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**LaCrosse County District Attorney Closes Eau Claire County
Department of Human Services Investigation with No Criminal Charges**

March 31, 2023

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EAU CLAIRE, WI – On May 29, 2020, the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office (hereinafter "ECCSO") commenced an investigation of the County's Department of Human Services (hereinafter "DHS"), at the request of two County Board supervisors. The supervisors' concerns arose out of a shortfall of \$3.3 million in the 2019 budget of DHS. From the outset, County Administration has been transparent in its opinion that the shortfall arose due to the ongoing need of DHS to provide services to the community versus available funding, and is the result of revenue and expense estimates for the 2019 budget that did not develop in the budget, as expected. After a thorough investigation by the ECCSO and a forensic audit conducted by WIPFLI, the LaCrosse County District Attorney, to whom the matter had been referred due to a perceived conflict of interest, declined to issue any criminal charges in this matter.

In October of 2021, the ECCSO executed various search warrants to gather information it felt was necessary for it to complete its investigation. The search warrants in this matter, which were previously sealed, were unsealed this morning. In accordance with County policy and best practices, and due to the fact that Eau Claire County Administration has not been privy to information in the affidavits utilized to obtain the search warrants while the criminal investigation was ongoing, it has been unable to address or respond to the allegations contained therein.

To the extent possible, Eau Claire County has implemented various remedial measures to address the policy and financial issues that came to light prior to the start of the ECCSO investigation and continuing as issues were brought to its attention by the ECCSO and County Board members. The County has continued to cooperate with the ECCSO's criminal investigation and is pleased that the La Crosse County District Attorney's Office has closed their review and will not be issuing any criminal charges.

The law firm of von Briesen & Roper, s.c. will continue to work with the County to address any identified personnel or policy issues now that the Sheriff Department's investigation is complete. "We are a learning organization," said County Administrator Kathryn Schauf. "We are stronger today because of what we have learned and applied to deliver better operations to County residents." If any individual has a concern about the policies or operations of the Department of Human Services (or any other County department), do not hesitate to contact Kathryn Schauf at the contact information listed above, or via the confidential Lighthouse ethics and compliance hotline on the County's website: (www.lighthouse-services.com/eauclairecounty).

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