



HOPP NEUMANN HUMKE^{LLP}

February 5, 2019

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator,

I am pleased to present the 2018 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 firm, I have been privileged to have been designated to act as lead attorney in providing legal services to Sheboygan County. In 2018 we negotiated another four-year contract, extending through 2022.

At the end of 2018, I took over as lead Corporation Counsel from Attorney Carl K. Buesing upon his retirement. Commencing in 2016, Attorney Buesing and I worked together on County matters as contemplated by the transition plan we established, in conjunction with County Administrator Adam Payne, to ensure a seamless transition upon Attorney Buesing's retirement.

I am grateful for the cooperation and assistance of the other members of my firm – Attorneys Michael J. Bauer, J. Phil Mueller, Paul Dirkse, Herb Humke III, and Oliver Bauer, and our principal staff person Dianne Hohenstern – in serving as Corporation Counsel.

We look forward to continuing to work for the benefit of the citizens of Sheboygan County, their County Administrator, and their County Board in 2019 and beyond.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal H. Fieber', written in a cursive style.

Crystal H. Fieber

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 2018

Our 2018 goals were in the nature of providing continuing changes rather than having tasks that are completed and checked off of a list. In 2018, we made progress as follows:

- Attorney Buesing reduced his institutional knowledge to written form accessible to other members of the firm;
- Worked with the Health and Human Services Department in continuing challenges with its software system;
- Provided support to the Finance Department as necessary for the implementation and distribution of the County sales tax revenues;

- Attorney Buesing completed the transition of Corporation Counsel duties to me pursuant to the transition plan; and
- We worked with the County Planning & Conservation Department and the County Administrator to complete the sale of an Amsterdam Dunes lot.

Budget

According to the year-end report from the Finance Department, the Corporation Counsel budget was \$323,047, \$224,000 of which was tax levy. As of December 31, 2018, \$324,160 was spent. We finished the year with a positive balance of \$516. The 2019 adopted budget is \$331,379 and property tax levy total is \$228,418.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

I primarily handle the duties of the Corporation Counsel but 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; Attorney Paul Dirkse who supports the County mental health and child support enforcement functions; and Attorney Oliver Bauer who handles general collections, lead paint abatement, maltreatment cases, and sanitary ordinance enforcement. The overall services provided to the County are ably coordinated by Dianne Hohenstern, legal assistant.

Goals and Objectives for 2019

In 2019, I will provide assistance to the County Administrator in fulfilling the goals assigned to him by the Executive Committee. I also expect to work on the following, in addition to the general legal services our firm provides:

- Continue work with County staff and the Kohler Company to install a U.S. Customs agent at the Sheboygan County Memorial Airport;
- Explore and implement, in connection with the Finance Department, the Community Development Block Grant Close-out (CDBG-CLOSE) Program; and
- Develop a grievance procedure manual for the Human Resource Department for union and non-union grievances.