

February 6, 2007  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Presiding over the meeting was Chairman Norm Holmen. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson, Tom White, Ron Kuecker; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Doug Storey; Gerald Engstrom, Mike Hanson, Kurt Deter, Bruce Nagorske, Nanno Schoneman, David Bucklin, April Sullivan, Tom Kresko, Carl Nehlsen, Jim Weidemann, Duane Bendixon, Bill Modestad, Rob Anderson, Jason Purrington, Gale Bondhus and Ron Gregg. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2007 meeting.

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Commissioner Oeltjenbruns gave a brief update in regards to the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA). He reported that they have recently received a few grants and are planning to hire three different positions, one of which is a Nutrient Management Specialist that will be housed in the Windom office and will serve all of Cottonwood County.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to recess as the County Board and to convene as the Ditch Authority to hold a public hearing for JD #5.

After careful consideration of all of the information presented from all parties involved, there was a motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve proposed project of JD #5 and to abandon the existing portion of tile within the project.

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to adjourn as the Ditch Authority and to reconvene as the County Board.

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Mt. Lake Economic Development/Chamber Director Rob Anderson met with the board to discuss the possibility of the county participating in tax abatement of 36 acres of land in Mt. Lake that was purchased by the Mt. Lake EDA with the intent to develop housing. The board agreed to allow Auditor/Treasurer Johnson to be the contact person for collecting information the EDA may need while researching the possibility of tax abatement further.

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Sheriff Jason Purrington met with the board to discuss a few items. He reported that he received 15 applicants for the position of part-time jailer/dispatcher and that 5 applicants were interviewed. Purrington recommended that the board allow him to hire Tim Jenniges for the position.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to hire Tim Jenniges as part-time jailer/dispatcher effective February 7, 2007 on Start step of the union pay scale.

Purrington presented two quotes off the state contract for the purchase of a new light bar for the Emergency Management vehicle. Both quotes were from Northern Safety Technology, Inc. and were as follows: \$1499.13 and \$1925.13. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to accept quote for \$1925.13 from Northern Safety Technology, Inc. as this light bar had the added safety feature of brighter lighting.

Motion by Sorenson, second by White, unanimous vote to allow Purrington to apply for grant through Federated Rural Electric Trust Program on behalf of the Sheriff's Department.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board to set the annual Board of Equalization meeting. Motion by Sorenson, second by White, unanimous vote to set Board of Equalization for June 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. with the first appointment to begin at 1:30 p.m.

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Environmental Officer Mike Hanson met with the board to discuss several items. Hanson reported that the Des Moines Drinking Water budget has a balance of \$10,538.03, which needs to be reallocated or it will end up in the General Fund. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to allow Hanson to transfer the 2006 balance of \$10,538.03 from the Drinking Water budget to the 2007 DMR Grant (Dept. 609) to be used for salaries & benefits and to amend the 2007 budget to reflect this change.

Hanson presented a copy of the bid notice for quotes for mowing of Dynamite, Mountain, Red Rock Falls, Schoper Busch Dam and South Dutch Charlie County Parks. He also presented a 2007 mowing expense estimate for the board's review.

Hanson reported that he is still waiting for quotes for electrical equipment upgrades at Talcot.

Hanson presented three quotes for the replacement of a swimming raft at Talcot but was asked to do some further research in regards to this matter before approval.

Hanson asked that the board authorize the board chairman to sign the State of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Block Grant Agreement for the grant period of July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008. This will allow the county to receive funds totaling \$71,746. Motion by Sorenson, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to allow Chairman Holmen to sign this agreement.

Hanson presented that board with copies of the 2005 & 2006 County Parks budget and Environmental Planning & Zoning budgets for informational purposes.

Hanson requested that the board allow Greg Johnson and himself to attend an Onsite Sewage Treatment Program Workshop on March 19-20 in

Hinckley as part of their ISTS certification. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to allow Greg and Mike to attend this workshop on March 19-20.

Hanson handed out copies of a letter he received from Bill Dunn of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in regards to an update on a future grant related activity as well as a letter that was recently sent to David Johnson in regards to a complaint regarding a neighboring property.

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County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few items. Gregg reported that he received three bids for the landfill property lease as follows: Scott Veenker - \$6,500; Mike Harrington - \$8,750; Wyatt Bloch - \$5,400. Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to accept the bid from Mike Harrington in the amount of \$8,750 for the lease of approximately 100 acres.

Gregg reported that he received 13 applicants for the position of Solid Waste Worker and he hopes to begin interviewing this week.

Gregg requested that the board allow him to begin charging the township engineering cost associated with bridge replacement projects. Gregg reported that the average engineering cost for a township bridge replacement project is \$5,000 using precast box culvert. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to authorize the County Engineer to begin charging for actual engineering costs associated with a township bridge replacement.

Gregg was informed that the lease agreement for the recycling building in Westbrook has expired so he should work to get a new lease signed.

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Chairman Holmen reported that I & S Engineers & Architects assisted in the opening of bids for the Commissioner's Room on February 5<sup>th</sup>. The following bids were received and were as follows: Borsgard Construction - \$52,781; Brennan Construction of Minnesota, Inc. - \$65,947; Buhler Construction - \$57,900; Salonek Construction - \$64,800; Tri-State General Contracting - \$71,951. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to accept low bid in the amount of \$52,781 from Borsgard Construction.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to agree to pay I & S Engineers & Architects \$300 per visit to perform construction administration during the remodel of the Commissioners Room as requested by the Board of Commissioners.

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Discussion was held in regards to employees at the top of the pay scale. This will be discussed in more detail after the union settlements.

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Discussion was held in regards to county cell phones. Motion by White, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to state that as cell phone contracts expire, the county will no longer renew contracts and will begin reimbursing employees a monthly cell phone allowance with approval of the county board.

This cell phone allowance does not apply to cell phones that go with a county owned/leased vehicle.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to set the cell phone reimbursement rate at \$20/month. Each employee has to provide proof of his or her cell phone contract to the County Auditor/Treasurer at the beginning of each year for reimbursement by the county. This is a taxable reimbursement.

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Discussion was held in regards to credit card policy. A form to be used by the Board Administrative Assistant was developed to use in cases where charges need to be made on the credit card on behalf of Department Heads.

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Brief discussion was held in regards to clarification of dates for policy changes as made by the board. Some questions were recently raised regarding the policies that were sent out for the 30-day posting. A new format will be used and will include the following information as each policy is developed: revised date, approved date, adopted date, and effective date.

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Discussion was held in regards to where the board plans to meet when the remodeling project is taking place in the Commissioners Room. The consensus of the board was to plan on meeting at the Law Enforcement Center during the remodel. It was reported that Sentence to Serve would be emptying the files of the County Recorder's Office from the vault in the Commissioner's Room on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

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Discussion was held in regards to a recommendation of the State Auditor to get all employees of the county on a positive payroll system. Because the employees at Family Service Agency are the only employees currently not on a positive payroll system, there was a motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to direct Family Service Agency to take the necessary steps to develop and implement a positive payroll system as soon as possible.

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Discussion was held in regards to a recent appeal by Kathy Kretsch in regards to the dispute of her 2007 salary. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to hire Scott Anderson to represent the county in the elected salary appeal of the County Recorder.

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Discussion was held in regards to the formation of an Audit Committee that was recommended by State Auditor Roger Albertson. No action was taken at this time. It was suggested that Department Heads might need to start bringing in quarterly reports to the board for their review.

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It was reported that the mediation date for the Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) union has been set for February 28<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

Motion by Sorenson, second by White, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 2:55pm to discuss strategy for labor negotiations. The following individuals were present: Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson, Tom White, Ron Kuecker, Kelly Thongvivong and Jan Johnson.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to open the meeting at 3:45pm.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Norm Holmen, Board Chairman

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Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant