

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Social and Environmental Committee
CHAIRPERSON: Dianne Allendorf, Chairperson
DATE/TIME: August 15, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

☒ Dianne Allendorf
☐ Vacant
☒ Michael Dittmar

☒ Lynn Gallagher
☒ Joseph Heitkamp

☒ Bob Heuerman
☒ LaDon Trost

A quorum was established.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Hermesen, Sandra Schleicher and Scott Toot. ‘District 13 Watchdogs’ appeared via Zoom.

1. Minutes Approval:

- a) Minutes of the July 18, 2024 Social & Environmental Committee Meeting – Lynn Gallagher made a correction to the minutes before they were approved. There was a citizen incorrectly named on the July 18th draft minutes. **Heuerman made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2024 Social & Environmental Committee meeting as corrected. Seconded by Heitkamp and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.**

2. Citizens’ Comments: None.

3. Unfinished Business:

- a) FY2023/FY2024 Strategic Goals and Plans – The committee did not have anything new to review on their strategic goals and plans however, they will be discussing mental health a little later on the agenda.

4. New Business:

- a) Discussion and possible action on a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and Stockton School District #206 – Nicole Hermesen was contacted by the Stockton district and they do not have the capability to transport children that have handicapped accessible needs. She went back and forth with the State on how Transit needed to proceed to provide service for these passengers. **Gallagher made a motion to approve a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and Stockton School District #206 for \$25.00 per person, each way. Seconded by Heuerman and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.**
- b) Discussion and possible action on a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and East Dubuque School District #119 – **Heitkamp made a motion to approve a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and East Dubuque School District #119 for \$18.00 round trip, per person. Seconded by Gallagher and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.**
- c) Discussion and possible action on creating an Ad-Hoc Committee to investigate Mental Health Needs in Jo Daviess County – Gallagher said this is the result of the County Board retreat from July of 2023. The 708 Mental Health Board solely focuses on funding of agencies in the County. This committee will hopefully research the needs of the County and make recommendations to the Board on what we can do, as well as any funding that might be available. Dittmar asked Gallagher what are some of the mental health issues in the County. She replied that we have a lot of reactionary services, when people are in the middle of a crisis; not a lot of preventative services. The current programs in the County are for specific demographics and if you don’t fit into that demographic, you don’t qualify to be a recipient of

those programs. There is nothing for people with developmental disabilities unless you go to the workshop or you live in the Kreider home. She continued to say that they'd like to look at preventative-type things. Homelessness is also an issue and the majority of people who are homeless, have mental health issues. If we could put together a plan to address that, that would be great as well. Dittmar also asked Gallagher if she'd be looking for grants for this and she said she absolutely would and that there is a lot of money out there for things like this. Dittmar said he thinks it is a great idea. Heitkamp asked how many hours of counseling, or how many hours have patients been served with these providers. Toot replied that he could give Heitkamp some of the 708 Mental Health Board packets that show the provider's reports. Heitkamp said that would be nice; he would like to see where all this money is going. Trost reported that when he was Chief of Police years ago, a lot of his time was devoted to mental health. **Dittmar made a motion to recommend to the County Board, to create an Ad-Hoc Committee to investigate Mental Health Needs in Jo Daviess County. Seconded by Heurman and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.**

5. Staff Reports

- a) Jo Daviess County Transit Director/PCOM – Nicole Hermesen, Transit Director, reported that it has come to her attention that there seems to be an educational piece missing on how Transit grants work and why there are so many contracts. She gave the committee a handout for them to follow. All of the grants for operating expenses are reimbursements. Transit spends the money out of their account and then they ask the State to reimburse that money. She also mentioned that their department has Project Income, which is fares paid by passengers. There is a stipulation that was set; if the State gives Transit grant money, then Transit has to come up with their portion of the money, referred to as Local Match. This could be anything like service contracts with non-profit, local or State organizations, local appropriations (townships and individuals giving donations) and designated revenues and in-kind services. Service Contracts are a formal agreement between Transit and an agency, mutually agreeing on the rides, dates, times and the cost. They are also a source for Local Match. There are also new projects. These would be any additional rides given that are new in nature; they don't already provide service from Point A to Point B, etc. She gave an example to the committee on a reimbursement for a specific situation. Every dollar matters. All of the grants are different percentages, but she also has to report to the State and Federal Transportation Administration on what she did for the past month with contracts, revenue, etc. Every cent that they receive by local match revenue has to be reported. She presented a list of the grants that Transit receives and what percentage of each be reimbursed to Transit. When fares are 1.6% of the revenue, raising them will only make it harder and Transit will receive less reimbursements. Hermesen also gave a brief update on the Transit department and what has been happening since the last meeting. Committee Chair, Dianne Allendorf, asked Hermesen for a list of contracts and how much each contract is. Dittmar said that it sounds like with these service contracts, we basically break even. Hermesen said that when the County took over, there was a large deficit. Dittmar replied that it seems like we don't even want to charge fares because we could lose money off of them. Hermesen replied that was correct. He asked her how we pay for things when there is a deficit. She replied that there was a PTA, which means Public Transportation Account. There was much discussion. Allendorf said she actually feels that the entire County Board needs to hear Hermesen's report and that it would be an educational piece to everyone to help them understand. Hermesen will be presenting at the next County Board meeting.
- b) Public Health – Sandra Schleicher, Public Health Administrator, gave a brief report. She said they are in between things – they are waiting for their grants to come in for their FY25 that started in July. Otherwise, it has been business as usual. Back-to-school vaccines are on the rise.

c) Mental Health Board – Colleen Farrell was not in attendance.

6. Citizens' Comments: None.

7. Board Member Concerns: Gallagher thanked the committee for sending the recommendation to the County Board for the Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee.

8. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn was made at 7:07 p.m. by Joseph Heitkamp and seconded by Michael Dittmar. Motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.

Next regular meeting will be on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.