

Strategic Planning Committee

Bill Hefferan, Chair

Bryan Smith

Laura Stanek

Minutes October 5, 2016

Members present: Bryan Smith, Laura Stanek, Bill Hefferan, Sherry Comben, Sheryl Guy, Judy Parliament

Members absent: None

Others present: Pete Garwood, Janet Koch

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Sheryl Guy, seconded by Bryan Smith, to approve the minutes of the September 13 meeting were approved as presented. Motion carried – unanimous.

3. Organizational Chart (see attached pg. 3)

Pete Garwood, County Administrator, had provided copies of a County organizational chart to the Committee. Mr. Garwood said it had been noted that some departments also had advisory boards (COA, 911, Veterans, etc.), however, those had not been included in the organizational chart as Board of Commissioners is the ultimate decision maker.

Bryan Smith, County Commissioner, said he listens to County employees, but anything beyond listening undermines a supervisor's authority. The Committee discussed the chain of communication within the County. A communication flow chart was suggested, which would provide direction for employees and for commissioners and could be included in the employee handbook.

Bill Hefferan, Probate Court Administrator, asked if phone numbers and email addresses could be added to the organization chart. Janet Koch, Associate Planner, said she could turn the names into live email links. Ms. Koch asked about the preferred location for the chart on the County's website; it was the Committee's consensus that it should be a page on the "Government" dropdown. Ms. Koch said she could include a temporary link to it on the home page.

4. Leadership/Communication Training Discussions

Mr. Garwood and Ms. Koch distributed memos (**see attached pgs. 4-5**). Mr. Garwood said he'd talked with other County Administrators about the topic. He said some counties publish regular newsletters, but that seemed to be more for the public than for internal purposes.

Mr. Garwood said there are numerous types of communication; interpersonal, intra- and inter-department, up and down the chain of command, communication with the public, conflict resolution, and communication about policies. He said the Committee should focus on what needed the most improvement.

Laura Stanek, County Commissioner, said some department heads feel the commissioners don't necessarily listen to their employees. Mr. Smith said he thinks some commissioners feel they should have a direct line to employees. Ms. Stanek asked how the Strategic Planning Committee would communicate the appropriate chain of communication to the commissioners. Sherry Comben, County Treasurer, and Mr. Smith said it's an education issue with commissioners.

The Committee recommended that the information packets for the new commissioners include the committee chart, the organization chart, and any communication flow charts. The Committee noted that if a communication is sent to some commissioners but not all, that the commissioners should redirect the communication to the County Administrator or the Clerk.

A communication flow chart for the public was also discussed. This would direct the public on how to communicate with the Board of Commissioners, which would be to send communications to the Clerk, the County Administrator, or that there are public comment periods at all public meetings.

Mr. Hefferan said the Committee was only tasked with improving communication between the BOC and the department heads. He added that when the BOC isn't working together, it filters down to the employees. Mr. Hefferan asked the Committee members to bring their personal definitions of leadership to the next meeting.

Ms. Stanek said, regarding the training mentioned in the memo provided by Ms. Koch, that she thought the most important was Communication and Listening Skills. Second was Team Building. This training would be for both the BOC and the department heads.

Mr. Hefferan asked Ms. Koch to talk to Rebecca Garland from Conflict Resolution Services (CRS) about recommendations for training. Ms. Guy asked if it was possible to get references from other organizations that have used the services of CRS.

5. Commissioner Value Knowledge of all Dept. Heads & all Depts.

The agenda item had been identified at the previous meeting. Ms. Comben said some department heads felt that their opinions and thoughts aren't valued by the commissioners and that some department heads felt the Board second-guessed their decisions. The Committee discussed the importance of providing detailed information to the Administration Department for agenda packets. Ms. Koch said with the full agenda packets online, the information is available not only to the oversight committees, but also to all commissioners and to the public.

The Committee recommended two sessions for new commissioner orientation; one for finances and one for department head introductions. Department heads would also be invited to the financial orientation session; all existing commissioners would also be invited.

6. Communication

Ms. Comben asked about avenues for feedback to the department heads and how to work feedback into the flow of information.

