

August 1, 2006
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 1, 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; Linda Fransen, Margaret McDonald, Loy Storey, Marilyn Erickson, Tom Wickie, Ron Gregg, Brenda Anderson, Gale Bondhus and Mike Klepper. Motion by Severson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve additions to the agenda. Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2006 meeting as amended.

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Auditor/Treasurer Johnson presented 2007 proposed budgets for several different departments those of which included Court Administrator, Auditor/Treasurer, County 125 Plan, General Administration, Elections, Courthouse Grounds & Buildings, Coroner, Probation Officer, Community Health, County Library and General Administration. No significant changes were noted.

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Linda Fransen, Historical Society Director, and Margaret McDonald, Treasurer, met with the board to give an update in regards to the Historical Society and to request funding for 2007. The amount being requested by the Historical Society is \$52,000. The board stated that they should know sometime in September how much the county is planning to contribute to the Historical Society.

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County Engineer Ron Gregg met with the board to give some updates. Gregg reported that a response letter was sent to MPCA regarding violations at the Cottonwood County Landfill and work has begun to correct areas of the landfill that are deficient.

Gregg gave an update on a few different projects that are currently being worked on and had some brief discussion in regards to the Mt. Lake Trail.

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Motion by Sorenson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to appropriate \$989 to the Minnesota River Board for 2007 contingent on remaining 24 counties agreeing to the increases as well. It was reported that Cottonwood County's 2006 appropriation was \$714.

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The board clarified that the stipend that is being paid to Brenda Anderson for the months from June – September is being paid out of the Veteran's budget.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Oeltjenbruns, unanimous vote to pay remaining miscellaneous 2006 appropriations which include Prairie Ecology Bus, Heritage Houses, Senior Citizen Centers, Ag Society and Tourism.

Motion by Sorenson, second by Severson to increase 2007 appropriation to Heritage Houses (Mt. Lake & Westbrook) from \$400 to \$500. Voting as follows: Aye: Kuecker, Sorenson, Severson. Nay: Holmen and Oeltjenbruns. Motion carried.

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Deputy Service Officer Brenda Anderson met with the board to present the 2007 proposed budget for the Veteran's Office. No significant changes were noted.

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It was reported that the MCIT dividend for 2006 would be in the amount of \$70,745 (Property/Casualty - \$54,709 and Workers' Compensation - \$16,036). The actual dividend payment will be mailed in mid-November of this year.

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Motion by Severson, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to allow Windom Chamber of Commerce to use Courthouse grounds on August 28th for the yearly ice cream social.

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It was noted that the county received notice from the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety regarding their option to renew the lease of the Driver's Exam Room at the Law Enforcement Center for a 1-year term at the same rate. This lease will be extended 1-year from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to set 2007 appropriation to the Rural Minnesota Energy Board at the same rate as last year which was \$2,000.

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Chairman Kuecker reported that he recently received the Annual Disclosure of Tax Increment Districts for the Year Ended December 31, 2005 from the Windom Housing Redevelopment Authority.

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County Assessor Gale Bondhus met with the board in regards to the appraiser position within the Assessor's Office. She asked that the board consider allowing one of the individuals in her office that works as an Assessor Technician be compensated at a higher rate when she is helping out with appraising. Bondhus also requested that the board consider getting the wages within her office more in line with other counties. Bondhus will put together some further information for the board for their next board meeting.

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Auditor/Treasurer Johnson reported that the state recently denied the City of Mt. Lake's request for conveyance of tax-forfeited land and the Mt. Lake EDA

is not going to reapply. After much discussion in regards to how to proceed with the tax-forfeiture properties, there was a motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Sorenson, unanimous vote to accept revised tax-forfeiture list #7 and to add the parcel in Mt. Lake that the state denied. It was noted that the clean-up fund currently has a balance of \$46,000. Motion by Holmen, second by Oeltjenbruns to instruct Auditor/Treasurer Johnson to seek quotes for the demolition of five tax-forfeiture properties. Voting as follows: Aye: Holmen, Oeltjenbruns, Severson, Kuecker. Commissioner Sorenson abstained from the vote. Motion carried.

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Administrative Assistant Kelly Thongvivong presented proposed 2007 budgets for the Commissioner's Office, Transit System and Safety Program. After brief discussion in regards to the Seed Capital Fund, the board agreed not to budget any more funds for the Seed Capital Fund, as there are many other loan programs available to individuals.

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Motion by Oeltjenbruns, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve 2007 appropriation request from Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council (SMAHC) for \$750.

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Chairman Kuecker reported on a few miscellaneous items. He read a thank you note that was recently received from an applicant for the Veteran's Service Officer/Deputy Emergency Management position. He also reported that the RSVP recognition to honor volunteers would be held on August 28th at 9:30am at the High School.

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Commissioner Severson updated the board on a few miscellaneous items. Brief discussion was held regarding Travel Southwest and whether or not the county will continue to give them an appropriation each year. No action was taken at this time.

Severson reported that he recently received a list from the Historical Society as to what they plan to take to the landfill to dispose of.

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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