



# COLUMBIA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

112 E. Edgewater Street  
Portage, WI 53901

608-742-9654

FAX: 608-742-9602

WEBSITE: [www.co.columbia.wi.us](http://www.co.columbia.wi.us)

## **Columbia County Executive Committee Emergency Meeting Minutes March 24, 2020**

Members present: Dan F. Drew, James E. Foley, Vern E. Gove, Barry Pufahl, JoAnn Wingers

Others were in attendance by teleconference during all or portions of the meeting.

The emergency meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Gove at 3:30 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed as required by the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. The meeting was held at the Administration building, Meeting Room #115, 112 E. Edgewater Street, Portage, Wisconsin.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Pufahl to approve the agenda as published. Second by Foley. Motion carried.

### **Coronavirus/COVID-19 Situation Update**

Ruf gave a brief report on the current COVID-19 situation.

Changes to County Department Operations in Response to Coronavirus/COVID-19 State of Emergency:

### **Emergency Staffing Plans for County Departments/Changes to County Employee Work Schedules and Work Rules**

Gove stated some departments are requesting changes to their plans. He has requested Department Heads submit any requests in writing to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Day requested to have all doors at the Health and Human Services building and ADRC locked from the public.

Motion by Drew to approve the request to lock all doors at the Health and Human Services and ADRC building. Second by Wingers. Motion carried.

Hardy gave an explanation of changes he is requesting. He also reported the ferry is currently not in operation and asked for direction on prioritizing road construction projects.

Motion by Pufahl to approve the Highway request as presented. Second by Foley. Motion carried.

Judge Voigt gave an update on court operations. The Supreme Court has limited the duties to be performed by the courts until May 22, 2020.

Yaskal gave an explanation of the request for the District Attorney's office staff to work remotely from home. Several concerns were addressed, including discussion to maintain at least 1 staff person in the office.

Motion by Drew to approve the District Attorney request as presented. Second by Wingers. Motion carried, not unanimously.

Day requested to have the internal door locked by the bathrooms near the ADRC.  
Motion by Pufahl to approve the request to lock the internal door. Second by Foley. Motion carried.

Ruf reminded Department Heads to submit any plan changes in writing to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Johnson requested to continue operating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on a virtual level.  
Motion by Foley to approve the request to continue operating the Emergency Operations Center virtually. Second by Drew. Motion carried.

### **Governor Evers “Safer at Home” Emergency Order**

Ruf reviewed the “Safer at Home” Emergency Order as it relates to local government and essential duties. He explained potential consequences to the County Board leadership if the Governor cancels or postpones the election, stating the existing Board terms would end on April 21, 2020. Ruf shared an option for consideration. Columbia County could become self-organized, allowing the county more flexibility to make rules about things like filling county board vacancies. The process to do this would require the current Board to adopt an ordinance to become self-organized, allowing the Board to make their own rules. Then the Board could pass a resolution to keep the current county board, committees and leadership in place until such time as a new county board is sworn in. Ruf stated 43 counties in Wisconsin are currently self-organized.

Motion by Foley to proceed with the process for Columbia County to become self-organized and put in place a plan to keep the current county board leadership in place until a new county board is sworn in. Second by Wingers. Motion carried.

Ruf will draft the ordinance and resolution for the Executive Committee to consider at the next meeting scheduled for Monday, March 30, 2020.

Gove stated all other committee meetings will be cancelled for the month of April unless approved by the Board Chair and Executive Committee. A special county board meeting will need to be scheduled before the April 7<sup>th</sup> election to consider the ordinance and resolution. Call-in or safe space options will be considered when scheduling the board meeting.

Motion by Foley to adjourn the meeting. Second by Wingers. Motion carried. The Executive Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
JoAnn Wingers  
Executive Committee Secretary

*These minutes were recorded by Sue Moll, County Clerk*