

Minutes of the Manitowoc County Board of Supervisors Committee of the Whole Meeting

The Manitowoc County Board of Supervisors Committee of the Whole convened in open session at the Heritage Center, County Board Room, 1701 Michigan Ave, Manitowoc on January 16, 2024 following the January 16, 2024 6:00 p.m. County Board meeting.

Chairperson Martell called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

Roll call: 22 members were present at the time of roll call: Behnke, Brey, Engelbrecht, Falkowski, Gerroll, Hacker, Hansen, Heller, Klein, Lillibridge, Maresh, Martell, Metzger, Muench, Naidl, Neils, Phipps, Shimulunas, Sitkiewitz, Vogt, Weiss, and Zimmer. Supervisors Baumann, Jadowski, and Wagner were excused.

Approval of August 7, 2017 minutes: On a motion by Supervisor Gerroll, seconded by Supervisor Behnke the August 7, 2017 meeting minutes were approved on a unanimous vote.

Discussion and possible action regarding the Courthouse Dome Project and funding options:

Chairperson Martell informed the committee this meeting was to have an open discussion on the courthouse dome project, along with funding options to cover the expense of the project.

Supervisor Falkowski commented that the project cannot move forward without details as to the work that would be required.

Supervisor Gerroll commented he would not be in favor of funding the project through a sales tax.

Supervisor Klein questioned whether there might be a third financing option available through long-term savings in a designated fund.

Supervisor Phipps mentioned the county needs to live out the effects from COVID and not ask residents for more money. He was not in favor of the project or the funding options.

Supervisor Maresh was in favor of a sales tax to fund the project.

Supervisor Heller questioned how much the sales tax would generate and would be in favor of a cost-effective funding option for her constituents.

Supervisor Gerroll mentioned adding the cost of the engineering into the next budget because an investigation needs to be done before we know how much the dome would cost.

Supervisor Sitkiewitz informed the committee that the Courthouse Dome Ad Hoc Committee recommended the project be funded through borrowing.

Supervisor Lillibridge mentioned all taxes are regressive whether it is through borrowing or a sales tax. The people would have to pay either way for this project.

Supervisor Naidl mentioned the courthouse does need to be maintained, but this project is not an emergency. The County should save the funds for the project.

Supervisor Weiss stated that the County could have saved money for the dome replacement since 2006, but they chose not to. Also, to determine the amount of work that has to be done, an engineering study should be required.

He was in favor of a sales tax to fund the project.

Chairperson Martell was not in favor of borrowing since it would burden future generations. He also expressed concern for other possible emergencies that the County would not be able to fix due to County debt. He did not see this as an emergency to borrow for.

Supervisor Behnke was in favor of a sales tax, but also in favor of saving to replace the dome.

Supervisor Phipps mentioned the engineer informed the committee that something needs to be done in the next ten years, not necessarily right now.

Supervisor Zimmer was in favor of borrowing to maintain the courthouse for the future generations. He was not in favor of a sales tax.

Supervisor Hansen would like to see the engineering study to take place to help determine the cost to fix the dome. He had a concern with the sales tax and whether a future County Board would sunset it if that was the wording within the resolution.

Supervisor Falkowski was not in favor of a sales tax.

Supervisor Shimulunas was not in favor of a sales tax.

Supervisor Metzger would be in favor of either a sales tax or saving for the project.

Chairperson Martell reported the funding options of borrowing or sales tax seemed to be at a stale mate.

Adjournment: Supervisor Behnke moved to adjourn, seconded by Supervisor Brey and the motion was adopted by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Backus, Manitowoc County Clerk