STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION AGENDA

Administration Center - 630 Florence Avenue – Owatonna, MN 55060

Steele County's Mission:
Driven to deliver quality services in a respectful and fiscally responsible way.

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024, AT 3:30PM
County Boardroom, Steele County Administration Center

Agenda

1. Call to Order

2. Steele County Extension Office Presentation (15 minutes)

   Lisa Dierks, UMN Extension Regional Director
   Tracy Ignaszewski & Kelsey Erf - Extension Educators Youth Development (4-H)
   Ryan Lermon – Agricultural Extension Educator
   Lorrie Rugg - Master Gardener Program Coordinator

3. 911 Dispatch: 2025 Preliminary Budget Proposal Presentation

4. MNPrairie Joint Powers Board Meeting Report

5. Human Resource Services for MNPrairie (Continuation from 7/9/24 meeting)

6. Other Business

Presentation:

7. MS-ISAC Conference Review (10 minutes)
   Dave Purscell, IT Director

Adjourn

Disclaimer: This agenda has been prepared to provide information regarding an upcoming meeting of the Steele County Board of Commissioners. This document does not claim to be complete and is subject to change.

University of Minnesota Extension

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MINNESOTA: ENVIRONMENT + FOOD & AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES + YOUTH

MEMO FROM REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Board Presentation Request

To: Steele County Board of Commissioners & Administrator Fry

Date: July 17, 2024

On the recommendation of the Steele County Extension Committee, Extension staff will be providing a brief presentation about programming in the community from the past year. Attached are written reports with additional details for your review.

We look forward to sharing with you at the Work Group meeting on July 23.

Thank you.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY

Lisa Dierks, UMN Extension Regional Director

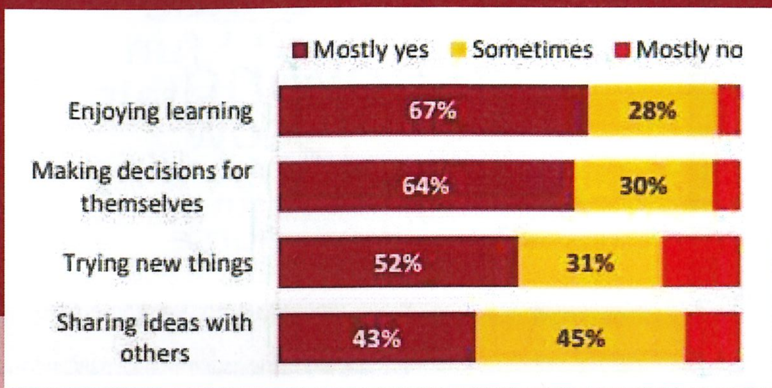
dierksl@umn.edu 507-254-7178

University of Minnesota Extension

Steele 4-H

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Kelsey Erf & Tracy Ignaszewski



"The most important thing I learned in 4-H is to respect others' opinions and help in any way possible. To be kind."

"The most important thing I learned in 4-H is how to communicate and ask more questions."

2024 Steele County 4-H Goals

PROGRAM GOAL: Hold 12 programs and/or educational experiences for youth to learn and explore their interest in 4-H project areas with an emphasis in agriculture.

GROWTH GOAL: Increase participation in county 4-H programming so 75% (360) of the youth enrolled in Community Clubs will participate in at least one county 4-H experience as cloverbuds, 354, camp, youth leadership groups, project workshops and activities.

RETENTION GOAL: Retain at least 75% of Steele County community club enrolled youth. Total enrollment in 2022-23 was 843 with 364 PA (site based and in school) youth and 479 community club youth.

