

## Price County Administration Committee Minutes

**Date:** October 15, 2025

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Place:** Courthouse County Board Room 101; 126 Cherry St; Phillips, WI 54555

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Dennis Wartgow, Committee Chairman.

### Roll Call

**Members Present:** Alan Barkstrom, Jeff Hallstrand, Paula Houdek, Jordan Spacek (remote), Dennis Wartgow.

**Also Present:** Brian Ernst, County Chairman; Nick Trimner, County Administrator; Jennifer Miller, County Human Resources Manager.

### Items For Discussion and Possible Action

1. **Public Comment:** None.

**Communications:** Discussion on two future agenda items including supervisors providing proof of insurance for mileage; and the procedure for abstaining during vote and participating in discussion beforehand.

2. **Meeting Minutes from the September 9, 2025 Meeting:**

Motion Houdek/Barkstrom to approve the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Employee Status Updates

New Hires, Promotions, & Reassignments

- Nancy Olson – Program Assistant UWEX – starts 10/29/2025

Terminations, Resignations, & Retirements

- Nancy Olson – Substitute Nutrition Site Manager 10/23/25 (6 months)
- Daniel Lambert, Deputy Sheriff – 10/31/2025 (2 ½ years)

Recruitments

- Deputy Sheriff
- Part-time Correction Officer/Dispatcher – ongoing
- Part-time Deputy Sheriff – ongoing
- Substitute Nutrition Site Manager – ongoing

4. **Health Insurance 2026 Premiums:**

Motion Hallstrand/Barkstrom to accept the Health Insurance 2026 Premiums as presented and to forward them to County Board for final approval. Motion carried.

5. **Supervisor Policy and Procedure Manual 2026-2027**

- a. **Exhibit A – Rule II(B.) Page 5 – April Organization Meeting & Regular Meeting During Election Years:** No updates.

- b. **Exhibit A – Rule II(C.) – Page 5 November Board Meeting – Veteran’s Day:**

Meetings, other than the one on the Tuesday after the second Monday in November (*which shall be held on the following Wednesday if that Tuesday falls on Veterans Day*) and the third Tuesday in April, shall be held on the third Tuesday of February, May, June, August and September and either the second or third Tuesday of October of each year at which the County Board will approve a budget for the next fiscal year to be forwarded to the public hearing at the annual meeting. The date of the October meeting will be determined based on the publication requirements for the public hearing.

- c. **Exhibit B – B(I)1. Page 10 – Supervisor Per Diems:** No changes.

\*Spacek leaves the meeting due to remote connectivity issues.

- d. **Exhibit B – B(I)1. Page 10 – Second Meeting Per Diem:**

Each supervisor shall be paid one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per diem for each County Board meeting attended, seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) per diem for all other authorized committee/board/commission meetings attended and an additional twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for serving as chairperson for any standing committee/board/ad hoc of the County Board (excluding the Executive Committee). If more than one meeting is held on any one day, that is not a day that a County Board Meeting is held, the per diem for such subsequent meeting will be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). *However, if the second meeting begins more than 1.5 hours after the first meeting ends, the per diem for the second meeting shall be seventy-five dollars (\$75.00).*

- e. **Exhibit B – B(II)1. Page 12 – Board Chair Annual Salary:** No changes.

6. **Resolution – Approve Revisions to the County Board Policy and Procedure Manual:**

It was noted that there were no changes to Price County Supervisor Per Diems and no changes to the Board Chair pay.

Motion Barkstrom/Houdek to approve the resolution: Revisions to the County Board Policy and Procedure Manual, and to send it to County Board for final approval. Motion carried.

7. **Employee Handbook:**

**Wages & Other Forms of Compensation**

**Beeper Pay:** Social Workers working in the Children and Youth Unit and Behavioral Health Unit and **Adult Protective Services Unit** of the Department of Health and Human Services shall be required to carry the on-call cell phone and respond to after hours calls on a rotation scheduled by the unit supervisor. The Social Worker shall be paid a per diem corresponding to the following schedule.:

**Electronic Media & Social Media Policy**

**Price County Social Media**

Price County has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and/or other platforms. These platforms play a key role in the objectives of Price County. Price County-sponsored social media are for business use only, and Price County owns the accounts for Price County -sponsored social media, including all content, communications, and connections created, sent, received, or stored on such accounts. Only employees who are designated and authorized by Price County can prepare content for or delete, edit, or otherwise modify content on Price County-sponsored social media; such employees are specially trained by Price County for use of County-sponsored social media. **The full policy for Price County social media accounts is outlined in the Administration Manual.**

a. **Holidays:** (Added Presidents Day as a county employee holiday).

POLICY: To identify employee holidays and to establish a consistent procedure for scheduling and payment.:

Price County regular full-time and regular part-time employees, except as otherwise herein provided, shall be granted 11 paid holidays per year at an employee's regular rate of pay as follows:

1. New Year's Day
- 2. Presidents' Day**
3. Friday before Easter
4. Memorial Day
5. Independence Day
6. Labor Day
7. Thanksgiving Day
8. Friday after Thanksgiving Day
9. Christmas Eve
10. Christmas Day
11. New Year's Eve

b. **Payroll and Accounts Payable Employee One-Week Mandatory Vacation:**

Documentation and Preparation:

**Employees shall not complete their payroll or accounts payable duties prior to their vacation.**

c. **Benefits-Miscellaneous**

i. **Social Worker Certification:**

If Price County requires a social worker certification for a position, Price County may choose to assist in the cost for an employee to obtain a social worker certification. Employee must work with Department Head and the Office of Administration and get prior approval for reimbursement. **Proof of passing grade for each course is required prior to reimbursement.**

ii. **Expense Reimbursements and Compensable Hours for Travel, Trainings and Meetings:**

Expense Reimbursements and Compensable Hours for Travel, Trainings and Meetings:

Price County shall reimburse employees for necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of their respective duties and compensate hourly employees for time spent in County sponsored travel, trainings and meetings; subject to the conditions and limitations set forth in this policy. All requests for travel and training must be pre-approved by the Department Head. **Expense reimbursement requests must be submitted within 15 days of return from travel or date expense was incurred, whichever is later.**

Requesting Reimbursements:

Employees seeking reimbursement(s) for travel or training expenses pursuant to this policy must complete a request for reimbursement, attach necessary documentation, and submit it to their Department Head for approval. The Department Head will review the request; approve the necessary travel/training time and the employee's work schedule for the week in which the travel/training will occur. Approval must occur prior to the travel/training taking place. Reimbursements for other expenses must be requested on an Expense Reimbursement Form and submitted no later than **15 days** from purchase. Employees must prepare, sign and submit an Expense reimbursement Form and all required supporting documents/receipts to their immediate supervisor. ***Mileage reimbursement requests submitted through the payroll time keeping software must include itemized notes detailing the origin and destination locations and the purpose of the travel (e.g., Phillips to Wisconsin Dells WCA Conference).***

