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TO: Honorable County Commissioners
FROM: Goodhue County Human Resources
DATE: September 24th, 2024
RE: Land Use Management Organizational Structure Final Report

In May 2024, Lisa Hanni, the Goodhue County Land Use Management Director, retired. As part of her succession plan, Hanni provided insight and recommendations as to how the Land Use Management department should be structured based on her experiences and anticipated future needs of Goodhue County. Her reports and recommendations were given during the [April 16th, 2024 County Board Meeting](#) and during the [May 21st, 2025 County Board meeting](#). Following Ms. Hanni's recommendation, the County Board requested that the Human Resources department conduct a study to determine if the recommendations were the appropriate way forward or if there may be additional viable options. It is in this final report that we provide said findings and establish a timeline of events that lead to the current state.

Currently the Deputy County Surveyor and Planning Zoning Administrator (for which the current Planning Zone Administrator will be leaving as of November 7th, 2024) are acting as co-directors leading the segmentations of the department. These employees took on these additional leadership responsibilities, in addition to performing their all normal work responsibilities. This represents a significant workload increase and impacts timelines of various projects due to the need for approvals.

A Survey was conducted to determine how other counties structure their Land Use Management Departments and with 41 counties responding, there was a wide variety of different structures provided. These were the key takeaways.

- Organizational structures vary greatly
- Internal talent and market constraints influence the structure
- There is no right or wrong way to structure
- This may not be the time to implement a Deputy County Administrator model; staff recommends a separate study to assess this structure.

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Based on the research done and feedback provided there are several different options that would be viable. Below are these options with data and cost associated with them.

Maintain Status Quo and backfill Land Use Management Director position. One department head overseeing Building, Environmental Health, GIS, Planning & Zoning, Recorder & Survey functions.



Cost (Estimated):

CURRENT

	2024 Budget <i>Gross Pay + Benefits</i>
LUM Director <i>(Survey, GIS, Recorder, Planning & Zoning, Building, Environmental Health)</i>	\$215,255.30

\$215,255.30

*After preliminary DDA review Salary is based on the previous job description, and removing the Acting County Administrator duties will likely cause a lowering of the overall evaluation.

Considerations:

- Maintains headcount
- Maintains direct reports to County Administrator
- Anticipated difficulty finding a qualified candidate if the position is required to be a licensed Surveyor
- Potential cost savings; position would need re-evaluation if Acting County Administrator job duties are eliminated.

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- Streamlined structure
- Collaboration and integration

Based on employee and stakeholder feedback, there was general support for a 2-department head structure as recommended by Ms. Hanni. This structure and estimated costs are below.

Option 1: Two Department Head Structure. The County Surveyor position would be classified as a department head overseeing GIS, Recorder & Survey functions. The Land Use Management Director would oversee Building, Environmental Health, and Planning & Zoning functions.



Option 1 Closer Look:

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Estimated Cost:

PROPOSED (Option 1)

	2025 Budget <i>Gross Pay + Benefits</i>
County Surveyor <i>(Survey, GIS, Recorder)</i>	\$153,586.08
LUM Director <i>(Planning & Zoning, Building, Environmental Health)</i>	\$153,586.08

Adds 1.0 FTE to organization

\$307,172.16

This option seemed to have the most consensus from the board during the Committee of the Whole on September 3rd, 2025.

Option 1 Considerations:

- Strengthens subject matter expertise
- Enhanced experience for the public (customer service)
- Adds 1.0 FTE to overall employee headcount
- Adds 1 direct report to County Administrator
- As written, County Surveyor requires licensure

Option 1b:

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In light of the upcoming departure of one of the interim Co-Directors, it has been recommended to consolidate the roles of Planning and Zoning Administrator with the LUM Director position. Additionally, it is proposed to hire a Zoning Assistant in place of the Planning and Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Assistant will support the future LUM Director.

- The backfill position will be adjusted from Grade 115 to Grade 109.
- This change will enhance the support provided for planning and zoning operations.
- It is expected to improve the department's service delivery to taxpayers.

Through previous meetings linked above, the below options, i.e. options 2-4, require significant organizational change that would require additional study and time to complete and have been spoken to in regards to the potential issues that may arise if these changes were made. There was not Board Consensus on any of these options.

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Option 2:



Considerations:

- Maintains headcount
- Maintains direct reports to County Administrator
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Surveyor
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Recorder

Cost:

- LUM Director (Grade 117)
- Cost of appointing a County Surveyor is TBD
- Cost of appointing a County Recorder is TBD

Option 3:



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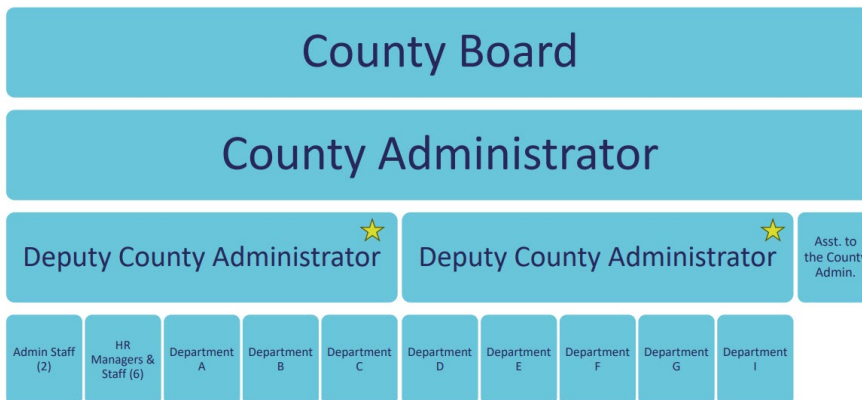
Considerations:

- Maintains headcount
- Maintains direct reports to County Administrator
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Surveyor
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Recorder

Cost:

- LUM Director (Grade 117)
- Cost of appointing a County Surveyor is TBD
- Cost of appointing a County Recorder is TBD

Option 4: Deputy County Administrator Model



Financials:

CURRENT		OPTION 5	
	2024 Budget Gross Pay + Benefits		Estimated Annual Gross Pay + Benefits
LUM Director <i>(Survey, GIS, Recorder, Planning & Zoning, Building, Environmental Health)</i>	\$215,255.30	Deputy County Administrator	\$210,000
		Deputy County Administrator	\$210,000
	\$215,255.30	<i>Adds 1.0 FTE to organization</i>	\$420,000

*These are estimates

Considerations:

- Adds 1.0 FTE to headcount
 - Eliminates 2 department head positions (grade 117)

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- Adds 2 Deputy County Administrator positions (estimated at grade 122 or higher)
- Significantly reduces number of direct reports to County Administrator
- Considerable change to organizational structure
 - More research needed on various models and structure
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Surveyor
- Board would need to appoint/designate a County Recorder

This process is best explored outside of this current process and by an independent agency.

Overall Cost:

TBD

All the information above was shared with the board via presentation by Goodhue County Human Resources during the September 3rd, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting. This presentation can be found on the [Committee of the Whole Agenda for September 3rd, 2024](#). During this time, while there was general consensus around the selection of Option 1. The follow-up conversation included several questions that required follow up. Those questions are restated below with the answers that were required to move forward.

Question 1: Could the proposed positions (Land Use Management Director and/or County Surveyor) be structured as managers rather than department heads in an effort to reduce salary expense?

Answer: Yes you can but if the purpose is to save money that won't be accomplished. Changing the position titles would not reduce the pay grade or overall compensation, as the responsibilities and duties would remain the same. This has been confirmed with our compensation consultant, Dr. Tessia Melvin of David Drown Associates (DDA).

Question 2: Could we default to the original structure with one department head?

Answer: Yes, the overall cost and considerations are outlined above under "Status Quo".

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With the information provided above and the questions answered we ask that we move forward with the Board's preference on options to begin the organizational changes that will be needed in order to effectively lead the Land Use Management Department.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to any feedback or further discussion.

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