Enrollment

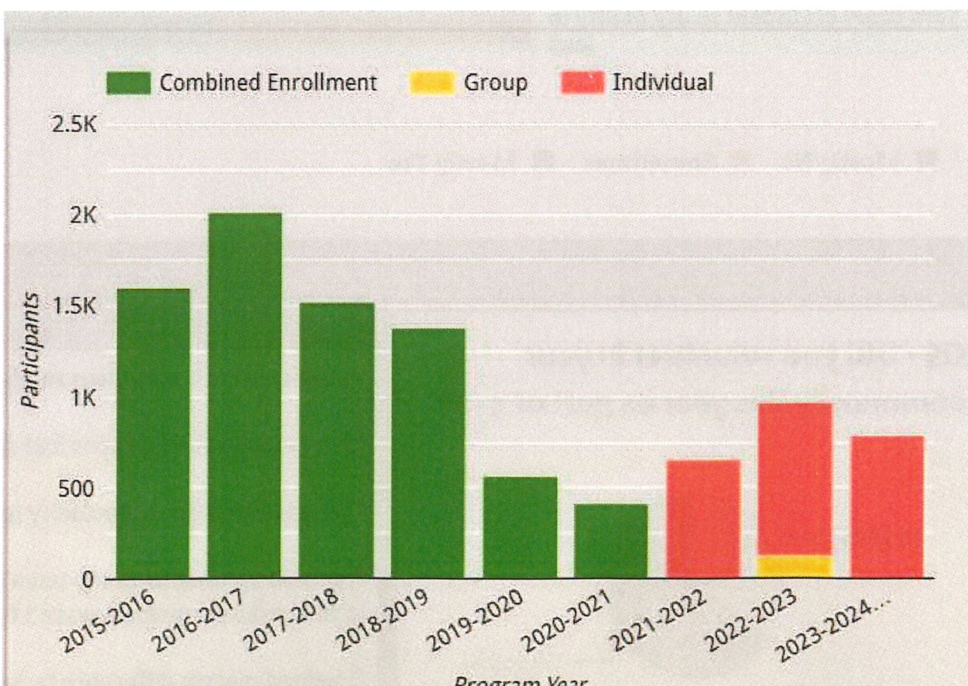
2023- 2024
790 individual

2022 - 2023
843 individual
120 Group

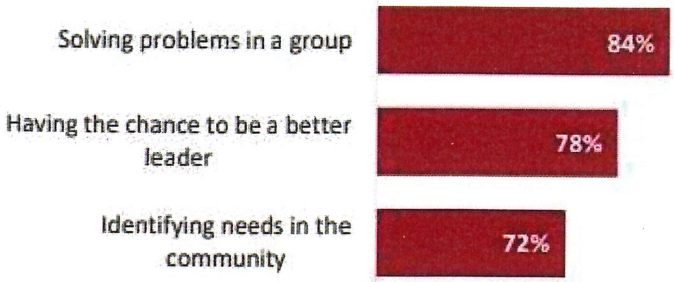
2021- 2022
417 total

2020 - 2021
562 total

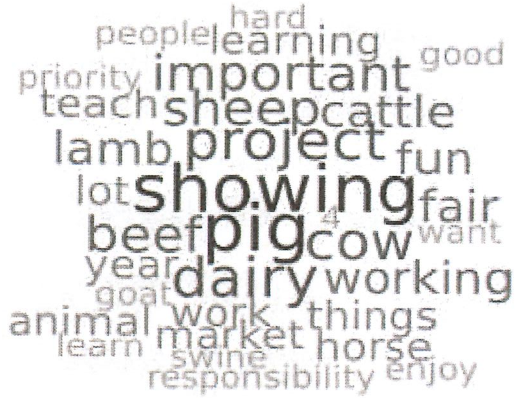
2019 - 2020
1384 total



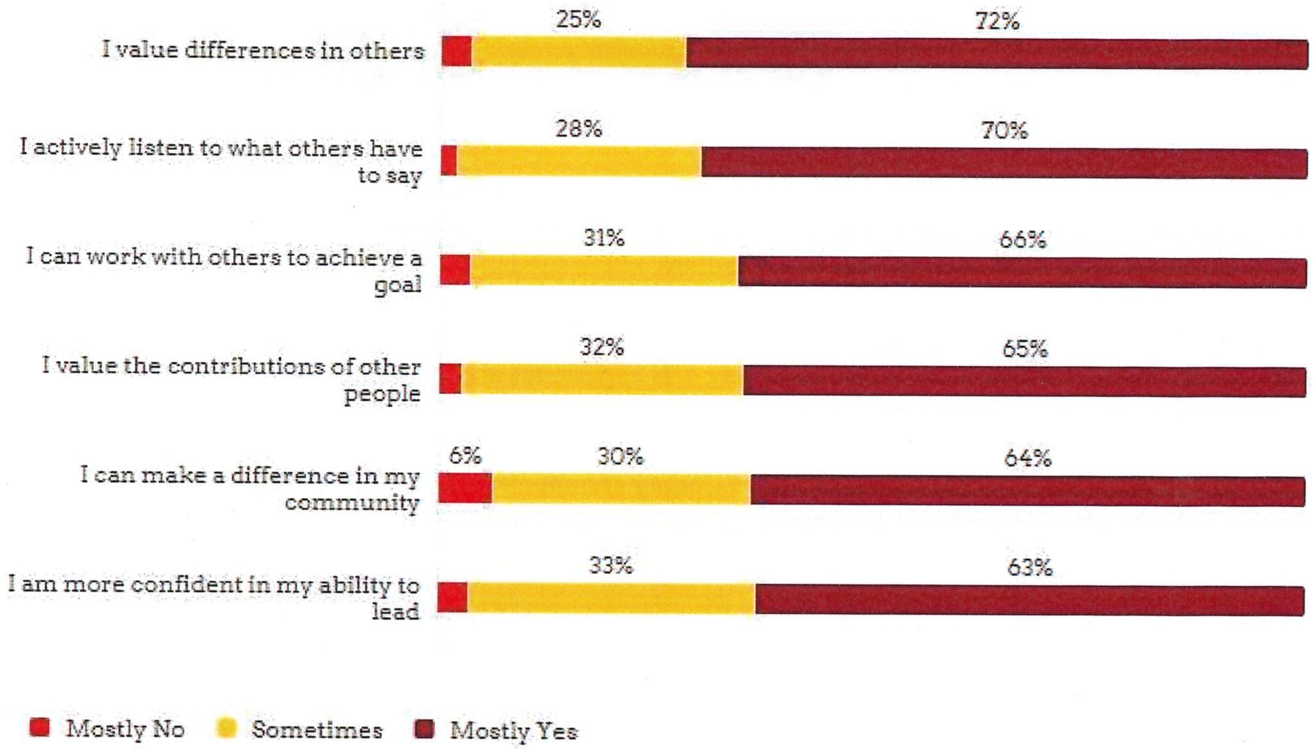
Youth practiced leadership by:



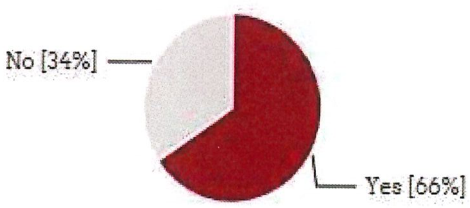
Youth used a variety of words to describe the projects most important to them.



Leadership Measures - "After this year in 4-H..."



Q5 - Did you volunteer in your community this year as part of 4-H?



Youth said their volunteer service made a difference in their community:

"We helped senior citizens feel appreciated by visiting the nursing home."

"We gave kids the opportunity to learn about 4-H."

"I picked up trash after my town's 4th of July parade on the parade route and in the parks so my town wasn't full of trash."

"I helped make a difference by keeping our club organized."

University of Minnesota Extension

Local Educator Report

2024

Serving Rice and Steele counties

A note from your educator

Ryan Lermon

What's new: Recently assisted with Youth farm safety and tractor certification in Goodhue County

Why it matters: Looking into the possibility of offering the program next summer

I am always looking for ideas and opportunities to offer education and outreach to members of the various communities across both Rice and Steele counties.

