

February 4, 2020
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 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, Donna Gravley, Norm Holmen, Larry Anderson; County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, County Attorney Nick Anderson, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Gail Timmerman, Paul Johnson, Crystal Reith, Jed Rhubee, Nick Klisch, Dona Purrington, Mike Meeks, Gretchen Warner and Vicki Beckendorf. Absent was Commissioner Kevin Stevens.

Vice-Chairman Appel called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2020 meeting.

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Paul Johnson, Emergency Management Director, met with the board to let the board know that the 2019 Emergency Management Performance Grant is ready for signature. The grant amount is \$18,281 and requires a 50/50 match. Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote (Chairman Stevens absent) to allow the Board Vice-Chair and Auditor/Treasurer to sign the grant agreement as presented.

Johnson reported that his attendance at the conference in Alabama has been scheduled as well.

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Crystal Reith, 4-H Program Coordinator, met with the board to give an update on the 4-H Program and some of the activities that were held in 2019.

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Gail Timmerman met with the board to share some of her thoughts and concerns about Talcot Park. She also complimented the county on the many improvements at the park the last five years.

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Jed Rhubee, Public Works Superintendent, met with the board to report that three applications were received for the Camp Host at Talcot Park this year. Rhubee recommended that Bekah Saffert be chosen as the Camp Host for the 2020 camping season. Rhubee noted that the Camp Host receives a free site for the year. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow Bekah Saffert to be the 2020 Camp Host and to have Jed Rhubee discuss with Bekah Saffert the expectations of the position of Camp Host.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss the purchase of a new pickup to replace the Public Works Superintendent's 2016 GMC Sierra ½ ton crew cab pickup, which has 85,000 miles on it. A Dodge Ram was the recommendation for the replacement vehicle. Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the purchase of a 2020 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew cab in the amount of \$36,862 from Mike Motors off the State Contract and approval to sell the current 2016 GMC Sierra Crew cab on public auction.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer, asked for approval of the Mt. Lake Golf Development Inc. liquor license renewal for 3.2 and malt liquor. Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the Mt. Lake Golf Development Inc. liquor license renewal as presented.

Torkelson asked for the board’s consideration of approving a resolution appointing staff as mail, absentee, and UOCAVA ballot board. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call (Commissioner Stevens was absent) vote to approve resolution as follows:

Resolution 20-02-04

WHEREAS, the governing body of the County must authorize an absentee ballot board by resolution to process regular absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the County must authorize a mail ballot board by resolution to process regular mail ballots; and

WHEREAS the County must also establish a UOCAVA (Uniform and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act) ballot board to process UOCAVA ballots; and

WHEREAS, these boards may consist of County Auditor office staff.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the County of Cottonwood does hereby authorize an absentee ballot board, mail ballot board, and a UOCAVA ballot board, consisting of County Auditor office staff. This resolution shall be in effect until it is rescinded.

Adopted this 4th day of February, 2020.

S/Tom Appel, Board Vice-Chair
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S/Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer
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Commissioner Donna Gravley asked for the board’s consideration of helping out with census expenses. Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to allow the county to pay an amount not to exceed \$1,000 to help cover printing expenses for the upcoming census.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to ask approval to move two employees to permanent status effective February 6, 2020. Lonn Engler (FT Heavy Equipment Operator) and Dan Kelly (PT Landfill Scale Operator), have both completed their performance reviews with satisfactory performance. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to move Lonn Engler (Full-Time Heavy Equipment Operator) and Dan Kelly (Part-Time Landfill Scale Operator) to permanent status effective February 6, 2020.

Thongvivong reported that a resignation was received from Travis Eichstadt (IS Technician) effective January 24, 2020. Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to accept resignation from Travis Eichstadt (IS Technician) effective January 24, 2020.

Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to advertise for the IS Technician position.

Brief discussion was held regarding the Minnesota Viewer’s Association Membership annual dues. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to pay 2020 membership in the amount of \$200 to the Minnesota Viewers Association.

Thongvivong presented a letter dated December 31, 2019 that had been received from Andrew Goertzen requesting that the board pay him \$400 in damages for an incident that occurred on August 16, 2019. The claim was submitted to Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) and after an investigation into the incident, it was determined that Cottonwood County cannot be held liable and is protected by any claims of negligence. After review of all documents, there was a motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to deny the request of Andrew Goertzen based on a letter that was received from Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT), which states that its employees are protected from any claims by the doctrines of discretionary immunity, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 466.03, Subd. 6.

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Discussion was held regarding to a request that was received for consideration of a wage increase for the Engineering Technician that recently received a job offer at MnDOT. After much discussion, there was a motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to move Gretchen Warner (Engineering Technician) from Range 14 B (\$24.21) to 14 E (\$26.45) effective February 17, 2020.

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Commissioner Appel gave an update regarding a meeting that he attended on Monday morning at the Heron Lake Watershed District Office along with area commissioners as well as Senator Bill Weber and Representative Rod Hamilton. Further information will be brought forward to the next board meeting.

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

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| County Revenue Fund | \$ 52,043.61 |
| County Building Fund | \$ 5,395.36 |
| Long-Term Capital Outlay | \$ 910.00 |
| Road & Bridge Fund | \$ 86,227.46 |
| Waste Abatement/SCORE | \$ 4,706.78 |
| Landfill Enterprise Fund | <u>\$ 6,835.66</u> |
| | \$156,118.87 |

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Commissioner Appel gave building updates regarding the Auditor/Treasurer's Office remodel, the Jeffers addition, the evaluation of three potential sites for a new highway building and the transit garage.

It was noted that all ditch levies have now been turned in to the Auditor/Treasurer.

Commissioner Anderson gave an update regarding the 150-year celebration of the county's existence. It was noted that the Historical Society is no longer interested in taking the lead on planning anything for a celebration due to lack of participation.

The board took some time to review the proposed plans for a remodel of the Auditor/Treasurer's office and actually walked over to the Auditor/Treasurer's office to look at the space to get a better idea and visual of what is being planned.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

Tom Appel, Board Vice-Chair

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator