

December 11, 2007
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 9:00 a.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; Cheryl Peters, Kathy Kretsch, Don Reffer and Mike Hanson. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2007 meeting. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the December 6th Truth in Taxation meeting.

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Court Administrator Cheryl Peters met with the board to review two bids that were submitted for 2008 Court Appointed Attorney. The bids were as follows: Muske, Muske & Suhrhoff - \$75/hour; Birkholz Law - \$75/hour. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to award bid in the amount of \$75/hour to Birkholz Law for 2008 Court Appointed Attorney services.

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Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson reported on an Official Grievance that was received from the AFSCME unions effective November 28, 2007. The grievance stated "Violation of M.S. 471.6161 Sub. 5 and other statutes and labor agreement articles or policies as they may apply in that the employer failed to negotiate a reduction in aggregate value of the group insurance benefit". Because two insurance plan options were offered to all employees effective January 1, 2008, the county board feels that there was not a reduction in aggregate value of the group insurance benefit. One of the options was the same plan as 2007. The second option was a VEBA plan. Motion by Kuecker, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to deny the grievance from AFSCME union dated November 28, 2007.

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County Recorder Kathy Kretsch met with the board to discuss a few different items. Kretsch updated the board in regards to a statewide marriage index system and stated that she would like to move forward with this project. Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to allow Kretsch to enroll in statewide marriage index system at a cost of \$1,000 start-up fee and \$250/year maintenance fee.

Due to the additional work that will be needed to get the statewide marriage index system in place, Kretsch asked that the board consider allowing her to hire a part-time seasonal employee at a later time. Motion by Sorenson,

second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to amend the 2008 County Recorder's budget to reflect \$5,000 change for part-time seasonal help.

Kretsch reported on some office improvements that she would like the board to consider for 2008. She was asked to bring in bids as appropriate when the projects come up.

Discussion was held regarding the request by Kretsch to give Susan Horkey and Nancy Macgregor a 3-step increase for 2008. No action was taken at this time and will be discussed on January 8th when the salaries for 2008 are set.

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Don Reffer from Brush & Weed Control Specialists met with the board to update them on a few different things. He reported that Cottonwood County is currently on a 3-year maintenance program and he planned to get out and look at some of the ditches in the next few weeks. He will then plan to report back to the board after the first of the year.

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Mike Hanson met with the board representing the Cottonwood County Fair Board. He presented the 2007 income and expense report but stated that there are still some grant dollars that have not been accounted for so the loss will be less than was reported. Hanson reported that the 2008 fair would be held August 13th – August 17th.

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It was reported that Cottonwood County recently received a Certificate of Excellence from the Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust in recognition of an Outstanding Loss Ratio Under 50% for plan years 2002 – 2006.

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Discussion was held regarding snow removal for a few of the county office buildings. It was decided to continue to use Negen Construction for the snow removal at the County Office Building and Scott Veenker for the snow removal at the building north on Highway 71.

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It was reported that final numbers for the 2008 insurance plans ended up being as follows: 70 employees choose the new VEBA insurance plan and 57 employees choose the existing insurance plan.

Discussion was held regarding request to have last contribution for VEBA plan put into accounts in December. The consensus of the board was to leave as is with December contribution being made with the first payroll in January.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to approve meal claim in the amount of \$50.96 from Sunshine Foods for food purchased for individuals that were involved with investigation of recent murder case.

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Chairman Holmen gave an update in regards to a recent building walk-thru that he had with a few employees of the Southwestern Mental Health Center at the new office building on Highway 71. Holmen reported that there are still some decisions that need to be made with some of the equipment in the building. He also reported that Holt's Cleaning is planning to do the cleaning of the carpets throughout the building.

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Motion by White, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve December warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$108,536.97
Long Term Capital Outlay	\$ 2,175.44
County Building Fund	\$ 1,816.41
Ditch Fund	\$ 1,865.75
County Revenue	\$ 30,000.00
Road & Bridge	\$142,668.34
Long-Term Capital Outlay	\$ 25,000.00
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 7,266.84
Landfill Enterprise	<u>\$ 8,537.71</u>
TOTAL	\$327,867.46

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow for blanket approval of end of year warrants.

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Brief discussion was held regarding The McDowell Agency. They will be contacted to try to come up with a few different packages with different price lists that might pertain more to county employees.

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Discussion was held regarding regional application for Healthy Homes Single Family Rehabilitation. Because there were a few unanswered questions regarding the application, this will be discussed again at the next board meeting. Commissioner Sorenson will plan to stop by the Minnesota Housing Partnership before the next meeting to ask the questions of the board.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to accept and sign 2008 transit grant application.

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Brief update was given regarding a meeting that was recently held with Tri-County Recycling, as the current contract will be up for renewal the first of the year. This will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

Brief discussion was held regarding a request to lower an individual's landfill bill. No action was taken.

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It was noted that Commissioner salaries and per diems for 2008 would be set at the next board meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding the availability of an IT person and whether or not an individual such as this would be beneficial for the county. It was noted that Watonwan County has agreed to allow their IT person to do work for Cottonwood County when work is needed.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Norm Holmen, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant