations) and the Department resulted over-budget on Maintenance (\$443,000). Poor subgrade quality soils on the CTH V project resulted in cost overruns for V resurfacing costs as large amounts of unsuitable soil removal as well as increased need for gravel, resulted in a much higher project cost than anticipated. Unfortunately, soils on west end of project (where investigations were completed) were more favorable than soils on east end (no borings). Once the pavement was removed, we had little option but continue to move forward. State maintenance workload remained mostly consistent from 2022 (increase \$75,000). Town maintenance workload increased about 6% or \$200,000. Staff shortages (14/83 or 17%) with increased workload demand (state, town, ARPA, CTH V) resulted in more outside trucking and hired contractor services to meet work demands (truckin, crack filling, etc). On a positive note, 11.3 miles of road received new surface and several large failing culverts were replaced using ARPA dollars.

Within the WisDOT State Transportation Program, a new local bridge was completed on Old Highway 73 Road in the Town of Columbus. Design continued for bridges on CTH A, Inglehart Rd, and Sterk Rd at the Union Pacific railroad; Kowald Rd at the Fox River, and road reconstruction for CTH P (Randolph to Cambria).

In 2024, the Department Plans to:

resurfacing CTHs U and F with budget dollars; plus CTH K and H using ARPA funds; and overlaying CTH XX. We will be conducting sealcoat on CTHs EF and K. 2024 is a full bridge inspection year for most bridges on the local systems (80 +/-). In addition, legislature recently implemented a program for inventorying and inspection on small bridge structures (6 ft < 20 ft), department will be initiating that process in 2024. In the STP program, we will complete construction of the Kowald Rd replacement bridge and continue design for the replacement of 3 obsolete bridges over the UP Railroad in the northeast section of the County (A, Inglehart, and Sterk). We will continue to take advantage of America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, working on CTH K and H as well as replacement of large culverts on CTH W. BIL program funds and programming will continue for a project to reconstruct CTH P (Cambria – Randolph) for around \$4.5 million dollars (in design).

We will continue working towards – **"Good, Safe Roads."**

Presented by:

Chris Hardy, Commissioner

Approved By:

Highway Committee on March 7, 2024



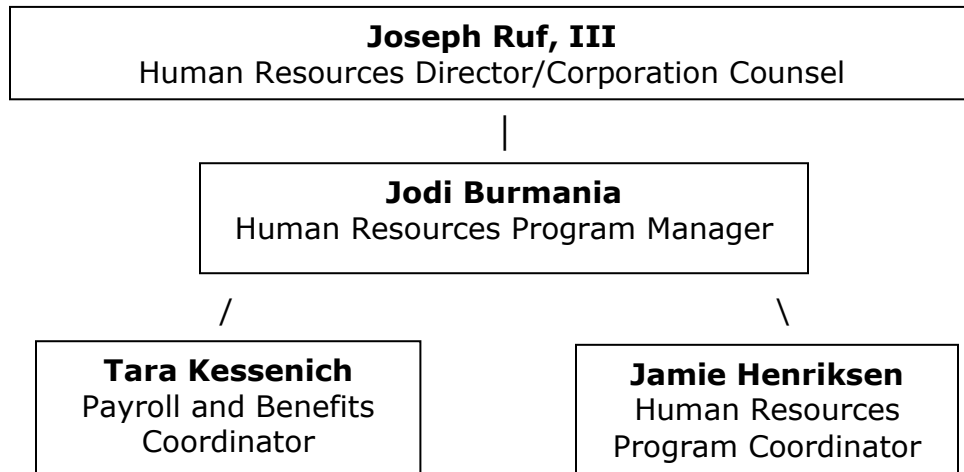
Human Resources

Department Overview:

Governed by the Human Resources Committee, the Human Resources Department ("HR") is responsible for all aspects of employment including confirming that all approvals are received from Committees, recruitment, processing applications, contacting chosen applicants for testing and/or interviewing, providing interview assessment packets, conducting background and reference checks, scheduling physicals when applicable, extending offers of employment and conducting new employee orientation. HR also calculates and processes employee retirements and resignations and administers the County Employee Assistance Program (EAP). HR oversees numerous Federal and State programs ranging from Family Medical Leave to Safety and Risk Management and including Workers Compensation and OSHA/WI Department of Safety and Professional Services Public Sector Reporting compliance. The HR Director serves as Chief Negotiator for collective bargaining with the Sheriff's Sworn Unit. HR responds to employee and management inquiries regarding the interpretation of Columbia County Policies and Procedures and maintains County Board approved changes to the County Personnel Ordinance and resolutions relevant to the County's General Employee Handbook and Personnel Manual for Management.

HR is responsible for processing payroll for County Board Supervisors, Committee members and County employees, ensuring the accuracy of tax and benefit deductions, reporting quarterly taxes to the IRS and vouchering all payments upon completion of bi-weekly payroll. HR manages enrollment and administration of all employee benefits including Health Insurance (medical, dental, vision and prescription), Life Insurance, WI Retirement, Deferred Compensation, Long Term Disability, Securian Accident and other voluntary optional participation selections. Additional functions include, allocating annual vacation, issuing probationary and annual employee evaluations with relevant information, monitoring step increases according to appropriate pay scales, monitoring personal holidays, direct deposit, processing W-2s, 1095-Cs, 1095-Bs and submitting documentation to initiate COBRA and retiree health insurance benefits.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

	2021	2022	2023
Scheduled Interviews	Data not collected	385	341
Individuals processed through HR Office	194	201	232
Separated from County Service	194	206	203
Retirement	34	22	19
Family Medical Leave requests	154	154	103
Workers compensation claims	56 claims 204 days away from work 526 restricted or transfer days	60 claims 102 days away from work 589 restricted or transfer days	56 claims 105 days away from work 297 restricted or transfer days
Union contract settlement	Settlement with Sheriff's Sworn unit for 2021 - 2022 (2 year contract).	Settlement with Sheriff's Sworn unit for 2023 - 2024 (2 year contract).	At the end of 2023, there was a wage re-opener for 2024 wages. There was a settlement for 2024 and 2025 wages.
Health Insurance	We continued with Quartz for 2021. We had a rate cap of 3%, however, M3 negotiated a lower rate of 2%.	We continued with Quartz for 2022. Our renewal came in at the 6% rate cap.	We continued with Quartz for 2023. Plan design changes were made to decrease our premiums.

Safety	Annual OSHA log statistics and posting requirements completed.	Annual OSHA log statistics and posting requirements completed.	Annual OSHA log statistics and posting requirements completed.
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Summary:

We continued to struggle with recruitment in 2023. Our application pools continued to be low. Often there were only one (1) or two (2) qualified candidates to interview. We also struggled with successful background checks for potential candidates. There were several grade changes to positions in an effort to stay competitive with wages. We also continued with weekend shift premium pay, shift differentials, Retention pay, and sign-on bonuses.

Even with our efforts to attract and retain employees, we still struggled. It was decided to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to do a comprehensive review of our wage and salary schedule to make sure our wages are market competitive. McGrath Consulting Group was selected during this process. We started working with McGrath and hope to have this project completed in 2024.

HR staff worked with M3 to make sure our health insurance remained competitive. Service with Quartz continued to be working well, so Quartz remained our 2023 Insurance provider. We had a 6% rate cap for 2023, but some plan design changes were made in an effort to reduce our increase. The insurance deductible was changed from \$250/\$500 to \$500/\$1,000. With the plan design changes, our health insurance premiums increased 2.63%. Superior Vision and Delta Dental continued to provide employee vision and dental benefits in 2023. The County continues to effectively self-fund employee dental benefits.

We had significant issues with the service The Standard provided to our employees and HR staff, so HR staff worked with M3 to shop the market for a new provider to administer our voluntary benefits. M3 received bids from several qualified companies. AFLAC was determined to be the most competitive in terms of cost and service they could provide to our employees and HR staff. We informed employees of the switch during 2023 open enrollment, with an effective date of implementation of January 1, 2024.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was renewed with Aspen Family Counseling to continue to provide services to County employees and their families.

2023 Workers Compensation claims decreased. There was not a significant change in days away from work, however, restricted or transfer days significantly decreased. HR staff work closely with Aegis-Charles Taylor/County Mutual Worker's Compensation program managers and County Department Heads in an effort to reduce Worker's Compensation claims. Aegis-Charles Taylor works with Guardian Managed Care Solutions to assign nurses to our worker's compensation cases. These nurses attend doctor's appointments with the employee and keep the County and Aegis-Charles Taylor updated on the claim.

To be eligible for Family Medical Leave, employees must work at least one thousand (1,000) hours in the preceding fifty-two (52) weeks and be employed for at least one (1) year. With newer staff, many of them do not qualify for Family Medical Leave, so they have had to request Leave of Absences. This has attributed to a decrease in Family Medical Leave, but an increase in our Leave of Absence requests.

The Columbia County Board of Supervisors approved a 2.0% increase to the Compensation Schedule effective January 1, 2023.

We continue to train and cross train in order to efficiently support all County Employees and Department Heads for a full range of employee issues including recruitment, benefit and payroll management, professional development and retention, personnel issues, terminations, separations and retirements.

Presented by: Joseph Ruf III

Reviewed and approved by: Human Resources at the March 8, 2024, Committee meeting.

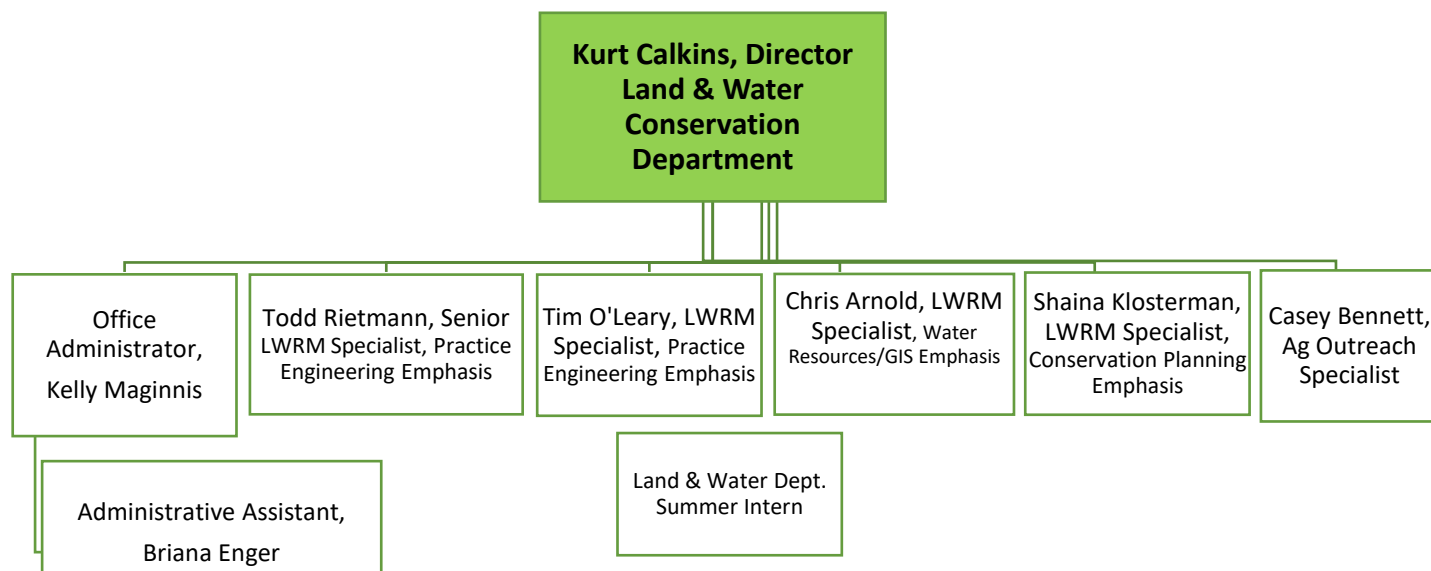
Land and Water Conservation Department

Department Overview:

"Protecting, Promoting and Enhancing the Natural Resources of Columbia County"

Mission: The conservation of land, water, and other natural resources through the implementation of conservation programs, ordinances and regulations, information, education and technical assistance to ensure responsible land use management and preserve the resources for the future. Including the use of enhanced agricultural outreach & educational programming to assist agriculture with a wide range of focus area needs.

Organizational Chart:



A. Department Programs

- Land Water Resource Management Program (LWRM) (SWRM)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)
- Agricultural Performance Standards & Agricultural Waste Management Ordinance (Chapter 11)
- NR 151 Performance Standards/ DNR Targeted Runoff Management (TRM)
- NR 243 Notice of Discharge (NOD)
- Wildlife Damage and Abatement
- Tree Sale Program
- WPDES Adaptive Management/Nutrient Trading (City of Columbus/Yahara WINS)

- Snowmobile Trail Program
- Oversight/Coordination & Management of Columbia County Parks Program
- Groundwater Study/Flow Model Program & Drinking Water Educational Program
- DNR Conservation Aid Grants Program
- Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) Training Program
- TSP for NRCS (Technical Service Provider)
- Surface Water Management Program (DNR Planning & Protection)
- Agricultural Outreach & Educational Programming
- Youth Educational Programs and Contests

B. Department Services

Technical Assistance; Engineering Assistance; Conservation Information/Education; Land Records Automation/GIS; Financial Assistance/Grant Writing; Regulatory Activities; Project Planning; Ag Outreach Services; Ag Reporter/Snapshot Newsletters

Statistical Performance:

A. Land and Water Resource Management Program (LWRM)

2023 - \$372,824 cost sharing allocated/committed to 44 landowners, involving 11 different Best Management Practices. (2022-\$248,853); (2021-\$147,916.18) This competitive allocation is awarded based on formula that weighs in several parameters focusing on utilization of funds and getting projects completed in timely manner. Columbia County has consistently been awarded funding levels at the highest tiers. These DATCP source funds are directly used to implement Nonpoint source (NPS) abatement efforts found in County Land & Water Resource Management Plan.

B. DNR Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) & Notice of Discharge (NOD) Programs

These annual allocations of competitive grants are used to help fund conservation BMP's that will bring landowners and operators into compliance with State Agricultural Runoff Management Regulations (NR 151 & NR 243) & Chapter 11 Columbia County Code of Ordinances. There were no completed projects in 2023. We currently have 2 active grant awards totaling \$361,791.00 (both were extended into 2024).

C. Ag Outreach Programming

This was the first full year for this position after transferring from UWEX to LWCD. Daily outreach interaction for 101 requests is detailed into 8 categories: Horticulture; Conservation; Crops/Soils (20); Livestock; Agribusiness (17); Forestry/Natural Resources; Energy (1); Pest Control (16). In June, the Ag Reporter moved to digital delivery only due to increasing paper/postage costs. Educational programming was provided to the public for such topics: Succession Plans for Farms; Farm Safety; Forward Contracts/Marketing; Market Outlooks; Cover Crops in Grain Rotations; Carbon Credits; Backyard Chickens, and Cover Crops for Home Gardens. Residents are pleased with quick responses to inquiries.

D. Youth Education Programs

There are 2 annual contests the department organizes through area schools/students. This year we saw participation increase with more schools and student participation. Participation was 5 students from 2 schools for the Speaking Contest from 2 age divisions, both participants will advance to the State contest in March. For our Poster contest we received 165 posters from 7 schools, consisting of 5 age divisions.

E. Tree Sales Program

There were 51,052 Trees/Shrubs sold in 2023; (2022-48,650) + 82 Fertilizer packs, 6,080 Tree Shelters, 1,480 Tree Stakes, 241 Tree mats, 12 Deer Repellent. Program history (1981-2023) 1,556,884 trees sold = \$289,643.48 revenue. This program continues to be financially successful in addition to filling an obvious customer need for conservation.

F. Chapter 11-Agricultural Performance Standards and Agricultural Waste Management

In 2023, 1 new structure permit, 1 abandonment; (2022-1 new structure permit, 0 abandonment.) Achieving and maintaining compliance with the provisions of this ordinance come from many sources. Cost sharing thru various programs in combination with FPP tax credits accounts for a high percentage of the compliance work done thru this ordinance. 290 (590 NMP) plans and checklists were submitted in 2023. 134 permits have been issued under this ordinance since 1987.

G. Farmland Preservation Program

- \$817,456 in tax credits claimed by Columbia County landowners claimed in 2023 for 2022 tax year.
- 505 Eligible landowners claimed credit, covering 110,115 acres (2022-462)
- Certified & issued 667 certificates of compliance (COC) with unique # for tax credits for 128,083.2 acres. Completed spot checks on approximately ¼ of participants.
- Town of West Point Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) contracts approved and recorded with 14 landowners to date.
- SEG Innovation- For 2023, 1 landowner was provided \$1,250.00 in incentives designed to encourage participation in the Farmland Preservation Program. Incentives will encourage participation in program, in AEA, and enhanced nutrient reductions. Awarded new grant totaling \$19,500 for 2023.

H. Snowmobile Trail Program

2022-2023 Season – 272.8 miles of trail in Columbia County; Management of DNR Trail Aid Grant of \$85,410.00 local clubs for maintenance. Total paid in 2023 was \$84,977.99 (\$70,124.85-2022).

-We currently are working on 1 active bridge grant, award funded for \$165,000.00

I. Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program (WDACP)

2023 had 4 landowners who claimed \$22,565.87 in crop loss compensation. (In 2022-3 landowners/\$21,800.00). On average about 75 landowners per year are provided technical assistance through this program helping them deal with things such as deer/geese/bears/cranes.

-Received \$47,783.40 annual grant for 2023 to carry out WDACP in Columbia County.

J. DNR Surface Water Grants

We have been awarded a DNR Surface Water Grant for Lazy Lake APMP Updates – Total grant amount \$9,997.24. APMP field work was completed in 2023, final updated plant harvesting plan will be completed for 2024.

K. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) (NRCS/FSA/DATCP)

As of 2022, there are 87 landowner contracts totaling 750.53 acres of buffers, and 1 perpetual easement of 11.3 acres, totaling 88 contracts with 761.83 acres.

L. Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant (NMFE)

This 2023 DATCP Grant of \$15,100 from DATCP Grant is used to implement a training program that allows landowners to develop and maintain their own 590 Nutrient Management Plans (NMP). This year we used this grant to assist 21 landowners (14 in 2022) in completing plans/updates, covering 5,920 acres. (2022- 6,114 acres) The incentives paid to landowners totaled \$2,100.00. This has been a successful tool for helping landowners meet the 590 NMP requirements. The Ag Outreach specialist assists with the trainings and plan completion assistance. Columbia County has developed substantial adoption of NMP planning across our agricultural landscape. We have 193,520 acres documented under NMP -590 plans. This represents a coverage in the range (65%-75%), 73% of all active agricultural lands. (2022-estimated 70%).

M. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) (NRCS Partner Program)

2023: Obligated 29 contracts totaling \$623,507.52 to install practices such as cover crops, brush management, pipeline, heavy use protection, watering facility, wildlife habitat planting, obstruction removal, CNMP's, FMP's, Tree/Shrub Establishment, Grassed Waterway, Critical Area Planting, Mulching, Grade Stabilization Structure.

N. Conservation Stewardship Program (NRCS Partner Program)

CSP has provided payments for having conservation measures in place, maintaining them, and installing new conservation activities. In 2023, 49 new contracts were signed for 19,470.9 acres. There are currently 123 active contracts in Columbia County covering 43,752.2 acres.

O. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (NRCS Partner Program)

As of 2023, 74 easements totaling 7,725.66 acres of wetlands were restored in Columbia County and protected with perpetual easements, 65 are permanent.

P. Producer Led Watershed Council Grant:

The department was awarded a new grant from DATCP in 2023. The grant will continue support of the Lake Wisconsin Farmer Watershed Council, which will include cost share incentives to install conservation projects. This is a grass roots initiative done in cooperation with local farmers. We utilized \$41,300.00 in 2023 with 16 landowners receiving incentives. The remaining \$16,830.00 will be extended for 2024 projects. Primary focus was group development, conservation and soil health education and cover crop installation financial assistance. A 4th grant was awarded for implementation in 2024 totaling \$19,550.00.

Summary:

This past year was very successful for the Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department. We are proud of how we were able to continue to manage the workload associated with a wide range of natural resource-based programs. Our tree program sale continues to be a successful niche program. This continues to be a well utilized program within the department. This report details the major programming work the department does.

Presented by:

Kurt R. Calkins, Director

Reviewed and approved by:

Ag, Extension, Land and Water Conservation Committee
March 4, 2024



Land Information

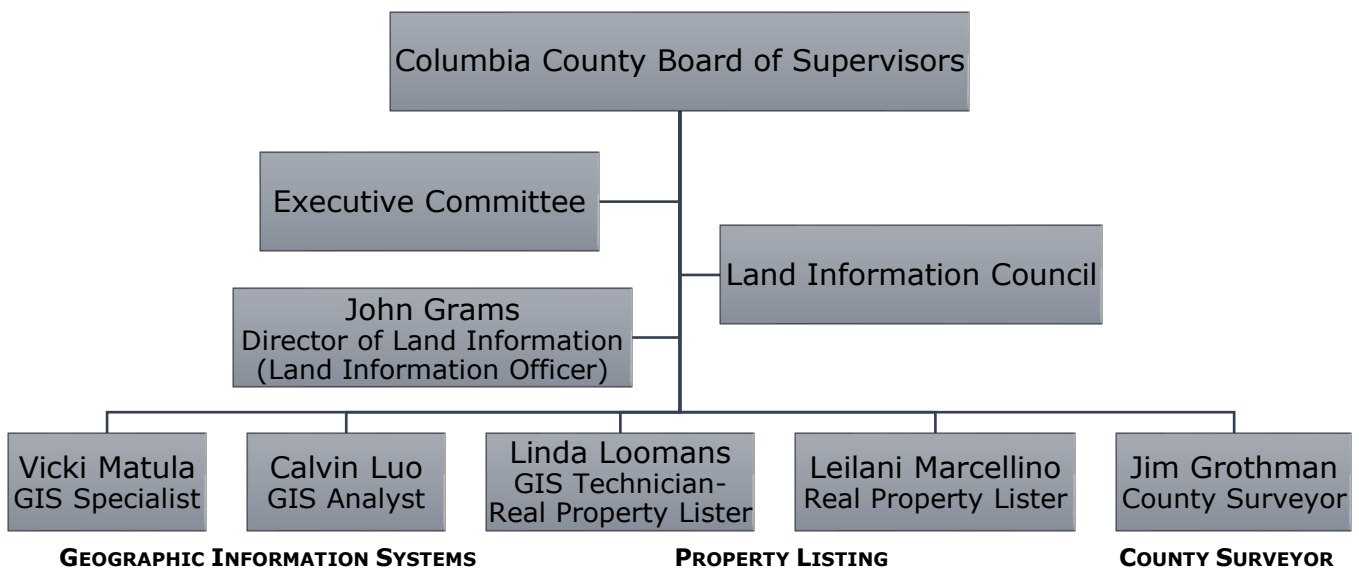
Department Overview:

The Land Information Department (LID) is governed by WI Stats 59 wherein specific duties are set forth and funding sources are determined. Under direction of the Executive Committee and Land Information Council, the LID is responsible for the following functions:

- (1) Property Listing and Assessment Management as defined in WI Stats 70.09
- (2) Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- (3) Land Records Modernization, Land Information Officer duties WI Stats 59.72
- (4) Office of the County Surveyor as defined in WI Stats 59.74
- (5) Coordination and storage of property survey records

The LID is a central player in supporting all land records and mapping activities in Columbia County and is the coordinating office for land records. Current office staff includes five full-time employees. County Surveyor duties are contracted for a two-year period.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

Revenue

Description	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Land Information Misc.	437	88	1,493	454	368
Land Records Expendable Trust	72,488	84,656	129,782	121,824	89,296
Grant Dollars	71,000	86,000	26,000	84,648	61,264
TOTAL	\$143,925	\$105,744	\$182,245	\$165,966	\$142,985

Land Records Expendable Trust revenue is generated from fees for recordings in the Register of Deeds as a participant in the WI Land Information Program (WLIP). Columbia County retains \$8 for each real estate recording. The LID will continue to pursue any and all appropriate grant opportunities and seek new revenue outlets where appropriate.

Tax Parcel & Land Records Maintenance

Recorded Documents Processed (Register of Deeds and County Surveyor's Documents)

Description	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Certified Surveys Recorded	127	137	133	134	126
Subdivisions Recorded	3	4	0	0	4
Condominiums Recorded	2	3	1	0	0
Transportation Project Recorded	17	4	3	8	15
Other Surveys Recorded	159	189	290	229	442
Other Documents (Deeds, Annexations, etc.)	3,783	3,665	3,768	3,516	3,242
TOTAL	4,091	4,002	4,195	3,887	3,829

The Tax Parcel & Land Records Maintenance table above shows the enormity of department data maintenance activities. Typical activities include updating owners, mailing and site address, tax parcel description, PLSS location, acreage, assessments, and GIS update of spatial location. Changes are from recorded documents or assessment code and value adjustments.

Assessment Values Changes

Totals by Community Type

Description	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
City	Land	301,921,700	300,442,500	273,148,025	273,609,200
	Bldgs	1,760,357,300	1,641,448,800	1,405,052,700	1,361,438,200
Town	Land	1,443,148,800	1,311,807,500	1,246,504,499	1,194,835,299
	Bldgs	2,681,945,968	2,221,053,815	2,028,301,900	1,953,173,700
Village	Land	153,859,300	151,298,900	145,307,400	141,972,600
	Bldgs	754,644,850	736,260,450	668,411,650	617,916,350
TOTAL		7,095,877,918	6,362,311,965	5,766,726,174	5,542,945,349

Change by Community (2023 – 2019)

Community	% Change	Rank Change
City of Columbus	13.68%	-6
City of Lodi	35.88%	5
City of Portage	37.75%	-12
City of Wisconsin Dells	47.72%	-4
Village of Arlington	37.93%	4
Village of Cambria	20.46%	3
Village of Doylestown	3.01%	-10
Village of Fall River	31.51%	13
Village of Friesland	30.87%	-14
Village of Pardeeville	1.79%	-16
Village of Poynette	5.14%	-1
Village of Randolph	60.40%	6
Village of Rio	42.39%	9
Village of Wyocena	53.51%	-15

*Communities reporting to have performed assessment revaluations: 2023- Town of Fort Winnebago, Town of Lowville, Town of Pacific, Town of West Point; 2022 – City of Lodi, City of Wisconsin Dells, Village of Rio, Village of Wyocena, Town of Scott; 2021 – Town of Arlington, Town of Hampden, Village of Fall River; 2020 – Town of Columbus

The change in real property assessed value of all property classes between 2019 to 2023 for all community types was \$1,732,774,841 and represents a 32.31% increase in Columbia County. The Town of Pacific reported the largest increase in real property assessed value of all property classes with \$196,200,468 during this timeframe which represents an increase of 86.10%. The Towns of Fort Winnebago, Lowville, Pacific, and West Point also had large increases which may be in part due to revaluations.

Summary:

The LID continues to maintain and grow existing data and applications to support a robust land records information system for Columbia County. As the LID moves forward with the implementation/development of this enterprise system, it is important to improve access, integration with external systems, and eliminate data redundancies. The primary way to enhance access to LID information has been to utilize the internet. Our website, which is one of the County's most used, had over **130,000** views in 2023.

Community	% Change	Rank Change
Town of Arlington	41.69%	12
Town of Caledonia	37.48%	-9
Town of Columbus	41.84%	7
Town of Courtland	29.83%	2
Town of Dekorra	15.16%	-5
Town of Fort Winnebago	53.10%	15
Town of Fountain Prairie	6.12%	1
Town of Hampden	27.99%	8
Town of Leeds	4.75%	-3
Town of Lewiston	-6.08%	-13
Town of Lodi	46.63%	17
Town of Lowville	75.55%	10
Town of Marcellon	-2.01%	-7
Town of Newport	-4.16%	16
Town of Otsego	-1.08%	-8
Town of Pacific	86.10%	-2
Town of Randolph	0.69%	14
Town of Scott	34.25%	19
Town of Springvale	-0.90%	18
Town of West Point	63.61%	11
Town of Wyocena	23.94%	-11

In addition to the statistical performance reported in this report the LID performs many other tasks not easily evaluated using statistical measures such as complex GIS work, including tax parcel mapping, monthly 911 data updates for location validation and call routing, and land records integration projects. Functions such as these require complex analysis of business processes, technical knowledge, and cooperative work to implement successfully and cost effectively.

Presented by: John Grams

Reviewed and approved by: Executive Committee on March 14, 2024



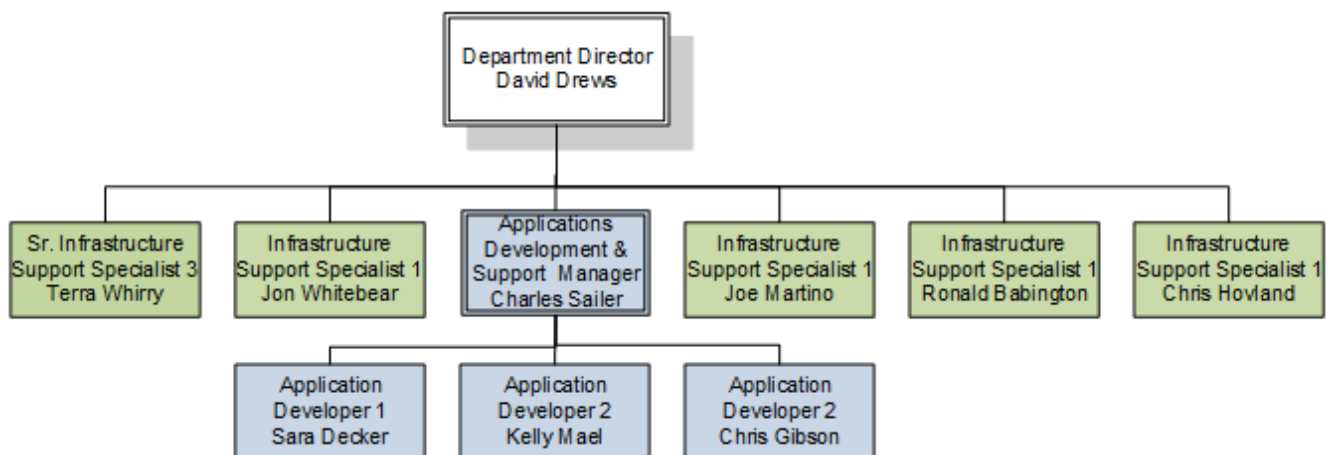
Management Information Services

Department Overview:

The MIS departmental functions are broadly divided into two major areas, Infrastructure Support, and Applications Development & Support.

- The Infrastructure Team's principal responsibilities include installation, monitoring, and maintenance of core technology infrastructure. They install the operating systems and application software and ensure that the software is functioning correctly. This includes file servers, web servers, workstations, wiring, data switches, telephone, cloud services, and other technical systems.
- The Applications Support Team's responsibilities revolve around developing, maintaining interfaces, and reports from core systems such as the county's financial system JD Edwards. Additionally, the Applications Team is responsible for developing and maintaining the county's website and integrating county information systems with numerous State and Federal systems. Each development effort requires a thorough review to ensure that the application meets the requested need and is operationally sustainable.

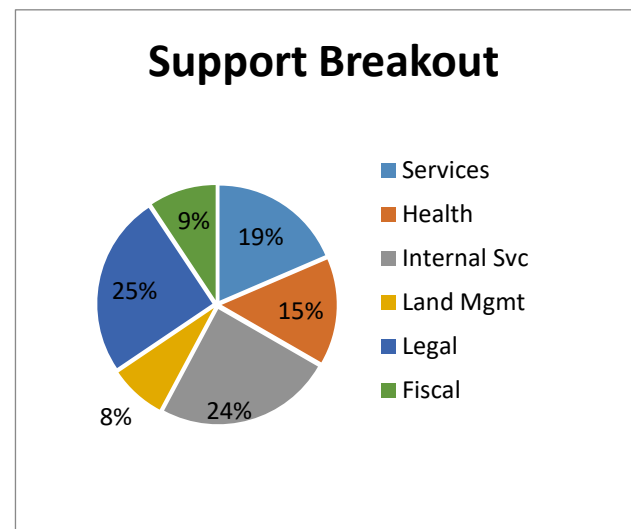
Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance: Distribution of I.T. Support Resources

The support breakout chart illustrates how the county's information technology support services are distributed across key areas of county operations. These I.T. services help streamline the county's operations which ultimately benefit the county's citizenry in the form of efficient services:

- Services support requirements in 2023 increased slightly to 19% from 12% in 2022. This service area includes County Clerk, Highway, Solid Waste, UW Extension, and Emergency Management. With the upgrade to new election equipment and new applications developed for the Highway Department, additional services were required from MIS.
- Health system support is comprised of all divisions within Health & Human Services, Medical Examiner, Veterans Service Office, and Health Care Center. Support in this area slightly decreased to 15% from 16% in 2022. With no major projects planned in 2023, this category had minimal changes in support compared to other areas.
- Internal Services within the county account for 24% which had a substantial increase from 10%. These include Facilities Management, Human Resources/Corporation Counsel, and County Board support. A new application developed for the Human Resources Department contributed to the large increase along with an uncommon number of open records requests.
- In 2023 Land Management (Land Information, Register of Deeds, Planning & Zoning, and Land & Water Conservation) support accounted for 8% of MIS provided support services. With a small change from 2022, the Land Management category has high technical needs that share information with the public. Project planning and coordination with MIS is a key result of having limited future interactions with the department's required software.
- Legal system support (Sheriff's Office, Clerk of Courts, District Attorney, and Register in Probate) accounts for 25% of the total MIS support resources. This reflects a decrease of 3% from the support requirements of 2022. The technology requirements required by the legal system continue to grow. The Sheriff's Office along with the Clerk of Courts continues to have several technical requirements that involve support staff assistance.
- Fiscal systems (Accounting Department and Treasurer's Office) support accounted for 9% of the support requirements which was a decrease from 26% in 2022. With the County's financial system operating with little to no errors, minimal work was requested in 2023.



I.T. Infrastructure

The County maintains an extensive IT infrastructure to process the large quantity of data used in the normal course of conducting county business operations. In 2023 the number of desktop PCs used decreased by 4 from 2022. There are no

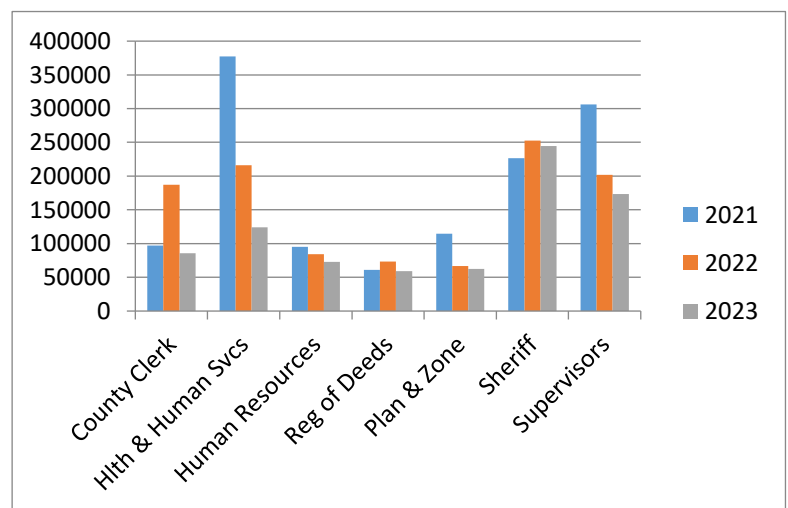
	2020	2021	2022	2023
PCs	288	237	235	229
Laptops	201	234	244	240
Tablets	89	60	55	46
Security FOBs	176	193	194	367
Smartphones	175	187	185	184

anticipated major changes expected to continue into 2024 as most departments have moved toward more mobile devices. This reflects an industry trend in which mobility is taking an increasingly important role in how individuals utilize technology and the ability to work remotely. Laptops allow end users the tools to collaborate with external users without additional equipment. With the County's wireless equipment being upgraded in 2023, new standards were implemented as departments requested ease of access to wireless for non-County-owned devices. County departments are starting to see the value in using a laptop for their main desktop which allows the flexibility to take their laptop with them anywhere and continue to be productive away from the office. This will decrease the overall cost as individuals will use one device as opposed to multiple devices. Over the last four years, the counts on PCs and tablets continue to show a decrease as more laptops are being utilized for all operations. Multifactor authentication (Security FOBs) continues to be a critical part of the County's IT security plan to be used to facilitate secure remote connections to the County's data network. With the completion of acquiring Microsoft 365, the County implemented in 2023 that security FOBs are required for all users connecting to Microsoft 365 products. This reflects an increase in the number of security FOBs that have almost doubled in size. For County employees who have been assigned a smartphone, software security FOBs have been assigned to those individuals.

Website Usage

Public use of the County's website in 2023 generally reflected a decrease from the prior years. Even though the County website is the official source of County information, some County Departments are choosing other options for ways to share information with the public which will continue to decrease website activity. The Supervisors and Sheriff's Office web pages had the most website visits in 2023. The Human Resources, Planning & Zoning, and Register of Deeds Departments showed comparable visits from 2023, but

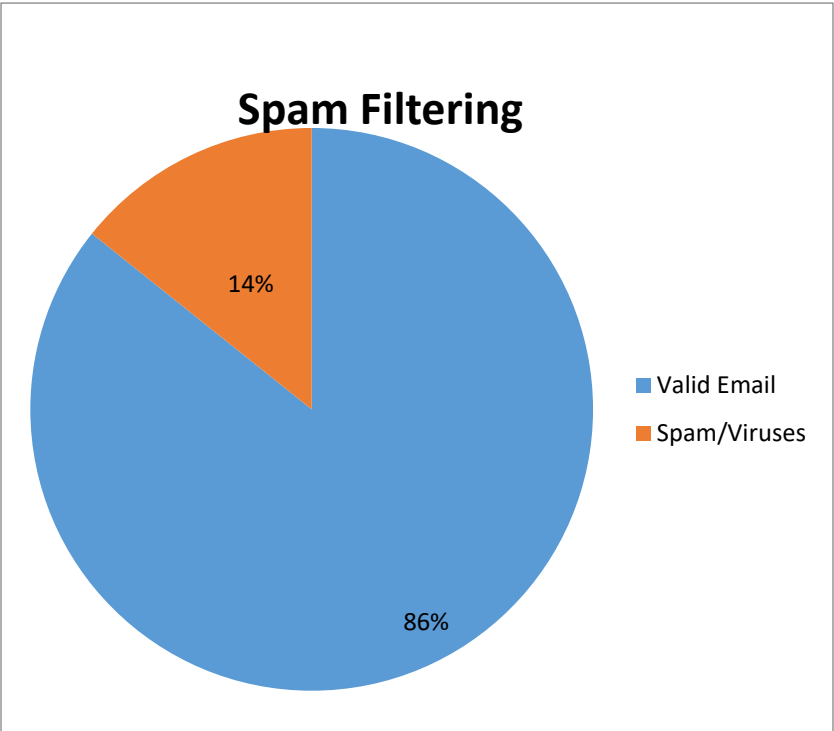
other sampled departments were either roughly the same or had a slight decrease in website hits. With information being shared through social media sites, the decrease will continue as a vast majority of citizens follow those sites to receive information.



Email Traffic & Spam Filtering

During 2023 the County received just under 900,000 email messages of which 14%, were spam or virus related. This reflects an increase in the amount of spam received by the County when compared to 2022. Improved security measures have been added in 2023 to the County's email system to not accept messages unable to meet new industry email standards. All messages are filtered using a layered antispam/antivirus approach. The first layer successfully filters the majority of the undesirable spam before the messages reach the County's email server. The second layer scrutinizes each message on the email server where it filters spam and quarantines potential computer viruses. The spam messages that do get through the filters, tend to be targeted toward specific individuals as a result of friends or colleagues who have had their email contacts compromised or signed up for a mailing service.

Total	814630
Valid Email	685060
Spam/Viruses	113974



Summary:

MIS provides services in a variety of forms, from the more visible aspects of providing County employees with desktop computers or having a publicly available County website to the less visible aspects of maintaining financial software, troubleshooting issues, or keeping networks available and responsive. This less visible, behind-the-scenes, work comprises the majority of the work performed by I.T. Such work requires employees that not only possess technical skills but also deep institutional knowledge of the county's services.

Presented by: David Drews

Reviewed and approved by: Information Services & Property Committee;3/6/2024



Medical Examiner's Office

Department Overview:

Mission Statement: Our mission is to serve the community, in conjunction with other agencies, in a time sensitive, respectful, and dedicated manner. We strive to complete thorough, professional, and timely investigations. We ensure those we serve that we are available for them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year as a way to offer solace in a time of grieving.

This office is the Chief Medicolegal Death Investigating agency for Columbia County. The Medical Examiner's Office is located within the Law Enforcement Center at 711 East Cook Street, Portage, Wisconsin. The primary duty of the Medical Examiner's Office is to investigate and certify, when appropriate, deaths as required by Wisconsin State Statutes 979.01 and 69.18 outlined below.

Many deaths are investigated concurrently, yet independently, with law enforcement as required by statute. This office also works with the District Attorney's Office in those deaths involving possible criminality.

Aside from conducting death investigations, some ancillary duties of the Medical Examiner's Office include:

- ❖ Identifying and notifying next of kin.
- ❖ Inventorying and storing personal property.
- ❖ Inventorying and destroying prescription medicines.
- ❖ Providing court testimony.
- ❖ Coordinating tissue donations.
- ❖ Maintaining storage of various samples.
- ❖ Reporting data to appropriate state, federal, and local agencies.
- ❖ Fulfilling open record requests.
- ❖ Participating in continuing education.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Child Death Review Team: Established 2011, this is a multi-disciplinary team. This team's goal is to evaluate each death of a Columbia County child from birth to the age of 18 years old. Tracking these cases provides information as it relates to community intervention and education. This information is also entered into a State database through the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention.

Overdose Fatality Review Team & Opioid Task Force: This task force was initiated in 2019 as a direct result of state-wide concern for the growing opioid epidemic in an effort to evaluate, educate, and decrease the opioid use and fatality rate in Columbia County.

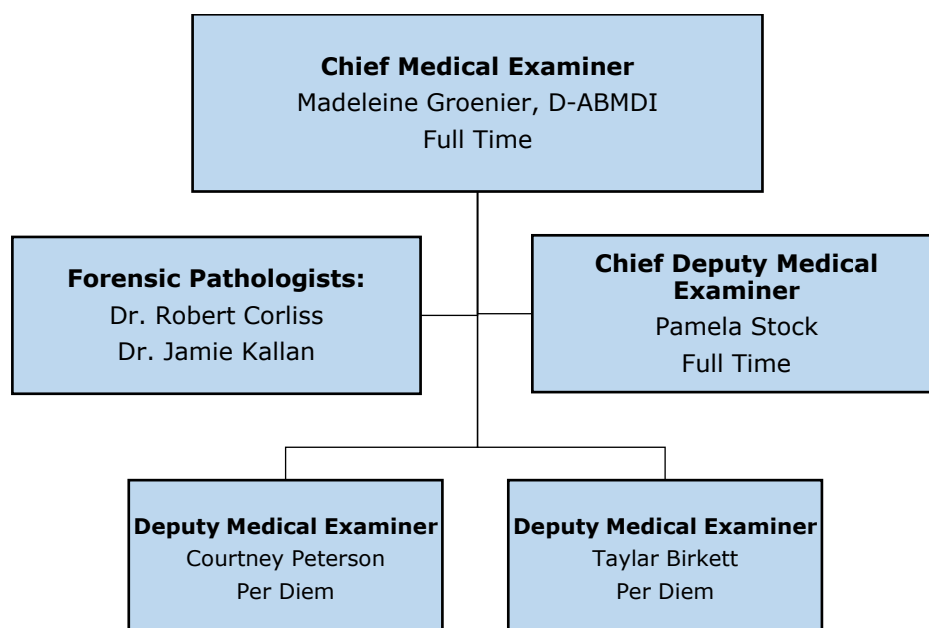
Harvard Brain Tissue Resource Center: Established at McLean Hospital in 1978, this center is a centralized resource for the collection and distribution of human brain specimens for research. They receive brain donations from across the United States and make tissue samples available to investigators across the world. This research is of critical importance in furthering the understanding of disorders of the nervous system, such as neurological, neurodevelopmental, and psychiatric disorders.

The Beat Goes On: Veterinary Health Center – University of Missouri: The University of Missouri – Veterinary Health Center has been recycling donated pacemakers to maintain the rhythm of life for canine patients. After death, implanted pacemakers are removed prior to final disposition. There is current research being conducted for reimplantation of pacemakers into other people, but reimplantation has already been successful in pets. The Columbia County Medical Examiner’s Office has teamed with local funeral homes to send retired pacemakers for implantation at the Veterinary Health Center at the University of Missouri.

Prevent Suicide Columbia County: The mission of Prevent Suicide Columbia County is to prevent suicide through awareness, education, collaboration, and improved access to mental health care and to support those who have lost a loved one to suicide. The Medical Examiner’s Office began attending Prevent Suicide meetings in order to better provide support and services to grieving families at the time of death. Survivors of Suicide care packages have been distributed with contribution from the Columbia County Medical Examiner’s Office, Columbia County Health and Human Services, Prevent Suicide Columbia County, and the Columbia County Association for Home and Community Education.

Versiti Donation Facilitation: Beginning in November 2021, the Columbia County Medical Examiner’s Office has contracted with Versiti Organ, Tissue, and Eye Donation to facilitate tissue and eye donation in the Columbia County morgue. This contract increases the Columbia County Medical Examiner’s revenue while offering a centralized location for donation to take place.

Organizational Chart



Statistical Performance History:

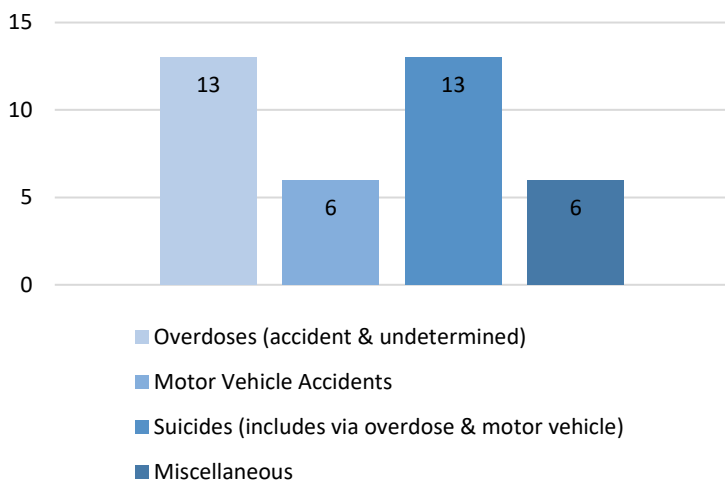
Call History	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Deaths Reported	521	558	613	584	546	603
Death Certificates Signed	403	500	516	462	496	516
Cremations	298	343	374	363	355	364
Autopsies	41	41	40	32	25	16
ATSF Donations	6	5	3	8	7	6
Versiti Donations	X	X	X	5	72	104

Revenue	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cremations	\$55,939.80	\$62,008.90	\$65,857.90	\$63,667.10	\$66,745.20
Death Certificates	\$32,249.50	\$35,106.50	\$34,041.20	\$34,562.40	\$34,202.30
Removal Fees	\$12,641.00	\$14,014.75	\$14,026.50	\$13,266.00	\$11,316
Morgue Fees	\$4,633.60	\$4,180.60	\$7,331.70	\$32,612.60	\$41,460.80
Record Requests	\$1,002.50	\$2,929.50	\$834.50	\$1,347.00	\$360
Disinterment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$114.50	\$0.00	\$239.80
Total Revenue	\$107,966.40	\$122,740.25	\$122,215.30	\$145,455.10	\$154,324.10

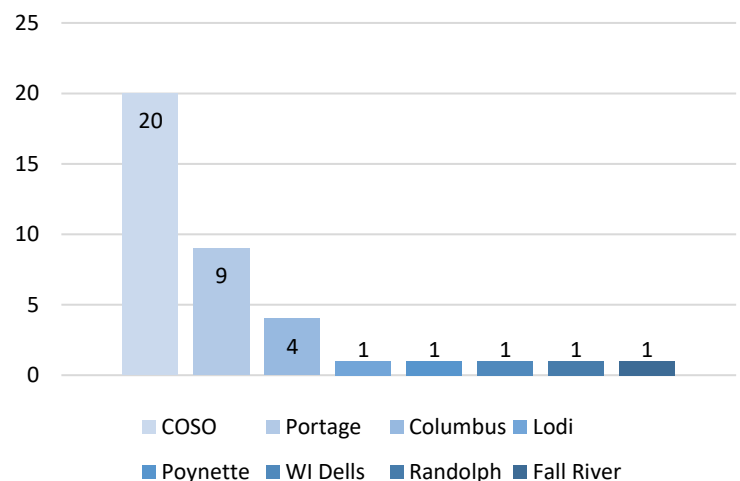
2023 Non-Natural Death Review:

(data provided on non-natural deaths requiring an in-person response by the Columbia County Medical Examiner's Office)

Non-Natural Deaths by Type



Non-Natural Deaths by Jurisdiction



Monthly Case Details:

Case Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Natural Hospice	20	18	24	18	27	18	19	21	15	23	23	24	250
Natural Scene	9	7	6	6	10	5	6	4	4	2	9	6	74
Cremation Only	14	6	7	10	5	3	6	6	6	6	1	7	77
<24 Hours	6	2	3	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	4	27
Contributing Fall	7	4	2	4	3	0	3	4	3	6	4	5	45
Motor Vehicle Accident	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	7
Overdose (includes suicide)	3	3	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	3	17
Ligature Hanging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Gunshot Wound	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	4
Other Asphyxiation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
Sharp Force Injuries	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
In-Custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
DNR Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Related	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abuse/Neglect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infant/Fetal Demise	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Natural	48	33	41	36	43	27	33	35	26	32	34	41	429
Accidental	9	6	3	5	7	2	5	7	3	8	5	8	68
Suicide	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	1	2	13
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undetermined	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NJA (No Jurisdiction Assumed)	5	6	3	10	8	4	9	9	9	10	11	7	91
TOTAL CALLS	64	46	48	51	59	34	47	54	41	50	51	58	603

Summary:

In 2023, the Columbia County Medical Examiner's Office saw an overall increase in caseload. The services provided as a result of this contributed to an increase in revenue, supplemented by the increasing frequency of tissue donations at this facility. This office has increased its community involvement in preventative initiatives targeted towards fatal overdoses and suicides. This department enhanced the grief support and resources that are provided to loved ones at the time of death and beyond.

The investigators within this office attended several conferences and trainings to maintain knowledge of current and effective investigative techniques. Many practices have been implemented to ensure objective, accurate, and thorough investigations are being conducted.

It has been rewarding to continuously improve upon how we serve the citizens of Columbia County and those affected by the deaths that occur within this community.

Respectfully submitted:

Madeleine Groenier, D-ABMDI

Chief Medical Examiner of Columbia County

Submitted for reviewed by Public Safety Committee: 03/11/2024

Planning & Zoning Department

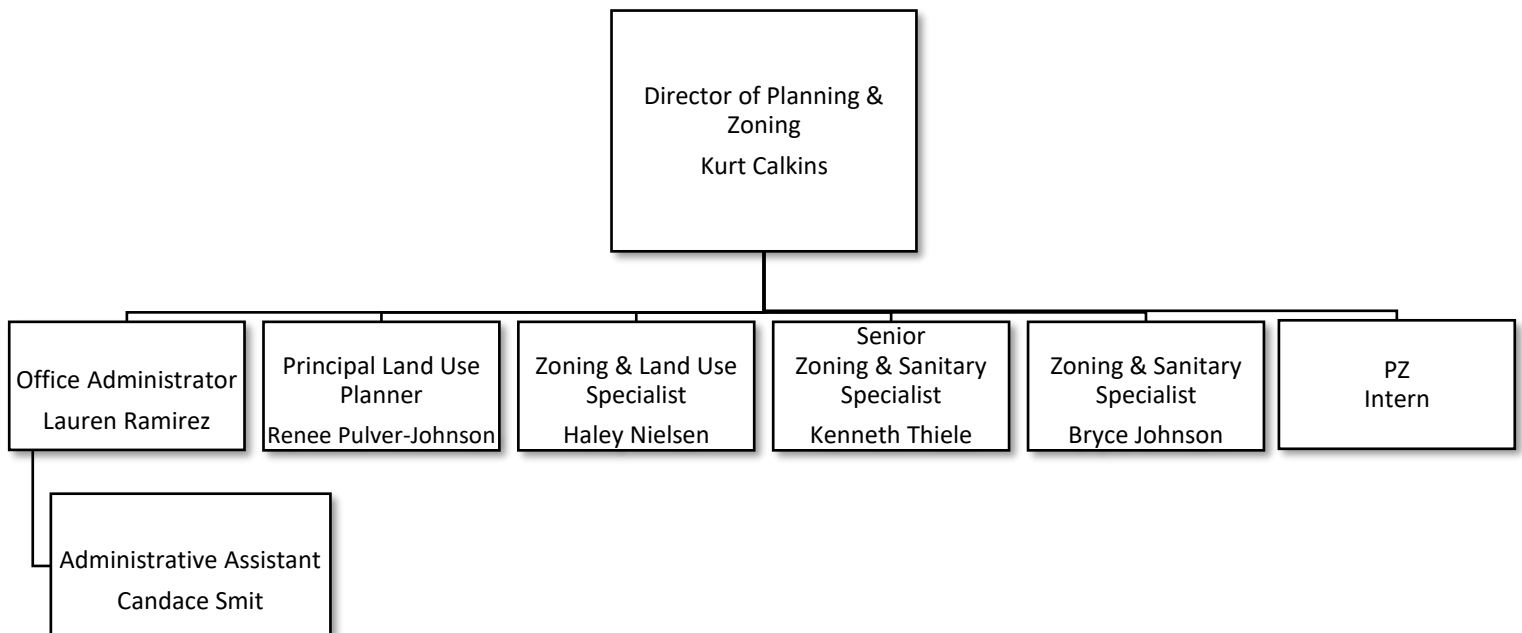
Department Overview:

Mission: To promote the public health, safety and general welfare with well planned development & responsible stewardship of the land through equitable administration of ordinances, regulations and planning practices.

