

November 22, 2011  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 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, Jim Schmidt, Tom White, Ron Kuecker; Executive Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Nick Anderson; Ron Gregg, Crystal Reith, Lloyd Kalfs, Kay Clark, Cheryl Hanson, Rahn Larson, Brianna Grandprey, Ken Leas, Jason Purrington, Mari Harries, Craig Myers and Staci Veenker.

Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by White, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2011 meeting as amended.

\* \* \* \*

County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss several items. Gregg presented his recommendation to move Lonng Engler from the position of Solid Waste Worker to the position of Landfill Operator and to recommend that he begin on Step 3 of the current pay matrix for this position. Motion by Kuecker, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote (Commissioner White recused himself from the vote) to accept Ron Gregg's recommendation to move Lonng Engler from Solid Waste Worker to Landfill Operator effective December 1, 2011 on Step 3 of the current pay matrix and to allow a 1-step increase to Step 4 after successful completion of a 6-month probationary period for this position.

Gregg asked that the board consider allowing him to use an online auction service to deal with used and surplus equipment as a way to market equipment through the website. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to enter into Memorandum of Understanding with GovDeals, an online auction service to deal with used and surplus equipment. Gregg will notify the cities and townships that the equipment will be on GovDeals if they are interested in bidding. This motion supersedes any other past motions of notification requirements.

Discussion was held regarding options to handle the position abolishment in the Solid Waste (Recycling) Department. Gregg presented his recommendations on creating positions for the two full-time employees that are affected by this change as of December 31, 2011 when the recycling program ceases. Gregg also discussed the possibility of an expansion to the landfill hours. After much discussion, there was a motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to abolish the Cottonwood County Recycling Department effective before January 31, 2012, as well as all positions within the Recycling Department and to instruct Ron Gregg to provide the appropriate layoff notice and notice of abolition of the Recycling Department to the employees affected.

Gregg presented his recommendation for radios in the Highway Department in order to become compliant with the new narrow band requirements. The minimum amount of radios required for the Highway Department will cost approximately \$52,240. Gregg would like to add an additional 14 mobile radios to the list bringing the grand total to approximately \$97,740. The county has until January 1, 2013 to be compliant with the new requirements. Gregg was instructed to hold off on any purchases as there may be more grant opportunities available in the near future.

\* \* \* \*

4-H Program Coordinator Crystal Reith met with the board to give an update on some of the past summer activities as well as to report on some of the upcoming events being offered through 4-H.

\* \* \* \*

Lloyd Kalfs, SWCD Water Resource Technician, met with the board to ask for approval of the 2012-2013 Cottonwood County Feedlot Work Plan. Kalfs reported that he is not expecting any changes to the plan once it is sent in but he will keep the board informed if there are any. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by White, unanimous vote to approve 2012-2013 Cottonwood County Feedlot Work Plan.

\* \* \* \*

Kay Clark, SWCD District Administrator, met with the board to ask for approval of the FY 2012 Board of Water & Soil Resources Natural Resources Block Grant Agreement. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to approve the FY 2012 BWSR Natural Resources Block Grant Agreement.

Clark gave an update regarding the Water Management Plan and reported that the first meeting would be held on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Environmental Office. She is still looking for a few more individuals to serve on the Task Force Committee if anyone has any suggestions. The Water Management Plan should be completed by July 2012.

Brief discussion was held regarding a call that Commissioner Kuecker recently received from Mark Wiebe in regards to his septic system. This issue is currently being worked on and Lloyd Kalfs will plan to follow-up with Mark Wiebe sometime after the Thanksgiving holiday.

\* \* \* \*

County Attorney Nick Anderson provided some information to the board in regards to consideration of accepting a grant to begin a drug court in Cottonwood County. The drug court would be available to convicted drug abusers and drug users (at a cost) as an intense coordinated effort to keep closer tabs on these individuals to make sure they are not using drugs. These individuals would be tested more frequently through the drug court.

\* \* \* \*

Cheryl Hanson, Windom Chamber Director, met with the board to ask for permission to use the Courthouse rotunda for the Santa visit to be held on Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Motion by White, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to allow for the use of the Courthouse rotunda for this event.

