



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 2015 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 2015, we completed the first year of a renewed four-year contract.

At the end of the remaining three 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 will be implemented over the next three 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 2016 and beyond.

Very truly yours,

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

Carl K. Buesing  
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CKB/dh

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

# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

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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 2015 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 2015**

In 2015, we achieved our principal goals of assisting in the implementation of the new compensation plan for Sheboygan County, the review of the *in rem*. foreclosure process, and the completion of the Amsterdam Dunes acquisition.

In addition, in concert with the IT Department, our office has successfully implemented a protocol for maintaining a continually updated Code of Ordinances on our County website, a task that was assigned during 2015.

Finally, in 2015 we tackled an unexpected challenge. Attorney Ryan O'Rourke, who was hired in 2014 to replace long-time Child Support Enforcement Attorney Natasha Torry, accepted the position of Court Commissioner which became vacant when Rebecca Persick was elected as a Circuit Court Judge. We were able to find a capable replacement with the hiring of Attorney Mary Theisen, who is settling into the position.

#### **Budget**

According to the year-end report from the Finance Department, the Corporation Counsel was budgeted to spend \$323,135, \$211,802 of which was tax levy. As of December 31, 2015, \$314,305.53 was spent. However, revenue was down slightly and we finished the year with a negative balance of \$298.84. The 2016 adopted budget is \$320,061 and property tax levy total is \$215,471.

#### **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 representing the Board of Adjustments 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 and open meetings issues; Attorney William Moir who focuses on real estate matters, and Attorney Paul Dirkse who supports the County mental health

and child support enforcement functions. Attorney Oliver Bauer, who was hired in 2014, is also being assigned County matters, notably in the area of Health and Human Services matters, collections, and Corrections issues. The overall services provided to the County are coordinated by Dianne Hohenstern, legal assistant.

Over the next three years, Attorney Crystal Fieber and I will be implementing a 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 2016**

In 2016, 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 integrate Attorney Oliver Bauer into assisting the Health and Human Services Department with its various public health enforcement initiatives;
- Continue to assist the Transportation Director and Airport Superintendent in addressing tenant challenges at the Sheboygan County Memorial Airport;
- Work with the IT Director in implementing our HIPAA compliance protocols;
- Work with the County Administrator and Transportation Director in the process of consolidating sheds and Department headquarters.

Very truly yours,

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY CORPORATION COUNSEL

By   
CARL K. BUESING  
Corporation Counsel  
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CKB/dh