

April 7, 2020  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present in person or via teleconference for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Kevin Stevens, Tom Appel, Donna Gravley, Norm Holmen, Larry Anderson; County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Jim Jorgensen, Kristi Sell, Jason Rupp, Jason Purrington, Alex Schultz, Nick Klisch, Gale Bondhus, Jed Rhubee, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2020 special meeting. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2020 special meeting. Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2020 special meeting.

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Alex Schultz, Planning and Zoning Technician, met with the board to get approval for a Conditional Use Permit. Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the Conditional Use Permit request from Red Rock Rural Water to install two new water protection wells within the Drinking Water Source Management Area in Great Bend Township, Section 8, with the following conditions: (1) shall be in compliance with the Cottonwood County Zoning Ordinance #28; (2) shall obtain all necessary Federal, State, and Local Permits and Fees; (3) erosion control measures taken; (4) USDA FONSI report must be attached; and (5) MDH and DNR plans and specifications must be implemented.

Schultz also informed the board that he would be donating \$5,000 of Aquatic Invasive Species monies to the KARE 11 AIS television advertisement. Schultz stated that approximately 20 Minnesota counties participate in this and he has done this in the past.

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Jason Purrington, Sheriff, met with the board to discuss a few items. Purrington asked that the board approve a Proclamation for Telecommunicators Week in recognition of the work that the dispatchers do for the county. Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to recognize the Proclamation and declare the week of April 12-18, 2020 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and to allow Board Chair to sign.

Purrington presented a retirement letter from Chief Deputy Jim Jorgensen. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to accept the retirement resignation from Jim Jorgensen, Chief Deputy, effective June 30, 2020 with appropriate payout of benefits.

Purrington stated that he would like to move forward with appointing a replacement for Jorgensen by June 1, 2020, so there would time to work together to aid in the transition. Purrington also stated that he plans to appoint from within the Sheriff's Department so would like to start the process of hiring a Deputy Sheriff.

Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve starting the process for appointing a new Chief Deputy and post internally to fill the future vacant Deputy Sheriff position.

Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to promote Tesla Crowell to full-time Jailer/Dispatcher effective April 27, 2020. Crowell’s wage will remain the same at \$20.50 per hour.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss several items. Klisch presented a revised Credit Card Agreement that he would like approved for the Public Works Department. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the revised Credit Card Agreement for the Public Works Department as presented.

Klisch presented bids for the construction of Cell 8 as follows: Burski Excavating, Inc. - \$1,295,105.70, Veit & Company, Inc. - \$1,118,026.00, and Mationwetz Construction Co. - \$889,854.64. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to accept the low bid of \$889,854.64 from Mathiowetz Construction Co. for the construction of Cell 8 at the Landfill. Klisch inquired as to if the board would like to take out a bank loan versus a loan from the County’s general fund. Consensus of the board is to borrow from the general fund as originally planned.

Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. Agreement for Professional Services for monitoring the landfill as presented.

Klisch led discussion regarding the county parks and COVID-19 implications. Klisch stated that currently parks are scheduled to open May 1, 2020. Klisch stated that one option would be to suspend camping in the parks, close restrooms, playgrounds, shelters, and the contact station until May 22, 2020. Consensus of the board is to wait and see if the state says anything about parks/camping and to find out what surrounding counties are planning.

Klisch led discussion regarding the Public Works Department’s 2020 budget and spending and how this could help if the Jeffers Highway Shop addition was to move forward. After much discussion, consensus of the board is to move forward with the Jeffers Highway Shop addition.

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Nick Anderson, County Attorney, led discussion regarding the Emergency Sick Leave Act and how it affects the county employees. After much discussion, the County Coordinator was instructed to share the flyer with the Department Heads again and give some guidance for its usage. Consensus of the board is that the sick leave policy will not be revised to help an employee with child care.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve and sign the Memorandum of Agreement for the Des Moines River Watershed.

Thongvivong state that she did not received any comments on Policy #720 during the 30 day comment period. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to adopt Policy #720 – “DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing for Commercial Drivers” as presented.

Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to accept the resignation from Angie Sykora, part-time Deputy Recorder, effective April 10, 2020, with appropriate payout of benefits.

Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen to extend the probationary period for Patrick Gordon, Solid Waste Technician, for an additional 6 months until October 10, 2020. Voting Aye – Holmen, Gravley, Anderson, and Stevens. Voting Nay – Appel. Motion passed.

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to implement Policy #350 – “Layoff/Workforce Reduction” and to layoff Carly Pohlman, Auditor/Treasurer Office Technician, retro to March 19, 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Once Carly returns to work from her layoff status, her benefits with Cottonwood County will become effective immediately and she will not be required to fulfill the typical 30-day waiting period.

Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve a temporary monthly cell phone reimbursement in the amount of \$60 for the County Recorder effective April 1, 2020.

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to adopt resolution 20-04-07 as follows:

**RESOLUTION 20-04-07  
COVID-19 Pandemic**

**WHEREAS**, the United States and State of Minnesota are under state and federal emergency declarations due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, per Emergency Executive Orders 20-04 and 20-08, the closure of bars, restaurants, and other public accommodations is extended until May 1, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

**WHEREAS**, a stay at home directive, per Emergency Executive Order 20-20 and beginning on Friday, March 27, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. through Friday, April 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., has been imposed by the State of Minnesota, to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus; and

**WHEREAS**, we are all acutely aware that businesses in our county are taking a hard hit during this time of pandemic;

**WHEREAS**, people are staying at home and many businesses are closed or forced to do business on a much smaller scale;

**WHEREAS**, it is our hope that all of our local businesses in Cottonwood County can come through this and still be a vital part of our communities when we get back to whatever “normal” will be;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners would like to remind local consumers that shopping locally and supporting businesses in Cottonwood County is crucially important, now more than ever.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Cottonwood, Minnesota this 7th day of April 2020.

S/Kevin Stevens, Board Chairman

Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to adopt resolution 20-04-07A as follows:

**County Day Proclamation for Cottonwood County  
Resolution 20-04-07A**

**WHEREAS**, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, the nation’s Counties are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet their needs; and

**WHEREAS**, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants address the most pressing challenges facing our communities, from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to fighting the opioid epidemic, to responding to natural disasters, to supporting veterans and military families; and

**WHEREAS**, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 50,000 locations across the country, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our economic and social well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 14,000 Minnesota Senior Corps Volunteers provided more than 1.79 million hours of service in 2019. Cottonwood County was served by 215 Senior Corps RSVP volunteers in 2019. The Senior Corps RSVP volunteers perform their volunteer service work under the guidance of A.C.E. of SW Minnesota – Cottonwood County office. These volunteers provide vital support to county residents and improve the quality of life in Cottonwood County, and

**WHEREAS**, as a County Commission, we work hard every day to make life better for our constituents, and strengthening the spirit and commitment of the volunteers who serve our county is just one of our many goals. We are grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these citizens who are helping make our great county stronger, safer, and healthier, and

**WHEREAS**, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; and

**WHEREAS**, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with local leaders nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, Cities of Service, and local leaders across the country for National Service Recognition Day on April 7, 2020.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim April 7, 2020, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our community, to thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

Dated April 7, 2020

S/Kevin Stevens, Board Chairman

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Commissioner Holmen inquired if the April 10<sup>th</sup> special meeting was still necessary. Consensus of the board is to still hold the April 10<sup>th</sup> special meeting.

Commissioner Appel led discussion regarding the inspection of ditches. Appel stated that according to ditch statute counties need to inspect their ditches, each ditch once every 5 years. The Soil & Water Conservation District has stated they would agree to be the ditch inspector. After much conversation, more research is needed.

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Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve April warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$111,477.58
Long Term Capital Outlay	\$ 41,091.14
County Building Fund	\$ 2,195.33
Ditch Fund	\$ 6,779.69
Road & Bridge Fund	\$ 53,360.00
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 871.38

Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 21,557.40</u>
	\$237,332.52

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Kevin Stevens, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator