

Conservation/UW-EX Education Committee
August 22, 2016
Minutes

Committee members present: Chairman Bob Mott, Robb Jensen, Alan Van Raalte, Mitchell Ives, Jim Winkler. Kim Simac excused.

Others present: Lynn Feldman, Myles Alexander, Sara Richie, Ken Krall, Kevin Boneske, Daleth Mountjoy, and Merry Lehner.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mott at 1:00 p.m. noting the meeting has been properly posted and the facility is handicap accessible.

Approve Agenda: Motion by Van Raalte/Jensen to approve the agenda with the order of the items at the Chair's discretion. All ayes; motion carried.

Options to Re-locate Office Temporarily:

Chairman Mott gave an overview on seeking temporary office space for UW-Extension staff. It is related to the quality of air which is termed "work place environment". Diesel fumes entering into to the building in the lower level of the Airport are from airplanes and the luggage tug. It has not been determined how the fumes get to the Extension offices. Temporary office space has been recommended as an option to staff experiencing negative effects from the fumes. There are two facts. One, some staff members cannot work in the office due to sensitivity to diesel fumes and have to leave the office to work elsewhere. It is not ideal for staff to have to leave the office to do their job. Nothing has changed since last winter. An air study found that fumes were present but within standards. Attempts to prevent infiltration into the building have failed. Neither a wall constructed nor a negative air flow fan installed has prevented the presence of diesel fumes.

A second fact is that an engineering firm was to be contracted to locate the source of fumes coming into the building, but no firm can be found to complete the task. If an engineering firm were to come forward, an estimate of the cost to correct the identified infiltration points would be needed. Since no engineering firm can be found, determining the cost cannot happen. This no longer seems to be an available option. Therefore, a temporary re-location is the stop gap measure to ensure that some action is being taken for the staff.

Feldman spoke with Building and Grounds who informed her there is office space available for some staff in the Southwest corner of the Courthouse. This option would need approval by Buildings and Grounds; Feldman will propose this at their September 6 Committee meeting. This would only be a temporary location to accommodate staff during winter months pending any final decision. All protocol would still be in place where staff would be allowed to leave when necessary. The definition of temporary was discussed on whether it depends on the finalized budget at December 31, 2016 or 2018 when the finalized nEXT generation re-organization is complete. Current rent of Airport office space was discussed. Rent is \$40,000 per year. Rent to the Airport is the obligation of the County, not the Extension. Building and Grounds pays the rent for the current space. The County would have to find a new renter if the Extension office re-locates. Extension does not need a reason to leave to end their rental contract. If solutions are not working the Committee feels that it is just time to re-locate. Would the solution be to move affected staff to a county different office? Feldman stated that the Extension office needs to remain a unified staff where all work together on projects. She did not see how staff could provide good customer service divided among two offices.

Permanent Options to Re-locate Office:

Some advantages of a new office location would be that there would no longer be any environmental concerns or health problems. It would end this very long on-going discussion regarding workplace environment. A new location would provide the business like and professional setting the UW-Extension wishes convey. The staff feels that a more visible venue would better accommodate the public who visit the office than the current location.

The disadvantages of re-locating are that the current conference room space provides the needed square footage required for various programs and activities. Another disadvantage is that the County may have to account for loss of revenue to the Airport. There could be some offsetting money where it might not be the full \$20,000 portion of rent from the County. They could rent to another entity. The re-organization of Extension is an unknown variable regarding staffing. There are 19 committees working on nEXT generation currently and the final resolution will not be until 2018. We cannot wait until 2018 to make a decision.

Feldman distributed a partial list of possible properties to research but due to the Fair responsibilities staff has not had ample time to search for alternative properties. The required square footage would be approximately 2500 square feet. A floor plan was shared of a property viewed on Stevens Street that was promising for individual offices, conference rooms, and storage space. Other properties were evaluated by staff. One location had no parking available. Others did not enough area, or interior remodeling was required. Nicolet College currently has no available space.

Other Options:

Good wireless service will be required by State employees for any temporary office space is pursued. Temporary space was understood by Richie as being a location where she could move her entire office to not be running back and forth.

If a property is found that is suitable, the proper steps will need to be followed in seeking approval from the County. The first thing this Committee has to do is to resolve that UW-Extension will re-locate or not move. That is what Administration has asked. Then a fiscal impact statement must be presented to Building and Grounds and to the Board. Then the Administration Committee would look at those numbers. The Committee can move the decision to the County Board. It is felt that the timeline for this to happen could be by December 31, 2016. The Airport will have to be informed of any decision as well. Winkler made a motion to proceed to move the UW-Extension offices out of the Airport to a new desirable location that would be acceptable to staff and have adequate storage. Ives seconded the motion. All Ayes; motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion made by Van Raalte/Jensen to adjourn at 2:10 p.m. All ayes; motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,


Merry J. Lehner, Recording Secretary



Bob Mott, Committee Chair