- d. **Cell Phone & Telephone Use:** (The full policy for Price County social media account is outlined in the Administration Manual).  
Personal Use of County-***Issued*** Cell Phone: ***County-issued cell phones are to be used for County business purposes only and for personal use only in an emergency. The County-Issued Cell Phone Policy in the Administration Handbook provides further guidance on use of these devices.***
- e. **Code of Ethics:**  
Acceptance of Gifts, Favors or Honoraria:  
***4. Employees attending events, conferences, trainings, or similar professional gatherings shall be eligible to enter prize drawings or receive door prizes or vendor giveaways. Employees may accept individual prizes or gifts related to these events, provided the value of the prizes does not exceed \$250.***
8. **Resolution – Adopt Revised Employee Handbook:**  
Motion Houdek/Hallstrand to approve the resolution: Adopt the Revised Employee Handbook and send it to County Board for final approval. Motion carried
9. **Administration Manual**
  - a. **Recruitment Policy:** The recruitment policy and updates were presented in the Administration Manual, which is on file. (Attached changes in minutes index).
  - b. **Social Media Policy:** The social media policy and updates were presented in the Administration Manual, which is on file. (Attached changes in minutes index).
  - c. **Cell Phone Policy:** The county issues cell phone policy and updates were presented in the Administration Manual, which is on file. (Attached changes in minutes index).
10. **Resolution - Adopt Revised Administration Manual:**  
Motion Houdek/Barkstrom to approve the resolution: Adopt Revised Administration Manual and send it to County Board for final approval. Motion carried.
11. **Employee LTE Wage Schedule**
  - a. **Interpreter Wage Differential:** Presented the Interpreter Wage Differential: \$25.00 hourly pay in addition to regular wages.
12. **Resolution – LTE Wage Schedule with Interpreter Wage Differential:**  
Motion Barkstrom/Hallstrand to approve resolution: LTE Wage Schedule with Interpreter Wage Differential, and to send it to County Board for final approval. Motion carried.
13. **Review 2026 Committee and Board Calendar:**  
Motion Houdek/Hallstrand to send the 2026 Committee and County Board Calendar to County Board. Motion carried.
14. **Next Meeting Date:** November 11, 2025.
15. **2026 Deputy Union Negotiation Update:** Negotiation and a tentative agreement in conversation during closed session at this meeting. The negotiation decision will need to be ratified by the County Board of Supervisors.

\*Wartgow announced a short break at 10:04 a.m.

16. **Announcement and motion to adjourn to closed session pursuant to the exemptions in Wis. State Statute 19.85 (1)(c) for considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility and 19.85 (1)(e) deliberating or negotiating whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session for the purpose of:**
  - a. **Deputy Union Contract Negotiations**
  - b. **Return to Open Session**

Motion Hallstrand/Houdek to go into closed session at 10:15 a.m. Roll call vote: Yes (4): Barkstrom, Houdek, Hallstrand, Wartgow. No (0). Excused (1): Spacek. Motion carried.  
Motion Houdek/Hallstrand to go into open session at 2:45 p.m. Roll call vote: Yes (4): Barkstrom, Houdek, Hallstrand, Wartgow. No (0). Excused (1): Spacek. Motion carried.
17. **Take action, as needed, on closed session items:** No action taken.
18. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m. by Dennis Wartgow, Committee Chairman.

Respectfully submitted by Meredith Hueckman, County Clerk

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Administration Manual Policy Index (policies mentioned in the minutes):

### 3. RECRUITMENT

**POLICY:** All applicants, with the exception of Summer Hire positions, shall be at least 18 years of age at the time employment starts. Summer Hire positions may be hired at the age of 17, with restricted duties. All approved County job vacancies shall be filled using the established County recruitment procedures to ensure fair and consistent employment practices.

**PROCEDURE:** When a vacancy in any on-going position (i.e.: regular full-time, regular part-time and project) occurs, approval to fill the position must first be obtained by the respective Department Head and County Administrator.

With the exceptions of a Department Head vacancy, current employees may be considered for promotion using the following process:

1. Employee must meet the following qualifications:
  - a. Must have at least the minimum requirements of education and/or experience for the position
  - b. Must have a good work history in all positions held with the County
  - c. Must have the recommendation of their Department Head
  - d. In the absence of an active Department Head, it falls to the County Administrator to make the initial recommendation
2. The steps of the Internal Promotion are as follows:
  - a. Employee expresses interest in the advancement opportunity and fills out a job application.
  - b. Department Head makes recommendation to County Administrator.
  - c. County Administrator and Department Head will interview the Employee and either approve or deny the promotion.

