

Sauk County, Wisconsin
Corporation Counsel Annual Report

2016 Mission: Provide professional legal services to Sauk County government, including the Board of Supervisors, committees, departments, and connected boards and commissions, as well as providing legal representation of the public interest in statutorily and contractually defined areas.

Vision: Provide legal advice and guidance to County officials to assist them in making policy decisions, and provide the legal support to the organization to facilitate and carry out those decisions.

Departmental Program Summary: The work of the office is broken down into four separate program areas described below:

General Government Legal Services: The duties of the corporation counsel involve civil legal matters and include giving legal opinions to the board, its committees, and county departments, interpreting the powers and duties of the county board and officers, drafting and reviewing contracts, leases and other legal documents, representing the county in all manner of civil legal proceedings in state and federal court, defending or coordinating the defense of claims and suits, reviewing and drafting resolutions and ordinances, maintaining the county code of ordinances and prosecuting violations of the code, and serving as ethics advisor to county employees and elected officials. This program area also includes providing legal counsel to the University of Wisconsin Baraboo/Sauk County Campus Commission.

Department of Human Services (DHS): Legal support to the DHS includes representing the public interest in involuntarily mental commitments and the DHS as petitioner in guardianship and protective placement actions, children in need of protection and services cases (CHIPS) and termination of parental rights (TPR) cases.

Labor-management Relations: The office represents the county in all labor/management relations matters to include negotiations, arbitrations and other proceedings before the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, equal employment matters, and litigation resulting from labor relations issues.

Child Support Enforcement: The office provides legal services to the Child Support Agency including enforcement of child support obligations through judicial action, establishment of paternity, and related collection matters.

2016 Goals Review:

2016 GOALS REVIEW

OBJECTIVE	WAS THIS OBJECTIVE REACHED IN 2016?
	Yes or No (If no, please provide comment)
Refine the use of West Concourse and implement new office procedures consistent with upgraded technology and paperless filing requirements.	Yes
Support economic development activity through proactive legal support to the County.	Yes
Respond to the challenges posed by the trust land applications of the Ho-Chunk Nation.	Yes
Support the County's efforts to protect the health and safety of Sauk County.	Yes

Changes / Accomplishments: The legal services provided to the County in 2016 were reflective of the myriad diversity of county operations, but the year was far from routine. The office accomplished the daily and critical work of protecting the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, abused and neglected children, and enforcing child support. The office contributed to, or was centrally involved in every major project the county pursued. These projects will continue to contribute to the quality of life for Sauk County residents and visitors for years to come.

Beginning with the identified objectives, the office continued to refine the use of new technology while recognizing the limitations of technical solutions. Research and file sharing is easier, but care must be taken to ensure that technological solutions do not create more work. The office is on the cutting edge of technology for corporation counsel offices statewide. In addition, now that the systems have been in place for more than a year, we are implementing procedures that make the systems leaner and more agile.

A major project for 2017 was the reestablishment of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. This office worked closely with the Department of Human Services, the Register in Probate and HOPE House to reestablish this program. The office also did training for the new CASA volunteers and will work closely with them as the program evolves.

The office was critically involved in major projects that will have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment in Sauk County and contribute to the economic development efforts of Sauk County communities. The Great Sauk State Trail moved dramatically forward with the extensive legal work spearheaded by this office. This included coordinating with all the diverse parties to arrive at agreements for all manner of work including the innovative use of County resources to complete portions of the trail work and the establishment of the Friends of the Great Sauk State Trail, a non-profit friends group, to engage in fundraising.

Parks projects were in focus with emergency repairs to the Redstone Dam spillway and engineering services for that dam. This office was critically involved with that process to ensure the safety of Sauk County residents and to ensure that this vital resource endures. The office also provided critical assistance to all aspects of planning, solicitation and award of contract pertaining to the new park building at White Mound Park. There is every indication that this building will be an impressive addition to the Sauk County Park System.

The office worked closely with staff from the Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department, Committee and the County Board on the rewrite and adoption of several major ordinances including Shoreland Zoning, Floodplain Zoning, Manure Management, and updates and improvements based on lessons learned to the General Zoning ordinance. Conservation, Planning & Zoning and the Corporation Counsel received positive feedback from other jurisdictions who are working to use Sauk County's general zoning ordinance as a model.

The year saw the office critically involved in responding to external changes affecting the health and welfare of the county. The long standing and productive South Central Environmental Health Consortium dissolved due to changes in state policies and the Sauk County Health Department moved to become full agents for the State of Wisconsin. This office did all legal work dissolving the three-county Consortium and worked with the Health Department to conduct a comprehensively rewrite the ordinances pertaining to health matters in the County. The office reviewed the contractual relationship with the State of Wisconsin to become full agents of the State for health programs and responded to the legal needs of the Health Department in making these changes.

The year was one of internal and external challenges. Internally, three key office positions turned over during the course of the year with half the attorney staff leaving for career advancement. This resulted in limitations on attorney time, as well as significant periods of recruitment, training and staff development. Actions were triaged and all critical cases were zealously pursued and completed. No backlog of cases developed, nor was outside counsel retained saving the county taxpayers. The cases handled remained roughly the same as the previous year. Despite the challenges, the office ended the year with new attorneys trained and in place, office procedures refined, and the office in a tremendously solid position to move forward in 2017.

Externally, there were challenges that impacted the office. The recruitment, hiring and ultimate departure of the Administrative Coordinator was extremely time consuming. The lack of a Conservation, Planning & Zoning Director for much of the year increased the amount of time needed to support that department. However, as the year ended, the County was taking the necessary steps to resolve these issues, and 2017 should be an extremely positive year for the office.

Statistical Summary:**OUTPUT MEASURES**

DESCRIPTION	2014 ACTUAL	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL
Guardianship/Protective Placement Hearings & WATTs Reviews	180	178	165
Mental Commitment Hearings	108	108	135

OUTCOME AND EFFICIENCY MEASURES

DESCRIPTION	2014 ACTUAL	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL
Legal Opinions Rendered (90% of actions completed or status report given within two weeks)	418 – 98% of goals met	387 – 97% of goals met	363 – 98% goals met
TPR/CHIPS Hearings & Filings (100% of actions followed through to completion)	217 – 100% of goals met	226 – 100% of goals met	162 – 100% goals met
Mental Commitments (100% of actions followed through to completion)	108 – 100% of goals met	119 – 100% of goals met	135-100% goals met