



*Make it a Great Day to Live in Winona County!*

WINONA COUNTY LAND RECORDS  
MEETING MINUTES  
August 6, 2021

**Present:** Ken Fritz, County Administrator; Kay Qualley, Planning & Environmental Services Director; Steve Jacob, County Commissioner; Chris Meyer, County Commissioner; Bob Bambenek, County Recorder; Sandra Suchla, County Auditor-Treasurer; Chad Lang, I.T. Director; Stephanie Nuttall Asst. County Attorney III; Brian Wodele, County Surveyor.

**Others Present:**

**1. Open**

Ken Fritz called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. Introductions**

Each member introduced themselves.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

K. Fritz amended the agenda to table item 5.b as the County Assessor was unable to attend the meeting.

On motion of K. Qualley and seconded by S. Jacob, the Land Records Committee voted to approve the amended agenda. Vote: Yes – All.

**4. Approval of the December 4, 2020 Minutes**

On motion of B. Wodele and seconded by S. Jacob, the Land Records Committee voted to approve the minutes. Vote: Yes – All.

**5. Old Business**

**a) Discuss Maintenance of Forfeited Properties – Maintenance, Administration**

- a. K. Fritz stated the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity has interest in attending the October Land Records meeting to discuss how Habitat for Humanity could assist the County in this process. S. Jacob asked if the County has looked into private sector companies that may specialize in mitigation of hazardous sites. K. Fritz stated there should be a process put in place and increased knowledge of the issues and process.

**b) Provide Update on New Tax System – Assessor**

- a. Tabled.



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## **6. New Business**

### **a) Consider Recommendation to County Board for 2022 Recorders Technology Funds Budget – I.T., Recorder, Administration**

- a. K. Fritz stated the recommended budget is standard and comparable to previous years recommendation. Applicable placeholders have been put in place for upcoming years to account for additional maintenance, programs, etc.

On motion of B. Bambenek and seconded by S. Suchla, the Land Records Committee voted to approve the recommendation to County Board for 2022 Recorders Technology Funds Budget. Vote: Yes – All.

### **b) Discuss Various Forfeited Tax Parcels – Auditor-Treasurer**

- a. S. Suchla questioned a parcel in Richmond Township with river facing property, which must go through a DNR review. The DNR approved it for sale, but was deemed unbuildable by the Assessor's Office and Planning and Zoning. S. Suchla stated Fish and Wildlife has interest in the property, but was not sure how to proceed, which could include putting the property up for sale or the County could hold onto it. The parcel is valued at \$6,000 and there is harvestable timber on the parcel valued at about \$5,000. There are also threatened species on the property. S. Jacob asked about the potential liability to the County if the property were to be sold. K. Fritz explained the Planning Department would provide direction and go through regular processes and protocols to determine what can and cannot be done on the property. K. Fritz stated there did not seem to be a reason to not put the property up for auction and advised S. Suchla to do so. K. Qualley stated the Planning Department will create a zoning fact sheet of the property to include as an addendum to the auction packet.
- b. S. Suchla stated at the 2019 auction, an individual purchased a vacant parcel adjacent to their existing property in Dakota and the legal is problematic. S. Suchla and B. Bambenek proposed that the County pays to have the property surveyed. B. Bambenek stated the property forfeited shortly after I-90 was built and most of the parcel was taken. Because this parcel is a remnant piece of land left from the I-90 project, the County does not have the legal for it. B. Wodele stated the parcel needs to be surveyed in order to create an accurate legal description. The quote received for the survey was \$1,400 and is considered reasonable, according to B. Wodele. K. Qualley mentioned the property owners could consider combining the two parcels into one and should contact Planning if they plan to do so. S. Jacob stated he agrees with the proposal to have the County pay for a new survey to obtain a clean and accurate legal description. K. Fritz directed B. Bambenek to move forward and he will sign off on the cost.

### **c) Mid-Year Real Estate Sales Update - Recorder**

- a. B. Bambenek stated the demand for homes, land and commercial properties is very high, if not unprecedented. The competitive bidding taking place on properties, often above the asking price, is very common. 80% of the sales are above county market value. Interest rates have remained steady at 2%.



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**7. Updates from the Committee Members**

- a) Brian Wodele provided an update on the remonumentation project. Dresbach has been completed. Hillsdale, Rollingstone and Richmond are next.
- b) Bob Bambenek discussed the new Plat Book and the status of recordings.
- c) Sandra Suchla discussed working on the proposal for the new tax system and forfeited and abandoned properties.
- d) Kay Qualley discussed progress with OpenGov.

**8. Recommended Agenda Items for Future Meeting – October 1, 2021**

- a) **Whitewater Cemetery Land Issues – Recorder, Attorney**

**8. Adjourn**

The Land Records Committee adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Dana Krings  
Executive Assistant

DocuSigned by:  
Signed by: *Ken Fritzy* October 5, 2021 | 8:48 AM CDT  
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Kenneth J. Fritzy, County Administrator Date