RESOLUTION SUPPORTING WISCONSIN SENATE BILL 916 RELATED TO REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

COVER MEMO

TO: County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Ken Witt, County Administrator
DATE: March 12, 2024

AGENDA ITEM: Resolution Supporting Wisconsin Senate Bill 916 Related to Refugee Resettlement

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On March 5, 2024, the County Board voted to have a resolution drafted supporting the adoption of Senate Bill 916.
WHEREAS, the Refugee Act of 1980, located at Title VI, Chapter 2 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, created The Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees; and

WHEREAS, the Refugee Act of 1980 states in 8 U.S.C. § 1522(a)(1)(B)(iii) that, “local voluntary agency activities should be conducted in close cooperation and advance consultation with State and local governments;” and

WHEREAS, the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors are concerned with the lack of transparency and communication by voluntary agencies, specifically World Relief of Chippewa Valley, regarding anticipated resettlement of refugees within a 100-mile radius of the City of Eau Claire; and

WHEREAS, in January 2024, Wisconsin Senate Bill 916 (SB916) and Assembly Bill 1004 (AB1004) were introduced requiring local governments to designate an individual for consultation, and for other purposes relating to proper notice for local government entities related to the federal program regarding refugee resettlement and assistance; and

WHEREAS, if passed, a statute would be created requiring an employee or officer of a local government unit, including a city, village, town, county, or school district, to report to the chief elected official (i.e. County Board Chair) if the employee or officer is contacted by the federal government or a private nonprofit voluntary agency regarding proposed placements of refugees in the local governmental unit; and

WHEREAS, the proposed statute further requires that the chief elected official notify each local governmental unit within a 100-mile radius about the potential refugee resettlement and the local governing body must schedule an open meeting to discuss the potential refugee resettlement and designate a representative from the local governmental unit to consult with the federal government and private nonprofit voluntary agency; and

WHEREAS, SB916 was passed by both the Senate and the Assembly in mid-February 2024, and is pending before Governor Tony Evers.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the adoption of SB916 to ensure that counties are provided with notice and consultation related to refugee resettlement.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors directs the County Clerk to send copies of this resolution to Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Counties Association.
**Legal – Fiscal – Administrative Approvals:**

**Legal Note:**

**Fiscal Impact:** Advisory resolution has no fiscal impact.

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**Vote Confirmation.**

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**St. Croix County Board of Supervisors Action:**

Roll Call - Vote Requirement – Majority of Supervisors Present

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<th>RESULT:</th>
<th>ADOPTED [13 TO 6]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOVER:</td>
<td>Mike Barcalow, Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECONDER:</td>
<td>Mark Carlson, Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>AYES:</td>
<td>Lind, Anderson, Long, Adams, Berning, Ottino, Feidler, Ostness, Counter, Sherley, Carlson, Barcalow, VanSomeren</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAYS:</td>
<td>Leaf, Koch, Hansen, Tellijohn, Swanepoel, Ramberg</td>
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This Resolution was Adopted by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors on March 12, 2024

Christine Hines, County Clerk