



# Department Updates

September 2020

## County Clerk

**DeeAnn Cook**  
County Clerk

Our 2020 August Partisan Primary is now history. Our municipalities did an amazing job adapting to the COVID situation. Voter turnout was slightly higher than the comparable 2016 Partisan Primary mostly due to calendar year absentee requests. Unfortunately, there were many absentee ballots that were not returned. The hand count paper ballot for the Partisan Primary required a separate page for each party ballot in addition to an explanation sheet. The template provided was four full pages. Jess and I worked together to create a template for the ballot where there were two ballots per page thus using ½ the paper and avoiding extra postage costs. Once we got approval from WEC, we shared it with any counties that wanted it. Many other counties used the template we created for the election. Special thanks to Vonnie Ritchie, Sharon Millermon and Jeff and Pam French who volunteered their time helping Jess and I take in results on Election night. All municipalities reported by 9:45pm. Jess and I, along with some self-providers, entered results into WEC Canvass Reporting System as they came in and Jeff Sirek from IT uploaded them to our website remotely so that anyone watching could see them very timely. With no contested races at the Partisan Primary, there was very little public interest in watching our results come in on Election Night but for the November General, our results will be being watched well beyond Barron County and Wisconsin. The entire country will be watching what happens here in Wisconsin.

The November 3, 2020 General Election is expected to have a large turnout just like all other Presidential Elections. We acquired 10 additional optical scan voting machines from a Wisconsin County that was changing equipment and will be using them at our polling places with the highest number of anticipated voters. The machines have all received preventive maintenance and are fully functional. All polling places will also have our touch screen machines for use on Election Day. We are anticipating a high number of absentee requests so the use of optical scan equipment will streamline the counting of votes and provide the most accurate results. Voters can rest assured that there is a verifiable paper trail for each and every ballot in Barron County and at all Wisconsin polling places. Clerks rigorously test the election equipment at a public test prior to each election and they welcome anyone interested to come and observe the process.

Marriage licenses have picked up somewhat but our numbers are still down from previous years. Prior to COVID, we did not take appointments for applicants but we are now asking couples to schedule an appointment in an attempt to keep the number of people here at any one time to a minimum. We are also asking that if anyone is experiencing any symptoms of COVID to please call and reschedule. It has been working well thus far.

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## Finance Department

### **Jodi Busch** **Finance Director**

Summer has flown by in the Finance Department. Because of Covid, we have been rotating some of our staff to work from home over the last few months. A big “Thank You” to our wonderful IT Department to help us with this transition. We have been able to continue to function efficiently and keep everyone healthy in our office.

While this year has been vastly different due to Covid, our goals have remained the same with regard to our duties and deadlines. We worked with CliftonlarsenAllen to finalize the 2019 audit, which was submitted to the State of WI – Dept of Administration on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The submission for the Federal & State Single Audit is September 15<sup>th</sup> so finalization on this is expected very soon. We also worked with Diversified Services Network, who was onsite for two days conducting the Indirect Cost Allocation Study. This plan was finalized in late July.

July also brought the start of the annual budget process. Budget Worksheets were distributed to departments the week of July 6<sup>th</sup> and were due back to Finance on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Compilation of the first draft of the county-wide budget was completed over the last few weeks. Committee meetings are well underway to review and approve the departmental budgets. The first view of the budget as a whole will be in September at the Executive and County Board meetings.

Because some budget information is still outstanding, September continues to be a busy month making adjustments and tweaks before the October Executive, when the Committee will give a recommendation to the County Board. Based on that recommendation, a Budget Publication will be developed and published in all County newspapers. A Public Hearing will be held on November 2nd, with the County Board approving the budget in early November.

After approval, the Finance Director will finalize the budget, file the appropriate reports with the municipalities and the State, and setup the budget in the financial software. About the time this process is completed, the auditors will be here again as they start the 2020 pre-audit in December. All of us in the Finance Department wish you a healthy, happy and colorful fall season.

## Forestry

### **John Cisek** **Forest Administrator**

Despite the recent rains, the Turn-Around Sale (Tract # 1-2019) & the Deer Culvert Sale (Tract # 2-2018) were opened and are progressing. The final storm damage sale (Tract # 4-2019) has been completed and wood is still being hauled from the landing.

We are updating our timber tracking software to Timber Base 2020. Courtney Cole will be assisting in tracking and billing.

The annual Partnership Meeting with the DNR took place on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Items reviewed included County Forest Time Standards, status of timber sales, aid monies and Forest Certification.

The fall timber sale bid opening has been postponed until the spring of 2021 due to poor market conditions. Location of sales are to be determined.