MEMORANDUM

TO: County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Scott H. Erbisch, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Status Update – Major Goal Area Four “Human Resources / Organization Development”

DATE: 10/16/2018

GOAL AREA FOUR
HUMAN RESOURCES / ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Human Resources / Benefits
Key Objectives for Human Resources / Benefits

1. Job Sharing
   - Continues to be considered under certain situations.

2. Increased Employee Benefits
   - Enhanced employee assistance options without cost to employee.
   - Implemented the Classification and Compensation system for all bargaining units and non-represented employees.
   - Switched health insurance to the Western Michigan Health Insurance Plan (WMHIP). Most employees will see a reduction in the insurance co-payment in 2019.

3. Good Work Environment
   - County continues to invest in critical infrastructure such as HVAC, Boilers, limited safety enhancements, gradually replacing outdated furniture. Encouraged training for new supervisors. Standing desk units have been installed in numerous offices.

4. Development of Staff
   - County continues to fund training in department budgets.
   - County is funding Assessing training for Tax and Equalization staff as part of a long range goal.
   - County is funding required annual training for Codes staff.
   - County continues to provide limited funding for qualified purposes to advance education.

5. Codes Department Customer Service
   - County purchased portable computers to be taken into the field. The computers allow for: 1) Better communication with contractor(s), 2) Improved records retention, 3) Quicker inspections as staff can access code books in the field, 4) Improved documentation as the other disciplines can access each others notes and records 5) Photos can be taken in the field and added directly to the file, reduces drive time.

Marquette County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
6. Minimize MIOSHA Violations and Fines
   - The County created a safety team that meets monthly at various county assets to inspect and identify potential safety concerns.
   - The County uses a safety consultant to assist with training and safety planning.
   - The County developed and implemented a County wide safety policy.
   - The 2019 budget includes funding for a safety training program and software.

7. Unfunded Health and Pension Costs
   - Additional funds have been sent to MERS via the Medical Care Facility that has assisted in reducing the County’s overall unfunded liability.
   - The County Board authorized extending the Defined Benefit Pension amortization period.
   - Since 2016 the County has set aside $1.2 million toward unfunded health insurance liability.
   - Through the negotiating process, the County has implemented a co-payment for retirement health insurance effective January 1, 2017.

Organizational Development

Key Objectives for Organizational Development

1. Take home Road Patrol Cruisers
   - Determined that there are not enough vehicles to make this work for Road Patrol. The Sheriff, Undersheriff, Captain, Lt. Detective are assigned vehicles for take home.

2. Road Patrol 24/7
   - One additional Road Patrol Deputy is in place effective 2017
   - Determined that the staffing levels currently do not support 24/7 shift. The current Road Patrol schedule has a Road Patrol deputy on duty for 6 a.m. until 1 a.m.

3. Restructured Court System – Four
   - With the retirement of former Circuit Court Judge Solka, the County was reduced by one Judge.
   - Given that the large case load, the County Board of Commissioners supported expanding the part-time Referee to full-time.
   - Court dockets have been adjusted to meet the reduction of a judge.

**ONE-YEAR TASKS (2015-2016)**

- **Court Organization (Refer to attachment from the Courts)**
  - Determine level of need for additional judicial staff support
    - State of Michigan has recently completed survey of the courts. The results are still pending.
  - All-court Administrator
    - All court Administrator position created and active.
  - Retool administrative responsibilities of existing deputy-type positions in all courts
  - Division of court dockets
  - Review of space needs
    - Per County Board direction staff has discontinued space needs review.
• Job Sharing

➢ Determine in which areas/departments job sharing is feasible/necessary
  - As noted above, job sharing is considered in certain circumstances. To date, there have been some challenges with job sharing as there have been scheduling difficulties between departments especially during critical department functions.
  - Encouraged cross training within the departments.

➢ Develop job description as a result of job sharing
  - Performed on an as needed basis.

➢ Point factor/evaluations for shared jobs
  - Completed if job description is developed.
2016-2017:

- Reorganized all dockets to accommodate loss of judgeship
- Discontinued Youth Home operations, reorganized juvenile court to accommodate the loss of in-county detention facility - included overhaul of budgets for juvenile/probate court and Child Care Fund, enhancing in-home care and intervention programs, creating a Diversion Specialist position
- Managed workforce with effective turnover rate of 36%, over 25% of court personnel retired in 2016, another 12% left because of job transfer
- Eliminated District Court Administrator, replaced with Deputy Court Administrator and Director of Court Operations
- Expanded Referee Duties to include responsibilities in Circuit Court (domestic relations)
- Replaced 2 FTE District Court positions (Chief Clerk and Clerk) with 1 FTE (Deputy Clerk of Court)
- Modified MGT agreement to allow for Title IV-D reimbursement for part of referee hours (approximately $15,000-$25,000 annually in federal dollars to the county)
- Developed and implemented Pretrial Services Program to monitor high risk defendants on bond - secured $82,000 in grant funding to support substance screening component of this program and specialty court operations
- Modified Specialty Court Programs, added Truancy Court, secured $125,000 to continue services for all treatment courts
- Worked with prosecuting attorney to develop and implement electronic filing system for criminal cases – this resulted in substantial time savings to local law enforcement agencies
- Consolidated District Criminal Caseload into one court location (created efficiencies for jail/MCSO and prosecuting attorney operations)
- Expanded service options for both District Court locations to include ability to pay and file in either location (previously payment could only be accepted for specific location)
- Expanded payment options in District Court to allow for online payments that automatically update case management system (for no additional fee)
- Substantial cross training within each court to support realignment of dockets
Current Challenges

- **Exploding Felony Caseload:** Over the last 15 years the number of felony cases has increased significantly. Last year there were more felony filings than at any point in Marquette County history. The felony criminal caseload is extremely labor intensive for judges and support staff. Because there is greater risk associated with a felony level offender the increased caseload has also compounded security concerns.

![Felony Filings: 2003-2017](image)

- **Drug Epidemic:** Controlled substance cases filed with the courts have increased by a staggering 178% since 2003. The defendant we have today is very different than the one we had 15 years ago. An offender struggling with addiction requires more intensive services such as pretrial monitoring, probation oversight and substance screening.

![Drug Cases Filed: 2003-2017](image)
- **Mental Illness:** The ever increasing societal problem of mental illness is also evident in the court's dockets. Probate Court’s caseload for mentally incapacitated individuals has doubled over the last 10 years. The time guidelines are extremely restrictive for these matters which makes docket management challenging. Court support resources are also strained by the increasing caseload because individuals struggling with mental illness require enhanced services.

![Mental Illness Cases: 2008-2017](chart.png)

**Future Goals**

- **Security and Space:** The trends described in the preceding section confirm that the court user of today is very different than the court user of yesterday. The court operations of tomorrow must necessarily evolve. This is particularly true with regard to security concerns and space needs. The original historic courthouse and annex were designed when court operations existed in silos, caseloads were smaller and defendants were less violent/addicted/mentally ill. The design failed to contemplate the challenges of forced consolidation and a much more complicated service population. Furthermore, there are new issues, such as indigent defense standards and bond reform, waiting on the horizon that will put additional pressure on the challenges created by our present physical setup. The county must put into place a comprehensive plan to address these deficiencies.

In an effort to mitigate the unavoidable financial ramifications of implementing such a plan I am suggesting the creation of a Building Use Fund. The District Court is in the process of reviewing fee schedules to ensure they are in line with state averages. A thorough review has not been conducted since 2011. It is likely that many of our standard fines are lower than the recommended range and less than what is typical in other courts. The potential additional revenue generated by aligning our fee schedule with state averages could be designated to the Building Use Fund. Although it is unlikely that this additional revenue would fully fund a renovation it would certainly offset the burden.
- **Review of Court Realignment:** Last year we had more felony filings than any year in the court's history. We had more drug charges than at any point in history. We had more mental illness cases than at any point in history. The challenge of managing an expanding and more complex caseload is exacerbated by the fact that the court is still retooling from the loss of a judgeship and a mass exodus of our most veteran employees. We have been forced to reshape every docket and rebalance the supportive functions of each court at the same time that our caseload is at its most complicated and our employees are least experienced. Over the last two years the court has adjusted and readjusted to address these issues. In the coming years we will continue to review procedures, staffing and operations. There will be necessary modifications within each of these areas.

- **Specialty Courts:** Marquette was an early supporter of treatment courts. Our first specialty court was created in 2004. It was the first in the U.P. Since then the courts have secured 1.3 million dollars in outside funding to support and expand this part of operations. We now have fully a fully functional Sobriety Court, Drug Court, Juvenile Treatment Court and Truancy Court. Very little general fund money has been utilized for these programs. Of course grants are fickle sources of funding. The court intends to continue seeking outside monies but to sustain services it may be necessary to draw on the general fund for this purpose.

There have been some preliminary conversations regarding the possibility of expanding specialty courts to include veterans, mentally ill defendants or homeless defendants. These populations have unique needs that make them ideal for a treatment court intervention.

- **Technology Enhancements:** The state has developed technology to assist courts in managing dockets and modernizing systems. This includes Court Display, public case searches and docket integration. The courts intends to explore these and other technologies to create efficiencies and enhanced customer service options. Although there will be no additional cost for these software enhancements there may be costs associated with new hardware. We are also currently in the planning stages of paperless document management and electronic filing.

- **Records Retention Program:** The Probate Court does not have a comprehensive records retention and disposal system. This has created a storage problem because every record was retained. The Probate Court is now out of storage space in a 3-story vault. Staff recently completed a reorganization of the vault in an effort to prepare for the implementation of a system. The court will be working with SCAO and Archives of Michigan to create a plan for records disposal. This will require staff time and as well as modernization of the storage systems within the vault. What worked for files 100 years ago no longer makes sense.