LINCOLN COUNTY AD HOC RULES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 3, 2025 - 2:30 PM

MINUTES

1. Call Meeting to Order

a. Roll Call

Chair Cummings called the meeting to order at 2:30pm with the following members in attendance: Angela Cummings (Chair), Joe Dorava, Marguerite Lyskawa (Vice-Chair), Jim Meunier, and Ken Wickham (5). Others in attendance: Christine Vorpagel(V) 2:43pm and Chris Marlowe (2).

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments offered at this time.

3. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

a. August 20, 2025 Minutes

M/S Wickham/Meunier to approve the August 20, 2025, minutes as written. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

b. Updated Rules Template - August 20, 2025

The committee reviewed the updated template, starting with section 2.09. The committee identified a necessary wording change in section 2.09, specifically to replace "members" with "board members" in the fourth sentence, and in 2.10, to correct "proceeding" to "preceding". For section 2.11, Marlowe explained that a new version was distributed. The committee decided to strike the first and third paragraphs, retaining only the blue paragraph, as the original text contained redundant information and two different methods for the same process. **M/S** Lyskawa/Wickham to approve the template with said changes. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

4. Review and Discuss the Conversion of Lincoln County Chapter 2 to the WCA Template

- **Discussion on Section 2.12 (Vacancy Procedures)** The committee addressed section 2.12, focusing on the procedure for filling board vacancies. They decided to strike the first sentence in brackets related to state statute references, as the existing wording sufficiently covered their policy. Discussions also centered on clarifying the phrasing for vacancy notifications, proposing "a vacancy in the respective supervisory district".

- **Applicant Qualifications and Terminology in 2.12** Regarding applicant qualifications for vacancies, a discussion arose about replacing "qualifications" with "background and interests" to avoid ambiguity and distinguish from established residency and voting qualifications. The committee agreed to use "background and interests" for describing applicant statements.

- **Timeline for Filling Vacancies in 2.12** The committee discussed the timing for filling vacancies, specifically the phrase "at the first county board meeting following the expiration." Ken suggested changing "first" to "next" to provide flexibility while still implying a timely process. Marlowe confirmed that the clerk would ensure adequate time for application review and interviews, aligning with the "not less than 30 days from the last publication" guideline.

- **Gender-Neutral Language in 2.12** The committee decided to incorporate gender-neutral language in section 2.12, specifically changing "his choice" to "his or her choice" or "the candidate's choice" when referring to the board chair’s selection of a candidate. This modification aimed to reflect inclusive language and anticipate potential female board chairs.

- **Christine Vorpagel's Comments on 2.12 and Statutory Authority** Christine Vorpagel was then invited to provide public comment, having experienced technical difficulties earlier. Vorpagel raised concerns about section 2.12, particularly the use of "residual" which she suggested changing to "remainder". She also expressed a personal objection to the rule stating that only the county board chair brings forward a candidate for a vacancy, arguing it grants too much power to one individual and limits the board's awareness of other applicants. Marlowe clarified that this process is in line with state statute, which dictates the board chair's right to bring forward a name for approval by the full board. Christine Vorpagel questioned if board rules could override state statute, but Marlowe affirmed that state statutes take precedence.
- **Status of Document Review and Future Discussions** Cummings informed Vorpagel that the current document review was preliminary and aimed at developing a rough draft. They stated that corporation counsel would assist, and the entire board would have the final say. Cummings also noted that section 2.14, regarding closed session exclusion, would be deferred for later discussion due to its contentious nature, while still welcoming Vorpagel's input.
- **Review of Board Member Rules of Conduct (2.15)** The committee proceeded to discuss section 2.15, "Board Member Rules of Conduct," which was an addendum to the original template. Marlowe clarified that Lincoln County should be inserted in section 2.15, number two, a generic placeholder. The general consensus was to keep the rules but ensure proper enforcement.
- **Discussion on Dress Code in 2.15 B** A discussion arose regarding the phrase "and dress in a professional and respectful manner" in section 2.15 B, particularly the word "professional". Concerns were raised about its subjectivity and potential for misinterpretation. The committee ultimately decided to strike "professional" and keep "conduct themselves and dress in a respectful manner" to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity while still addressing appropriate decorum.
- **Clarification of "County Employees" in 2.15 C** In section 2.15 C, the committee decided to replace "executive and administrator" with the broader term "county employees" to encompass all staff and remove redundant phrasing. They also agreed that the second point within this section was redundant and could be struck.
- **Complaints and Chain of Command in 2.15 D** The committee deliberated section 2.15 D, focusing on how board members should handle constituent complaints. They discussed the importance of board members referring complaints to the appropriate staff within the chain of command, ensuring that complaints are addressed and not ignored. The committee also agreed to strike "outside the chain of command" from the text, emphasizing that board members should still be able to follow up on complaints to ensure accountability.
- **Complaint Handling Process** Cummings initiated a discussion about how complaints are handled by board members, emphasizing that board members should not discuss the merits of complaints until they have been formally submitted and reported to the board or committee. They suggested that board members, as elected representatives, should be able to contact departments about constituent complaints, as state legislators do, and expect follow-up. It was also proposed that the complaint process should include reporting the results to the

committee, ensuring transparency and accountability, and suggesting that the committee chair, county administrator, or county coordinator be involved in the chain of command for such reports.

5. Develop Further Work Details

- The group will work on section three for the next meeting.
- Marlowe will check with legal if the proposed working document approach is okay. Cummings stated that the working board rules document would be edited by Margarite, herself, and Chris, as only two committee members editing would not constitute a quorum in any way. They clarified that while other members could view the document, only the designated editors (Chris, Margarite, and Angela) would have editing access to prevent any "walking quorum" issues. This approach aims to streamline the minute-taking process and ensure that the committee remains productive while in session. The three editors agreed that Lyskawa will edit using purple font, Cummings will edit in red, and Marlowe will edit in blue.

6. Upcoming Meeting Dates

a. September 17, 2025, at 2:30pm in Room 247/248

b. October 1, 2025, at 2:30pm in Room 247/248

7. Adjourn

Cummings adjourned the meeting without objection at 3:41pm.

Minutes prepared by Chris Marlowe, County Clerk