Staci Veenker and Mari Harries from the Finding Windom group met with the board to ask if they would consider sending a letter of support to the Lions Club in regards to allowing the song written by Jim Austerman entitled "The Christmas Bells of Windom" to be played on the chimes of the Courthouse during the Christmas season. The board agreed that it would be a welcome addition to the music that is already playing on the chimes of the Courthouse. It was also suggested that it would be nice to play Christmas music more frequently during the holiday season such as on Saturdays when there may be shoppers in town that would enjoy the beautiful chimes as well. Motion by Kuecker, second by White, unanimous vote to send a letter of support to the Lions Club for this endeavor.

Harries also questioned if there was a way to remove the "no loitering signs" on the Courthouse property as they are not welcoming to many that stop by the Courthouse and maybe deter people from spending more time visiting the Courthouse grounds. No action was taken at this time.

\* \* \* \*

Motion by Schmidt, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to approve Nationwide-transition support service agreement between Nationwide and Cottonwood County. This is the deferred comp plan for Cottonwood County.

\* \* \* \*

Motion by White, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution as follows:

**Resolution 11-11-22**

**WHEREAS**, the County of Cottonwood supports the grant application made to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the Federal Recreational Trail Program. The application is for a grant for the purchase of a snowmobile groomer for the Cottonwood County Recreational Trail System.

**WHEREAS**, the County of Cottonwood recognizes the fifty (50) percent match requirement for the Federal Recreational Trail Program, and has secured the matching funds.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, if the County of Cottonwood is awarded a grant by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the County of Cottonwood agrees to accept the grant award, and may enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota for the above referenced project. The County of Cottonwood will comply with all applicable laws, environmental requirements and regulations as stated in the grant agreement, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the County of Cottonwood names the fiscal agent for the County of Cottonwood for this project as:

Jan Johnson  
 County Auditor/Treasurer  
 County of Cottonwood  
 900 Third Avenue  
 Windom, MN 56101

S/Norm Holmen, Board Chairman

\* \* \*

S/Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

\* \* \*

Commissioner White shared with the board his thoughts in regards to the possibility of sharing a position with the Parks Department and the Big Bend Snowriders Club. White will do some further research on this issue.

\* \* \* \*

Chairman Holmen discussed a few miscellaneous items with the board. He reported that the Area II Annual Meeting would be held on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at Jackpot Junction.

A letter was received from Heritage Village in Mt. Lake. They are in the process of constructing and furnishing an Archive Building to preserve the history of our area, including our county, with valuable information in a climate controlled condition. They are requesting to apply for a donation (from the county) of \$5,000 for a five-year period beginning 2012 to help in completing the inside furnishings and electronics to maintain a well qualified addition. After careful consideration of the request, the board decided not to make a donation of \$5,000 to the Heritage Village for a five-year period beginning in 2012. A letter will be sent to the Heritage Village.

Holmen commended the Cottonwood County Transit System for a job well done. Cottonwood County Transit recently received news that due to good to acceptable performance for 2011 our contract amount for 2012 will remain the same at \$124,000, which is not the case for many transit systems within the state.

\* \* \* \*

Motion by Kuecker, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to allow Kathy Kretsch to use the county credit card for the purchase of a color laser printer from Amazon.

\* \* \* \*

Motion by White, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to approve payment to Dave Borsgard in the amount of \$480 for work recently done in the Courtroom.

\* \* \* \*

Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson reported on the tax rate for Jackson County and reported that Truth in Taxation notices have gone out. There does not seem to be as many phone calls but there is more confusion regarding the market value.

\* \* \* \*

Motion by Kuecker, second by Schmidt, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 3:52 p.m. to discuss strategy for labor negotiations. Individuals present were: Commissioners Holmen, Oeltjenbruns, Schmidt, White and Kuecker; Executive Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; County Attorney Nick Anderson. Chairman Holmen adjourned the closed session at 4:22 p.m.

\* \* \* \*

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norm Holmen, Board Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly Thongvivong, Executive Assistant