If no recommendation by the Department Head is made to the County Administrator, or, at the option of the County Administrator, external recruiting will take place. County Employees may apply for the position through the external candidate hiring process. Department Head vacancies shall always have a full recruitment process unless the vacancy was created through re-organization of departments. In that instance, the Administration Committee shall determine whether internal candidates shall be considered first prior to the external recruitment process.

**Determination of Applicable Testing:** The Department Head and the County Administrator shall determine what, if any, additional testing is required for the recruitment process.

**Advertising:** If no internal promotion takes place, position will be advertised in applicable media as is appropriate, including but not limited to local newspapers, Wisconsin JobNet, Price County Website, University and College Career Services, and non-local newspapers.

Advertising will be coordinated by the Office of Administration after consultation with the respective Department Head, or the County Administrator if the vacancy is for a Department Head.

**Application Period:** Candidates for the position are required to complete the appropriate Price County Job Application and submit it along with a resume to the Office of Administration prior to the application deadline.

**Application Review:** Applications for the vacant position will be reviewed by the Department Head, or

County Administrator if the vacancy is for a position of Department Head.

**Testing:** The Office of Administration shall coordinate any necessary applicant testing. Following the testing, the successful candidates will again be reviewed by the Department Head and Office of Administration to determine which candidates will be selected to interview.

**Interviews:**

Department Head Vacancies: When interviewing for vacancies for Department Heads the County Administrator may put together an Interview Committee consisting of the County Board Chair or its designee, the Committee of Jurisdiction or its designee, other Department Heads and any applicable external professionals who can offer technical knowledge. Interviews shall be conducted at a formal committee meeting in closed session under exemption C of the Open Meetings Law. Following completion of reference and applicable background checks, the Committee as a whole shall determine the best candidate to be offered the position. Interviews shall not create a quorum for any County committee.

Regular Full-Time/Part-Time Position Vacancies: For vacancies for regular full-time and part-time positions, the Department Head and Unit Supervisor along with the Office of Administration shall conduct the interviews on a schedule appropriate to the needs of the interviewers and the candidates.

Regular Full-Time Law Enforcement Vacancies: For Law Enforcement position vacancies, the process for requirement shall be followed as outlined in the PRICE COUNTY CODE: 120 – LAW ENFORCEMENT. Law Enforcement positions are defined as Deputies, Investigators and Law Enforcement Management staff.

Casual Position Vacancies: When recruiting for casual positions, the Department Head and/or Unit Supervisor shall conduct the interview using an established list of questions. Upon completion of the interview process, the Department Head shall notify the Office of Administration of the successful candidate. The Department Head/Unit Supervisor will forward to the Office of Administration all copies of applications, interview questionnaires and all other information gathered at time of interview. The Office of Administration will make the offer of employment after speaking with the Department Head and/or Unit Manager.

**Employment Offer:** After interviews and all reference and background checks have been completed, the Office of Administration will notify the successful candidate by phone to inform them of the decision, wage and start date. The Office of Administration will follow up with a written offer letter to the candidate, set up the required physical and drug screen and notify the Department Head (or Committee Chair in the case of a hiring of a Department Head) of the acceptance of the offer. All unsuccessful candidates for the position will be informed by the Office of Administration by letter.

**Eligibility Lists:** At the time of interviews, it may be determined there is a need to create an eligibility list for future vacancies for the same or similar positions within the department. The interviewers shall determine the names and ranking of the candidates to be placed on the eligibility list and also how long the eligibility list will be in place. The Office of Administration will then be responsible for notifying the candidates they are on the list and maintaining the list for the length of time approved.

In addition to creating an eligibility list at time of actual vacancies, the Department Head and County Administrator may determine that it is necessary to create an eligibility list for either casual positions or for regular positions which experience a high turnover rate. If that determination is made, the Department shall follow the same procedure used for vacancy recruitment with the exception that the advertisements/postings shall indicate the recruitment is for an eligibility list instead of an actual vacancy.

**Relocation Expenses:** Newly hired Department Heads, supervisory, professional, and technical employees who are in short supply or who have exceptional qualifications directly related to the position, as determined by the Office of Administration, may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in relocating to Price County up to a maximum of \$2,500.

1. Minimum Distance: In order to be eligible for reimbursement, the minimum distance between the newly hired employee's former residence and new place of employment must be more than sixty (60) miles.
2. Approval of Relocation Expense Reimbursement: Approval of relocation expenses will be the responsibility of Department Head and the County Administrator. The actual relocation must take place within six (6) months after the date of hire. Extension of the six (6) month time limit may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the County Administrator up to a maximum of an additional six (6) months in the event of extraordinary circumstances or undue hardship. Reimbursable Expenses may include:
  - a. Up to three (3) days of meal, mileage, and lodging expenses while searching for a permanent residence for the employee and the employee's spouse.
  - b. Expenses associated with the preparation and transportation of household goods and personal effects, excluding luxury items.
  - c. Mileage, meal, and lodging expenses for the employee and the employee's immediate family during

the actual move to the new place of residence.

The employee must submit his or her request for reimbursement of the cost of the move to the County Administrator for evaluation. Only actual costs incurred will be reimbursed up to the established limit.

Once approved, a one-time payment will be included with the new employee's first regular county paycheck after submission of the paid receipts. In certain circumstances, a partial advancement may be paid out just prior to the move to help facilitate the move.

Details of the advancement will be worked out between the County Administrator and the employee.

**NOTE:** Under IRS regulations, some or all of relocation expense reimbursements may be considered taxable income.

3. **Minimum Employment Requirements:** An employee receiving relocation expenses must maintain employment with Price County for two (2) years following the actual move. If an employee does not remain employed with Price County for at least one (1) year, the individual must repay 100 percent of the total reimbursement expenses.

If the employee terminates their Price County employment between one and two years after the actual move, the expense will be forgiven on a prorated basis with 50 percent forgiven after 13 months, 75 percent forgiven after 18 months and 100 percent forgiven after 24 months. All or part of the repayment may be waived by the County Administrator under extraordinary circumstances.

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## 7. SOCIAL MEDIA

**POLICY: Social media is a powerful tool for communication, transparency, and community engagement. The primary function of Price County's social media accounts is to communicate relevant and timely news, information and events and urgent notifications of critical incidents that may affect community stakeholders including residents, business owners and visitors. Information distributed via social media must be accurate, consistent and timely and meet the information needs of the County's customers. Since social media is used for social networking, this policy seeks to ensure proper use of the County's social media sites by its representatives.**

**Price County strives to maintain a positive and informative social media presence. County representatives have the responsibility to use social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. Posting of any content on any social media platform managed by the County or any County agent constitutes acceptance of this policy.**

### This policy applies to:

- Official social media accounts created and managed on behalf of Price County.
- Administrators, agents, and elected officials who manage or contribute to these accounts.

### Definitions

- **Social Media:** Internet-based platforms that facilitate sharing of content, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, and others.
- **Official Account:** Any social media account authorized and maintained on behalf of Price County.
- **Administrator:** An individual designated to post, monitor, and manage content on official social media platforms.
- **Agents:** County employees, officials, volunteers, consultants, contractors or anyone who represents the county in an official capacity. May also be referred to as representatives.
- **Content:** Any written copy, photos, graphics, videos, live video streams, comments, or any form of communicative content exchanged between parties.

### Account Creation & Management

- All official accounts must be approved by the Office of Administration.
- Login credentials must be securely stored and shared only with authorized personnel.
- Each account must list contact information for the department and link back to the official government website.
- Inactive accounts (no activity for 6+ months) may be subject to review and deactivation.

### Content Guidelines

All posts must be:

- Accurate, timely, and relevant to the public.
- Respectful, non-partisan, and free of discriminatory language.
- Aligned with Price County's mission and values.
- Free of confidential, private, or legally protected information.