7. Various Matters

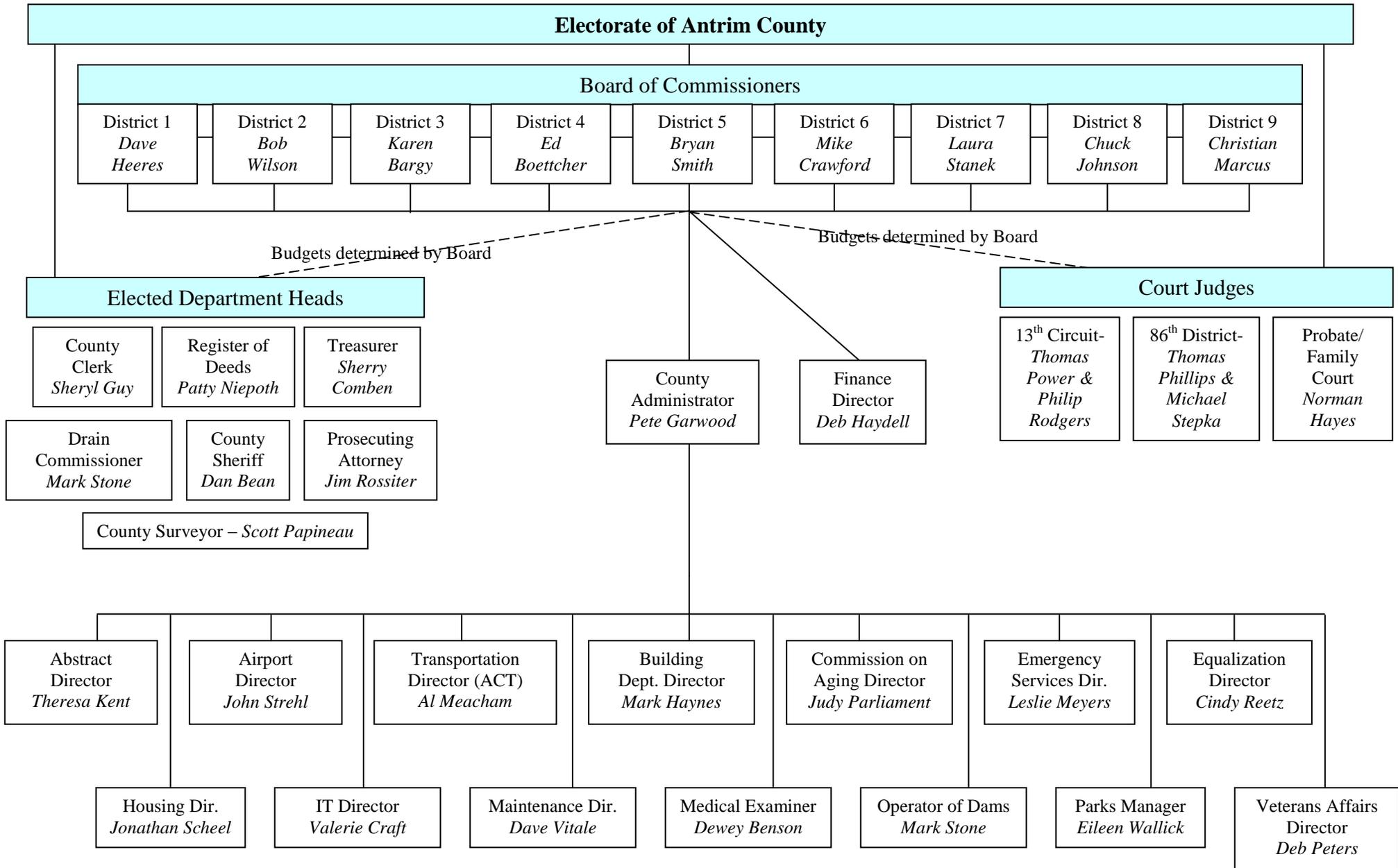
Mr. Hefferan said the Committee should look at what isn't working. He said not all department heads appear at oversight committees; relationships are built through regular appearances.

Mr. Hefferan asked about the purpose of the strategic planning committee. The Committee agreed that they'd been created to "provide a recommendation to the Antrim County Board of Commissioners on how to improve communications amongst elected officials and department heads no later than December 9, 2016."

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, October 18 at 1 pm. Mr. Hefferan said he would not be able to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Organizational Chart - 2016





Memorandum Administration Office

October 5, 2016

TO: Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee
FR: Peter Garwood, Administrator
RE: Leadership/Communication Training

At my recent County Administrator's Nuts and Bolts session I brought up a couple of topics for discussion related to communication and leadership. A few of the counties have had some type of leadership training sessions. Suggestions for facilitators included: MSUE, MAC, Chamber of Commerce and Peter Cohl, an attorney that often conducts workshops at the Michigan Association of Counties conferences. Other counties could not remember who they used to facilitate and I am working on getting that information.

Two of the counties have extensive programs in which they started with assistance from a consultant, and over time converted it to an in-house program. These two are larger counties (Kent and Ottawa) with many more resources. Ottawa County indicates they spend \$40,000 per year for their program in which the participants become certified "gold leaders".

There were also some ideas on communications between department heads, administrator and Board of Commissioners. Some counties have it in their by-laws that all communications between the Board and department heads go through the county administrator. Most agreed that they don't have concerns over the Commissioners going to the department heads to clarify information, but all agreed it was not appropriate for department heads and employees to contact Commissioners with their concerns or workplace issues. If an employee has a concern they should go to their supervisor. If a department head has a concern they should go to their supervisor, the administrator. There are, of course, procedural differences if the department head is an elected official.

When a department head has an action item many of the counties handle it the same way we do; get all the information to the county administrator office for the packets, and the department head presents it to the committee or Board.

Similar to Antrim County, many of the counties have department head meetings. The frequency of the meetings varied anywhere from once or twice per year to monthly.



Memorandum Administration Office

October 5, 2016

TO: Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

FR: Janet Koch

RE: Leadership Training

Last week, when researching something else altogether, I came across information about the Traverse City-based Conflict Resolution Services. The following is from their website:



Organizational Training

CRS can come to your organization to train directors, managers, faculty, employees and students in a variety of programs including: Listening Skills; Peer Mediation; Conflict Resolution; and Facilitation. Customized training programs are also available based on your organization's specific needs. These tailored programs can include training in the following areas:

- *Communication and Listening Skills*
- *Dealing with difficult situations and people*
- *Team building*
- *Effective negotiation*
- *Workplace structures for handling conflict*

I talked to Rebecca Garland, the executive director, and she noted that leadership is a massive topic to cover, and suggested that the training request be narrowed down.

Ms. Garland said CRS had recently provided communications training for the Leelanau League of Women Voters and employee disagreement training for the DEQ's Air Quality division. Their 2016 fee schedule is \$500 for 4 hours of training and \$1000 for 8 hours. Ms. Garland said different lengths of training could also be worked out.

The earliest date CRS could provide training in Antrim County would probably be the end of November or early December.