

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MAY 26, 2020
Minutes

Committee members present: Chairman Mike Timmons, Tom Kelly, Billy Fried, Russ Fisher and Mitch Ives.

Call to order: Chairman Timmons called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. via zoom. The meeting has been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting law and the meeting is handicap accessible.

Approve agenda: Motion by Fried/Ives to approve today's agenda. All aye; motion carried.

Brian Desmond gave an overview to the meeting attendees of who would be present at the meeting. Desmond reported that Andrew Phillips with von Briessen & Roper and Assistant Corporation Counsel Tom Wiensch are present. Desmond gave an overview of the large assembly permit ordinance, application process and the process that the committee will use for the meeting. Attorney Phillips gave an overview of the Local Health Officer's role in the meeting. Phillips stressed that ultimately the decision of whether a permit should be approved or denied is at the discretion of the committee. Desmond reported that there were approximately 100 emails that were received regarding the large assembly permits. Desmond reported that there were 3 themes to the emails. Those themes were public health, the economy and constitutional rights. Desmond reported that of the emails approximately 2/3 of the emails were opposed to Country Fest and the remainder were supportive. Mike Timmons and Russ Fisher stated that they do have tickets for Hodag Country Fest, however, those will not have any impact on their decision making.

Public Comment:

- Ann Wahlers, Pine Lake, expressed disagreement with holding a zoom meeting for this large of a decision.
- Mark Adams, Lake Tomahawk, is against the Fest being held.
- Jane Banning, Crescent, encouraged the Committee not to approve the application.
- Linda DeMill, Crescent, encouraged the Committee to say no to Hodag Country Fest.
- Oneida County Supervisor Jack Sorensen, Pine Lake, stated that he has spoken to his constituents and his conversations mirror the emails that were received. Approximately, 2/3 of the residents are against the Country Fest and approximately 1/3 were for the Country Fest.
- Karen Isebrands-Brown, Crescent, encouraged the Committee to make the right decision for the health of Oneida County.
- Rick Martin, Crescent, spoke against holding the Hodag Country Fest.
- Patricia Juday, Pine Lake, urged the Committee to deny the request.
- James Dallbeck, Hodag Country Fest Vendor, urged the committee to approve the application.

Public Health Director Linda Conlon presented the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) guidelines related to mass gatherings. Conlon reported that DHS does not advise any large gatherings and they do not have any guidance on when that will end. Conlon presented COVID-19 statistics for Wisconsin counties and neighboring states. Conlon also gave some case examples of COVID-19 that have occurred after a larger gathering.

Dawn Eckert, Hodag Country Fest, spoke to the Committee regarding profit margins at the Hodag Country Fest and how decreasing to 50% of attendance would impact the Country Fest not only this year but in the future. Eckert stated that if the committee votes yes to Hodag Country Fest she would request that the committee clarify if there will be restrictions put on the level of attendance and if guidance could change based on future considerations. Timmons questioned if the committee has the ability to revisit the decision closer to the event as more data becomes available. Andrew Phillips stated that while the committee can revisit the permit he would encourage the committee to make a definitive decision so that the organizers of the festival can move forward with their plans and mitigate their losses. Discussion regarding the Hodag Country Festival 2020 Safety Plan relative to COVID-19. Discussion regarding the 25 points that have been proposed. Fried questioned how the committee can move forward with this in light of the current COVID-19 situation. Ives stated that the people are already here and they are in the community. Fisher questioned if the Sheriff's Office is prepared to work at the festival and what concerns they may have. Sheriff Grady Hartman stated that the Sheriff's Office is ready to work with the Country Festival and the officers are ready to work the event.

Motion by Fried to deny the permit for the Hodag Fest for July 4 - 12, 2020. No second, motion fails.

Motion by Ives/Fisher to approve the permit for the Hodag Country Fest. Fried stated that there is more information that is needed. Fried expressed concern with the hospitals ability to serve the community. Fried also questioned the food vendors and who controls those vendors. Fisher stated that the Country Fest has been handled for the last 40 years by the Eckert family and believes that the running of the event should be left to them. Fisher also stated that when the Supreme Court overruled the safer at home order they stated that businesses should run as normal. Discussion regarding the food vendors and how they will be permitted. Conlon reported that all vendors will be permitted, however, she isn't sure how the Health Department will complete the inspections. Kelly asked if there were additional conditions that should be set by the committee. Discussion regarding concerns and the liability. Motion by Kelly/Timmons to amend Ives motion to include the 2020 Safety Plan relative to COVID-19 submitted by Hodag Country Fest. Vote taken by voice vote: four aye; one nay (Fried). Motion amended to include the 2020 Safety Plan relative to COVID-19. Discussion regarding further guidance from the Health department. Timmons called the question; Ives, aye; Fisher, aye; Kelly, aye; Fried, nay; Timmons, aye.

2:45 p.m. Meeting recessed until 3:00.

3:00 p.m. Meeting returned to open session.

Timmons called the meeting back into order. The committee was joined by Keith Troutman from Bubba's Bog Bash.

Public Comment – Desmond reported that there was an email in support of Bubba's Bog Bash. No other public comment was received.

Public Health Director Linda Conlon briefly reviewed the mass gathering guidance from the WEDC.

Keith Troutman stated that he doesn't believe that his event will draw anyone from the other areas of the state that aren't already traveling north for other reasons. Troutman presented a list of COVID-19 conditions that he is willing to adhere to during the event. Discussion regarding the insurance and Troutman stated that the insurance will be in place by the event. Motion by Ives/Timmons to amend the permit for Bubba's Bog Bash to include the Bubba's Bog Bash Protections. Roll call vote – Kelly, aye; Ives, aye; Fisher, aye; Fried, aye; Timmons, aye; motion carried.

Timmons adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ tracy hartman
Tracy Hartman, Recording Secretary
Oneida County Clerk

/s/ mike timmons
Mike Timmons, Chair