The Department utilizes a wide range of resources and partners to guide and permit land use activities that work toward the implementation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan & the Certified Farmland Preservation Plan.

Chapter 12 Subchapters 100-600 Code of Ordinance resources are available to accomplish our goals, they include: Zoning, Land Division & Subdivision, Private Sewage Systems, Floodplain Zoning, Shoreland-Wetland Protection & Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation.

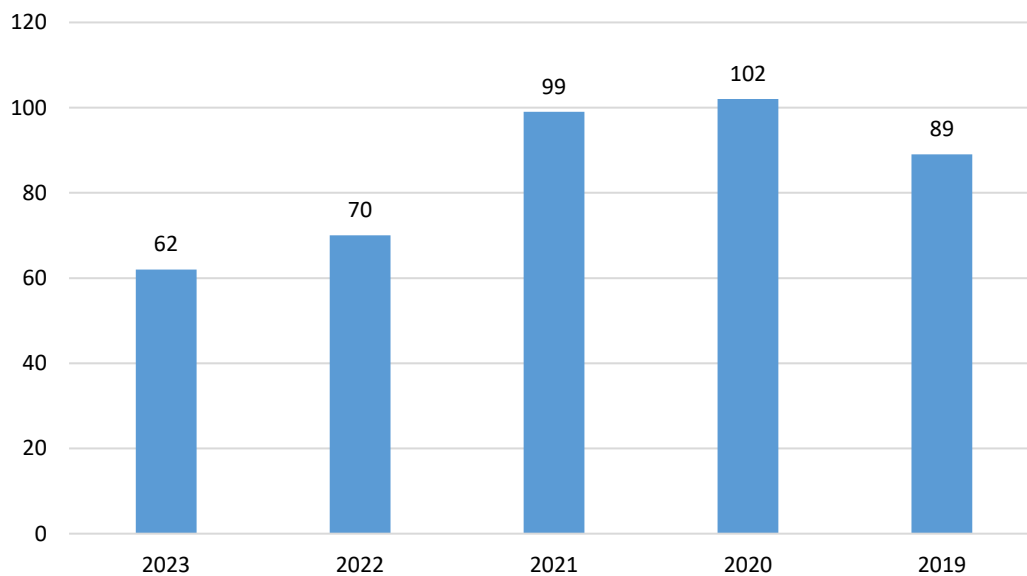
Organizational Chart:

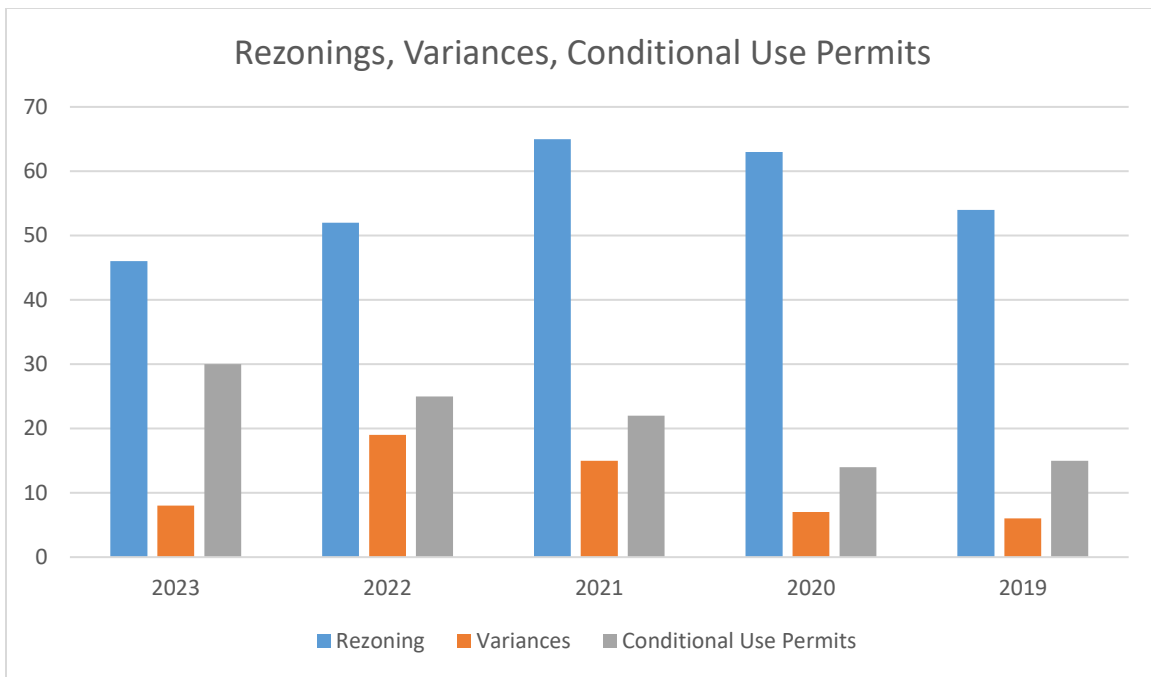


Statistical Performance:

Town	Zoning Permits					Sanitary Permits				
Town	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Arlington	12	9	9	8	13	4	2	3	6	8
Caledonia	39	36	42	35	40	11	11	17	10	16
Columbus	10	11	9	13	13	2	8	5	4	4
Courtland	2	0	2	0	0	1	3	1	3	3
Dekorra	56	57	59	61	42	32	24	23	21	16
Fort Winnebago	14	13	23	13	12	2	4	10	8	3
Fountain Prairie	14	24	18	14	13	7	10	9	5	9
Hampden	10	12	9	11	6	0	4	6	10	3
Leeds	8	10	12	18	7	7	4	8	6	1
Lewiston	27	14	17	11	15	9	9	7	12	8
Lodi	45	34	52	51	41	5	4	11	5	7
Lowville	16	20	15	16	13	6	7	9	9	3
Marcellon	21	11	25	37	11	5	5	7	13	3
Newport	5	8	3	12	5	4	9	4	8	4
Otsego	11	8	7	10	16	4	4	2	4	5
Pacific	32	25	31	36	33	15	12	21	20	18
Randolph	0	0	0	0	1	8	7	2	4	4
Scott	3	0	0	0	0	6	7	7	9	1
Springvale	10	18	9	9	6	3	5	2	3	5
West Point	61	60	29	44	38	23	17	15	20	16
Wyocena	41	26	34	36	37	20	8	28	20	20
Cities & Villages						1	3	6	8	2
Total	437	396	396	435	362	175	167	203	208	159

New Dwelling Permits





Compliance & Enforcement

Number of Complaints Received in 2023: 88

Type of Complaints	
Land Use/Other Zoning	43
Building Without Permits	16
Tourist Rooming House	9
POWTS (non-maintenance)	3
Junk	13

80 of these 88 complaints have had complete status reviews.

Percentage of verified complaints that were documented violations: 72.5%

Percentage of verified complaints that were cleared of any violation: 27.5%

Percentage of verified violations that have been resolved: 55.17%

Remaining:

The remainder of complaints not verified (8), we are working with Corp Counsel to gain access to property and are in process of gaining information to determine if violation is present.

Percentage of Violations that turned into Citations: 0%

POWTS Maintenance is not a part of the above numbers. Compliance runs 95% annually. Around 180 Citations are issued as a third step.

Summary:

The year 2023 continued to see lots of activity related to building and development. The demand for services throughout the entire departments service areas remains high. The staff worked diligently to react to the high demand. The entire staff did a great job managing this demand.

A quick review of the statistical side of the report shows that workload associated with zoning permits remained well above the 5-year average. In 2023, we processed 41 more zoning permits than we did in 2022. Sanitary permits remained close the 5-year average up from 2022. New dwelling permits were below the 5-year average, with a slight downward trend. The number of public hearing items related to rezones were below the 5-year average. Conditional use permits (CUP) are trending higher well above the 5-year average. We are seeing a growing number of Tourist Rooming House CUP requests, as well as general use requests that need a CUP. The zoning ordinance does require CUP's for many uses within the different districts. These trends tend to follow a few factors including the current economic situation. The department tries to evaluate these trends each year as part of our revenue predictions at budget time. Revenue projections were met and or exceeded in 2023.

The work associated with bringing properties into compliance with documented violations is an ongoing responsibility for the department. Complaints are reviewed and status is determined. If a Violation is found, those violations are brought into compliance through a range of options. The goal of the department is to bring properties into compliance through less formal solution-based options, if possible. This is the case most of the time. In some instances, the department, after exhausting more solution-based options, will need to use citations and courts to achieve compliance. The compliance and enforcement section of this report was updated this year. In 2023, the department received a total of 88 complaints regarding alleged violations. Of those 88 complaints, department staff have completed status reviews on 80 of those 88 complaints. We determined that 72.5% of the 80 complaints had violations. To date 55.17% of those violations have been resolved and brought into compliance. These violations were resolved without the issuance of any citations. The department takes compliance and enforcement seriously and follows up on all alleged complaints. In 2023, we gained compliance on a lot of different properties for a lot of different reasons. We continue to use a pragmatic approach to how we handle the wide range of compliance related issues we come across. We are thankful for the high level of engagement and assistance we get from Columbia County Corporation Counsel.

In 2023, with assistance of the Land Information Department, we were able to complete work on a Zoning Editor application that will streamline the data management and mapping side of the zoning district data. This newly developed application will make the process of mapping new zoning districts per parcel a more streamlined process that takes advantage of workflow that is already happening in the Land Information Office. We will start implementation in 2024. This will be a much more efficient and effective use of staff resources and technology.

Presented by: Kurt R. Calkins, Director

Reviewed and approved by: Planning & Zoning Committee March 5, 2024



Register in Probate

Department Overview:

The Register in Probate department consists of two positions, which include the Register in Probate/Probate Registrar/Juvenile Clerk and the Deputy Register/Registrar in Probate/Deputy Juvenile Clerk. The Probate Registrar/Register in Probate is an appointed position by the Columbia County judges and with the approval of the district chief judge. The Wisconsin Statutes, sections 851.71, 851.72 and 851.73 set the appointment, duties and powers of the Register in Probate. Section 865.065, Wis. Stats., outlines the Probate Registrar's definition and powers for informal administration. The Juvenile clerk is appointed by the court per section 48.04, Wis. Stats. The deputy clerk for register in probate/juvenile clerks is also appointed by the circuit court judges and approved by the district chief judge per section 851.75 and section 48.04, Wis. Stats.

The probate office is responsible for the following case types: probate (informal, formal, ancillary, special administration, summary procedures, trusts, and wills-no probate), minor and incompetent guardianships, protective placement, conservatorship, juvenile delinquent, juvenile injunctions, children in need of protection and services (CHIPS), termination of parental rights (TPR), adoptions, and mental/alcohol commitment cases. The informal probate cases are assigned to the Probate Registrar and responsible for all the non-judicial act required by the probate law.

Duties and responsibilities of the Register in Probate include comprehensive customer service including delivery of accurate, prompt, and courteous assistance on complex policies, guidelines or procedures and standard practices to both internal departments and external customers. In addition, our office insures the proper filing of forms, scheduling to meet all time limits and deadlines, clerk and record the minutes to the hearings and proceedings for our cases. The Register in Probate manages and audits all annual accounting for guardianship cases.

Organizational Chart:

Judge W. Andrew Voigt, Presiding Judge

Kristin Lemanczyk, Register in Probate/Probate Registrar/Juvenile Clerk
Dawn Lowrey, Deputy Register/Registrar in Probate/Deputy Juvenile Clerk

Statistical Performance:

Comparison of Cases Filed:

Type of Cases:	2021	2022	2023
Probate & Trust	139	144	143
Wills-no probate & safekeeping	209	184	199
Adult Guardianship-Incompetents	39	34	37
Minor Guardian-Estate - Ch. 54	0	1	1
Guardianship - Ch. 48	15	15	21
Conservatorship	1	1	0
Juvenile Delinquency	41	29	27
Juvenile JIPS/CHIPS	33	24	29
Juvenile Injunction	2	2	2
Term of Parental Rights	3	8	11
Adoption	8	9	21
Mental Health Act	113	70	79
Totals:	603	521	570

Register in Probate Fees Collected:

	2021	2022	2023
County (fees & copies)	\$ 26,491	\$ 46,769	\$ 39,637
State	\$ 48,624	\$ 89,482	\$ 74,483
Totals:	\$ 75,115	\$ 136,251	\$ 114,120

*** The probate inventory filing fees collected under Sec. 814.66 is split between the State (67%) and County (33%). All copy and certified fees are retained by the county.

GAL/Adversary Counsel Fees Ordered by the Court:

Responsibility of:	2021	2022	2023
County	\$ 11,735	\$ 12,915	\$ 28,562
Ward/Subject	\$ 89,941	\$ 87,526	\$ 96,814
Totals:	\$ 101,676	\$ 100,441	\$ 125,376

GAL/Adversary Counsel Fees Collected:

	2021	2022	2023
Totals:	\$ 52,766	\$ 48,647	\$ 59,515

***Guardian ad litem/adversary counsel is a court appointed attorney. The Wisconsin Statutes require the court to appointment of guardian ad litem in guardianship, mental and juvenile proceedings. The court may appoint counsel for parents in juvenile-chips cases. The statutes requires the county of venue to be responsible for the costs if the individual is considered indigent. The probate office mails notices and seeks the reimbursement through mailing of reminder notice, tax intercept, or collections.

Comparison of State Public Defender Legal Fee Reimbursement:

	2021	2022	2023
County	\$ 984	\$ 675	\$ 414
State	\$ 2,951	\$ 2,025	\$ 1,242
Totals:	\$ 3,935	\$ 2,700	\$ 1,656

***Chapter 938 requires the parents to reimburse the state for costs of legal services expended by the state on behalf of their child/juvenile. Collections are assessed and received through the Probate Office. The county retains 25%

Summary:

The Probate office continues to perform within all the parameters of statutory requirements for our case types. There were no significant statutory changes during the 2023 calendar year related to the case types maintain by the Probate Office. Most areas had an increase of filings except for the area of Juvenile Delinquency. There were more cases filed that were complicated and contested, especially in the areas of minor and adult guardianships. The overall count of cases does fluctuate from year to year, but in 2023 the caseload reflected filings of a typical year. The Probate office is starting to experience a challenge of finding attorneys who will accept counsel appointments in CHIPS cases.

The Probate Office did have a larger than normal increase in fees collected due to a couple larger probate cases and a multi-million dollar guardianship filing. The termination of parental rights cases that were being appealed in 2022 were still ongoing in 2023; one of those cases completed the appeal process in 2023 and the other is still in the appeal process. These cases as well as contested adult guardianship cases and an increase in requests for counsel in CHIPS will reflect on the increase of guardian ad litem fees. The Probate office continues to be assertive in attempting to collect all outstanding balance of guardian ad litem/counsel fees owed to Columbia County.

In 2023, Kristin Lemanczyk became the Register in Probate, which left an opening as the Deputy Register in Probate. That position was filled in February 2023. Therefore 2023 was used to train and transfer duties to the new Deputy. The Deputy position continues to help the Clerk of Court's office with other duties as assigned by the Clerk of Court to help their office with their workload. The scheduled hours are worked around any court hearings and office coverage for the Probate Office.

Presented by: Judge W. Andrew Voigt and Kristin Lemanczyk, Register in Probate

Reviewed and approved by: Judiciary Committee – 3/12/2024



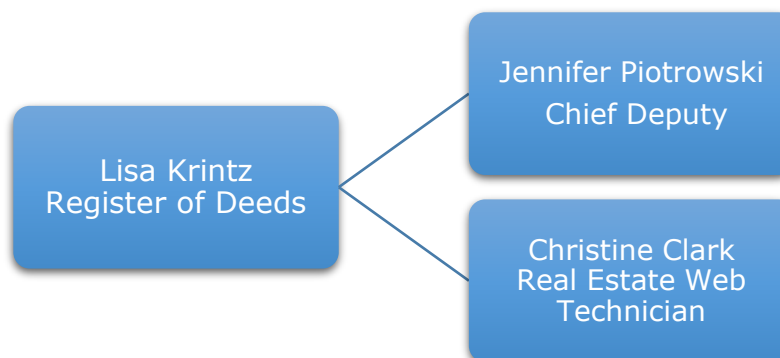
Register of Deeds

Department Overview:

The Register of Deeds office provides safe archival storage and access to public records as well as implementing statutory changes, system modernization, program and procedural evaluation, and staff development to assure a high level of timely service for our citizens and customers. The Register of Deeds office provides the official county repository for real estate and vital records, and is responsible for the following duties:

- Review, record, file, scan, eRecord and maintain all documents authorized by law to be recorded as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 59.43. Document examples include deeds, land contracts, mortgages, UCC Filings, Subdivision Plats, Condominium Plats, Certified Survey Maps, Lis Pendens, Annexations, Resolutions and Miscellaneous Files.
- Review and file all marriages submitted and review all deaths occurring in the county per Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 69.
- Prepare documents for indexing, imaging and eRecording using quality control procedures.
- Safely keep and return to the proper party, instruments which have been recorded.
- Make and deliver to any person on demand and upon payment of proper fees, certified and uncertified copies of official office records.
- File, index and maintain military discharges per Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 45.
- Record articles of incorporation, firm names and UCC fixture filings.
- File federal tax liens per Wisconsin Statutes 779.97.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

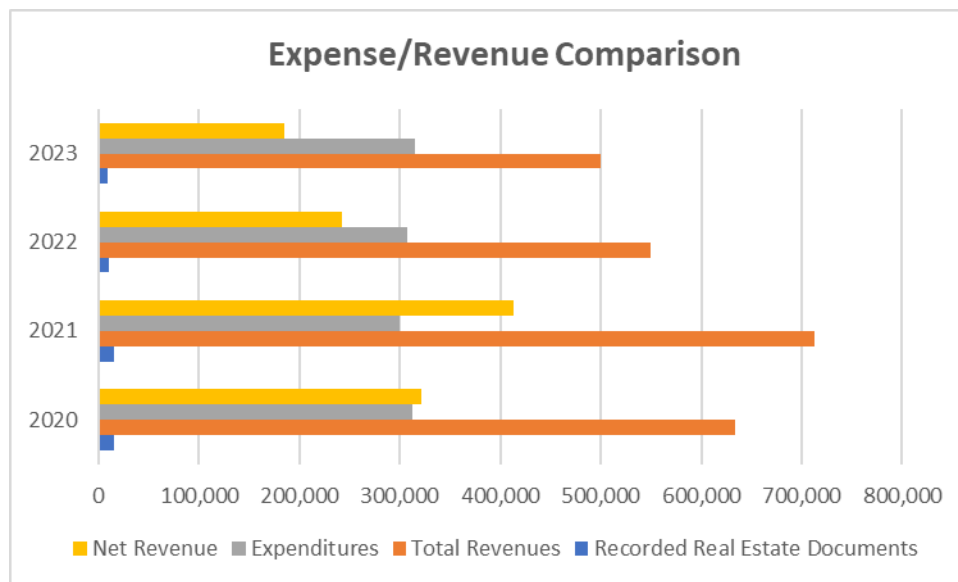
Recorded Real Estate Documents	2020	2021	2022	2023
	15,242	15,340	10,567	9,083
Revenues & Expenses	2020	2021	2022	2023
Real Estate Transfer Fee Revenue	231,846	303,078	234,790	222,019
Real Estate Document Revenue	228,795	229,450	159,205	136,815
Vital Record Revenue	28,772	28,796	27,554	27,777
Copy Revenue	42,996	47,082	41,606	38,678
Online Real Estate Revenue	100,860	104,711	86,761	74,626
Total Revenues	\$633,269	\$713,117	\$549,916	\$499,915
Less Expenditures	312,268	299,515	307,060	315,274
Net Revenue	\$321,001	\$413,602	\$242,856	\$184,641
Vital Record Statistics	2020	2021	2022	2023
Recorded Birth Certificates	813	836	827	770
Recorded Death Certificates	733	724	685	746
Recorded Marriage Certificates	422	529	526	469
Recorded Military Discharges	20	18	10	3
Online Services	2020	2021	2022	2023
Laredo Subscriptions	25	26	31	30
Tapestry Searches	7429	9237	7462	6299
Electronic Document Recording %	66%	69%	62%	66%

As indicated in the above chart, recorded real estate documents, real estate transfer fee revenue, real estate document revenue and copy revenue continue to decline due to the slowed real estate market. The online real estate revenue also has declined due to this.

There has been a significant drop in the number of searches performed using **Tapestry**. **Tapestry** is a web-based search service which allows users secure, remote access to real estate documents recorded in our office.

Laredo is a subscription-based search service which allows users secure, remote access to real estate documents recorded in our office. Despite the decline in real estate recordings, we have been able to maintain 30 **Laredo** subscribers.

Electronic Recording is the process of filing and recording documents with the Register of Deeds office via the internet. Customers pay a third-party vendor to submit documents to the Register of Deeds office. The number of documents being "eRecorded" has remained consistent.



The Expense/Revenue Comparison chart above shows that while there is not a huge fluctuation in expenditures, the revenues shift according to the number of documents recorded in the Register of Deeds office.

Summary:

In January of 2023, the Register of Deeds office completed verification of a back indexing project which was started in 2011. Approximately 128,000 documents were indexed and verified by staff in their spare time. It was a huge project to complete and will aid customers in their searches.

In March of 2023 a contract was awarded to On-Q Solutions, LLC to index approximately 172,000 documents that were downloaded into our database in 2022. The documents being indexed are from 1828-1964. On-Q started this project in June of 2023 with an anticipated completion date of May 2024. After this information is added to our database, personnel will begin the verification process when daily tasks are complete. The additional information will allow customers several options while searching. This project is financed through the Columbia County Land Records Modernization Plan. This account is funded with \$8.00 of the recording fee from each document recorded in the Register of Deeds office.

Statewide, real estate recordings were at a 30 year low in 2023. Rising interest rates and limited inventory attributed to this. When daily work is complete, the Register of Deeds team has been indexing our oldest vital records which were scanned into our database in 2017. All the death records have been indexed. Staff is now working on indexing the Birth Certificates. This information in our index has been a great asset for genealogists.

2023 Wisconsin ACT-12 passed legislation on June 20, 2023. ACT-12 repeals Wisconsin's personal property tax. Starting with the January 1, 2024 assessment, sec. 70.17(3), Wis. Stats., requires real property assessment for buildings, improvements and fixtures when located on: Leased lands, exempt lands, forest croplands and managed forest lands. The law states that in 2024, certain buildings, fixtures, and or improvements formerly considered personal property become real property. If nothing is done to separate the structures from the underlying land, the landowner will receive a tax bill in 2024 with the assessed value of the structure included. There is a new document called Buildings, Fixtures, And/Or Improvements that can be recorded in the Register of Deeds office which will prompt the Real Property Lister to create a new parcel number for the structure. This document will require a Real Estate Transfer Return. Property owners could also create a parcel through an assessor's plat, certified survey map, condominium plat or subdivision plat.

While recordings have slowed down, we remain busy with continued modernization efforts which are valuable to the constituents of Columbia County.

Presented by: Lisa Krintz, Register of Deeds

Reviewed and approved by: Executive Committee/March 14, 2024



Sheriff's Office

Department Overview:

The duties of the Sheriff are set forth by statute, the Constitution, and case law. The Sheriff is a unique position as it is elected and the Sheriff answers directly to the people of the county. Certain immemorial, principal, and important duties of the Sheriff at common law that are peculiar to the Office of Sheriff and that characterize and distinguish the office are constitutionally protected from legislative interference. The Sheriff will maintain the County Jail, investigate deaths and crimes within Columbia County, attend upon the courts, and enforce all federal and state laws and county ordinances, serve and execute civil process to include serving subpoenas, summons, complaints, and other court-related documents. Sheriffs shall keep and preserve peace in their respective counties and quiet and suppress all affrays, routs, riots, unlawful assemblies, and insurrections.

The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in the county.

The Columbia County Jail is charged with the responsibility of accepting and housing persons sentenced to the jail by the court system. Persons are also held in the county jail after being arrested by warrant or non-warrant arrests, pending court appearances, and violators of probation. Columbia County holds county inmates, inmates from federal and state institutions, and other county inmates as requested. There are 40 jail deputies/supervisors that operate and run the Jail and Huber Center on a 24/7 basis. The Sheriff's Office employs two full-time certified Registered Nurses to provide medical care to all inmates.

The Sheriff's Office has 127 employees spread out through nine different divisions. Most employees work varying hours and days as they cover nights, weekends, and holidays. The Sheriff's Office is a 24/7 operation and many of our staff must be available for call-outs.

