

January 25, 2005
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 25, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Chuck Severson, Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Doug Storey; Jim King, Gale Bondhus, Andrea Ruesch and Holli Arp. Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the additions of the agenda. Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2005 meeting as amended.

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Economic Development Director Jim King met with the board to ask them to consider a resolution of support for funding the completion of Highway 60 from Windom to St. James and from Worthington to the Iowa border. Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution as follows:

**Resolution in Support of the Completion of the Expansion
of Trunk Highway 60 to a Four-Lane Highway
from the City of Windom to the City of St. James
Resolution 05-01-25**

WHEREAS, Cottonwood County is committed to the best interests of the citizens of Cottonwood County; and

WHEREAS, Trunk Highway 60 is a major thoroughfare for commerce in the southwestern portion of the State of Minnesota and provides a vital commerce conduit from the state of Iowa to communities adjacent to Highway 60 and ultimately to the Minnesota metropolitan centers; and

WHEREAS, the State of Iowa will be completing the reconstruction of its portion of Trunk Highway 60 to a four-lane status by 2008; and

WHEREAS, the reconstruction of Trunk Highway 60 to a four-lane highway has been identified as a priority in the State of Minnesota for over 40 years, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation has designated Trunk Highway 60 as a Regional Transportation Corridor in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the four-lane section of Highway 60 between the Cities of Worthington and Windom was completed in 2004 and significant portions of the highway between the Cities of Windom and St. James have already been converted into four-lane highway; and

WHEREAS, the traffic volume of passenger vehicles and semi trucks, as evidenced by traffic counts conducted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, is more than sufficient to warrant such an expansion; and

WHEREAS, there are significant safety concerns because of the number of times the highway converts back to a two-lane highway and the volume of traffic that is funneled between four-lane and two-lane sections of this highway; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of Cottonwood County and the State of Minnesota as a whole to complete the expansion of Highway 60 to four lanes between the Cities of Windom and St. James.

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** as follows:

The Cottonwood County Commissioners, on behalf of Cottonwood County, Minnesota, support the completion of Trunk Highway 60 from Iowa to the City of Worthington as a four-lane highway, support efforts to complete the expansion of Trunk Highway 60 from the City of Windom to the City of St. James as a four-lane highway; and further request that funding be allocated by the State of Minnesota for the completion of this highway prior to the programming of any new additional highway projects within MN DOT District No. 7.

S/Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

S/Chuck Severson, Board Chairman

King informed the board that he had recently been contacted by a group of businessmen in the Westbrook Area in regards to a possible dairy farm being built in the area. They wanted to know if they would qualify for the benefits under the JOB Zone. King did some research on the matter and believes that a dairy qualifies as an economic development project but would not qualify as an agriculture project. This project is in the preliminary stages and would also have to be approved by the Westbrook-Walnut Grove School Board as well as the County Board of Commissioners.

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Veteran's Officer Pete Brand was unable to attend the meeting as scheduled but he did send some information regarding Cottonwood County Veterans Service Office Return on Investment that was very informational.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board to discuss a few items. Board of Equalization date was set for June 14th at 1:00pm.

Bondhus informed the board that she recently sent out requests for quotes to two area businesses for new computers in the Assessor's Office. The only quote she received was from New Star Sales & Service in the amount of \$8066.16. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to accept the quote in the amount of \$8066.16 + installation from New Star Sales & Service.

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Andrea Ruesch and Holli Arp from the Regional Extension Office met with the board to give a brief update. Ruesch informed the board that as of March 1st, she would no longer be working at the Regional Extension Office as she had just accepted a new position in Jackson County as a 4-H Program Coordinator. She thanked the board for their years of support.

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Commissioner Sorenson gave a brief update regarding a Solid Waste meeting that he had attended yesterday. He said that some of the counties had signed the Joint Powers Agreement for the Waste to Energy facility. He also

obtained some information on some upcoming training that might be helpful to the new Engineer/Solid Waste Officer as well as some of the other employees.

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One bid was opened for the 1987 15-passenger Dodge van that was advertised for sale with the Transit System. Bid was as follows: Nick Anderson - \$111.11. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to accept bid from Nick Anderson in the amount of \$111.11.

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Brief discussion was held regarding a request that was made at the last LMC meeting in regards to the possibility that all employees that are paid monthly be paid bi-monthly like all of the other employees (Family Services & Highway Department/Solid Waste). The board decided to wait to get a feel for how direct deposit goes before discussing it further.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to adopt Exit Interview form to be used by all Department Heads when an employee terminates employment with Cottonwood County or transfers to another department within the county. This Exit Interview form should be given out to employees in advance of their termination date or transfer so that they will have an opportunity to complete it if they choose to do so. This form should be returned to their current Department Head or Commissioner Liaison upon completion.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Chairman Severson to sign 2004 OSHA 300 Summary that is to be posted from February 1, 2005 to April 30, 2005.

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Commissioner Oeltjenbruns gave a brief update in regards to an Energy Task Force meeting that he recently attended. He stated that Lincoln County is challenging the production tax for wind towers.

Update was given regarding DAC proposal. Don Pankratz is still working on obtaining information as to what an expansion of their present building might cost the DAC. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding County Clean-Up Committee. There are three requests for cleanup from the City of Mt. Lake for the spring. However, the board is not sure who the members of the cleanup committee are so further research will have to do be done before any action can be taken.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to transfer the black Expedition from the Sheriff's Department to the Highway Department. The total amount to be paid by the Highway Department to the Sheriff's Department is \$7,500.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to authorize board chairman to sign ratification of contracts with MCCC and ACS.

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Brief discussion was held regarding Minnesota River Board dues for 2004 and 2005 in the amount of \$1428. No action was taken at this time and will be discussed further in a few months.

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Discussion was held regarding County Engineer/Solid Waste Officer. Ron Gregg will begin his duties on Friday, January 28th. There is a meeting set up for 8:00am on Friday morning so that introductions can be made to all of the employees.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Chuck Severson, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant