



JOINT PRESS RELEASE PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING REGARDING PROPERTY EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MARCH 1, 2019

- Portage County and the City of Stevens Point are exploring a tentative property exchange agreement to address current and future facility needs.
- The collaborative options would save taxpayer dollars compared to the entities working independently.
- Although talks between the County and City are in their early stages, public input is being sought through a public session on March 28th, 2019 at 7pm at the Portage County Annex building in Conference Rooms 1 & 2.

Portage County and the City of Stevens Point are jointly exploring options for a tentative agreement on an in-kind property exchange to help resolve long-standing facility and development related issues. One of the options that the parties are exploring would involve the County transferring ownership of the County Annex Building (1462 Strongs Avenue) and the Portage County Law Enforcement Center (1500 Strongs Avenue) to the City, in exchange for the City transferring to the County the ownership of the County Public Library Main Branch Building (1001 Main Street) and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (1519 Water Street), along with approximately 20-25 acres of land located in East Park Commerce Center, east of County Highway R and north of County Highway HH.

Under the collaborative property exchange agreement, the County would then have adequate land to explore the opportunity to relocate their facilities to the east side of the city, in a location that should improve response times and provide easier accessibility for a majority of county residents. The City would then be able to establish City Hall in the current County Annex Building, thereby improving efficiencies and eliminating the need to construct a new building for City Hall.

Both the County and City stress that these conversations are still in their conceptual stages. Final decisions depend on other factors to be discussed during upcoming exploratory talks between the two parties. Currently, there are no final decisions, and both the County Board and City Council will evaluate all details of any such agreement. Nevertheless, the County and City still view these talks as being critical and timely, given both parties are in the process of creating a long-term strategic plan.

Portage County's Executive Chris Holman said: *"By working together, the County and the City can simplify ownership and leasehold interests in several properties. More importantly, the County and City can potentially save millions of dollars by working through a collaborative agreement rather than working independently. This is about long-term strategic planning for the County and the City, but it's also about trying to find the best outcomes for citizens and taxpayers."*

"This opportunity allows the City and County to work together in order to solve current and future facility concerns for both entities, as well as furthering economic development opportunities within the Downtown," said City of Stevens Point's Mayor Mike Wiza

Portage County, in partnership with their Owner's Representative ICS Consulting, Inc. and design partners BWBR/Dewberry, hosted two (2) open house events in 2018 to provide education and gather citizen feedback regarding the design and construction of a new County government facility. The open houses informed and included all citizens/residents and other interested parties throughout the building project. Any questions or comments should be directed to:

Portage County

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