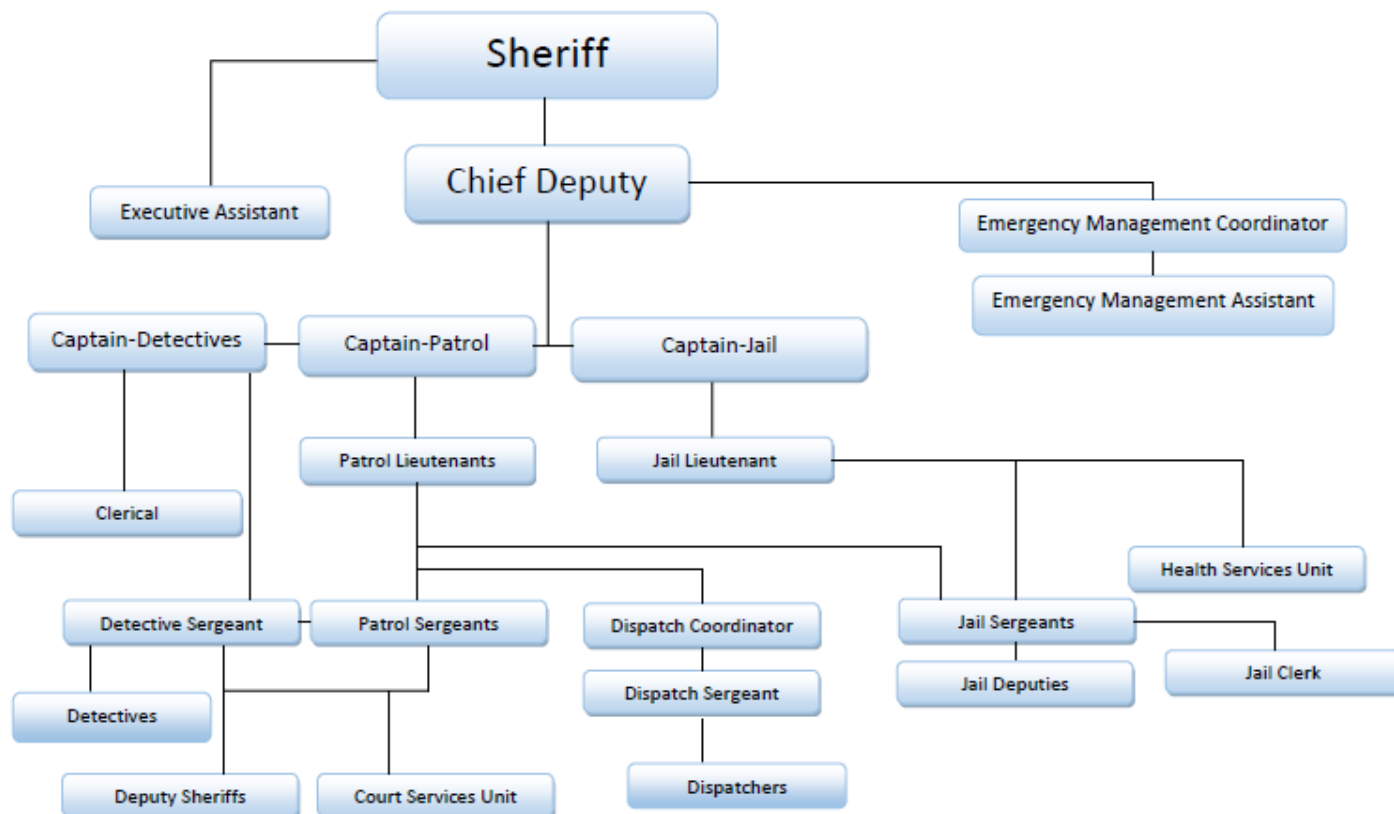
There are 33 full-time sworn road deputies, patrol sergeants, and patrol lieutenants who provide 24/7 patrols of the entire county. The Dispatch Center is the central dispatch for all of Columbia County Emergency Services, local municipal police departments, and 911 calls. There are 18 dispatchers and supervisors who keep the lines of communication open on a 24/7 basis. We have seven clerical and support staff that process, type, and organize all paperwork, reports, civil process, and open records requests for the entire department.

The Court Services Unit contains 13 part-time deputies. These deputies provide security to the courthouse and administration building as well as transport inmates to and from court and between secure facilities.

The Detective Division has seven detectives/supervisor that investigate all the criminal matters and crimes that occur in this county. They work with many local, state, and federal

partners to investigate these crimes. The detectives also operate and oversee the county's drug unit and undercover operations.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

Sheriff Administration – Civil Process

2019 - \$42,681	The Sheriff's Office processes civil papers for Columbia County Offices, other county agencies, attorneys, as well as the general public. The Sheriff's Office received \$47,142 in revenue for civil process service and executing writs.
2020 - \$31,817	
2021 - \$43,281	
2022 - \$47,718	
2023 - \$47,142	

Sheriff Administration – Motor Vehicle Accidents and Fatal Totals

2019 - 7	The Sheriff's Office investigated 906 accidents in 2023 and of those, 311 were car vs. deer crashes. There were six traffic fatal accidents within the county in 2023. We received a total of \$175 in the sale of reports and accident photos.
2020 - 11	
2021 - 10	
2022 - 10	
2023 - 6	

Sheriff's Administration – Citations and Warnings Issued

2019 - 4,419	The Sheriff's Office issues traffic citations and written warnings for traffic and equipment violations. The numbers fluctuate based on calls for service and current staffing levels. Deputies issued 7450 traffic citations 2,961 written warnings and 939 equipment violations. Deputies also arrested 503 drivers for impaired driving.
2020 - 6,286	
2021 - 6,737	
2022 - 6,824	
2023 - 7,450	

Sheriff Administration – Drug Unit

2019 - 171	The drug unit investigators worked 17 felony drug investigative incidents in 2023. We received approximately 105 Crime Stoppers drug tips. To assist with this growing epidemic and better educate the community and youth, four drug awareness presentations, and 10 demonstrations were conducted. Drug money seized totaled \$2,746 along with a 2015 Mercedes for the year. Our K9 Units conducted 806 free air sniffs of vehicles with 400 positive indications, 19 tracks for citizens, six building searches, and seized 495.6 grams of cocaine, 36.5 grams of heroin, 80.9 grams of fentanyl, 538 grams and 187 CCs of methamphetamines and 2234.9 grams of THC.
2020 - 283	
2021 - 137	
2022 - 53	
2023 - 17	

Sheriff's Administration – Traffic, Ordinance and Jail Assessment

2019 - \$277,603	These figures include both the county retained portion of traffic fines and ordinances and the \$10 jail assessment received on every citation. About 25% of those figures are amounts received on criminal matters as there is no easy way of separating those figures on the reports available to Columbia County. These statistics reflect actual fines and forfeitures collected during 2023 and previous years. Collections reflect the impact of the economy (lower, slower payments) and are not as effective.
2020 - \$302,866	
2021 - \$422,938	
2022 - \$487,886	
2023 - \$483,427	

Communications Center – Total Calls for Service

2019 - 91,530	The Sheriff's Communications Center created 88,315 calls for service for all police, fire, EMS, and our Sheriff's Office. Calls for service for the Sheriff's Office's alone were 44,588 for 2023. There were 18,008 911 calls and an additional 51,423 phone calls into the Dispatch Center.
2020 - 102,962	
2021 - 92,393	
2022 - 91,566	
2023 - 88,315	

County Jail – Huber Law Board Revenue

2019 - \$176,320	Inmates sentenced with Huber privileges at the Columbia County Jail are charged a weekly fee. This fee is charged only to those inmates that are actively working or performing child/elderly care and if granted by their judgments. Those going to school or not working are not charged the weekly fee of \$125. Total revenue for eligible inmates on the Electronic Monitoring Program was \$10,777.
2020 - \$55,421	
2021 - \$72,978	
2022 - \$142,591	
2023 - \$152,925	

County Jail – Boarding Out-of-County Prisoners Revenue

2019 - \$242,145	The Sheriff's Office charges a range of \$25-\$100/day for out-of-county inmates and \$50/day for Extended Supervision Sanction Inmates.
2020 - \$200,652	
2021 - \$388,414	
2022 - \$334,035	
2023 - \$167,592	

County Jail – US Marshal Revenue

2019 - \$139,793	The Sheriff's Office charges \$72/day to hold Federal prisoners. The County Jail sought and held additional inmates for revenue in 2023.
2020 - \$207,205	
2021 - \$12,586	
2022 - \$0	
2023 - 234,207	

County Jail – Average Daily Population

2019 – 135	The population of the County Jail consists of male and female secure and Huber inmates, secure Federal inmates, and inmates on probation and parole holds. Inmates with behavior issues are not allowed in the program. One of the many positive attributes of ERP is it provides participants an incentive to maintain a higher standard of behavior and respect towards jail staff, provides a cost-savings on inmate meals, and also provides other county departments assistance. This allows certain inmates out to work.
2020 – 135	
2021 – 104	
2022 – 132	
2023 – 130	

Summary:

The Sheriff's Office faced another challenging year with recruitment, retention, and overall staffing. Every division worked short-staffed for a good portion of 2023. We ended 2023 with over 10% vacancies of the approved positions. Our dedicated employees worked overtime at amounts never seen before. The Sheriff's Office continues to be plagued with finding good and qualified candidates especially for our patrol, dispatch, and jail divisions. Increasing wages and thinking outside of the box in streamlining the interview process have helped us get some qualified candidates hired, however, fewer candidates are applying. With so many new staff in all divisions, it has been a huge strain on our training and supervisory efforts. This is an increased cost to the county because constantly hiring and training new staff is expensive.

The county continues to see relatively low overall crime rates. Exceptions to this are impaired driving, child sex assaults, eluding, and mental health cases where there were increases. Property crimes are at an all-time low with only 18 burglaries and 90 thefts reported. Drug overdoses are at a 10-year low with 57 drug overdose calls. Our staff did an amazing job keeping our community safer and doing more with less. Our staff are very dedicated and continue to put their lives in danger every day and notably, five employees earned life-saving awards for helping save lives.

In addition to their investigative duties, the Detective Division is also tasked with background investigations for prospective employees. Hiring good candidates is a priority, but it does take time away from other investigations and duties. The detectives started working more internet crimes against children cases as we have partnered with ICAC task forces. The Patrol Division continues to have a strong proactive presence throughout the county which has a direct correlation of greater visibility, reduced response times, and quicker availability for calls for service. Driving behavior complaints like inattentive and reckless driving continue to be our main call for traffic enforcement. From a noticeable uptick in non-compliance and serious reckless driving seems to have resulted in 48 eluding calls in 2023. The Jail Division continues to be challenged with inmate drug addiction and mental health issues with sharp increases in contraband being smuggled into the jail as well as an increase in violence and non-compliance of the inmates. We transitioned to a different inmate communication platform in the jail which resulted in an increase in revenue to the county. The jail also increased our federal inmate population which has drastically increased our jail revenue. The consolidation and transfer of the Dells Dispatch Center to Columbia County Sheriff's Office was a huge logistical undertaking.

Due to increased jail revenue and consistently being short-staffed in the jail, the Sheriff's Office is anticipating coming in under budget by over \$450,000. This money goes directly back into the general fund for the county. The successful implementation of license plate readers provides deputies and detectives extra evidence which have already helped solve many crimes and are a great tool in keeping our community safer.

Presented by: Sheriff's Administration
Reviewed and approved by: Public Safety Committee on March 11, 2024.

Solid Waste

Department Overview:

The Solid Waste Department is a valuable resource for the residents of Columbia County. In addition to general refuse, construction and demolition material and recycling, the facility also accepts and recycles appliances, electronics, furniture, fluorescent bulbs, used oil, tires and agricultural plastic.

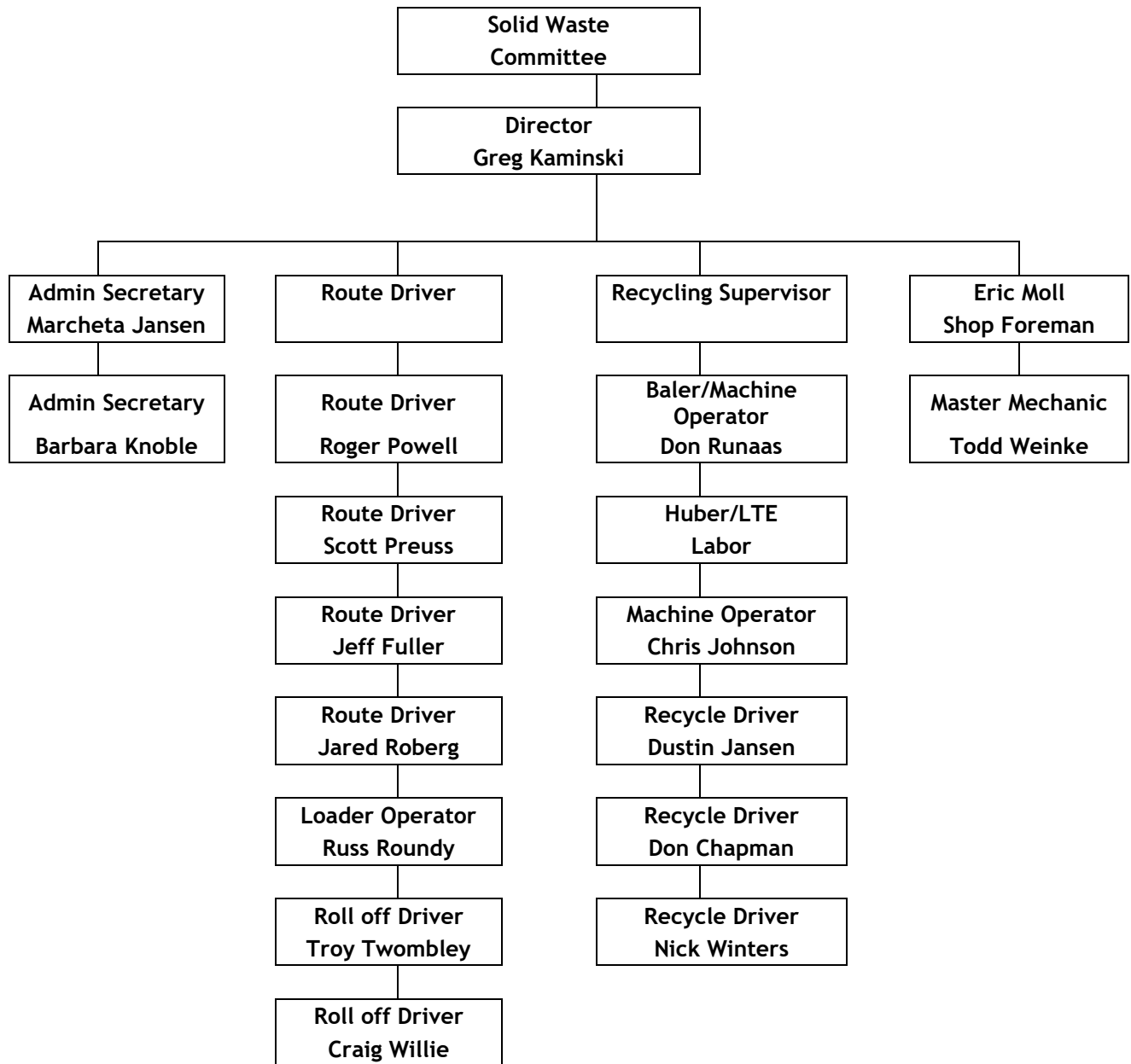
The Solid Waste Department provides curbside collection of garbage and recycling to 7 municipalities throughout the County. The department utilizes automated side load trucks for collection wherever possible to improve efficiency and reduce costs. The department also offers commercial containers for businesses as well as large roll off containers for construction jobs and home remodeling projects.

The Solid Waste Department is the Recycling Responsible Unit or Responsible Unit by contract for 20 Towns, 10 Villages and 3 Cities. The County staff collects the recyclables from 24 drop-off sites located throughout the County and delivers them to our recycling facility for processing.

The Solid Waste department was devastated by two fires in May 2023. These fires destroyed the waste transfer station, the recycling building and all the waste processing equipment as well the two material storage buildings. A temporary manual processing line was set up in the old recycling building to allow the department to continue to process recycling from the County's collection routes and drop off sites. Recycling material is brought into the facility as a mixed single stream and is sorted into individual commodities such as paper, cardboard, tin, aluminum, and plastics to achieve the greatest possible revenue.

A fabric structure is being installed to allow the County to continue to operate the transfer station. Solid waste brought into the facility is now being loaded into trailers and transported to Glacier Ridge Landfill in Horicon. Construction and demolition waste are also accepted and transported to the landfill. The volume of material brought into the transfer station was again strong in 2023 with more than 37,000 tons brought into the facility.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Recycling Revenue	\$935,585	\$1,381,646	\$1,391,068	\$833,162.00
State Aid Recycling	\$138,143	\$138,219	\$138,637	\$137,978.00
Municipal Contracts	\$1,374,498	\$885,584	\$869,265	\$788,206.00
Garbage	\$1,258,644	\$1,205,798	\$1,162,940	\$1,091,270.00
Demolition	\$881,263	\$773,038	\$751,032	\$707,508.00
Sofa/Loveseat /Chair	\$15,722	\$17,461	\$17,450	\$16,412.00
Appliances	\$33,416	\$25,910	\$24,590	\$26,088.00
Microwaves				\$2,595.00
Televisions	\$43,955	\$45,540	\$58,132	\$61,270.00
Mattress/Box Spring	\$12,860	\$12,682	\$12,682	\$11,643.00
Toilets			\$907	\$930.00
Container Rental	\$576,396	\$490,993	\$476,613	\$383,410.00
Florescent Bulbs	\$8,120	\$11,093	\$13,765	\$7,430.00
Tires	\$62,544	\$60,298	\$55,095	\$60,076.00
Brush /Pallets	\$10,907	\$12,392	\$17,838	\$6,668.00
Total Revenue	\$5,308,098	\$5,060,950.00	\$4,990,014.00	\$4,134,646.00

Despite the fires, revenue increased 4.7% over 2022, due to continued strong transfer station volume for both garbage and demolition.

Recycling

	2023 Tonnage	2023 Revenue	2022 Tonnage	2022 Revenue	2021 Tonnage	2021 Revenue
Newspaper	1,440.82	\$53,374.57	1,893.43	\$151,573.80	1,165.00	\$75,905.65
Cardboard	3,086.11	\$195,161.90	3,877.48	\$546,584.80	3,358.54	\$463,558.90
Mixed Glass	375.62	0.00	1,352.00	0.00	968.00	0.00
Tin Cans	187.97	\$34,183.32	208.16	\$34,345.15	143.24	\$34,712.13
Aluminum	89.50	\$99,032.40	116.65	\$200,182.80	114.38	\$168,533.60
Single Stream	0.00	\$258,614.25	0.00	\$26,844.56	0.00	\$37,022.30
PET #1 Plastic	358.55	\$96,172.45	416.61	\$191,654.55	285.09	\$103,888.40
HDPE #2 Natural	107.20	\$133,103.20	117.86	\$114,929.50	107.89	\$197,313.60
HDPE #2 Color	58.45	\$16,379.70	88.89	\$33,843.10	84.32	\$74,669.40
Mixed Plastic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metal	301.59	\$49,564.40	382.72	\$58,955.05	382.72	\$75,905.65
Total	5,995.93	\$935,584.52	8,246.18	\$1,381,645.96	6,609.18	\$1,391,068.19

Recycling revenue and tonnage were down significantly in 2023 due to the impact of the fire.

Summary:

Despite the fires, the Solid Waste Department continued to see significant growth in 2023. Revenue from garbage, construction and demolition and container rentals achieved record levels.

Recycling revenue was up more than 50% prior to the fire in May 2023 but ended the year down 32%. We are currently using a combination of Huber, LTE and temporary labor to operate a temporary manual recycling line. We are also renting a baler which allows us to continue to process recycling from our collection routes and the Town drop off sites. Residual garbage in the recycling stream has more than doubled over the last several years resulting in increased processing costs. In 2023, the residual rate improved slightly to 20%. We have updated our recycling guide and are continuing to look for ways to educate the public on proper recycling.

Transfer station volume and revenue increased by 5% in 2023. High trucking costs continue to be an issue. A compactor will be installed in 2024 which will increase the weight of loads hauled to the landfill and reduce trucking costs. A temporary fabric structure will be attached to the pre-existing transfer station walls to allow continued operations during the rebuild. All of the building and equipment damaged by the fires have been removed and new buildings are being designed with the goal of beginning construction in mid-2024.

Truck maintenance continues to be an issue with major repairs on older vehicles. Supply chain issues in getting parts and tires also impacted the department. We will continue to upgrade our truck fleet and continue to focus on preventative maintenance to reduce truck and equipment costs.

Demand for commercial and roll off containers for construction continues to be strong. We will continue to look for other opportunities to add to our residential and commercial customer base.

The Department processed 36,530 transactions over the scale or an average of 146 per day.

Presented by: Greg Kaminski

Reviewed and approved by: Solid Waste Committee

March 6, 2024

Veterans Service Office

Department Overview:

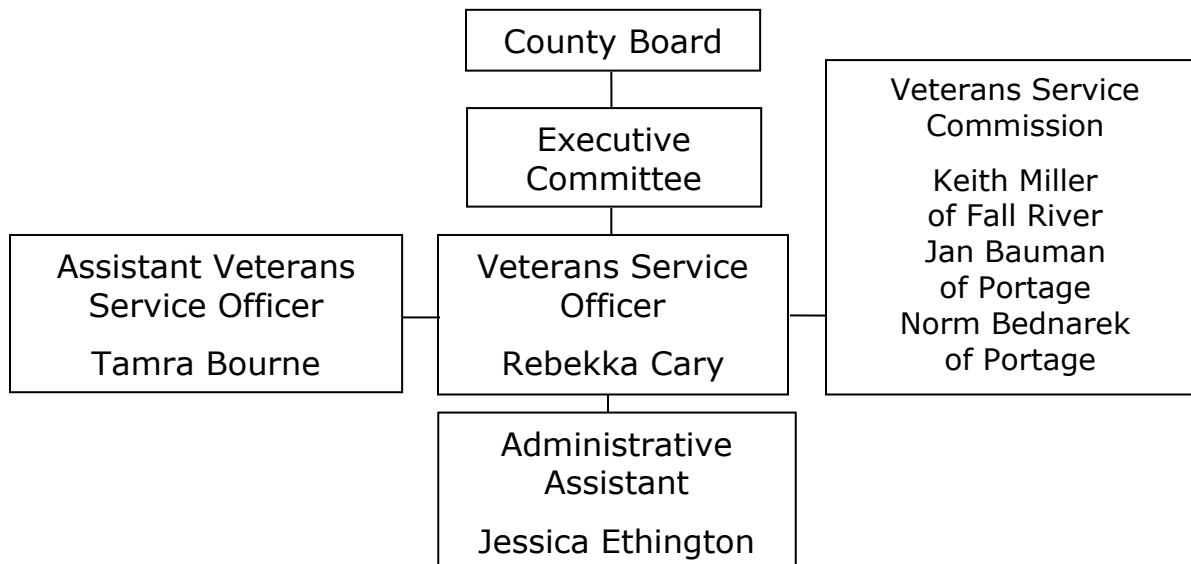
Chapter 45.80 of the Wis. Statutes provides for each county to have a County Veterans Service Officer and establishes the duties of the Veterans Service Office.

All Columbia County resident veterans and dependents may receive assistance through veteran services provided. This office provides information on veterans' service-connected disability compensation, nonservice-connected disability pension, vocational training, educational programs, home loan guaranties, life insurance, hospital and domiciliary care, healthcare, combat veteran readjustment counseling, long-term care/veterans' home residency, funeral/burial benefits, employment/job-search counseling, and death benefits to surviving dependents. Approximately 3,951 veterans have been identified as residents of Columbia County.

Chapter 45.81 of the Wis. Statutes provides for each county to have a County Veterans Service Commission consisting of three residents of the County who are veterans appointed for staggered three-year terms by the County Board Chairperson.

The Commission administers the Columbia County Veterans Relief Fund which provides short-term, temporary financial assistance to all resident veterans and their dependents. The Commission investigates claims for financial aid, determines eligibility, and authorizes financial assistance for applicant veterans and dependents. The Commission may delegate administrative duties to the County Veterans Service Officer, who serves as its Executive Secretary.

Organizational Chart:



Statistical Performance:

Veteran Population in Columbia County		
2021	2022	2023
4,072	3,951	3,894

Veterans Using VA Healthcare		
2021	2022	2023
1,446	1,498	1,474

Federal DVA Expenditures in Columbia County			
VA Service	Expenditures		
	2021	2022	2023
Compensation & Pension	\$19,076,000	\$20,606,000	\$25,875,000
Education & Voc. Rehab	\$1,308,000	\$1,304,000	\$1,206,000
Insurance and Indemnities	\$259,000	\$146,000	\$139,000
Medical Care	\$20,233,000	\$23,416,00	\$25,406,000
Total Expenditures	\$40,876,000	\$45,472,000	\$52,093,000

State DVA Expenditures in Columbia County			
WI DVA Service	Expenditures		
	2021	2022	2023
Retraining Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subsistence Aid Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0
Healthcare Aid Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0
Education Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0

Veterans Service Commission Financial Assistance Grants		
2021	2022	2023
\$445.25	\$3,551.00	\$5,553.84

State Benefit Applications			
Type	2021	2022	2023
Healthcare Grant	0	4	0
Subsistence Grant	0	1	0
GI Bill	34	26	32
Property Tax Credit	25	45	56
Total	56	60	76

Federal Benefit Applications			
Type	2021	2022	2023
Disability Compensation	198	288	318
Pension	13	15	9
Medical	67	81	82
Higher Level Review	44	27	28
Appeals to BVA	16	13	16
Supplemental Claims	60	88	115
Life Insurance	2	1	0
Burial Allowance	33	16	41
Survivors Pension / DIC	23	19	25
Discharge Correction	3	2	5
Marker applications	114	112	116
Request for Military Records	52	58	76
Other	60	74	92
Total	685	795	923

Employee Activity			
Activity	2021	2022	2023
Email	334	374	445
Phone	1,315	1,505	1,638
Fax	186	179	244
Outgoing Mail	95	116	170
Incoming Mail	33	11	28
Completed Forms	1,549	1,614	1,882
Office Visits	576	729	899
Home Visits	22	38	25
Outreach	24	28	61
Other	961	1,138	1,244
Total	5,095	5,732	6,636

Summary:

The level and pace of work throughout the office have continued to increase. Recent changes in Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) regulations and processes have improved access to and benefits for many veterans and their dependents. These improvements have resulted in an increased number of claims being filed by this office, and not only made the office busier but also brought over \$5 million more directly into the pockets of veterans and their dependents than the previous year.

The staff continues to do outreach to let veterans and their families know that the office is available to provide benefit counseling, claims assistance, and/or referrals in all federal, state, and local veterans' programs. Outreach events included attending Veterans' and Memorial Day activities, a Veterans' March at the State Capitol, the Laverne Griffin Flag Retirement Memorial dedication, Retirement Appreciation Day, and more. Assistant CVSO Tamra Bourne continues to be a member of the Columbia County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and CVSO Rebekka Cary is a member of Prevention and Response Columbia County. A member of the staff was able to attend at least one meeting of each of the service organizations throughout the county.

The CVSO Association of Wisconsin fall conference was held in Kenosha with Rebekka attending. Rebekka and Tamra attended the National Association of CVSOs (NACVSO) conference in Madison. Rebekka attended Certified Veteran Advocate (CVA) training in conjunction with the NACVSO conference.

The office continues to be productive and beneficial to the veterans and the family members of veterans of Columbia County.

Presented by:	Rebekka Cary, Columbia County Veterans Service Officer
Reviewed and approved by:	Executive Committee – March 14, 2024