Ryan

Highlights

Hitting the ground running

I started with Rice and Steele county extension in May and have been taking every opportunity to meet with members of the community and further my knowledge through University programs and local field days. I am looking forward to meeting more people and finding out what programming they would like to see in the future.

Education and Outreach

- **Radio**

  Weekly radio slots on KDHL

- **E-newsletter**

  Starting in July then 1x/month (300+ subscribers and counting)

- **Newspapers**

  2 articles/month

  Interviews as needed

Calls for service and common questions

Calls this year are starting to pickup as the community knows this position is occupied again

- **Agriculture:** Alfalfa weevil, hay prices, pasture rental rates, weeds
- **Horticulture:** Apple thinning, soil testing
- **Forestry:** Oak wilt, ash tree spraying, squirrel damage

What's next?

- **Passport to Agriculture:** Connecting the community with agriculture
- **Steele County Free Fair**: Farm Family of the Year presentation, My children will be showing goats and entering a few general projects for 4H..
- **Farm Safety Lunch and Learn:** Fuel/propane safety

University of Minnesota Extension

Steele County Master Gardener Coordinator Report

Lorrie Rugg, Program Coordinator

I am the Master Gardener Program Coordinator for Rice and Steele Counties. But I am also a University of Minnesota Master Gardener Volunteer.

How do you become a University of Minnesota Master Gardener Volunteer?

In 2000, I took the training to become a Master Gardener. There are 2 parts to the training program. During your intern year, you take the on-line Core Course of Education - equivalent to a Hort 101 class from the University which runs from mid-January through mid-May. During the second part of the program, you are required to put in 50 hours of Community Service. You have a year to finish both parts. When both parts are completed, you then are an official Master Gardener. After that initial year, we must complete 25 hours of community service and 5 educational hours to keep our active status.

What is the mission of a University of Minnesota Master Gardener?

Our mission as Master Gardeners is to provide research-based gardening knowledge to our local community.

How do we accomplish our Mission here in Steele County?

As the Program Coordinator, it is my job to help interns achieve active status and help the active Master Gardeners retain their status through programming that best serves our community. We have monthly meetings throughout the year to plan on how best to achieve that.

Since becoming the Coordinator in January of 2020, one of my main goals was to increase membership. In January of 2020, we had 17 Active Master Gardeners and today we have 35 active members, more than doubled our membership. Retention has also been 100% since 2020.

In 2023 the Master Gardeners recorded over 1,800 volunteer hours in Steele County, The University states that each hour is valued at $34.47. That is over $62.000 worth of research-based information being shared with our community.

In 2024, the big project we are working on is the expansion of our garden at the Fairgrounds. In previous years, the Fair staff approached the Master Gardeners and asked if we could put in a garden on the fairgrounds where there was a continual wet spot and would help with that. So, during the Covid year of 2020, the garden was started while the world was shut down, we could still garden outside, so we went to work. The Fairgrounds are forever changing and we wanted that area to change and grow as well. Today, with the Fair staff's approval, we are looking to expand that area with a pergola, beds for seed trials through the University, a texture garden, a healing garden, a water feature, and a children's garden area. This is a multi-year project depending on the funding sources we secure.

Ways We Reach Our Community

- Our Annual Plant Sale - sales have doubled in the last 4 years
- Community garden - a great partnership with Riverland Community College. We currently have 21 - 20X20' plots, and 9 raised bed gardens for rent. The Master Gardeners also have a plot to grow food to donate for the Community Pathways. Our gardens are a stop for the Secret Garden Tour of 2024.
- Programming at the Library Garden that we maintain- Bee session was held in June - 53 kids and 20 adults attended
- Pollinator Garden located at the Extension Office
- Monthly newspaper columns for the Owatonna People's Press and the Steele County Times
- Pumpkin Composting Project - new last fall. We collect a large dumpster full of pumpkins to compost
- Speakers for various church groups, Women's Club, local preschool programs, Bee Friendlies, and others
- Work with Steele County 4-H Plant Science projects
- County Fair Booth in Outdoor Event Center - last year we engaged with over 1,100 youth and 800 adults
- Work with the Mckinley Elementary School Garden
- Volunteer with the Power of Produce program at the Waseca Farmers Market

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Steele County
Agenda Item

Informational

Subject: Performance Measurement Update

Department: Finance Department

Committee: Internal Central Services

Committee Meeting Date: Enter a date.

Work Session Date: July 24, 2024

Board Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Purpose:

To review 2025 911 dispatch budget proposal

Background:

To review the 2025 911 Rice-Steele Dispatch Joint Powers Budget

Financial Impacts:

Steele levy financially supports the 911 Joint Dispatch

Attachments:

2025 911 Dispatch Budget proposal

Rice & Steele
911 Center

2025

Preliminary Budget

Proposal Presentation

July 10th, 2024

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair and JPB Members of the Rice & Steele 911 Center

I respectfully submit my 2025 Preliminary Budget Proposal for your review and consideration. The 2025 Preliminary Budget Proposal includes a county contribution of $1,980,488 for Rice County and $1,104,384 for Steele County.

Total expenditures, county contributions and fund balance included in the 2024 Preliminary Budget Proposal as compared to the 2024 Adopted Budget are as follows:

	Adopted 2023	Proposed 2024	Percentage Increase (Decrease)
Total Expenditures	$3,593,999	$3,796,682	5.6%
Rice County Contribution	$1,802,778	$1,980,488	9.9%
Steele County Contribution	$1,005,288	$1,104,384	9.9%
Reserve Fund Balance Applied	$181,100	$0	(100%)
Dedicated NG911 Funding Applied	$0	$35,000	

While the expenditures have risen by 5.6%, the county contributions have risen by 9.9%. This is due to the Reserve Fund Balance not being used this year compared to previous years. Our current Reserve Fund Balance sits at 32% of Operating Expenditures. Steele County, our fiscal agent, prefers that this fund balance be a minimum of 40%. You will also see later that there is a 0% increase State E911 Funding.

Accomplishments Over the Past Year

While we are focusing on what is needed in 2025, I would be remiss not to mention the accomplishments over the past year and what we will be doing for the rest of 2024. With the help of the Joint Powers Board, the hiring process has improved with the added background investigations, psychological evaluations and changes to the training program, our new hire success rate sits at 73%. That number is even better when we account for our classroom orientation. Since the start of the classroom orientation, the success rate sits at 86%. The training program, as previously mentioned has improved with all trainers going to class and being certified as a Communications Training Officer. Supervision is also key in this change. Currently half of our Supervisors and Jennifer have traveled and received specific training to be a Supervisor in the Communications Center. Our last two Supervisors will receive this training within the next month. All employees currently receive monthly training and have also attended at least one outside of the center training this year. All this effort provides an opportunity for the employees of the Rice & Steele 911 Center to provide the best service possible to the citizens, visitors and agencies we serve. This mission will only continue with the process of protocols. The consistency these protocols provide will allow us to meet or even exceed the industry best practices. While the employee is a priority for any business, advances were needed with equipment and security of our systems. This year we have been able to replace/update 5 CAD positions, change out all monitors for those positions, replace and update computers for the Armer Radio System and replace a main server in the computer room. The City of Owatonna also completed the generator replacement. It is a great relief knowing that a quality piece of equipment is sitting there ready to work when it is needed.

Difficulties with Forming this Budget Proposal

I have previously mentioned that employees are a priority. Unknowns to an employee causes anxiety and reduces morale. I regularly get asked what is happening or when will a decision be made about the building. I am honest with them that these decisions take time and there is a lot of work that needs to be done, especially at the Joint Powers Board level. I will pass on that whatever the decision is, they will be happy. The waiting for the decision is the hard part.

With the decision of a building not yet made, I had some difficulty on prioritizing capital projects. I did work through a capital improvement plan, but a decision on a building will help finalize this projection. It is my goal that we spread out capital projects so that we do not have large fluctuations year over year. There are several large projects that will be required over the next couple of years including a hardware refresh or replacement of our phone system, a replacement of our recording system and console furniture is in dire need of replacement.

The State of Minnesota in working with the 911 Centers on a study to see the readiness of agencies for NG911. I was expecting some money to become available in 2025 to help with our replacement of phone equipment but I am now being told that we should plan on not seeing money until 2026. This is my reason for not recommending a hardware refresh or phone replacement in 2025. With that said, we will see an increased maintenance agreement for our phone equipment because our equipment is passing its life expectancy.

Lastly, projecting wages was difficult as the current contract ends on December 31st of this year. We are also expecting a large increase for health insurance. We plan on continuing with Steele County's insurance and they are currently out with an RFP.

Added Revenues and No Reserve Fund Balance Applied

Licensee fee costs were determined the responsibility of the agencies who have these licenses. I worked with agency heads to determine the exact number of licenses required. The Rice & Steele 911 Center will continue to pay for these licenses as we are charged for them and we will then bill the agencies for reimbursement. Since we are the member agency with Logis, we are not able to simply ask Logis to bill the agencies directly. This change will add an additional $65,240 in revenue for 2025.

The Rice & Steele 911 Center currently sits at approximately 32% reserve fund balance compared to our expected 2025 expenditures. Candi Lemarr who is the Fiscal Agent for the Rice & Steele 911 Center would like to see this number around 40%. I am expecting that will be close to this number after this year due to not replacing the UPS System. I have also decided not to purchase a document management system due to the fact that we believe the systems we are using are currently fitting our needs. With this in mind, no reserve fund balance will be used in the 2025 proposed budget.

2025 Expenditures & notable initiatives

As I mentioned last year during my presentation, I go into each budget cycle with a primary goal. Last year it was "We need to make operational improvements in the dispatch room to assist the Telecommunicators with the difficult job that they do and to provide a quality of service to the agencies that we serve". While those values continue, my focus this year changed slightly and reads "We need to prepare ourselves for the technology and security needs of the future". With that said, below are a few primary objectives for 2025:

1. Complete a protocol based dispatching system and program CAD to better serve the agencies with these new protocols.
2. Training is always a priority for me. I have increased the budget again for the 2025 Preliminary Budget to the same amount I initially requested in 2024. This number will get us to a point where we can fulfill our needs currently and prepare our employees for the future. I do not expect a large increase like this again in future years.
3. In the Miscellaneous category, I am again requesting “check up from the neck up” for all employees. Mental health is a priority for our staff who regularly take stressful calls. This once-a-year requirement will provide the employees an initial check-in with a professional. Many times, pride or the feeling of being stronger than what you really are hold people from seeking this type of help. This item was removed from the 2024 final budget.
4. In the Miscellaneous category, I am again requesting uniform shirts for all staff. Uniforms show professionalism and solidarity. We have been driving the need for professionalism since Jennifer and I arrived at the Rice & Steele 911 Center. This is just another step towards maintaining that professional atmosphere. The staff are also receiving more training outside the center and attending events.
5. We will continue to replace CAD stations by replacing (3) in 2025 while at the same time getting them into a 5-year replacement plan.
6. Firewall and switch replacements are needed at both the primary and backup center. I have budgeted for these in 2025. These replacements will allow quality connection and improved cyber security.
7. The last project will be to migrate to M365 for email services. Our current email is coming to the end of its life and Microsoft is wanting everyone to move to the M365 platform. Larger entities will not have to move as quickly because they are on an Enterprise version of email but with our small agency being on a Select Plus plan, this move needs to happen early as it will no longer be supported.

Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have about the 2025 Preliminary Budget Proposal and the rationale. I would particularly like to thank Nicole Hable, Jennifer Colby, Candi Lemarr (Rice County Finance Director) and Jonathan Walstrom (Steele County Finance) for all their work in helping produce the 2025 Preliminary Budget Proposal.

