

Trempealeau County Ad Hoc Ordinance Certification Committee

Minutes from March 26, 2015, Committee Meeting

This committee did not meet since January 22, 2015

Committee Members Present: Michael Nelson, Richard Frey, and Tim Zeglin.

Others Present: Rian Radtke (Corporate Counsel), Paul Syverson (County Clerk)

Agenda Item #1--Meeting convened at 9:00 AM by Richard Frey as chairperson. Frey certifies compliance with open meeting laws.

Agenda Item #2--Motion to adopt today's agenda made by Nelson; 2nd by Frey; all in favor.

Agenda Item #3—Motion to adopt minutes of last meeting made by Nelson; 2nd by Frey; all in favor.

Agenda Item #4—Review Examples of Ordinance Codification Structure

Radtke reports that several department and their committees are still reviewing and revising ordinances that have been referred to them by the ordinance committee, and that he has no ordinances for committee to review or to reconsider at this meeting. Radtke asks committee to look forward to future structure and organization of all county ordinances once the review process has been completed, and therefore to consider various examples of methods other counties have used to organize their ordinances codes. Radtke uses the internet and a projection screen to display ordinances codes from various counties in the state.

Radtke displays Wisconsin state statutes as an example of the highest level for all codification structures in state. The basic divisions of the state statutes are: sections/subsections/paragraphs/subdivisions. Insertions within these divisions are controlled by a hierarchical system of lower-case alphabet letter designations. A composition style guide containing numerous grammatical and syntactical technicalities is described in the "Bill Drafting Manual". Radtke recommends that this committee adopt some variety of "history line", as exemplified in the Wisconsin State Statutes, to document any changes that have occurred to each ordinance over time.

Radtke presents Dane County code as an example of county system with a very high level of organization and complexity. This ordinance code uses "titles" as first level of organization; "titles" are then subdivided into "chapters".

Radtke presents Adams County code as example of a county system with a very low level of organization. This code appears to contain ordinances that have been scanned and made available digitally, but not otherwise organized, except loosely organized by year in with the ordinance was passed. This system mirrors the current system in use in Trempealeau County, which relies heavily on one individual's familiarity with and memory of the subject of each ordinance.

Radtke presents Barron County code as an example of the use of “Muni-code”, a commercially-produced codification system. The main disadvantage of this system is its “cookie-cutter” approach, with no individuation for specific needs of each county. “Muni-code” is also somewhat expensive. Radtke recommends that we avoid “Muni-code” and create our own, in-house system, based on the best practices from other counties.

Radtke presents Sauk County system as a possible model for our future codification system; Sauk County uses chapter headings, but no titles. Sauk Co. uses a first page table of contents, and puts all forfeitures into a separate chapter.

Radtke displays more screens from Calumet County, Iowa County, and Juneau County. Each of these counties is somewhat different, but each blends various aspects of systems used in other counties.

Radtke asks committee for feedback on displays. Zeglin states that Sauk County system appears to contain an adequate amount of complexity for any future ordinances combined with enough simplicity to allow a lay person to use the code. Frey comments that a person should be able to find an ordinance without becoming lost. Nelson agrees with previous statements, and a consensus emerges to use the Sauk County format, with any appropriate changes, for Trempealeau County. Some discussion ensues about use of two-column format as opposed to full-width page format, but no consensus emerges on this question.

Radtke shows example of hard-copy Code Book from Monroe Co, which uses traditional side tabs and binder rings, and suggests one or two similar, hard-copy books be made once the entire codification review process is completed. These books would be available to the public at the County Clerk’s office.

Radtke agrees to continue to accumulate revised ordinances from various committees and to work on an organization structure for completed project. Committee decides to postpone next meeting for several months to allow committee review process to finish.

No voting action taken at this meeting

Next meeting scheduled at 9 AM, June 25, in Packer Room.

Agenda Item #7—Adjourn at 11:14 AM.

