



HOPP NEUMANN HUMKE<sup>LLP</sup>

February 24, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ADAM PAYNE

Dear County Board Supervisors and Mr. Payne:

Please find enclosed the 2016 Annual Report of the Sheboygan County Corporation Counsel.

Wis. Stat. § 59.42(3) offers counties considerable flexibility in how they handle their civil legal needs, including the option to contract for services with private counsel. Sheboygan County has taken advantage of this flexibility and has had legal counsel provided through a contract with Alex Hopp and his law firm since 1955. As a member of Alex Hopp's successor law firms, I have been privileged to have been designated to act as lead attorney for providing legal services to Sheboygan County since the end of 2000. In 2016, we completed the second year of a renewed four-year contract.

At the end of the remaining two years of our contract, I will be retiring from the active practice of law. Attorney Crystal Fieber and I, at the direction of County Administrator Payne, have put together a transition plan that is being implemented over the next two years so that there will be continuity in the provision of legal services to the County even after my departure.

I am grateful for the cooperation and assistance of Attorneys J. Phil Mueller, Paul Dirkse, and Crystal Fieber, the other members of the HNH firm, and our principal staff person Dianne Hohenstern.

We look forward to continuing to work for the benefit of the citizens of Sheboygan County, their County Administrator, and their County Board in 2017 and beyond.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carl K. Buesing'.

Carl K. Buesing

e-mail: [carl.buesing@hopplaw.com](mailto:carl.buesing@hopplaw.com)

CKB/dh  
Enclosure

C:\Users\diannie\AppData\Local\Temp\fa3k0c4n\2016 Annual Report - digital letterhead (00107897) DOCX

[www.hopplaw.com](http://www.hopplaw.com)

Carl K. Buesing • Michael J. Bauer • J. Phil Mueller • Herbert C. Humke • Paul A. Dirkse • Crystal H. Fieber • Oliver M. Bauer  
OF COUNSEL Roland M. Neumann • William W. Moir III RETIRED Alex Hopp  
H. C. Humke, 1963-2009

2124 Kohler Memorial Drive | Suite 310 | Sheboygan, WI 53081 | PH 920-457-8400 | FX 920-457-8411

# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Office of the Corporation Counsel

2124 Kohler Memorial Drive – Suite 310

Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081-3174

Telephone (920) 459-3093

Facsimile (920) 457-8411

February 24, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF  
THE SHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD  
OF SUPERVISORS AND COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATOR ADAM PAYNE:

Ladies and gentlemen, the Corporation Counsel is pleased to present the Department's 2016 annual report.

### **Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities**

**Mission.** As the civil legal advisor for the County Board and its Committees, and the County Administrator and his Departments, the mission of the Corporation Counsel is to provide policy-makers and administrators with counsel of the highest caliber with integrity, respect, courtesy, and adherence to professional ethics.

**Responsibilities.** The responsibility of the Corporation Counsel is set forth in Wis. Stat. § 59.42 and Chapter 42 of the Code of General Ordinances of Sheboygan County. The responsibility is to provide all civil legal services that the County may require on any matter that is not covered by County insurance. The categories of such services include:

- Advise, counsel, and represent the County Board, Committees, Boards, commissions, officers, County Administrator, and Department Heads, and where appropriate, other County employees and agents.
- Prepare and review Resolutions, Ordinances, directives, and other legal documents, providing direction regarding completeness and correctness.
- Attend all County Board meetings and Committee Meetings as requested, and serve as parliamentarian, providing interpretation and explanation of County Board rules.
- Interpret the powers and duties of the Board, County officers, and Committees.
- Function as liaison between the judicial, legislative, and administrative branches of County government.
- Draft and approve contracts and leases executed by the County and review construction bids, contracts, and bonds.
- Prosecute and defend civil actions not covered by County insurance and in which the County is a party in interest.

- Provide representation before the Equal Rights Division, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, and other state and federal agencies as directed by the County Board.
- Meet periodically with the Human Resources Committee to review pending claims and litigation and summarize legal services provided since the previous reporting period.
- Review policies and procedures of the County to ensure compliance with federal, state, and County directives.
- Assist the County Treasurer in preparing, instituting, and completing annual litigation for *in rem*. foreclosure of tax liens.

#### **Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2016**

Our 2016 goals were in the nature of providing continuing changes rather than having tasks that are completed and checked off of a list. We have made progress with each of our 2016 goals as follows:

- Attorney Oliver Bauer is continuing to serve as the liaison to the Health and Human Services Department – Public Health Division and is taking on the responsibilities of lead paint violation enforcement. He also continues to handle all excess child support coverage.
- In 2016, the Information Technology Department took significant steps in improving the County's technology security, particularly in the area of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) protections. Our office prepared updated County HIPAA regulations, and we continue to work with IT in the implementation of HIPAA security.
- In 2016, our office worked with the County Administrator in implementing the first steps toward the construction and consolidation of the Transportation Department into its new headquarters.

In addition, the Corporation Counsel achieved a new goal in 2016 in assisting the implementation of the County sales tax.

#### **Budget**

According to the year-end report from the Finance Department, the Corporation Counsel was budgeted to spend \$320,613, \$216,023 of which was tax levy. As of December 31, 2016, \$311,233 was spent. We finished the year with a positive balance of \$2,072.61. The 2017 adopted budget is \$313,699 and property tax levy total is \$219,661.

#### **Issues and Challenges Ahead**

Attorney Crystal Fieber and I are the firm members who primarily handle the duties of the Corporation Counsel. In 2014, Attorney Fieber was assigned the additional responsibilities of handling the Board of Adjustments matters for the County. Other firm

members assist intermittently with County business including Attorney Phil Mueller who provides guidance to the County Treasurer, particularly in the growing area of tax foreclosures; Attorney Herb Humke who assists in litigation; Attorney Michael Bauer who works on public records, open meetings, and real estate issues; and Attorney Paul Dirkse who supports the County mental health and child support enforcement functions. As noted, Attorney Oliver Bauer, continues to be assigned to new County tasks. The overall services provided to the County are ably coordinated by Dianne Hohenstern, legal assistant.

Over the next two years, Attorney Crystal Fieber and I will continue to implement the transition plan which is intended to assure that as I near retirement status in 2018, there will be continuity in the legal services being provided to the County.

**Goals and Objectives for 2017**

In 2017, I will provide assistance to the County Administrator in fulfilling the goals assigned to him by the Executive Committee. In addition, I expect to work on the following:

- Continue to assist the County Administrator and Transportation Director in the move to the new Transportation Complex;
- Work with the Health and Human Services Department in challenges with its software system;
- Provide support to the Finance Department as necessary for the implementation and distribution of the County sales tax revenues;
- Continue to transition Corporation Counsel duties to Attorney Fieber pursuant to the transition plan.

Very truly yours,

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY CORPORATION COUNSEL

By



CARL K. BUESING  
Corporation Counsel  
e-mail: carl.buesing@hopplaw.com

CKB/dh