

August 3, 2010  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 3, 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; Gerald Engstrom, Matthew Adrian, Mike Adrian, Dick Wiens, Bill Moldestad, Jim Weidemann, Leo Bartosh, Bill Baerg, Wes Kroeker, Holli Arp, Gale Bondhus, Linda Fransen, Tom Wickie, Marilyn Erickson, Loy Storey, Margaret McDonald, Ron Gregg, Jeff LaCanne, Dan Birkholz and Greg Johnson.

Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2010 meeting as amended.

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Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to recess as the County Board and to convene as the Ditch Authority to discuss ditch business which includes the public hearing for JD #10.

Gerald Engstrom, Bill Moldestad and Jim Weidemann were present to discuss the details of the project. The viewers met with the petitioners of the project on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to establish JD #10 project and to accept the amended viewer's report as presented.

Commissioner Sorenson reported that the seeding has been completed on two different filter strips that Nick Muller agreed to seed. He also gave an update regarding the collapse of a storm water sewer in the City of Storden.

Commissioner Oeltjenbruns gave an update regarding a sizable bill that was received for a ditch in the Mt. Lake area.

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

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Karissa Hall from Express Employment Professionals met with the board to give a power point presentation in regards to the services that this company based in North Mankato has to offer.

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Holli Arp, University of Minnesota Extension, met with the board to present the 2011 proposed budget for the Extension Office.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board to present the 2011 proposed budget for GIS as well as the Assessor's Office. Motion by Kuecker, second by Sorenson to allow the Assessor's Office to send out a letter stating that assessing rates will remain the same for 2011 with no increase from 2010.

Voting as follows: Aye – Kuecker, Sorenson and Oeltjenbruns. Nay – Holmen.  
Motion carried.

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Linda Fransen and Margaret McDonald met with the board representing the Cottonwood County Historical Society. They presented a power point presentation highlighting the accomplishments of the past year as well as submitted their 2011 appropriation request for consideration of the board.

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County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few different items. Gregg requested board approval to proceed with the manhole extension project at the landfill. The landfill will purchase the manhole sections and miscellaneous pipe directly and contract for the installation. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Gregg to advertise for quotes for raising manhole at the landfill.

Gregg requested that the board review the salaries of the landfill employees as one of the employees has been taking on more responsibilities due to the upcoming retirement of another employee and the current pay does not reflect the added responsibilities. It was suggested that the recent pay study information be reviewed.

Commissioner White signed the contract with Quam Construction Company Inc. for the reconstruction of CSAH 32 (Whited Street) in the City of Jeffers that was approved at the last board meeting.

Brief discussion was held regarding a visit that Commissioner Kuecker had with a landowner along County Road 13 in regards to not being informed early enough for renter not to plant on right-away.

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It was noted that Chairman Tom White excused himself for this portion of the meeting per a letter dated June 7, 2010 that was presented to Tom's fellow commissioners as well as Greg Johnson and County Attorney Doug Storey. Vice-Chairman Ron Kuecker presided over the meeting at this time. Legal counsel for the employee (Dan Birkholz) informed County Attorney Doug Storey on August 2<sup>nd</sup> that the employee (Greg Johnson) would like this portion of the meeting open to the public and would not like the board to exercise their right to a closed meeting for consideration of allegations or charges against an employee pursuant to Minn. Statute 13D.05, Subd. 2.

Deputy Jeff LaCanne shared his investigative report (on file in the Commissioner's Office) with the board and highlighted some of the main areas of the investigation he conducted on Greg Johnson (Parks Department) which included gas usage as well as use of hours on his time card. This investigation began on December 23, 2009.

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Chairman White returned at this time and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Update was given in regards to a meeting that County Attorney Doug Storey and Commissioner Oeltjenbruns had with Environmental Officer Mike Hanson and Maryellen Suhrhoff on Friday, July 30<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing the correspondence in regards to the matter as well as much discussion, there was a motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns to remove Michael Hanson from the Department Head position in the Environmental Office. He shall continue his other duties during a 6-month probationary period. A letter of reprimand shall be placed in his file. Salary shall be reduced by \$800/month. A committee of three people, Chair and Vice-Chair of Board along with County Attorney shall write the letter of reprimand and also meet with Michael once a month during the probationary period. This committee shall also prepare a final report at the end of the 6 months probation. Voting as follows: Aye – Kuecker, Oeltjenbruns and Holmen. Nay – Sorenson. Motion carried. This will be effective immediately.

Bills and time cards for the Environmental Office are to be brought to the Commissioner's Office for review by the board.

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Further discussion was held regarding the office remodeling project as proposed by the County Assessor. Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow the Assessor's Office to obtain quotes on Option 1 of the document that was initially presented to the board at the July 27<sup>th</sup> board meeting and to move forward with remodeling and carpeting of the office. The board asked that this project not begin until after the November elections since Delton Township uses the break room as a polling place.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to amend Sheriff's 2010 budget by transferring \$26,025 from the part-time salary line item to the full-time salary line item.

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Brief discussion was held regarding vendor payment request. Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson will contact this individual to have them submit a bill to the county.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to allow for usage of the county credit card for the purchase of a portable digital recorder in the amount of \$99.89 for the Commissioner's Room.

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It was reported that Cottonwood County would be receiving a dividend from MCIT in the amount of \$123,291 which should be received sometime in mid-November.

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It was reported that a notice of program aid cuts for 2011 has been received. Cottonwood County received \$471,647 in 2010 and in 2011 will receive \$256,486. The county received \$648,474 in 2009.

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A laptop policy was sent out for the board's review to be possibly adopted at a future time.

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Discussion was held regarding the Department of Correction's use of the LEC for one of their group sessions. Because of an incident that recently happened at the LEC, the DOC will be asked not to use the meeting room at the LEC any longer.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

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Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Tom White, Board Chairman

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Kelly Thongvong, Bd. Adm. Assistant