

November 2, 2010
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, November 2, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Presiding over the meeting was Chairman Tom White. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Tom White, Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Doug Storey; Gale Bondhus, Rob Anderson, Paul Kirchner, Mary Ellen Suhrhoff and Ree Tschetter.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2010 meeting as amended.

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Mt. Lake Community Development Director Rob Anderson and Mt. Power Hydraulics President Paul Kirchner met with the board for the purpose of conducting a public hearing for consideration of approval of property tax abatements for Mountain Power Hydraulics, Inc. There were no members of the general public present for this hearing. After much discussion, the board decided to wait to hear the results from the state regarding the request of a waiver for repayment of JOBZ benefits by Mountain Power Hydraulics before proceeding with the proposed tax abatement.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board regarding a remodeling project of the Assessor's Office and current Courthouse break room. The board agreed to keep moving forward with allowing Bondhus to move ahead with the remodeling project since the water issues seem to have been addressed at this time. Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Bondhus to advertise for bids based on Bergen, Inc. specification sheet dated July 27, 2010 to include A – Option 1 as well as B, C, D, E & F. This will also be posted on the county website.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to recess as the County Board and to convene as the Ditch Authority for further discussion regarding consolidated JD #2 proposed improvements.

Commissioner Holmen reported that he visited with Brian Kipfer in regards to the matter and Brian would like to pursue handling this matter through the Ditch Authority.

Motion by Holmen, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to accept preliminary engineer's report by Gerald Engstrom, order final engineer's report by Gerald Engstrom and appoint Jim Weidemann, Duane Bendixon and Bill Modestad as viewers for the JD #2 improvement.

Commissioner Holmen gave an update regarding a plugged outlet on the east shore of Bingham Lake. Holmen reported that Jerry Hayes is handling this matter. He also reported that he has received a few phone calls from people in Germantown Township in regards to bringing land into a watershed that is not currently in the watershed.

Commissioner Sorenson reported that he had a request by a landowner to clean an open ditch system out.

Commissioner Kuecker suggested that the county look into the possibility of routinely having someone check some of the ditches for plugging problems. Contact will be made with Jackson County to find out how they currently fund their ditch position.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to adjourn as the Ditch Authority and to re-convene as the County Board.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to accept Mike Hanson's letter of retirement with appropriate payout of benefits per county personnel policy effective November 1, 2010.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns to accept Marlene Smith's letter of retirement with appropriate payout of benefits per county personnel policy effective November 1, 2010. Motion by Kuecker, second by White to amend the original motion to state "to accept Marlene Smith's letter of resignation (instead of retirement) with appropriate payout of benefits per county personnel policy effective November 1, 2010. Voting as follows: Aye – Kuecker and White. Nay – Holmen, Oeltjenbruns and Sorenson. Motion failed. Voting on the original motion was as follows: Aye – Kuecker, Holmen, Oeltjenbruns, Sorenson and White. Motion carried.

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Discussion was held regarding the Parks Department and some of the things that needed to be done before winter. The docks are being taken out of the lake today and some of the other issues will soon be completed as well. Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to close Talcot Park effective November 15th for all overnight camping. Red Rock Rural Water will be contacted in regards to questions with the water.

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Ree Tschetter, Southwestern Mental Health, met with the board in regards to usage of the meeting room in the lower level of the Law Enforcement Center. If the board agrees to allow the group facilitated by Jolene Wirkhus to use the room again, rules for the usage of the meeting rooms will be developed and will need to be signed by the person responsible for conducting the meeting. Sheriff Jason Purrington and Jim Vellema will be asked to review the rules to make sure that they are in agreement.

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Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson had several items to discuss with the board. After much discussion in regards to the Blue Cross Blue Shield renewal, there was a motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to renew Blue Cross Blue Shield policy and authorize Chairman White to sign with non-grandfathered status.

Johnson handed out a copy of a new time sheet that includes columns for actual comp hours worked as well as comp taken. The limits on comp hours and when they need to be used should be addressed in the personnel policy at some point.

Motion by Holmen, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to post proposed changes to Policy Number 490 – Travel and Expense Reimbursement for a 30-day period.

Brief discussion was held regarding coordination of trips from the N. 71 County Office Building to the Courthouse.

Johnson reported that Ochs Inc. would like for the County to be able to offer employees paid group insurance plans that would be voluntary and 100% employee paid. These coverages would include: Long Term Disability, Short Term Disability, Long Term Care Insurance and Vision Insurance. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to offer coverages through Ochs, Inc. at employee expense.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to allow commissioners to attend SRDC Hazard Mitigation Strategy Selection on November 18th at 1:00pm at the Cottonwood County Emergency Manager's Office at the Law Enforcement Center.

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Chairman White reported that he received notification from MPCA that the Cottonwood County Landfill is complete with their corrective actions effective October 26th.

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Discussion was held regarding a letter that was received from County Recorder Kathy Kretsch. Kretsch recently received several documents from the Environmental Office that have not yet been recorded. Chairman White appointed Commissioner Kuecker to work with the Recorder's Office to get some of these items corrected.

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Commissioner Oeltjenbruns reported that RC & D has recently received another grant for \$15,000 from NRCS for 2011. These grant funds will not be disbursed until March. He also reported that there is \$1,500 remaining in the mini-grant fund. Requests for these funds will need to be submitted by the end of 2010.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow commissioners to attend meeting at Family Services on November 3rd at 1:00

p.m. entitled Aging Communities, Boomers & Creating Communities for a Lifetime.

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Commissioner Holmen gave an update regarding a conversation he recently had with Jerry Evers. Holmen reported that he consulted with the County Attorney and he believes that the Environmental Office was accurate with allowing the permit for Jerry Evers.

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Update was given regarding a recent meeting between Commissioners White and Oeltjenbruns as well as officials from Jackson County regarding the needs of the Environmental Office/Parks Department. Motion by Sorenson, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to use the rates established by Jackson County if services by Jackson County employees should become necessary. This issue will be discussed again at next week's board meeting.

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Monthly trial balance was handed out for the board's review.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Tom White, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant