

Barron County Strategic Planning Work Group

Monday, March 10, 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 1-29-25 Meeting
5. Review Strategic Plan Update
6. Five Year Recreation Plan
7. Tiny Homes – City of Rice Lake (Dave Armstrong)
8. 2026 – 2030 Plan Ideas / Options – Process & Timeline
9. Staff Updates
10. Future Agenda Items
11. Set Next Meeting Date
12. 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 January 29th, 2025 1pm
Barron County Government Center, RM 2151
335 East Monroe Avenue, Barron, WI 54812
Minutes taken by CA French

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

Staff Present: French, Frolick, Fitzgerald, Richie

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 3-13-2024 Meeting:

Motion to approve 3-13-2024 minutes, Banks/Turcott, Carried

#5. Review Strategic Plan Update:

The "2025 Draft Committee Document" will be updated with the following items added.

- #1. New HHS Software - (Technology)
- #2. New boilers at Government Center - (Building Maintenance)
- #3. AGRS - WTE Plant - (Building Maintenance) (added 2021)

#6. Review Goals Accomplished:

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

#7. Review What Needs to be Accomplished:

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

#8. Tiny Home City of Rice Lake - (Dave Armstrong)

2025 Goal CA French to contact R.L. Administrator Johnson

DRAFT

Richie left at 1.35pm

#9. 2026-2030 Plan Ideas and Options

Discussion Only:

Use of Sarah Turner for HHS

Use of and cost to use U.W. Extension Staff

#10. Staff Updates:

None

#9. Future Agenda Items:

Review approve SPWG Documents

Discuss/approve process for next five year plan

Discuss/approve shorter Mission Statement

#10. Set Next Meeting Date:

March 10th, 2025 @ G/C

#11. Adjourn:

2.20pm adjourned by unanimous consent.

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2024 IMPACT REPORT



We are a local coalition working to create an understanding of how poverty impacts our community. Our mission is to empower every one of our neighbors in Barron County with skills, resources, and personal connections so that we may all enjoy lives free of poverty.

Tiny Homes

Tiny homes are built for unsheltered individuals and families who are in need of temporary housing.

Our two tiny homes were finally placed in 2024! Through a partnership with the Salvation Army of Barron County, they are now able to start housing people in need.



✦ Centerpoint Events- *All the Help You Need in One Place*

Top 3 Needs Identified



Food



Clothing



Housing



412

people served



1,200 +

lbs of food distributed



38

agencies involved



83%

attendees below poverty

This quarterly event (held 3 in 2024) efficiently delivers services to our neighbors by bringing together 20+ service providers in a single location and providing on-site assistance in a "one-stop-shop" style.

Loads of Love- *(Started in September 2024)*



1 lead organization
(Bethany Lutheran)



28 free loads of laundry



7 volunteer hosts
(spots filled through spring 2025)



\$950 raised to support the program

Loads of Love provides quarters, soap, and dryer sheets so people in need can do their laundry for free. Bethany Lutheran Church of Rice Lake is the first lead organization to launch a Loads of Love program in Barron County. More organizations are needed to expand the program. If your organization would like to get involved, please reach out to ccpbarroncounty@gmail.com.



Upcoming Events

2/06/25 - Centerpoint Event
4/10/25 - New 90 day Project Summit
5/8/25 - Centerpoint Event
8/7/25 - Centerpoint Event
9/10/25 - New 90 day Project Summit
11/6/25 - Centerpoint Event



Feed the Future Fundraiser

May 16 - 18, 2025

*Supports school weekend food programs in Barron County



Get Involved

ccpbarroncounty@gmail.com

**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
- 2025 Brightspeed Rural Broadband Expansion

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
- 2021-2025 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 – 2024/2025
- Ann Street School – Sale – Improvement Mental Health Services
- Preparedness/safety at buildings and table-tops trainings for Dept. Heads
- 2025 New Boilers at Government Center

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
- 2025 January Emergency Preparedness Exercise
- 2025 Officer Security at Justice Center

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
- 2025 Shredder and Material Handler at WTE Plant

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)
- Family House – open at HWY TT Location, Cooperation with Salvation Army
- RLASD – UWECBC Student Center and Gymnasium Repurpose (in process)
- UWECBC Ballfields repairs and improvements by local non-profit

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
- 2025 New Health and Human Services Software

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
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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
2025-1-31

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

Supplement

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.

New Health and Human Services Software Purchase

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 Justice Center

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 UWECBC Student Center and Gymnasium working cooperatively with RLSD

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)
AGRS at WTE – Plant, Update to Adopted Plan Document

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

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All, following are my notes from the hand written notes I took at today's meeting.

Bike chargers for pedal bikes, at government locations and/or at county parks
EV chargers for boats at boat landings
EV chargers for vehicles at county parks and/or other locations. FYI, we have looked at an EV charger at the WTE Plant which would be a great location as we have excess electrical capacity at the WTE Plant
Signage on the Rivers, specifically the Red Cedar
Kayak Docks
ATV Rec., Park Improvements - suggestions from Jeff Wolfe.....
Signage on the "water-side" at lakes, private property
Signage on the "water-side" at lakes, on our county owned docks
Playground improvements at Grant Park
Campground Area at Grant Park
At Kirby Lake, permanent cement vault toilet, more amenities, tent pads and fire pits, camp site improvements
Fee usage implemented for both rifle ranges
Toilets at the Pipestone and upgrade main forest road and observation platform at the south overlook
Pit-toilet at Rockman's woods
At Southworth park there are 12 acres, how can these acres be improved for access, walking trails, and how about benches
Dog, poo-poo disposal bags and stations in/at county parks and boat landings
Warming house at Timberland Hills West and a permanent concrete toilet
Improvements to the Disk golf course at the campus
Resurrect, improve, etc., the existing rest room at/on the Cedarside trail in Rice Lake
New, individual docks at Veterans park????
Allow access and etc., for ATV's in County Parks
Develop a water trail plan.

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