

Manitowoc County Executive Committee
Heritage Building
1701 Michigan Ave, Manitowoc, WI 54220
January 3, 2024

Attendance: Chairperson Martell, Supervisor Behnke, and Gerroll. Also in attendance: County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer, Corporation Counsel Peter Conrad, Finance Director JJ Gutman, Public Works Director Gerry Neuser, Supervisors Baumann, Falkowski, Hacker, Hansen, Heller, Maresh, Metzger, Naidl, Sitkiewitz, and Weiss.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Martell at 5:02 p.m.

Approval of the March 21, 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes: Supervisor Behnke moved to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023 meeting, seconded by Supervisor Gerroll. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Chairperson Martell declared public input open at 5:02 p.m.

Ann Wolf, City of Manitowoc, would be in favor of the courthouse restoration project if the project was funded through a sales tax, not borrowing.

Judge Bob Dewane, Ad Hoc Courthouse Dome Advisory Committee Member, informed the committee that the consensus of the Ad Hoc Committee was the project needs to be done and it would be funded through borrowing. He expressed concern that the project should not be delayed any further because it would only cost more in the long run.

No one else present wished to speak, subsequently Chairperson Martell closed public input at 5:09 p.m.

Discussion and possible action on the courthouse restoration project:

Chairperson Martell explained the reason for this meeting was to keep this project moving forward after the County Board did not pass the initial resolution to bond for the project. He opened the floor to all supervisors present.

Supervisor Behnke explained there should be a Committee of the Whole meeting to receive all supervisors input on what decisions need to be made regarding the funding for the project. He also questioned if this discussion should wait until after the April election or continue moving forward with it.

Supervisor Gerroll informed the committee of new numbers for the renovations that were recently provided by the Public Works Director. He mentioned the projects could be separated.

Chairperson Martell agreed that separating the projects might be favorably received. This would allow the HVAC and windows project to move forward, while the discussion on funding the dome continued.

Corporation Counsel Conrad informed the committee that it would take time to create a new resolution because the bond council would have to reengage and certain posting requirements are necessary.

Supervisor Behnke mentioned he would still like a timeline for all projects, along with other supervisors' input on sales tax option versus borrowing.

Supervisor Maresh mentioned supervisors need to have an open mind when it comes to the sales tax to help this project to move forward. She does not agree with placing the burden of funding the dome project on her constituents.

Supervisor Heller mentioned she would be in favor of the HVAC and windows. She also mentioned Manitowoc County was one of the four counties left in the State without a sales tax. She questioned the possibility of a referendum to have the County residents make the final decision on the project.

Supervisor Baumann mentioned he would not be in favor of a referendum. He felt the public would not have enough background knowledge about the dome to make an informed vote . He was in favor of the sales tax to fund the project.

Conrad informed the committee an advisory referendum might not be allowed under state statute.

Heller was concerned with putting the dome project on hold until after the election because possible new board members would have to be educated on all the information and work that has taken place over the last year and a half.

Supervisor Sitkiewitz agreed the discussion and decision should take place before the election. He supported the whole courthouse restoration project.

Supervisor Falkowski expressed that he would not support a sales tax to fund any project for the County.

Supervisor Hansen mentioned the project needs to take place to help Public Works determine what the true cost would be for the dome.

Gerroll expressed he was in favor of moving forward with bonding for only the windows and HVAC at this time.

Public Works Director Gerry Neuser provided new estimated numbers for the Courthouse Windows and HVAC Replacement Project: \$176,000 for architectural and engineering fees for the windows and HVAC replacement project; an estimated \$3,529,000 for the construction costs of windows and HVAC from Strang Study; and \$370,000 for a 10% contingency. This brings the total project funds needed to \$4,075,000 for the windows and HVAC replacement project. The new estimate for the Courthouse dome repair and renovation project for architectural and engineering fees only would be \$1,700,000. The total funding needed to complete both projects would be \$5,775,000 instead of the \$7,500,000.

Supervisor Hacker believed that both projects should be taken care of because without knowing what the issues are with the dome, the project would be at a stand-still.

Behnke mentioned he would be in favor of the windows and HVAC, but not until the sales tax has been discussed.

Supervisor Gerroll moved to make a recommendation to the Finance Committee to start the initial process of contacting the bonding council to discuss borrowing only the \$4,075,000 for the Courthouse Windows and HVAC Replacement Project, seconded by Supervisor Behnke. Upon discussion and voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Martell mentioned a Committee of the Whole meeting will be scheduled to discuss funding options for the dome project. The meeting would be scheduled later this month or in February.

Adjournment: Supervisor Behnke moved to adjourn, seconded by Supervisor Gerroll. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Backus, Manitowoc County Clerk