

**Minutes of the February 8, 2024 meeting of the Sawyer County
Finance Committee
Of the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors
Assembly Room; Sawyer County**



Voting Committee Members (X) Present:

- ☒ Chair: **Ron Kinsley**
- ☒ Vice Chair, John Righeimer
- ☒ Stacey Hessel
- ☒ Tom Duffy
- ☒ Dale Schleeter

Others Present:

Andy Albarado
Lynn Fitch
Mike Markgren
Linda Zillmer
Ron Buckholtz

Call to Order –Chair Kinsley called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Certification of Compliance with the open meeting law was met. Roll Call taken and quorum was met.

Meeting Agenda –

Public Comments – Linda Zillmer, Casey Culhane, Kevin Hagman,

Minutes from the previous meeting dated: January 11, 2024

Motion to approve made by: Mr. Righeimer Second by: Ms. Hessel

Motion carried without negative vote.

Finance Department Report -

Sales Tax Distribution – A written report was provided and showed that sales tax was down from the previous year. If the trend continues as recently has been, we would be below budget at the end of the year.

Budget Updates – A written report was provided and reviewed by Mr. Markgren. We are in a good position at this point with expenses and revenue. HHS is running a deficit but they have built up a funds balance.

Capital Improvement Plan Update – Purchases – A list of planned purchases was provided; we purchased a squad, some IT equipment and heat pumps, and had an airport State match in January. The total was \$191,628.65.

Tourism Analysis – Mr. Markgren provided a presentation and various graphs. Sawyer County is second highest county in tourism dollar impact in the counties compared showing it is a leader among our neighboring counties. A graph of how our tourism tax dollars are spent categorically was included. Retail and other trade industry spending correlate closely to the sales tax spending pattern. Historically, the percentage of sales tax revenue of accommodations and food services to retail has remained consistent. Over the last three years, inflation has negatively affected the trends.

Resolution Designating 2023 Fund Balance- Mr. Markgren presented a Resolution to Designate General Fund Balance to allow unanticipated excess revenues be assigned to three projects: put \$500 in Resource Development Fund for dam projects, \$450,000 in Highway Funds, and \$150,000 in the Courthouse Addition Fund. A motion was made by Stacey Hessel to approve the resolution with a correction in the date; second by Mr. Righeimer and forward to County Board. Motion carried without negative vote.

Investment Update -

A written report was provided in the packet. Investment income remains strong with the good rates offered showing \$92,219 in interest earned last month with a YTD total of \$1,093,274.

Elected Officials Wage Review -

A Resolution Establishing Official Wages was presented by Mr. Markgren. Rusk and Sawyer have been on the low end of wages for these officials. An elected official salary summary worksheet was shared with committee members. A motion was made by Ms. Hessel to approve the recommended wage set for 40 hours at \$67,863 for 2025, \$69,220 for 2026, \$70,605 for 2027 and \$72,017 for 2028; second by Mr. Righeimer and forward to County Board.

Out-of-County Vehicle Policy -

Mr. Markgren presented a worksheet identifying costs of hiring a deputy at \$16,185, and costs of providing the take-home squad policy at \$23,855.60. A list of neighboring county policies was included showing Rusk, Washburn, Barron and Burnett allowing the policy and Price, Bayfield and Ashland not yet permitting it. A motion was made by Ms. Hessel to approve allowing the out-of-county squad policy/cost within a 25-mile radius and forward it to County Board; second by Mr. Righeimer. Motion carried without negative vote. Mr. Albarado provided a potential Resolution Amending County Vehicle policy and the 2024 Budget to Accommodate Take-Home Vehicles for consideration in reviewing potential language changes.

EMS-Ambulance

A written presentation was provided and reviewed by Mr. Markgren. There is a concern about the amount of aging bills in the 120 days and older category. He anticipates a “catch-up” billing collection in the near future. Other collection trends are looking positive. At this time \$373,849.07 in revenue has been collected and the amount written off has started to increase.

Future Agenda Items – Financial Update of the Remodel, Airport Master Plan

Correspondence, reports from conferences and meetings -

Adjournment – 9:47 am

Next Meeting: March 14, 2024 **Time:** 8:30 am **Location:** Board Room
Minutes recorded by Lynn Fitch, County Clerk