

January 3, 2006  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 3, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Chuck Severson, Ron Kuecker, Norm Holmen, John Oeltjenbruns, Gary Sorenson; Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong; Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson; Ron Gregg and Andy Olson. Auditor/Treasurer Johnson called the meeting to order and asked for nominations for Board Chairman. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns to nominate Commissioner Kuecker for 2006 Board Chairman. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to cease nominations for Board Chairman. Chairman Kuecker then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to nominate Commissioner Holmen as 2006 Vice-Chairman.

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Severson, unanimous vote to approve the additions of the agenda. Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the December 27, 2005 meeting.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to set the 2006 meeting dates for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month and to set the Board of Equalization date for December 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:01 p.m.

Motion by Holmen, second by Severson, unanimous vote to approve department/committee assignments as presented by Chairman Kuecker and listed below:

**Commissioner Department Assignments – 2006**

**Commissioner Ron Kuecker**  
Board Administrative Assistant  
County Transit System  
Environmental Office  
MN Extension Service

**Commissioner Norm Holmen**  
County Assessor  
Family Service Agency  
Sheriff's Department

**Commissioner Chuck Severson**  
County Recorder  
Emergency Services  
Solid Waste Department

**Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns**  
County Attorney  
County Highway Department

**Commissioner Gary Sorenson**  
County Auditor/Treasurer  
Court Administration  
Veterans Service Office

**Commissioner Committee Assignments – 2006**

AMC Voting Delegates	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson Commissioner Chuck Severson County Assessor Gale Bondhus CSSA Director Craig Myers
Area II River Basin Projects	Commissioner Gary Sorenson Commissioner Norm Holmen, alt.
Board of Adjustment	1 <sup>st</sup> District – Phyllis Bakken 2 <sup>nd</sup> District – Lowell Tjentland 3 <sup>rd</sup> District – Dennis Hoehne 4 <sup>th</sup> District – Mike LaMaack 5 <sup>th</sup> District – Jonathan Penner
Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood County Joint Powers Board of Directors	Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns
Cottonwood County DAC	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns
Cottonwood County Ditch Authority	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson Commissioner Chuck Severson
Cottonwood County Law Library	Commissioner Ron Kuecker
Cottonwood County Personnel Board of Appeals	Leon Stalls Dennis Nelsen Emily Doughty
Cottonwood County Seed Capital Fund Advisory Board	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Chuck Severson
Des Moines River Drinking Water Project	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Gary Sorenson
Des Moines River West Fork Project	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Gary Sorenson, alt.
Family Service Agency Labor-Management Committee	Commissioner Norm Holmen
Family Services Collaborative Board	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Chuck Severson, alt.
Food, Beverage, and Lodging Task Force	Commissioner Chuck Severson C. Michael Hanson

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Norm Holmen, alt. C. Michael Hanson, Tech. Advisor
Heron Lake Watershed District	Commissioner Ron Kuecker
Intergovernmental Relations Board	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson Commissioner Chuck Severson
Juvenile Screening	Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner Ron Kuecker
Labor-Management Committee	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen
Land Use Advisory Committee	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns
Mental Health Local Advisory Council	David Lightner Becky Wiens Ree Tschetter Ken Bakalyar
MN Counties Computer Cooperative Delegate	Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson
MN Extension Agency Board of Directors	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen Auditor/Treasurer Jan Johnson 1 <sup>st</sup> District – Karlain Erickson (12/06) 2 <sup>nd</sup> District – Tom Resch (12/07) 3 <sup>rd</sup> District – Robert “Mike” Stone (12/08) 4 <sup>th</sup> District – Sarah Wiebe (12/07) 5 <sup>th</sup> District – Cindy Garcia (12/07)
MN Noxious Weeds Appeals Board	Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner Gary Sorenson Coralee Krueger Mark Hesse
Planning Commission	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns 1 <sup>st</sup> District – Phyllis Bakken ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> District – Lowell Tjentland (12/08) 3 <sup>rd</sup> District – Leland Thiesen (12/08) 4 <sup>th</sup> District – Tom Fast (12/08) 5 <sup>th</sup> District – Phil Harder (12/08)
Plum Creek Library Board	Commissioner Chuck Severson
Prairie Health Purchasing Alliance	Commissioner Gary Sorenson

