

January 25, 2011
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 25, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at the Cottonwood County Family Service Agency in Windom, MN. Presiding over the meeting was Chairman Ron Kuecker. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Jim Schmidt, Tom White; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Nick Anderson; Jason Purrington, Gale Bondhus, Ron Gregg, Steve Nasby, Mike Schwalbach, Travis Hodkin, Ken Moser and Craig Myers.

Motion by White, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2011 meeting.

* * * *

Sheriff Jason Purrington met with the board to discuss several different items. Purrington informed the board that pursuant to Minnesota State Statute 3.088 he would be taking a leave of absence from his previous position as sheriff's deputy in the Sheriff's Office. Motion by White, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to accept Purrington's letter for an extension of a leave of absence from his previous position as a sheriff's deputy in the Sheriff's Office.

Purrington reported that he received a 2010 IEC grant in the amount of \$2,110.33 with a local match of \$527.59 (for a total of \$2,637.92) for equipment. A state quote in the amount of \$2,684.98 was received from Alpha Wireless for a portable radio. Purrington reported that he also received a 2009 HSGP grant in the amount of \$4,720.54 with no local match. A state quote in the amount of \$4,706.52 was received from Alpha Wireless for a portable radio and remote speaker microphone. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to accept both state quotes (\$2,684.98 and \$4,706.52) from Alpha Wireless.

Purrington presented two informational sheets from Schwalbach's Hardware and Elite Mechanical Systems regarding the air conditioning units at the Law Enforcement Center. Motion by White, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to authorize Purrington to advertise and obtain quotes for the replacement of two air conditioning units (one 20-ton and one 15-ton unit) for the Law Enforcement Center.

Discussion was held regarding needed repair of the roof at the Law Enforcement Center. Purrington will contact Laraway Roofing for some options/ideas since they are the company that put on the original roof.

Purrington reported that the county received an additional squad car camera grant through the state. He was supposed to have the contract information last week but will not receive it until sometime this week. The cost of the camera is \$100.00. Motion by Schmidt, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to accept the grant and to allow the Auditor/Treasurer's Office to write a check for

\$100 to the Sheriff's Association and to allow the Chairman to sign the paperwork when it comes this week.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not the board would like to continue discussions in regards to a new phone system for the county. The consensus of the board is to pursue looking for a consultant that can come in and look at the county's phone system and give recommendations for a new system. Kelly Thongvivong will work together with Steve Nasby from the City of Windom and Dan Olsen from Windomnet in regards to this matter.

* * * *

County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board to discuss a few different items relating to the remodeling of the Assessor's Office. Bondhus asked for approval of the following: #1) Dave Borsgard to paint heat registers at a cost of \$500, #2) to hire Schwalbach Hardware to re-tape 18 water valves from 6 air conditioning units and #3 Option 1) to purchase new ceiling tile in the Assessor's main office and connecting hallway to former breakroom from Lampert's at a cost of \$3,837.89. Motion by White, second by Kuecker to approve all three requests. Voting as follows: Aye – White, Kuecker, Schmidt and Holmen. Nay – Oeltjenbruns. Motion carried.

Brief discussion was also held regarding cleaning of the courthouse after the remodeling project is completed. Sentence to Serve will be contacted to see if they might be able to assist with some cleaning duties.

* * * *

County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few items. Gregg gave an update to the board in regards to the filling of the position of Solid Waste worker. Gregg reported that the in-house applicant turned down the position. Gregg and Chairman Kuecker are hoping to conduct interviews for the position sometime this week.

Gregg wanted to discuss the employees' response to advertising for the part-time snow plow operator position.

Gregg was given a copy of the recent changes that were made to the highway department union contracts.

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow Gregg to attend the National Association of County Engineers Conference which will be held April 17-21, 2011 in Minneapolis at a cost of \$500. Gregg will not need lodging during this time.

Gregg presented information in regards to the rental of snow removal equipment. Gregg is not going to pursue the rental of equipment at this time but will keep the list for future reference if ever needed.

At this time, there was a motion by Holmen, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 2:41 p.m. to discuss Ron Gregg's performance evaluation with the board.

Motion by Holmen, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to open the meeting at 3:04 p.m. During the closed session, the board discussed Ron

Gregg's Department Head review as he did not have an opportunity to be in attendance at the previous closed session.

* * * *

Discussion was held regarding a draft copy of a job description that was presented by Chairman Kuecker for the position of Planning & Zoning Administrator/County Parks Director. The commissioners were instructed to get any further suggestions to Kelly.

* * * *

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to authorize payment of 2011 dues in the amount of \$2,500 to Rural Minnesota Energy Board.

* * * *

It was reported that the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership appointment is done by the SRDC and not the county.

* * * *

It was reported that the appointment to the SW MN EMS Board needs to be done in the form of a recommendation by the County Board to the SW MN EMS Board. Some further research will be done in regards to this matter.

* * * *

Chairman Kuecker appointed Commissioner Schmidt as an alternate to the RSVP committee.

* * * *

Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve 2011 Pay Equity Report as submitted and to authorize Chairman Kuecker to sign.

* * * *

Motion by Holmen, second by White, unanimous vote to approve Kim Armstrong's appointment as a representative of District 2 on the Extension Committee.

* * * *

Motion by White, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve AFSCME union contracts (Highway Department, Solid Waste and Family Services) as presented.

* * * *

Brief discussion was held regarding approval of Minnesota Clean Water Partnership Project Implementation Loan Agreement. Because further information needs to be obtained, this item will be discussed at a later time.

* * * *

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to approve 2011 RC & D dues in the amount of \$300.

* * * *

An appropriation request by Southwest Initiative Foundation for 2011 in the amount of \$3,650 was received. No action was taken at this time.

Commissioner Oeltjenbruns gave an update regarding a few meetings he recently attended. He reported that RC & D currently has approximately \$12,000 in grant money available for conservation oriented projects and another \$5,000 in mini-grants (\$750 each) available for projects of almost any kind.

Oeltjenbruns gave an update regarding a recent Solid Waste meeting he attended as well. Much of the discussion was related to recycling in each county.

* * * *

Brief discussion was held regarding whether or not a 2% increase was paid to AFSCME union employees with their first paycheck before union contracts were approved. Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson stated that there is a lot of work involved with retro-pay and he wanted to avoid it if at all possible so he authorized payroll personnel to go ahead with pay increases before union contracts were approved. It was suggested that in future negotiations, unions should be informed that if contracts are not signed by the first payroll of the year, no retro-pay will be granted.

* * * *

Update was given in regards to Greg Johnson's unemployment compensation. It was reported that he is currently collecting unemployment benefits.

* * * *

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow Leslie Makovsky to attend Land Use meeting on March 10th in Mankato at a cost of \$45.00.

* * * *

Brief discussion was held regarding Day at the Capitol and whether or not anyone is interested in attending along with Murray County. Some of the commissioners may be interested in attending depending on the day that is scheduled.

* * * *

Chairman Kuecker informed the board about a letter that he received from Brown-Nicollet CHS in regards to a compliance problem at one of the local motels. It seems that the situation is being taken care of at this time.

* * * *

Commissioner White reported that the Food, Beverage and Lodging Task Force no longer exists so this will be removed from the committee assignment listing.

* * * *

Discussion was held regarding the request by Mt. Power Hydraulics for a tax abatement. Commissioners White and Oeltjenbruns gave a report regarding the tour that they recently took of Mt. Power Hydraulics with Paul Kirchner. They also presented information for the proposed resolution for a tax abatement.

* * * *

Brief discussion was held regarding exempt/non-exempt status. Commissioner Holmen put together some information for the board to look at.

Holmen stated that the FLSA status is based upon the job descriptions that were developed by Wayne Brede. Holmen reported that he did some research on FLSA if anyone is interested in looking at the information he was able to find. There were a few opinions voiced in regards to the consequences of a change to the current FLSA status as well as the impact that a change might have on office operations.

* * * *

Commissioner Schmidt reported that he would not be in attendance at the next board meeting due to a prior commitment.

* * * *

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Ron Kuecker, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant