

Resolution No. 15 (2024) RESOLUTION REQUESTING AN IMMEDIATE PAUSE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN ST. CROIX COUNTY

COVER MEMO

TO: County Board of Supervisors

- **FROM:** Ken Witt, County Administrator
- **DATE:** March 12, 2024
- AGENDA ITEM: Resolution Requesting an Immediate Pause on Refugee Resettlement in St. Croix County

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On March 5, 2024, the County Board voted to have a resolution drafted to address an immediate pause on refugee resettlement in St. Croix County



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1 2 3 4	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		
5 6 7 8	WHEREAS , within the United States, the U.S. Department of State operates the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which assists refugees with access to various services in coordination with the states; and		
9 10 11 12	WHEREAS, within Wisconsin, the Bureau of Refugee Programs (BRP) receives grants from the ORR and funds local statewide organizations to provide critical services to refugees; and		
13 14 15 16	WHEREAS , voluntary agencies, referred to as VOLAGs, in Wisconsin that contract with state and/or federal governments to assist refugees with resettlement include World Relief Wisconsin with locations in the Fox Valley and the Chippewa Valley; and		
17 18 19 20	WHEREAS, the nearest voluntary agency to St. Croix County, Wisconsin is World Relief Chippewa Valley with an office located at 221 W. Madison Street in Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and		
21 22 23	WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of State requires that refugees be resettled within 100 miles of a voluntary agency's physical office location; and		
24 25 26	WHEREAS, St. Croix County is located within 100 miles of World Relief Chippewa Valley; and		
27 28 29	WHEREAS , approximately 75 refugees are planned to be resettled in the Chippewa Valley by September 30, 2024; and		
30 31 32 33 34	WHEREAS, the resettlement of refugees in the United States requires significant financial resources to ensure their successful integration into society, including but not limited to, housing, healthcare, education, employment assistance, language training, and social services; and		
35 36 37 38	WHEREAS, the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors are concerned about refugees being resettled within St. Croix County without the necessary long-term funding sources to sustain their integration without reliance upon the taxpayers of the county; and		
39 40	WHEREAS , St. Croix County is already stretched to its levy capacity without the ability to adequately fund state-mandated programs; and		
41 42 43 44	WHEREAS, the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors are disappointed by the lack of transparency and communication by World Relief Chippewa Valley regarding the anticipated resettlement of refugees within 100 miles of St. Croix County; and		

- WHEREAS, as refugees may be resettled within 100 miles of World Relief Chippewa
 Valley, collaboration and consultation with local government units within 100 miles of that
 location is imperative in order to inform the public of the resettlement of refugees, and for
 necessary studies to be conducted to ascertain the impact on the local communities.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the St. Croix County Board of
 Supervisors that there be an immediate pause on the placement of any refugees within St. Croix
 County.
- FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors will
 review this resolution at the May 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting

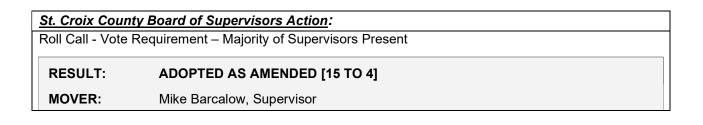
FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors that, prior to the resettlement of refugees within St. Croix County, that all federal, state, local, or voluntary agencies involved with resettlement engage in collaboration and consultation with local government units within the county to inform the public of the resettlement, that adequate time be allocated to conduct studies necessary to ascertain the impact on local communities, and that the county be provided with a detailed description of the short and long-term funding resources available to the refugees.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors directs
 the County Clerk to send copies of this resolution to World Relief Chippewa Valley, the Bureau
 of Refugee Programs, U.S. Department of State, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Legal – Fiscal – Administrative Approvals:				
Legal Note:				
Fiscal Impact: Advisory resolution has no fise	cal impact.			
Heather M. Amos, Corporation Counsel 3/8/2024	in Hawkins, Finance Director 3/7/2024			
Ken Witt County Administrator 3/8/2024				

Vote Confirmation.

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SECONDER:	Mark Carlson, Supervisor		
AYES:	Lind, Anderson, Long, Adams, Berning, Ottino, Feidler, Ostness, Counter, Hansen, Sherley, Carlson, Barcalow, VanSomeren, Ramberg		
NAYS:	Cathy Leaf, Carah Koch, Greg Tellijohn, Bob Swanepoel		
This Resolution was Adopted as Amended by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors on March 12, 2024 Christine Hines, County Clerk			