

September 7, 2010
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, September 7, 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; Gale Bondhus, Chrystal Dunker, Kathy Kretsch, Kim Hall, Kristi Sell and Jim Vellema.

Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Kuecker, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2010 meeting as amended.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board to discuss a few items. She reported that she had requested bids from five contractors in regards to the remodeling work in the Assessor's Office and only received one bid. After further discussion in regards to some water problems that have been discovered, there was a motion by Sorenson, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to reject all bids because water problem needs to be addressed first and to see if someone can come in and look at the water problem.

Bondhus requested that she be allowed to obtain a credit card for the Assessor's Office as they attend several conferences each year. Bondhus does not feel that employees should have to put county charges on their personal credit card. The consensus of the board was to instruct Bondhus to contact Kelly Thongvivong when charges need to be made on a credit card. These charges will then be presented to the board for their approval to be paid for with the existing credit card that is kept in the Commissioner's Office.

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Chrystal Dunker met with the board representing the Prairie Ecology Bus. She has recently received some requests for programming from some of the schools in Cottonwood County and they want to know if funding is available. After much discussion in regards to how the funding is distributed, there was a motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to pay \$1,000 appropriation that was originally budgeted for 2010 to the Prairie Ecology Bus.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Kim Hall, Emergency Management Director, to receive one step increase effective September 1, 2010 as she successfully completed her 6-month probationary period.

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Discussion was held regarding committee that was recently formed to deal with matters in the Environmental Office due to the absence of a Department Head. County Attorney Doug Storey expressed his thoughts in regards to his role on this committee and stated that he would not like to be a voting member of this committee. In the absence of a Department Head for the Environmental Office, there was a motion by Kuecker, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to state that the County Commissioners will assume the role of Department Head for the Environmental Office acting through their Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman.

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County Recorder Kathy Kretsch met with the board to discuss debit/credit card options that the Recorder's Office may be mandated to provide in the near future for drivers license transactions.

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Emergency Management Director Kim Hall met with the board to give an update regarding a Video Conferencing System Project. Hall reported that 24 counties were identified as a top priority for video conferencing equipment through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Statewide Video Conference Technology for Emergency Management Report. Hall reported that the equipment will be provided to the county through a grant from Homeland Security. The maintenance fee of \$550 and a one-time video cost will be waived. Beginning in 2012, the county would be responsible for the \$550 maintenance fee. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to allow the county to accept the equipment that will be covered by the grant.

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Jim Vellema, Custodial Supervisor, of the Sheriff's Department met with the board in regards to the air conditioning unit at the Law Enforcement Center. He reported that an estimate for the replacement of the existing system would be approximately \$26,750 and repair of the existing system would be \$11,000. Vellema was asked to explore other options such as geothermal systems and to obtain bids for both a geothermal system as well as the replacement of the existing system.

Vellema was asked to give an update regarding the boiler at the N. 71 County Office Building. It was reported that a few bids were received and will be reviewed at the next board meeting.

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Jail Administrator Kristi Sell met with the board in regards to a part-time jailer/dispatcher currently on probationary status. Motion by Sorenson, second by Kuecker, unanimous vote to terminate Allison Johnson (probationary jailer/dispatcher) effective September 7, 2010 as requested by her immediate supervisor.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 11:04 a.m. at the request of the County Attorney for attorney-client privilege. Individuals present were: Commissioners White, Kuecker, Sorenson, Holmen, and Oeltjenbruns; Kelly Thongvivong, Doug Storey and Jan Johnson. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to open the meeting at 11:46 a.m.

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Brief discussion was held regarding union negotiations and whether or not any of the unions have been in contact with the county board.

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Update was given in regards to ditch business items. Commissioner Sorenson reported that he would be completing his annual ditch inspections in the near future. Commissioner Holmen had some questions in regards to the grace period for buffer strip enforcement.

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Discussion was held regarding a grievance that was filed by Greg Johnson on September 2, 2010. The consensus of the board is to deny the grievance based on criminal charges that have been filed against Greg Johnson.

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Discussion was held regarding the preliminary levy and information was handed out to the board for their review. The preliminary levy for 2011 will be set at the next board meeting.

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Brief discussion was held regarding bills and time cards for the Environmental Office. If there are bills that are questionable, they will be brought to the board for review/discussion.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Tom White, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant