

Barron County Strategic Planning Work Group

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 – 1:00 p.m.

Government Center – Room 2151

335 East Monroe Avenue - Barron, Wisconsin

AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Public Meeting Notification
3. Public Comment
4. Approve Minutes of 3-13-24 Meeting
5. Review Strategic Plan Update
6. Review Goals Accomplished
7. Review What Needs to Be Accomplished
8. Tiny Homes – City of Rice Lake (Dave Armstrong)
9. 2026 – 2030 Plan Ideas & Options
10. Staff Updates
11. Future Agenda Items
12. Set Next Meeting Date
13. Adjourn

PLEASE CALL 537-6841 IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND

cc: Patti Anderson, Randy Cook, Louie Okey, Karolyn Bartlett, John Banks, Craig Turcott, Chris Fitzgerald, Stacey Frolik, John Muench, Rachael Richie, Jeff French, Administrator, Corp. Counsel, Co. Clerk, Webmaster & 3 Public Postings

Any person who has a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in an accessible format must contact the County Clerk's office at 715/537-6200 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting so that arrangements may be made to accommodate your request.

DRAFT

Minutes
Barron County Strategic Planning Work Group
Wednesday March 13th, 2024, 1pm
Barron County Government Center, RM 2151
335 East Monroe Avenue, Barron, WI 54812
Minutes take by CA French

Committee/County Board Members Present: Okey, P. Anderson, Turcott, Bartlett, Banks

Staff Present: French, Frolik, Fitzgerald, Jako,

Virtual Attendance: None

Others Present: None

#1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 1.00pm by Chair Okey

#2. Public Meeting Notification:

Public Meeting Notice was read by CA French

#3. Public Comment:

None

#4. Approve Minutes 2-16-2024 Meeting:

Motion to approve 2-16-2024 minutes, Banks/P. Anderson, Carried

#5. Preventative or Alternative Programs:

- a. *Lona's Cafe:* Information presented by J. Jako, background and need of Lona's cafe in reference to senior dining site(s), \$15 paid to Lona's per meal, Cumberland has seen an increase in on-site dining, Turtle Lake has been closed, Federally funded program out of County or out of state participants are not prohibited, discussed having Jen prepare her 2025 budget with an expansion plan
- b. *Multi-Agency Response Team:* 200+ people were helped with this event, Article in Barron News Shield, people actually get the service they need, 30 vendors, will be held every quarter
- c. *New State Policy - Bridges and Culverts:* French provided information regarding this new State Program and work by Hwy Commissioner Hoefs to implement this program.

DRAFT

#6. Old Business:

- a. *HSHS Closing:* Hospital closing sooner, recruitment process on-going for new provider for Barron County.
- b. *New Sally Port:* Update from Sheriff Fitzgerald

#7. Review Strategic Plan Update:

No changes at this time.

#8. Review Goals Accomplished:

2021-2025 Strategic Planning Work Group Word document was updated by CA French

#9. Review What Needs to be Accomplished:

2021-2025 Strategic Planning Work Group Word document was updated by CA French

#10. Staff Updates:

None

#9. Future Agenda Items:

None

#10. Set Next Meeting Date:

2025

#11. Adjourn:

2.33pm adjourned by unanimous consent.

G:\google\googledocs\2024-3-14 SPWG Minutes.docx

**2025 Draft Committee Document
Strategic Planning Work Group
January 29th, 2025**

Information from Department Heads: By Department or Function or Directional Statement:

Information Technology:

The finance system platform changed to hosted system

Setup Digital Courtroom signage

Will be soon finishing Government Center Conference Room upgrades

Jail Body Camera Upgrades

Campground/Parks Cameras and WIFI upgrades

Courtroom A/V Upgrades for virtual court

Redundant connections via wireless from Hwy-JC

Upgraded about 26 network switches, which were 15+ years old in some cases.

Assisted with Radio Tower upgrade

Several Laserfiche processes - IT Helpdesk, CCS Provider Portal, Sheriff Onboarding, Child Support Paperless, WIC Electronic Storage

Jail Security System upgrade was original to the building.

Human Resources:

Allowing eight (8) hours of floating Holiday 7-5-2024 (employee retention)

Periodic pay reviews and adjustments (employee retention)

Building Security:

Door Security at J/C

WTE Plant:

Shredder and Material Handler – Improve municipal solid waste handling and removal

Cooperation Businesses and other Governmental Units:

County Board continued support for grants; Broadband expansion

Begin process to repurpose UWEBC Student Center and Gymnasium working cooperatively with RLASD

Directional Statement #1. – Affordable Housing, Aging Population, Rental and Entry Level Buyers

December 2024 Family House opens at Hwy TT location

December 2024 Mobile Family Homes are moved by Salvation Army to Hwy TT location

1.0 FTE Addition – I&A Specialist Aging/Disability Resource Center, Feb., 2024

Directional Statement #3. – Maintain and Improve County Owned Buildings:

Begin process for Secure Sally Port Expansion at J/C

New Boilers at Government Center (this also improves the new Aging/ADRC kitchen)

Directional Statement #4. – Improve Mental Health and Decrease Substance Abuse:

Resolution 2024-39, 10-21-2024 Advocating for an Inpatient Behavioral Health Facility for Northern Wisconsin

Resolution 2024-3, Requesting Hshs and Previa work cooperatively for continuation of care at Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire Hospital locations, (closings)

Directional Statement #5. – Remaining Fiscally Responsible:

Sale of 410 East LaSalle Ave., Building

Future Agenda Item/Decision:

CA French recommend a brief meeting in August to meet with a lead person for work on the next five year plan in 2026

U:\word\strategic planning\program prioritization\2025 Draft Committee Document.docx

**2024 Strategic Planning Work Group
Barron County Strategic Plan Update
For Years 2021 – 2025
Adopted January 11, 2021**

Accomplishments or in-process projects corresponding to the current Strategic Plan

Directional Statement #1: Expand affordable housing programs for aging population, rental and entry level buyers

Actions:

- 2021 CDBG-Covid 19 grant application for transitional housing (CTH TT)
- Veterans housing in Rice Lake
- [ARPA Funds for Barron County Housing Authority](#)

Directional Statement #2: Expand broadband coverage and enhance technology advancement in Barron County

Actions:

- EDC and County Board action to support \$7M grant application by Mosaic Technologies for fiber expansion in Barron and Washburn Counties
- December 2021 – County support for Mosaic USDA Reconnect Grant
- [Continued use of Zoom for Court hearings](#)
- [2023 Roll Call Voting system for County Board meetings](#)
- 2024/2025 Mosaic Fiber Grants to rural areas

Directional Statement #3: Maintain and improve all County owned facilities

Actions:

- New Highway Facility
- Auditorium upgrades
- Waste to Energy Z-wall, acid gas removal system, duct sizing, substantial repairs to boilers, air pollution control construct & operation permit renewal
- 2021-2022 acid gas removal system (in-process)
- 2022 budget for Sheriff radio system
- [Ann Street School](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and Reservation of Fund Balance for these projects](#)
- [Improvements to Chetek Dam](#)
- [New Aging Kitchen](#)
- [Improvements to Arland Rifle Range, possible improvements to Maple Plain Rifle Range](#)
- [Squad car maintenance by Hwy Department](#)
- [New Sally Port](#)
- [Ann Street School – Sale – Improvement Mental Health Services](#)
- [Preparedness/safety at buildings and table-tops trainings for Dept. Heads](#)

Directional Statement #4: Improve mental health and decrease substance abuse

Actions:

- NW Hope Consortium – addressing opioid and alcohol abuse in Barron, Chippewa, Rusk and Washburn Counties (Public Health / Sheriff / ADRC)
- Recovery Corps Grant
- Ann Street School for Community Support Program
- Transitional Housing (CTH TT)
- October 2021 - Family Drug Treatment Court testimonials from graduates
- Co-Responder pilot program (HHS / Sheriff)
- Investment of opioid settlement funds – Community Health Workers (continuation)
- Decrease drug abuse – 2023/2022 \$150K TAD Grant from WI Dept. of Justice
- Ann Street School Sale – Mental health services expansion

Directional Statement #5: Remain fiscally responsible

Actions:

- 2021 group purchase of new voting equipment
- Continued strong bond rating – Highway Facilities
- WCA article on unfunded mandates by French, Frolik and Syvinski
- 2021 approved budget – reduced mill rate, used 1/3 of sales tax collections
- TID meetings with cities and oversight of distressed TIDS
- Preserved Fund Balance and Strategic Borrowing for Capital Projects
- Increase medical assistance private insurance billing

Directional Statement #6: Attract and retain new skilled workforce

Actions:

- Proposed change to how sick and vacation are paid out to employees
- Allow employees up to 3 hours paid time for blood donation
- Allow remote work / telework for employees
- 2021 Pay plan step movement for employees with more than ten (10) years of service
- Work from home – 2 days per week
- 2023 Brent & Lance recommendation, attend NACo Leadership Academy
- Increased paid leaves, life insurance contribution, allow sale of vacation and sick leave to deferred comp plan, matching of deferred comp for management/confidential staff
- Telework and flexible schedule options available
- Implemented Laser fiche on-boarding process for new hires
- County Administrator meets, calls or emails new hires
- Raises for Jail and Dispatch (retention)
- Allow out of County patrol car usage

Other Actions:

Barron County as a great place to live and work

- Administrator interviews of CASTA and BANTA supporting Barron County as a great place to live, work and play
- County support of Discover Wisconsin winter segment
- 2021-2022 working with Gary Peterson, Red Cedar River canoe paddling and possible canoe/kayak docks – City of Rice Lake
- 2021 Special Administrator reports – Judge Babler & Bell Press Pod Cast
- Continued improvements to Cedar Side Trail - Buckthorn
- 2022-2023 More special Administrator reports & BANTA special program
- February 2023 – special program at Waste to Energy plant
- Demonstration Plan – Cameron, cooperation with local farmer
- 2022 special TV interview of Mark O’Connell, WCA
- Street and Infrastructure Improvements City of Rice Lake
- Bike and Pedestrian Plan

Safety

- HISP and ICE study and improvements to Decker Drive – Rice Lake
- 2022 Sheriff’s radio system – upgrade
- ARPA dollars for high-speed fiber lines to towers
- Signage on Red Cedar River bridge crossings, etc.
- Patrol deputies at lakes and recreation areas, Saturdays and Sundays
- School Resource officers

Protect Environment

- Successful reclamation of NIS site
- Ten (10) Year Land and Water Plan
- Air Pollution Control Construction and Operation Permit renewal – Waste to Energy
- Fifteen (15) Year Forestry Plan
- New air emissions analytical equipment
- Recycling site and infrastructure improvements (new boxes and recycling truck)
- (In Process), WTE Plant more and diverse specialty waste loads from out of state
- Portable grinder for WTE Plant
- Grant application(s) with WCWRP for schematic design, new Recycling Center
- Ground Water Study

Cooperation

- Manned recycling sites – cooperation with local municipalities
- Red Cross Blood Drives – 90% of appointments filled
- Highway Commissioner – NACo trip to Washington, DC
- 2021 purchase of new election equipment with municipal clerks
- Barron County Housing Authority – Apartment complex rebuild
- Sterling Bank help with opioid settlement dollars incorrectly remitted
- Special TV Show Rice Lake Cable Commission – WTE Plant
- Multi-County Bike and Pedestrian Plan (Polk-Barron)

Use of Technology – Response to Citizens

- Online applications for zoning permits
- **New website design and layout**
- **Availability of information on new website**
- Open Meeting software by C/B members
- Dryden Wire interviews
- Homeland Security Audit – voting, Clerk's Office
- Technology Improvements at Register of Deeds office

Delivery of Services to Citizens

- Meals on Wheels adapting to Covid and offering drive-by / drive-up delivery system
- Virtual attendance and expanding virtual assistance
- 2020 & 2021 Court System Full Operational during Covid
- September 2020 UW Lecture Series – “What is a County?”
- Snowbound Bison – Tyler's work / report to LCC Extension working cooperatively to help local citizen
- Congregate meals at Lona's Café
- Potential expansion of Lona's Café model
- HSHS/Prevea Closing – inter-county collaboration
- Ground Water Study

Forward thinking changing demographics

- Number of and conversion of lake homes to permanent residences
- Tourist rooming houses
- **Tourist rooming houses & work with DOR – sales tax**
- **Farmland Preservation and balance with the small rural business**
- **Seasonal park-model mobile homes at farmsteads**
- **Future Department Head retirements**
- **Agreement with WI DOR – sales tax & reporting to DOR short term rentals**
- **Moving UW Extension to UWECBC**

Tourism

- Ice Age Trail & working on Memorandum of Agreement between IAT and County – Completed 2021
- ATV/UTV Trail System expansion
- **ATV/UTV & Snowmobile Trail System – bridge rebuild**
- 2024 Approval Property Committee IAT Improvements
- Wild Rivers Trail Signage (possible)
- New Tourism Magazine
-

Other in-process considerations

- Monitor opportunities to identify vacated space in Government Center due to increased telework, cost savings due to vacated spaces (City of Barron)
- Discuss long-term plan for Government Center due to age of building, increased telework, etc
- Consider pursuing outdoor wellness grant
- 2021 WCA Magazine article on County Finances – Frolik, Syvinsk, French
- 2021-2022 Continued work on Highway Facility (lots of staff time)
- **ARPA expenditures**
- **Automated payroll system**
- Consider County-wide snowmobile & ATV/UTV alliance
- Implement an international trade symposium or etc.
- Continued annual Centenarian celebration
- Working cooperatively – coat giveaway drop location
- Concern express moving Aquafest to Lumbering Hall of Fame
- Snowbound Bison – Tyler's work & report to LCC/Extension Committee
- Seasonal – Permanent Park model Rv's @ Farm Locations (Bayfield Cnty)
- Refuge Letter
- 2024 Affordable Connectivity Program Discontinued

Recommended Action Items:

2025 Budget Aging/ADRC to include a supplement reference, replicating Lona's Café in another location

Color Scheme

2021 Updates

2022 Updates

2023 Updates

2024 Updates

2025 Updates

Updated: 2021-2-1
2021-2-5
2021-3-25
2021-12-27
2022-1-26
2022-2-14
2023-2-6
2023-3-6 *** - information added 2023-2-6 to 2023-3-6 ***

2024-1-12

2024-3-13

U:\word\2021-2025 Strategic Planning Work Document Updated 2-23.docx

SWOT Analysis Barron County

Strategic Planning

2020 - 2025

Ariga Grigoryan

UW Madison Division of Extension Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles tribe

The Mission of Barron County is: To enhance life by providing services in a fiscally responsible manner through leadership, collaboration and innovation, that is responsive to all Barron County citizens

Vision: A sustainable, vibrant community

Motto: A great place to visit, a better place to live

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fiscally responsible ❖ Recreational opportunities including our parks, natural resources and agricultural land ❖ Coordination and collaboration of our government employees, departments and Board of Directions leading to fiscal efficiencies ❖ Skills, knowledge and experience of our staff ❖ Strong partnerships with municipalities ❖ Creating innovative programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Affordable housing and transportation ❖ Underutilized technology available in the county ❖ Outreach of Barron County's achievements, successes and tell "our" story ❖ Broadband coverage ❖ Opioids: meth and heroin ❖ Mental health resources and available bed space ❖ Attracting skilled workforce ❖ Managing a growing workload with current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Implement technological efficiencies ❖ External and internal cross training ❖ Cooperation with other entities ❖ Technological advancement ❖ Create controlled recycling manned program ❖ Willingness to change and improve ❖ Embrace diversity and reach out to diverse populations as a potential workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Aging population ❖ Lack of housing ❖ Levy limit ❖ Federal/ State mandates without funding ❖ Lack of mental health resources ❖ Rising costs ❖ Unfunded mandates

2020 – Updated – Responses:

Weakness to Strength: 2020 increased usage of technology for meetings, and daily use

Opportunity to Strength: Continues work on manned recycling sites

2021/2022 – Updated Responses:

Opportunities: ARPA/Neighborhood Block Grant/CDBG Grant/Infrastructure Grants/Broadband

Opportunities: Solar webinar training ICMA

Weakness: Housing shortage, workforce shortage, community development, relocation/recruitment of families

2023 - Updated Responses:

Threats: Supply Chain, Inflation, Lack of skilled/qualified work force, Cyber-security

Opportunities: GPS broadband infrastructure mapping, Higher education assistance program for employees, Being cognizant of how work is completed today and how work will be completed differently in the future.

Strengths: Aging/ADRC breakfasts, Living and working in Barron County

U:\word\strategic planning\SWOT Update.docx

Updated: 2023-3-4, 2023-4-8,