

SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES – QUARTER 4 OF 2020

Election-Related: The November election went as well as we could have hoped. There was approximately a 70% turnout of eligible voters with about half of those being absentee voters. There were no major issues at the polling places or on our end in regards to supplying election-related items or doing our post-election data entry and reporting. Because there were so many people that registered online ahead of time during the year it eliminated the big stacks of voter registrations we would normally have to enter after a presidential election. We performed our post-election equipment audit that showed the equipment was returning 100% accurate results. We were happy that there was no recount requested for Eau Claire County. And, possibly because there was so much attention given to the Madison/Milwaukee areas there were no open records requests submitted to us that we had to fulfill. Our results were very much in line with historical results so they were not questioned.

Marriage Licenses: We were down a bit from our average number of licenses issued. For the year, we issued 520 licenses compared to a normal year of about 600. We continued doing the licensing by appointment only which works well for us and we will continue to do that when we open back up again. We expect an uptick in applications in the spring as more people have large gatherings again.

Tax Deed: We completed the transaction deeding the former Kitelinger property to the Town of Pleasant Valley. We also took a vacant property in the Village of Fairchild. That was the extent of our tax deed activity for the year. Due to a number of factors; being short-staffed, additional election work taking up all our time and COVID-related issues we did not work on tax deed as much or take or sell any other parcels. The plan is in 2021 after the spring elections to work diligently on tax deed with the new staff.

Budget: Our 2020 budget came out OK with just a small surplus due to not being fully staffed and election-related expenses being slightly less than anticipated.

Staffing: We hired a new half-time person. Christina Anderson started right before the November election. Her job is to work on the County board journal of proceedings, and to update and publish minutes and ordinances. She will also be working on the County Official directory that is published in June. A new full time person to replace Andrea Helland who took over the Chief Deputy position will also be hired. (She started Feb 1st. Her name is Deb Schaaf). Janet departed at the end of the year and it will be some time before we know how that will impact the office overall. We were fortunate to have such an experienced clerk for so long.

GOALS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Continue to get all new staff trained in and assigned responsibility. Because all four of us will be assuming new positions, with two being brand-new employees, there will be a lot of discussion outlining all of the office duties and aligning the right staff to be responsible for certain tasks. Until everyone is up to speed there will be a learning curve.
- There will be a Spring Primary in February and a Spring Election in April. Most of the first quarter of 2021 will be devoted to that work. Sue and Andrea have both taken primary roles in election work up to this point so we are confident those will be well-managed and nothing should fall through the cracks in terms of all of the tasks needed to be done to plan the elections. There are no fall elections in 2021 so that will be good to have time for training in other office procedures and duties.