

December 17, 2019  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Tom Appel, Kevin Stevens, Norm Holmen, Donna Gravley, Larry Anderson; County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Drew Hage, Amy Thomas, Nick Klisch, Kathy Kretsch, Jason Purrington, Kyle Pillatzki, Gale Bondhus, Karla Ambrose, Alex Schultz, and Vicki Beckendorf.

Chairman Holmen called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2019 regular meeting.

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A public hearing was held in regard to the residential property tax abatement applied for by Orville W. Wojahn for the construction of a single family home on parcel number 08-002-0100. No opposition to the abatement was heard prior to or at the hearing. Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve the Orville W. Wojahn Home Initiative application and resolution 19-12-17 as follows:

**Resolution 19-12-17**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING TAX ABATEMENT FOR  
CERTAIN PROPERTY PURSUANT TO MINN. STAT. §469.1813**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes §469.1813 gives authority to the County of Cottonwood to grant an abatement of property taxes imposed by the County if certain criteria are met; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the statutory requirements, on December 13, 2016, the Cottonwood County Commissioners adopted the Cottonwood County Home Initiative Guidelines (the "Guidelines") which must be met before an abatement of taxes will be granted for residential development; and

**WHEREAS**, Orville W. Wojahn ("Wojahn") is the owner of the following described real estate within Cottonwood County, Minnesota:

Parcel #:	08-002-0100
Address of Property:	38479 US Highway 71, Windom, Minnesota
Legal Description of Property:	Tract in SE¼ of NE Fr ¼ of Section 2, (Brief Desc.) Township 105 North, Range 36 West of 5 <sup>th</sup> P.M., Cottonwood County, Minnesota.

**WHEREAS**, Wojahn proposes to a construct a new home on this property; and

**WHEREAS**, Wojahn has made application to Cottonwood County (the "County") for the abatement of taxes as to the above-described parcel; and

**WHEREAS**, Wojahn has met the statutory requirements outlined under Minnesota Statutes §469.1813 Subdivision 1(1) and Subdivision 1(2)(i) as well as the County's Home Initiative guidelines for tax abatement; and

**WHEREAS**, the County expects the benefits to the County of the proposed abatement agreement to at least equal the costs to the County of the proposed agreement and finds that the proposed abatement is in the public interest because it will increase or preserve the tax base.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COTTONWOOD COUNTY, MINNESOTA, AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Cottonwood County does hereby grant an abatement to ORVILLE W. WOJAHN of the County's share of real estate taxes upon the above-described parcel based on the proposed construction of a new single-family home on said parcel
2. The tax abatement will be for no more than five (5) years commencing on the first year of taxes payable for the assessed value related to the capital improvement (new home) outlined above.
3. The County shall provide the awarded abatement payment following payment by the property owners of the real estate taxes due annually. One single payment of the County's share of the abatement shall be made to the property owners of record by December 30th of that calendar year.
4. The tax abatement shall be for the residential capital improvements only. Land values and the current base value are not eligible and will not be abated.
5. The abatement shall be null and void if construction of the new home is not commenced within six (6) months of the approval of this resolution or if real estate taxes are not paid on or before the respective annual payment deadlines.

Adopted this 17th day of December, 2019.

S/Norman Holmen, Board Chairman

S/Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

A public hearing was also held in regard to the residential property tax abatement applied for by Dustin R. Thom for the construction of a single family home on parcel number 25-362-0050. No opposition to the abatement was heard prior to or at the hearing. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to approve the Dustin R. Thom Home Initiative application and resolution 19-12-17A as follows:

**Resolution 19-12-17A**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING TAX ABATEMENT FOR CERTAIN PROPERTY PURSUANT TO MINN. STAT. §469.1813**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes §469.1813 gives authority to the County of Cottonwood to grant an abatement of property taxes imposed by the County if certain criteria are met; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the statutory requirements, on December 13, 2016, the Cottonwood County Commissioners adopted the Cottonwood County Home Initiative Guidelines (the "Guidelines") which must be met before an abatement of taxes will be granted for residential development; and

**WHEREAS**, Dustin R. Thom ("Thom") is the owner of the following described real estate within Cottonwood County, Minnesota:

Parcel #:	25-362-0050
Address of Property:	2280 Seventh Avenue, Windom, Minnesota
Legal Description of Property:	Lot 1 in Block 2 of Hoffmann LaCanne Subdivision in the City of Windom, Cottonwood County, Minnesota.

**WHEREAS**, Dustin R. Thom and his wife, Maria Thom, propose to a construct a new home on this property; and

**WHEREAS**, Thom has made application to Cottonwood County (the "County") for the abatement of taxes as to the above-described parcel; and

**WHEREAS**, Thom has met the statutory requirements outlined under Minnesota Statutes §469.1813 Subdivision 1(1) and Subdivision 1(2)(i) as well as the County’s Home Initiative guidelines for tax abatement; and

**WHEREAS**, the County expects the benefits to the County of the proposed abatement agreement to at least equal the costs to the County of the proposed agreement and finds that the proposed abatement is in the public interest because it will increase or preserve the tax base.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COTTONWOOD COUNTY, MINNESOTA, AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Cottonwood County does hereby grant an abatement to DUSTIN R. THOM of the County’s share of real estate taxes upon the above-described parcel based on the proposed construction of a new single-family home on said parcel.
2. The tax abatement will be for no more than five (5) years commencing on the first year of taxes payable for the assessed value related to the capital improvement (new home) outlined above.
3. The County shall provide the awarded abatement payment following payment by the property owners of the real estate taxes due annually. One single payment of the County’s share of the abatement shall be made to the property owners of record by December 30th of that calendar year.
4. The tax abatement shall be for the residential capital improvements only. Land values and the current base value are not eligible and will not be abated.
5. The abatement shall be null and void if construction of the new home is not commenced within six (6) months of the approval of this resolution or if real estate taxes are not paid on or before the respective annual payment deadlines.

Adopted this 17th day of December, 2019.

S/Norman Holmen, Board Chairman

S/Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Amy Thomas, CPA, State Audit Director, met with the board to review the 2018 Audit and answered any questions the board had.

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Kathy Kretsch, County Recorder, met with the board to present information regarding her salary compared to other counties and to ask that when setting 2020 wages, the board set the County Recorder’s wage at \$76,000.

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Nick Klisch, County Engineer/Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to make a final payment to River City Electric Company in the amount of \$36,470.88 for Project 017-030-004 – Lighting.

Klisch asked for approval for out-of-state travel to attend the 2020 National Association of County Engineers (NACE). Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to allow the County Engineer to attend the NACE Conference in Baldwin County, Alabama, April 19 – 23, 2020.

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Kyle Pillatzki, Assistant County Engineer/Solid Waste Administrator, presented a design and construction oversight agreement from Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) for the building of Cell 8 at the landfill in the amount of \$139,730. Pillatzki stated that Cell 7 will be full by the end of 2020. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to enter into the Cell 8 Design and Construction Oversight Agreement with Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. and allow

the Board Chairman to sign.

Pillatzki informed the board that he had planned to get approval for the 2020 Waste Haulers but hasn't received all the information so will bring to the next board meeting.

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Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to give blanket approval for year-end warrants.

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve December warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 274,516.10
Long Term Capital Outlay	\$ 0.00
County Building Fund	\$ 0.00
Ditch Fund	\$ 11,085.23
Taxes and Penalties Fund	\$3,811,828.95
Agency Fund	\$ 0.00
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 123,012.30
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 0.00
Landfill Enterprise Fund	\$ 0.00
	<u>\$4,220,442.58</u>

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Thongvivong presented revisions to Policy #490 – Travel and Expense Reimbursement. Thongvivong stated the revisions being made is in regard to original receipts. Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to revise Policy #490 – Travel and Expense Reimbursement and post for required period of time for comment.

Chairman Holmen appointed Commissioner Appel to the Des Moines River Watershed Policy Committee and appointed himself as alternate.

Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set the 2020 COLA for non-union employees at 2.75%.

Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to set Nick Anderson's 2020 salary at \$114,000.

Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set Jason Purrington's 2020 salary at \$102,250.

Motion by Appel, second by Anderson to set Kathy Kretsch's 2020 salary at \$71,500. Voting Aye – Appel and Holmen. Voting Nay – Anderson, Stevens, and Gravley. Motion failed. Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson to set Kathy Kretsch's 2020 salary at \$73,000. Voting Aye – Anderson, Stevens, and Gravley. Voting Nay – Appel and Holmen. Motion passed.

Motion by Appel, second by Stevens to set Donna Torkelson's 2020 salary at \$80,600. Voting Aye – Gravley, Appel, and Anderson. Voting Nay – Holmen and Stevens. Motion passed.

Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set Commissioner per diems for 2020 at \$75 per day.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens to set the Commissioner’s salaries the same as 2019. Voting Aye – Gravley. Voting Nay – Appel, Stevens, Anderson, Holmen. Motion failed. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, to set the Commissioner’s 2020 salaries at \$21,750, the technology fee at \$60, and the Board Chairman to receive an additional \$1,000. Voting Aye – Appel, Stevens, Anderson, and Holmen. Voting Nay – Gravley. Motion passed.

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Alex Schultz, Planning and Zoning Technician, met with the board regarding the Environmental Awareness Worksheet (EAW) submitted by Red Rock Quarry for an expansion. Schultz informed the board that the Planning and Zoning Committee received comments from the DNR and State Historical Preservation Office regarding the EAW. After discussion, motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to extend the comment period for the Environmental Awareness Worksheet based on the agreement with the Project Proposer so that the Hydrologist can review to determine if a Calcareous Fen Management Plan is required; until the Botanical Survey/Rare Species Survey is completed; and until the Archeological Survey – Phases I and II are completed.

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Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to pay a per diem to Commissioner Anderson if he attends the Amy Klobuchar Round Table on December 17, 2019.

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Commissioner Appel led discussion regarding the request from Section 8 Housing in Worthington asking for \$2,132.16 for their 2019 budget. After much discussion, motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to pay the amount of \$2,132.16 in 2019 and invite Randy Thompson, Section 8 Housing, to attend a meeting in the first quarter of 2020.

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Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to certify the levy for 2020 at \$11,061,758.50, which is a 3.02% increase from 2019.

Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, to give an additional \$200 to each of the Senior Citizen Centers for 2020. After discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set the 2020 Revenues and Expenditures by Fund. The total revenue for 2020 are \$22,756,646.50 and total expenditures for 2020 are \$22,756,646.50. Landfill total revenues for 2020 are \$1,050,654 and total expenditures for 2020 are \$1,071,697.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Norman Holmen, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator