

COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 31, 2025

Executive Committee

1. **Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Wineke at 8:30 a.m.

2. **Roll Call**

Members present: Walt Christensen, Steve Nass, Blane Poulson, Michael Wineke, Brandon White (joined at 8:32 a.m.)

Others Present: Michael Luckey, Deb Reinbold, Ryan Roecker

Others Present via Teams: Danielle Thompson

3. **Certification of compliance with Open Meeting Law Requirements**

Luckey certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. **Review of Agenda**

Motion by Poulson/Nass to approve agenda. Motion passed 5-0.

5. **Communications**

None

6. **Public Comment**

None

7. **Approval of December 9, 2025 County Board meeting minutes**

Draft minutes were provided for review.

Motion by Christensen/Poulson to approve December 9, 2025 County Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

8. **Approval of November 25, 2025 Executive Committee minutes**

Draft minutes were provided for review.

Motion by Nass/Poulson to approve November 25, 2025 Executive Committee meeting minutes as printed. Motion passed 5-0.

9. **Discussion and possible action on 2026-2028 official newspaper bid documents**

Luckey discussed options for newspaper bid documents. The Committee favors having a local/County paper be the official newspaper of record. Staff will solicit bids and bring to the Executive Committee for approval.

10. **Discussion and possible action on oral annual reports from Department Heads**

Luckey shared Department Head feedback regarding the current format for presenting Annual Reports to the County Board. Department Heads are open to a change but would still like the opportunity to address the Board each year. Luckey recommended changing the process to remove Annual Reports as an agenda item but to stagger Department Head appearances at Board meetings from July through December of each year. Each Department Head would have an opportunity to address the Board briefly and to answer questions. Luckey also suggested making all Annual Reports due in July, to facilitate a more current review of previous results and to coincide with the annual budget process.

The Committee is comfortable refining the process itself but believes it is important for Department Heads to attend a Board meeting each year and be available to answer questions. The Committee also wants to ensure the Annual Reports are available to the public on the Jefferson County website.

Motion by Poulson/Christensen to approve Luckey's recommendations as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

11. Administration Department staffing update

Luckey indicated that the vacant County Engineer position is unfunded for 2026, although he is open to revisiting this role if the need presents in future years.

Luckey announced that a new Administrative Secretary will begin on January 12. County Board members can continue to work with Sarana Stolar until the Administrative Secretary is onboarded. Luckey noted that Tammie Jaeger compiled notes for her successor, and he is confident in a smooth transition.

12. Discussion on Community Spotlight Award Idea

Luckey and Roecker shared that some recent social media posts recognizing community members have received a lot of attention. He asked the Committee to consider a County Supervisor Proclamation program in which Supervisors nominate deserving citizens.

The Committee supports this idea as another way to increase Jefferson County's profile and focus on exemplary members of the community. Luckey and Roecker will create a proposal for County Board approval.

13. Discussion regionalization of economic development

Reinbold introduced an option for ThriveED to come under the umbrella of the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, with ThriveED growing to be a regional economic development hub for both Jefferson and Dodge Counties. She stated that this format would allow ThriveED to address a structural deficit that has occurred within the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC), present our area as a more attractive region for businesses, an allow for increased business retention outreach. Luckey cited possible gains of extra capacity and the ability to pay staff market rates, with possible losses including Jefferson County's sole control of its development.

The Committee discussed a previous partnership with Dodge County that did not last. They also asked how a regional approach would ensure Jefferson County communities were still receiving the same amount of attention.

This concept will still need to go before the ThriveED Executive Committee and the boards for both ThriveED and JCEDC as well as the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation. The Executive Committee agreed to keep this as a standing agenda item as the process moves forward.

14. Discussion on 2026 County Board orientation

Luckey spoke on feedback he received from the 2024 orientation and reviewed that agenda with the Committee. Ideas from the Committee included a photo directory of County employees, information on Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) classes and/or presentations, and a presentation from Corporation Counsel.

Luckey and Thompson will finalize an agenda for the 2026 orientation.

15. EMS Working Group Update

Luckey shared updates from the most recent EMS Working Group meeting on December 6. The group heard the final presentations from various student groups. Luckey noted some friction within the team, as stakeholders are in differing positions on budget capability, autonomy, and overall outcomes. The group is looking to reset its discussions at the January meeting. Luckey indicated that student work continues through UniverCity Alliance in the spring semester.

16. Financial Reports

- Administration
- Clerk of Courts
- Corporation Counsel
- County Board
- County Clerk

Financial Reports were provided for review. No action taken.

17. County Administrator's monthly report

Luckey highlighted the following: Youth Flourishing discussion with Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, Jefferson County Deputy Sheriff's Association contract negotiations, Legislative Breakfast, Treatment Courts case management coming in-house, interviews for those case managers and also Administrative Secretary and County Veterans Service Officer, Family Friendly Workplaces designation, Sinnissippi Solar Towns Meeting, Matz Center legislative tour, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) bill testimony in Madison, Bug Tussel fiber lighting event in Cambridge, Travel Wisconsin discussions, partnership with Milwaukee County on autopsies, and Luckey's goals for 2026

18. Consider motion to convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 1985(1)(c), "considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility" to conduct the County Administrator's annual performance evaluation.

The Committee determined that closed session was not necessary.

19. Reconvene in open session for discussion and possible action on items discussed in closed session.

Luckey shared key objectives completed or advanced in 2025, challenges in 2025, and key goals for 2026. Feedback was offered by Committee members.

Motion by Poulson/Christensen to approve annual step increase. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion by Nass/Poulson to approve Luckey's goals for 2026. Motion passed 5-0.

20. Discussion and possible action on tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items

Regular Meeting – January 28, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.

Agenda Items:

- Approval of December 31, 2025 Executive Committee minutes
- Approval of January 13, 2026 County Board minutes
- Introduction of Jessica Holmes, Administrative Secretary
- Regional Prosperity Hub Update
- EMS Working Group Update
- Community Spotlight Award proposal
- Financial Reports
- County Administrator's Monthly Report

21. Adjourn

Motion by Poulson/White to adjourn at 10:59 a.m. Motion passed 5-0.