- Free of spelling or grammatical errors.

#### Prohibited Content Includes:

- Nonpublic information of any kind, including personnel, sensitive or confidential information.
- Political endorsements or campaign-related content.
- Obscene, profane, or threatening language.
- Commercial promotions or spam.
- Personal opinions that could be interpreted as official statements.

#### Comment Moderation:

- Comments on official platforms are considered public records.
- Moderation must follow viewpoint-neutral standards.
- The following may be hidden or removed (with documentation):
  - Hate speech, threats, or harassment
  - Personal attacks of any kind
  - Obscenity or pornography
  - False or misleading information
  - Spam or unrelated links to other sites
  - Off-topic comments
  - Comments that advocate illegal activity

A disclaimer must be posted on each platform explaining the comment policy. Postings that violate these standards are subject to removal and review.

#### Data Ownership

Price County retains ownership of:

- All social media communications or messages composed, sent or received in County equipment in an official capacity
- Sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while an employee or agent is representing the County in any capacity

The County maintains the right to monitor social media used by employees and agents on County equipment. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Any social media messages composed, sent, accessed or received on County equipment for personal use may be subject to public records laws. Even if a public record, employees and agents may not repeat, disseminate or share information learned in the course of their employment that they would otherwise have no reason to know. This applies to both County and personal social media communications.

#### Public Records & Retention

- Social media content is subject to public records laws.
- Each department must ensure proper archiving of posts, comments, and messages in compliance with applicable retention schedules.
- Use of third-party archiving tools may be required.

#### Security & Accessibility

- Two-factor authentication must be enabled on all accounts.
- Content should be accessible to users with disabilities (e.g., alt-text, captioned videos).
- Lost access or security breaches must be reported immediately to IT and Communications.

#### Enforcement

Violations of this policy may result in the removal of agency social media sites or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with HR policies. The Office of Administration retains the authority to remove pages. Elected officials may be subject to censure or other actions per local ordinances.

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## 8. COUNTY-ISSUED CELL PHONE

**POLICY: County-issued cell phones will be supplied to employees whose positions require connectivity to perform business activities more efficiently, to be available offsite and outside regular business hours, to improve productivity and to have access to information that is necessary to carry out responsibilities for approved employees of Price County.**

#### PROCEDURE:

1. A Department Head must submit a request for a County-issued cell phone to the Office of Administration if requesting to purchase or update any cell phone to assist with County business. New device requests must include the employee's name and justification for the device.

2. The Office of Administration shall review the request and grant or deny final approval of the County-issued cell phone.
3. If the request is approved for a County-issued cell phone by the Office of Administration, the Department Head and County Clerk will work together through the County's account representative to obtain the best plan design for the department.
4. Each cell phone invoice will be billed to the department with the Department Head being responsible for their account.

**Procedures and Restrictions:** The following procedures and restrictions shall apply to all County-issued cell phones and their use when conducting County business.

1. County-issued cell phones are to be used only for County business.
2. If personal use of the County device is required in an emergency situation, the employee will notify their Department Head as soon as possible.
3. Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions or policies, may result in cancellation of these privileges, as well as disciplinary action as specified in the employee handbook.
4. Any new equipment purchased to assist, upgrade, or add on to the cell phone must receive prior approval by the Office of Administration, i.e. boosters.
5. All employees are required to pull over to the side of the road to place calls or send texts. The vehicle needs to be pulled over to a safe area away from traffic and come to a complete stop. Employees are expected to follow all applicable traffic laws. If a cell phone is to be used in a vehicle while moving, it must be used as directed for hands-free operations.
6. Prior to separation from the County or transfer to another department, the employee shall return the County-issued cell phone and accessories to the Department Head.
7. Cell phone use is subject to review by the Office of Administration for the purpose of preventing misuse of the device.
8. Any individual or department who violates the above procedures may have their cell phone privileges terminated by the Office of Administration and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.