Sincerely,
Brian Becker
Administrator, Rice & Steele 911 Center

Rice-Steele Consolidated Dispatch
2025 Budget Proposal

	2024 Final Budget	2025 Prelim Budget	$ Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
Revenues				
County Contributions:				
Rice County - 64.2%	$ 1,802,778	$ 1,980,488	$ 177,710	9.9%
Steele County - 35.8%	1,005,288	1,104,384	99,096	9.9%
Total County Contributions	2,808,066	3,084,872	276,806	9.9%
State Grant - E911	536,593	536,593	-	0.0%
Charges for Services	65,240	125,217	59,977	91.9%
Interest Income	3,000	15,000	12,000	0.0%
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	#DIV/0!
Budgeted Use of dedicated NG911 Funding Reserves		35,000	35,000	#DIV/0!
Budgeted Use of Reserves	181,100	-	(181,100)	(100.0%)
Total Revenues	3,593,999	3,796,682	202,683	5.6%
Expenditures (Budget)				
Personnel Services				
Wages and Overtime	1,862,800	1,994,200	131,400	7.1%
Health, Life, and Disability Insurance	309,700	388,600	78,900	25.5%
Payroll Taxes and Retirement Benefits	277,600	297,200	19,600	7.1%
Other Payroll Related Expenditures	3,400	3,500	100	2.9%
Total Personnel Services	2,453,500	2,683,500	230,000	9.4%
Operating Expenditures				
Advertising	1,000	1,000	-	0.0%
Audit Costs	14,175	15,500	1,325	9.3%
Computer Usage Fees	27,120	27,120	-	0.0%
Consultants	12,000	12,000	-	0.0%
Equipment Maintenance & Repairs	742,441	794,707	52,266	7.0%
Garbage Disposal	400	-	(400)	(100.0%)
Membership Dues	600	1,260	660	110.0%
Employee Physical & Exams	-	5,100	5,100	#DIV/0!
Miscellaneous Expenditures	8,000	11,050	3,050	38.1%
Non-Capitalized Inventory	11,070	11,800	730	6.6%
Office Rent	59,584	63,159	3,575	6.0%
Office Supplies	3,950	4,036	86	2.2%
Property and Liability Insurance	11,459	11,802	343	3.0%
Telephone, Cell Phones, Cable and Internet	50,400	48,491	(1,909)	(3.8%)
Training/Mileage/Conferences	17,200	20,900	3,700	21.5%
Total Operating Expenditures	959,399	1,027,925	68,526	7.1%
Budgeted Capital Outlay	181,100	85,257	(95,843)	(52.9%)
Total Expenditures	3,593,999	3,796,682	202,683	5.6%
Net Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	$ -	$ -	$ -	

Rice-Steele Consolidated Dispatch
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MNPRAIRIE HR SERVICES PLAN

CURRENT SERVICE LEVELS

Current major HR services to MNPrairie

Steele currently manages/provides:

- Recruitment and selection of employees
- Labor relations and contract implementation
- Benefits administration
- Administer personnel rules and policies
- Performance management
- Leave of Absence administration
- Compliance with laws and reporting requirements

MnPrairie currently manages/provides:

- All payroll related functions for its employees
- ACA reporting

TERM OF CONTRACT

Contract terms related to changing the arrangement:

- Contract currently ends 12/31/25
- 1 year notice for non-renewal/withdrawal
- Terminate upon mutual agreement
- 14 days notice if Steele is unable to provide quality/quantity of service or changes in personnel

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- MnPrairie has matured into a large, complex organization that handles such matters as governance and finance on their own. The number of full-time, benefits eligible staff is nearly comparable to that of the county.
- MnPrairie handles its own payroll and finances already.
- The role of HR is ever evolving as it relates to changing laws, unfunded mandates and this is made even more complex by the fact that the county is administering benefits for 3 organizations, with 9 collective bargaining agreements and 45 different benefit plans.
- Department staffing levels are guided by industry standards for the county's departments and MnPrairie. HR Standard is 1/75 employees and our current ratio is 1/131.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The growth in case load is not best measured by what is being accomplished alone but should consider what is not being accomplished. Concerns have been raised about the time it takes to fill vacancies, the lack of professional development, and fiscal responsibility. Staffing is key to addressing these concerns. Here is how Steele County is impacted/burdened by the current contracted arrangement:
  - ➢ Not able to focus on meeting Steele County’s needs
  - ➢ Longer delays in getting jobs filled: impacts for revenue generating positions i.e. public health and if it is a Grant required position (i.e. SHIP Coordinator)
  - ➢ Less responsive and timely
  - ➢ Relationship development w/employees suffers, potentially impacting employee retention negatively

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Important strategic work like succession planning, people development, and knowledge transfer aren't happening, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge and employees leaving the county for promotional opportunities elsewhere
- Increased risk of litigation for noncompliance with laws, regulations, requirements, contracts, etc.
- Team that is spread too thin and expectation to be subject matter experts to 3 different organizations leads to burn-out

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Projects not getting done:
  - ***Update Personnel Rules & Policies Handbook*** - Necessary to keep up-to-date with current legislation requirements and best practices
  - ***People/Leadership Training and Development*** – Negatively impacts ability to "grow our own" employees for promotion, which creates less transition time and is more costly.
  - ***Development of a "Leaders at All Levels" Program*** – A way to grow our own leaders and employees and retain more employees.
  - ***Development of an informal mentoring program*** – Another way to retain the next generation of staff.
  - ***Strategic Planning work and implementation of Stay Interview/ Retention Survey recommendations*** – *A lack of retention initiatives results in more employees leaving county.*
  - ***Digitize all HR records*** - Reduces the costs for space needs.

TRANSITION TIMELINE PROPOSAL

Steele County proposes hiring an HR Manager and an HR Generalist as MNPrairie employees as soon as possible. Ideally, the HR Generalist would be located in the Steele HR Department for at least the first 3-6 months of employment. Steele County also recommends the Manager be located at the Steele site for ongoing mentoring/consultation with the HR Team for 3-6 months. The HR Services Contract would be mutually ended upon completion of 3 months of employment and training. Once these 2 positions are hired, the proposed transition timeline/agreement would be:

Months 1 – 3:	Provide robust, hands-on training (Minimum of 10 hours/wk.)
Months 4 – 6:	Continue hands-on training (Minimum of 5 hours/wk.)
Months 7 – 12:	Ongoing training/consultation as needed (Minimum of 2 hours/wk.)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Description	Shared at 4	Steele	MnP	Alloc back to Steele	Shared at 5	Steele	MnP	Alloc back to Steele		Steele County 3
Allocation Percentage		52.38%	47.62%	45.25%		52.38%	47.62%	45.25%		
Cost Allocation	**Total**	**Steele**	**MN Prairie**		**Total**	**Steele**	**MN Prairie**			**Total**
Total Cost	$ 563,630.43	$ 295,255.57	$268,374.86		$ 668,398.22	$ 350,137.76	$318,260.46			$ 410,883.48
	MNP to Steele	$ 121,439.63			MNP to Steele	$ 144,012.86				
	Total Cost to Steele	**$ 416,695.19**			**Total Cost to Steele**	**$494,150.62**			**Total Cost to Steele**	**$ 410,883.48**

SUMMARY

- If MnPrairie goes on its own, with appropriate mentorship, training and ongoing sharing of information, Steele County can be adequately supported by a team of 3 into the future.

- Setting them up on their own gives MnPrairie the ability to control and manage the HR function and work, hiring specialization, and relationship development as colleagues. MnPrairie has expressed concern over the loss of experience/depth of the bench, but the proposal would include explicit terms related to onboarding, training and ongoing mentorship. (See timeline)