



HOPP NEUMANN HUMKE^{LLP}

March 1, 2025

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Alayne Krause,

Please find enclosed the 2024 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 am privileged to have been designated to act as lead attorney in providing legal services to Sheboygan County.

I completed my sixth year as lead Corporation Counsel. I am grateful for the cooperation and assistance of the other members of my firm – Attorneys Michael J. Bauer, Paul Dirkse, Herb Humke III, Oliver Bauer, and Kelly L. Del Ponte and our principal staff person Diamond Braeger – 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 2025 and beyond.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Crystal H. Fieber', written over a faint, larger signature.

Crystal H. Fieber

www.hopplaw.com

Michael J. Bauer • Herbert C. Humke • Paul A. Dirkse • Crystal H. Fieber • Oliver M. Bauer • Kelly L. Del Ponte
OF COUNSEL J. Phil Mueller
Alexander Hopp 1955-1999 • Roland M. Neumann 1986-2008 • H.C. Humke 1963-2009

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

Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

As the civil legal advisor for the County Board and its Committees, and the County Administrator and her 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.

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.
- Represent the County's interest in Wis. Stat. ch. 51, 54, 55, and 980 matters.
- Represent the public in termination of parental rights (TPR), children in need of protection or services (CHIPS), and guardianship matters.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2024

- Our goal was to complete 10 chapters of the Sheboygan County Code, reviewing for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. We reviewed and updated a total of twelve chapters: 5,12, 17, 18, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 71, 73, and 96.
- We worked with County staff to start a fixed base operator at the Sheboygan County International Airport.

Budget

	2024Budget	2024 Results	Variance
Revenues	645,530	647,385	1,855
Expenses	645,530	644,758	772
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	2,627	2,627

According to the year-end report from the Finance Department, the Corporation Counsel was budgeted to spend \$645,530, \$332,455 of which was tax levy. We finished the year with a **positive** balance of \$2,627.27. The 2025 adopted budget is \$690,555 and the property tax levy total is \$357,436.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

I primarily handle the duties of the Corporation Counsel but other firm members assist with County business including Attorney Kelly L. Del Ponte who provides guidance to the County Treasurer, particularly in the evolving area of tax foreclosures, and our County Board of Adjustment on variance requests. Attorneys Oliver Bauer and Herb Humke will continue to work with the Health and Human Services Department on Child Protective Services cases. We had two significant retirements at the end of 2024 - Attorney Phil Mueller and Legal Assistant Nancy Beck – but we are not anticipating any staffing changes for 2025.

Rising wage costs remain a challenge for the department, as experienced by other employers, and we are also encountering rapidly rising costs related to information technology services.

Goals and Objectives for 2025

- Review 10 chapters of the Sheboygan County Code of Ordinances for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.
- Coordinate and assist the Human Resources and County Administrator's departments with the Compensation Study as well as the Employee Engagement Survey.