Private Industry Council Chief Elected Officials Board Members	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns
Red Rock Rural Water	Commissioner Ron Kuecker Commissioner Norm Holmen, alt.
Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Agency	Commissioner Norm Holmen Commissioner Gary Sorenson, alt.
Resources Conservation and Development Steering Committee	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson, alt.
Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	Commissioner Chuck Severson
Soil & Water Conservation District	Commissioner Ron Kuecker
Southern Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council	Laura Esplan, lay member
SW Mental Health Center Board of Directors	Commissioner Chuck Severson Commissioner Gary Sorenson Marlowe Nelsen
SW Mental Health Consortium	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns
SW MN Energy Task Force	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson, alt.
SW MN Regional Solid Waste Commission	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Gary Sorenson, alt.
SW Regional Development Commission	Commissioner Gary Sorenson
Travel Southwest MN	Commissioner Chuck Severson C. Michael Hanson, Env. Officer Randy Markl, DNR
Tri-County Children Day Treatment	Commissioner Norm Holmen
Western Community Action, Inc.	Commissioner Chuck Severson
37-County MN River Basin Projects	Commissioner John Oeltjenbruns Commissioner Norm Holmen, alt.
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County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to discuss a few items. Gregg reported that he received 22 applicants for the position of Solid Waste/Landfill worker and that 10 of those applicants were interviewed. Gregg presented his recommendation for the position of full-time Solid Waste/Landfill worker. Motion by Holmen, second by Severson, unanimous vote to offer the position to this individual at Step 4 of the 2006 pay scale with a starting date of January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Gregg reported that the Highway Department did not receive the diesel tandem truck ordered in 2005 so he requested that the balance of the 2005 Equipment budget become the starting balance for the 2006 budget and the amount of \$77,504.78 be transferred. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Severson, unanimous vote to increase the 2006 Highway Department expenditure amount by \$77,504.78.

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Chairman Kuecker reported on a meeting that he recently attended in regards to a newly created position with the DNR. This position is a Roadside Habitat Coordinator and this individual will work with state, county and township highway departments.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to accept agreement to set the employee contribution for family health care coverage at a rate of \$165.16/month beginning January 1, 2006.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to leave temporary seasonal salaries the same as 2005, which were: 1<sup>st</sup> year - \$7.65; 2<sup>nd</sup> year - \$7.90; and 3<sup>rd</sup> year - \$8.15.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson, unanimous vote to set 2006 clerk hire wages at \$9.25/hour.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to set 2006 mileage rate according to the federal rate, which is currently \$.445/mile.

Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to leave meal rates at the same rate as 2005, which were: \$7.00 – breakfast; \$12.00 – noon meal; \$15.00 – evening meal.

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Motion by Severson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to leave gopher bounty for 2006 at a rate of \$2.00/pair.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to move line item for gopher bounty to the Commissioner’s Department beginning in 2006.

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County Engineer Ron Gregg again met with the board to let them know that the individual that he offered the position of Solid Waste/Landfill worker to declined the job offer. Gregg is hoping to have another recommendation at the next board meeting.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to allow the Auditor/Treasurer to pay regular and customary payments for 2006, which might include: payroll and associated payables; utilities; bond payments; contract payments; payments to other government entities; tax settlements; refunds; reissue voids; well sealing; sewer loan contractor payments; emergency payments; insurance payments and lease payments.

Chairman Kuecker mentioned a few items that will be discussed at the next board meeting. One of those being some information in regards to the Jeffers Wind Energy and the other item will be to adopt an out-of-state travel policy that is required by state statute for elected officials.

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Commissioner Holmen will plan to conduct an exit interview with Kathy Kretsch who will soon be transferring from the Assessor's Office to the Recorder's Office.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Severson, unanimous vote to appoint Phil Harder to another 3-year term to the Planning Commission representing District 5.

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Commissioner Oeltjenbruns reported that the contracts for the Environmental Office cell phones would be expiring in March.

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Auditor/Treasurer Johnson reported that he would be sending in an application for the HAVA county equipment plan sometime very soon and that a public hearing date will need to be set in regards to the equipment plan. Motion by Holmen, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to set public hearing date for Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:15pm during the regular board meeting.

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Chairman Kuecker reported that he recently met with Chief Deputy Jason Purrington in regards to the air quality issues at the Law Enforcement Center and the results of the tests that were conducted by IEA. Purrington will discuss these results at an upcoming staff meeting.

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Discussion was held in regards to a request that Environmental Officer Mike Hanson submitted for an increase to his 2006 salary. After discussing the request, there was a motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen to move Mike Hanson to Step 13 of the 2006 pay scale. Voting aye: Oeltjenbruns, Holmen, Severson, Kuecker. Voting nay: Sorenson. Motion carried.

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Auditor/Treasurer Johnson requested that the board consider giving two of the employees in his office a 2-step wage increase for 2006 due to additional duties related to twice/month payroll. Johnson stated that he met with his staff and they have decided that they would like to try to accomplish the additional duties without having to add another staff to their office. Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns to advance Diane Harder (Step 13 to Step 15) and Sue Hopp (Step 9 to Step 11) two steps and if it is determined that additional staff is needed after all, these two individuals will be adjusted back to a 1-step increase. Voting aye: Sorenson, Oeltjenbruns, Holmen, Kuecker. Voting nay: Severson. Motion carried.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to give all remaining non-union, non-elected employees a 3% step or equivalent increase if not currently on a step. This increase does not pertain to the County Engineer or the Family Service Agency Director as they already have prior agreements.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Jan Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Ron Kuecker, Board Chairman

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Kelly Thongvivong, Bd. Adm. Assistant