

December 26, 2006
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 26, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Presiding over the meeting was Chairman Ron Kuecker. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson, Chuck Severson; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Doug Storey; George Fetcho, Jack Kelly, Kathy Kretsch, Jason Purrington, Mike Hanson and Ron Gregg. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Holmen, second by Severson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2006 meeting as amended.

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George Fetcho met with the board to discuss some of his concerns regarding transportation for veterans. The board suggested that George also talk to the Veteran's Service Officer in regards to his concerns.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve Blue Cross Blue Shield addendum in regards to the prescription portion of the plan that is now being offered to Medicare eligible retirees.

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It was reported that the federal rate for mileage will be \$.485/mile effective January 1, 2007.

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Chairman Kuecker read a letter that was received from the Nobles County Public Works Director in regards to their proposed improvement of roadway on County Highway 61.

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

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve appropriate payout of benefits to Leslie Makovsky, Kathy Kretsch & Jason Purrington.

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Auditor/Treasurer Johnson asked that the board consider changing the hire date for the two new deputy recorders from January 2nd to January 1st. Because they will not actually begin their full-time duties until January 2nd, no change was made.

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Brief discussion was held in regards to the current procedure for beaver bounty. Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote that states

that prior to paying beaver bounty for the county ditch and road system a trapper must have prior approval from the respective County commissioner or the County Engineer.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to set the final 2007 levy certification at \$5,920,000.

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Information was handed out in regards to the ditch levy that needs to be set at one of the first two meetings in January.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to appoint Jane Pederson as the 1st District representative of the Extension Committee for a 3-year term.

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Deputy Recorder Kathy Kretsch met with the board to discuss a few items. She presented her salary request for 2007 for consideration by the board.

Kretsch also asked that the board allow her to contract with Mary Ann Anderson to help out in the Recorder's Office for training of the two new deputy recorders. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Kretsch to contract with Mary Ann Anderson for training purposes at a rate of \$30.00/hour for up to 120 hours.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to amend 2007 County Recorder budget to reflect \$3600 increase of "Other Professional & Technical Services" line item.

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Sheriff Jason Purrington met with the board to discuss several different items. He voiced his opinion in regards to the payout of an employee's sick leave bank when changing from a full-time county employee to an elected official. Research will be done to see what other counties have done in this situation.

Purrington gave his recommendation to the board in regards to his appointment for Chief Deputy Sheriff. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Severson, unanimous vote to appoint Jim Jorgensen as Chief Deputy Sheriff effective January 1, 2007. Purrington presented his recommendation for the Chief Deputy salary, which will be taken into consideration by the board when setting salaries.

Purrington updated the board in regards to the recent internal posting for two part-time jailer/dispatchers. Because the schedule has recently been revised, Purrington intends to fill only one part-time position at this time. He will update the board if something should change or if the new schedule does not work out.

Purrington presented information in regards to his proposed 2007 salary as well as that of the Sheriff's Secretary as her workload has increased.

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow Purrington to apply for a grant through the *Citizen* for further development of the Sheriff's Department website.

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Environmental Officer Mike Hanson met with the board to seek approval of SRDC contract extension and water plan revision. Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve SRDC contract extension and water plan revision. The new deadline for the water plan revision will be May 31, 2007.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to amend 2007 Planning & Zoning budget to reflect increase of \$6,000 to \$14,308 for "Professional Services" line item.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to change flex plan to follow what is permissible by the new federal guidelines. The new guidelines (Notice 2005-42) issued by the Internal Revenue Service permits employers to amend their current plan to allow a grace period (the "Grace Period") not to exceed two (2) months and fifteen (15) days following the end of the Plan Year during which Plan participants may use all or a portion of their unused Health Flexible Spending Account ("Health FSA") salary reduction amounts from the prior year for eligible expenses incurred during the Grace Period.

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County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few different issues. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 11:00am to discuss a personnel matter that involved medical issues. The following individuals were present: Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson, Chuck Severson, Kelly Thongvivong, Jan Johnson, Doug Storey and Ron Gregg.

Motion by Holmen, second by Severson, unanimous vote to open the meeting at 11:25am.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to deny unpaid leave of absence request as presented by the County Engineer.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to terminate Thomas Keech with appropriate payout of benefits effective December 26, 2006 based on the staffing concerns of the County Engineer and allow Gregg to post internally and to advertise for the position in order to get staff up to full capacity.

Motion by Holmen, second by Severson, unanimous vote to approve payment in the amount of \$40,000 to Schneider Corporation for the 2006 contract payment.

Gregg requested that the salary increases for 2007 be fair and equitable to the non-union employees as negotiated with the union employees. He also recommended that two employees within the Highway Department be increased two steps in 2007.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve 2007 final budget in the amount of \$14,898,285.00. This amount reflects changes made at today's meeting.

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Motion by Severson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to set the 2007 Commissioner salary at \$17,500 with Board Chairman to receive an additional \$500 and to set the 2007 per diem rate at \$65.00.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to approve \$1900 proposal from I & S Engineers & Architects to assist in furniture selection and specification for the commissioner's room remodeling project.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to advance \$10,000 to the Big Bend Snow Riders Club with the loan to be repayable next summer upon receipt of their grant.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

Ron Kuecker, Board Chairman

Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant