

January 6, 2009
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Gary Sorenson, Tom White, Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Doug Storey; Ron Gregg, Craig Myers, Judy Johnson and Becky Wiens.

Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson called the meeting to order and administered the oaths of office to Ron Kuecker and Norm Holmen.

Johnson asked for nominations for Board Chairman. Motion by Kuecker, second by White to nominate Commissioner Sorenson as Board Chairman. Commissioner Holmen asked that nominations cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Commissioner Sorenson. Motion by Kuecker to nominate Commissioner White as Board Vice-Chairman. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen to ask that nominations cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Commissioner White.

Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the December 23, 2008 meeting as amended.

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Motion by White, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to set 2009 meeting dates for the 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month with the exception of December when the board will meet on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Tuesday of the month. The Truth in Taxation meeting was scheduled for December 3rd at 5:01 p.m.

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Chairman Sorenson presented Department/Committee assignments but because of some changes that still need to be made, this will be approved at the next board meeting.

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Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson gave an update in regards to the interviews that were conducted for the Deputy Auditor/Treasurer/Recorder combined position. Johnson would like to offer the position to an individual but wanted direction from the board as to what he could offer for starting pay. This will be discussed more at the next board meeting.

Johnson opened up the one bid that he received for the 2009 official newspaper. Bid was as follows: Cottonwood County Citizen - \$7.60/column inch plus \$2.75 for the other two county papers; \$.11/subscriber; and \$1,400 for Financial Statement. Motion by Holmen, second by White, unanimous vote to award the bid to the Cottonwood County Citizen as the 2009 official newspaper.

County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few different items. Gregg gave an update on the MPCA Stipulation Agreement with the Cottonwood County Landfill. He will try to come up with some further options to present at the next board meeting.

Discussion was held regarding Department Head salary increases. Gregg asked that the Department Heads be given fair and equitable compensation as compared to the rest of the Cottonwood County employees.

Brief discussion was held regarding the Department Head meeting that was held on Monday. This will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

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Motion by Holmen, second by White, unanimous vote to set 2009 meal rates as follows: \$8.50 – breakfast; \$13.50 – lunch; \$17.00 – evening meal with gratuity included in these rates.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve three AFSCME union contracts (Family Services, Solid Waste and Highway) for 2009-2010 and to allow the Chairman to sign the contracts that have been presented to the board.

It was noted that negotiations would begin tomorrow with the Jailer/Dispatcher union.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to increase 2009 salaries for non-union employees (not including Family Service Agency Supervisors) at a rate of a 3.5% COLA for 2009.

Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to increase 2009 salaries for Family Service Agency Supervisors (5 individuals) at a rate of a 2.75% COLA and no step increase.

Motion by White, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to set 2009 temporary seasonal salaries as follows: 1st year - \$8.50; 2nd year - \$8.75; 3rd year - \$9.00 and to set clerk hire wages at a rate of \$10.25/hour.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns to increase 2009 salaries for 6 non-elected Department Heads at a rate of a 3% increase. Voting as follows – Aye: Kuecker. Nay: White, Oeltjenbruns, Holmen. Motion failed.

Motion by Holmen, second by White, unanimous vote to increase 2009 salaries for 6 non-elected Department Heads at a rate of \$1400/year.

Motion by White, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to set Jason Purrington's 2009 salary at a rate of \$68,300.

Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to set Kathy Kretsch's 2009 salary at a rate of \$48,500.

Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to set Doug Storey's 2009 salary at a rate of \$74,500.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to set Jan Johnson's 2009 salary at a rate of \$84,000.

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Brief discussion was held regarding a possible hiring freeze for Cottonwood County. The board did not feel that it was necessary at this time.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to pay regular and customary payments for 2009, which might include: payroll and associated payables; utilities; bond payments; contract payments; payments to other government entities; tax settlements; refunds; reissue voids; well sealing; sewer loan contract payments; emergency payments; insurance payments and lease payments. Auditor/Treasurer Johnson will plan to bring 2009 appropriations to the board for approval as they are submitted.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, to deny all requests for additional step increases for 2009 in light of the current economic forecast.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White to approve payment of 2009 dues to Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), Local Public Health Association (LPHA) and Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administration (MACSSA). Voting as follows – Aye: Oeltjenbruns, White, Holmen. Nay: Kuecker. Motion carried.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to move Rachel Cox to full-time status as a County Agency Social Worker effective January 1st as she was previously a Social Worker Intern.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to pay final payment in the amount of \$4,048.67 to Dallas Smith Construction for work done at the N. 71 County Office Building. The additional amount was for additional material and labor requested by the board.

Update was given in regards to the painting work at the N. 71 County Office Building and it was reported that TDS would allow the phone lines from the County Office Building to be cancelled without paying a penalty.

The sign for the N. 71 County Office Building is getting close to completion and will be installed by Fairmont Glass & Sign when it is convenient for them.

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It was reported that Commissioner Kuecker would conduct an exit interview with Lynn Mohlencamp in the near future.

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Commissioner Kuecker suggested that minutes of the Ditch Authority should be kept separate from the county board meeting minutes and that updates regarding ditch business should be given more frequently. The board agreed that updates should be given monthly at a regular board meeting as needed.

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Motion by White, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to authorize up to two county maintenance employees and any commissioners to attend workshop entitled "Reducing Energy Costs in Local Government" on January 22nd in St. Cloud.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to allow per diems for commissioners to attend SRDC Orientation Workshop on January 24th in Slayton.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Gary Sorenson, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvong, Bd. Adm. Assistant