

## Wayd new county medical examiner

By Amy Smith, Union staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, December 10, 2014 9:34 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday endorsed Nichol Wayd as the county's first medical examiner.

Meeting for its monthly session, the board authorized Wayd's appointment by County Administrator Ben Wehmeier.

Wayd will succeed longtime Coroner Patrick Theder, who announced in March that he would not seek re-election.

Theder first was appointed Jefferson County coroner in 1997 by then-Gov. Tommy Thompson, filling the post left by Scott Galston. He since has been re-elected to the office six times.

Prior to serving as coroner, Theder retired as the captain of the Watertown Fire Department.

It was Theder's recommendation that the elected Jefferson County coroner position, which traditionally would have been up for election this fall, be replaced with an appointed medical examiner.

Under state law, each county must employ either a coroner or a medical examiner to handle death investigations. The only difference between the two positions is that a coroner is an elected position, open to any resident over the age of 18, while a medical examiner is appointed. That leaves the county free to set qualifications such as required medical experience.

Wehmeier said during an earlier discussion that Theder had been pushing for the change in order to protect the quality of the position, as there would be no assurance that the next elected coroner has any medical experience without the county being able to place requirements on the job description.

Medical examiners commonly are medical professionals such as doctors or nurses, and frequently carry a certification from the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

Wayd currently is the deputy medical examiner in Waukesha County. She also had worked in the Rock County Coroner's Office and the medical examiner's office in Roanoke, Va.

The newly appointed medical examiner holds a bachelor of science in investigative forensics from the University of Maryland and an associate of science in crime scene technology. She is a registered diplomat with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigator and a member of the Wisconsin's Coroner and Medical Examiner's Association and the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners.

Wayd has had additional training in outdoor recovery, forensics specialties in medicolegal investigation, and



Nichol Wayd

medicolegal death investigation.

“Wayd has shown the expertise to fill this spot,” Wehmeier noted Tuesday.

Wayd is expected to start her duties upon the expiration of Theder’s term, on Jan. 5.

Her annual salary will be \$48,578.

Also, Tuesday, the board discussed at length an ordinance that would allow public comment at all county committee, board or commission meeting.

Currently, there is no policy that requires committee, board or commission chairs to allow public comment.

The presented ordinance reads, “All agendas of county committees, board, commissions and other bodies shall include the following language: ‘Members of the public who wish to address the committee, board, commission, or other body on specific agenda items must register their request at this time.’”

The ordinance was amended by Supervisor Walt Christensen to include “shall keep comments pertinent to the work of the committee,” rather than the original language that stated, “specific agenda items,” to allow members of the public to address certain committees on concerns that might not be present on the agenda. Christensen also noted that the previous language might deter the public from attending meetings.

“If anything, we don’t get enough public comment,” he added.

The amended language, however, raised concerns from members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, who noted that a public hearing is required for each issue on which the committee takes action, and once the item has had a sufficient public hearing, it is no longer up for discussion.

After unanimous approval of the amended ordinance by the entire board, Supervisor Steve Nass made a motion to send the ordinance back to the Rules and Administration Committee to rework the wording in order to make an exception for the Planning & Zoning Committee. The motion was approved.

In other business, the board authorized a contract of \$169,300 with SCS engineers to perform environmental services related to performing brownfield assessments.

Jefferson County was awarded a \$200,000 brownfields assessment grant by the Environmental Protection Agency to be used for environmental investigations and remedial planning activities for hazardous substances sites.

Wehmeier added that the services performed by the engineering firm will be fully funded by the EPA grant, which does not require the county to take any action following the brownfield assessments. The county was one of five counties throughout Wisconsin to receive the grant.

“The goal is to look at areas throughout the county that could provide potential redevelopment,” Wehmeier added.