

September 7, 2021  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 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 Tom Appel, Donna Gravley, Norm Holmen, Larry Anderson, Kevin Stevens; County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Jim Schmidt, Dr. Jared Schmidt, Paul Johnson, Alex Schultz, Kathy Kretsch, Nick Klisch, Jed Rhubee, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Appel called the meeting to order. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote to approve the agenda. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous roll call vote to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2021, regular meeting, August 24, 2021, work session, and the August 31, 2021, work session.

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Jim Schmidt and Dr. Jared Schmidt met with the board to present an update the Courthouse window grant that can be applied for from the Minnesota Historical Society. Dr. Schmidt informed the board that due to past discussions, and from the results of denied grants, it would be in the boards best interest to apply for a smaller grant of \$10,000 to hire an architect. After much discussion, motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow Jim Schmidt and Dr. Jared Schmidt to apply for a \$10,000 grant through the Minnesota Historical Society to use toward the hiring of a historical architect for the replacement of Courthouse windows.

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Paul Johnson, Emergency Management Director, met with the board to get approval to enter into an agreement for the updating of the stream gauge on the Des Moines River with the City of Windom, Soil & Water Conservation District, and Red Rock Rural Water. Johnson stated the funding from Emergency Management would be \$1,000 each year for five years. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve entering the Joint Funding Agreement for the improvement of the stream gauge on the Des Moines River.

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Todd Preimesberger met with the board to discuss the removal of a late fee that was received on parcel 01.025.0400. Preimesberger stated that he received a notice of a late fee in the amount of \$118.20 after he had paid the real estate taxes in full. Preimesberger also stated he had called the Auditor/Treasurer's office to ask about the late fee and was told that the payment was received after the deadline. Consensus of the Board is that the late fee on the real estate taxes for parcel 01.025.0400 will remain.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to recess as the County Board and to convene as the Ditch Authority.

Chairman Appel appointed Commissioners from District 3 (Gravley), District 2 (Stevens), and District 5 (Appel) to Cottonwood-Jackson JD #40.

Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to adjourn as the Ditch Authority and to reconvene as the County Board.

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Alex Schultz, Planning and Zoning Technician, met with the board to get approval for a Conditional Use Permit applied for by Lee R. Loewen for a unattached garage within shoreland in Midway Township. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the Conditional Use Permit from Lee R. Loewen for a unattached garage within shoreland in Midway Township, Section 32 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) keep a waste receptacle on site during construction, and (4) erosion control measures taken.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss a few items. Klisch presented an Adopt A Highway Program for approval. Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the Cottonwood County Adopt A Highway Program.

Klisch informed the board that the county's roller was damaged in an incident recently. Klisch also stated that the tires and bearings will need to be replaced soon. Klisch presented an estimate for repairing the roller and a quote for a new roller from Swanston Equipment Co. in the amount of \$19,050.00. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the purchase of a new WRT PT13 Roller from Swanston Equipment Co in the amount of \$19,050, which includes delivery, and sell the current 2004 WRT PT13 Roller.

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Kathy Kretsch, County Recorder, re-presented, from the August 17 Board meeting, her proposal of a two-part plan as an alternative to replacing the part-time position. Kretsch stated that her two-part plan consists of (1) approval for 3 hours of overtime per week so that appointment times could be taken earlier or later in the day and (2) raises for her staff. Motion by Anderson to extend the Recorder Office hours three days a week as presented. Motion died due to lack of a second.

No action was taken on Kretsch's request for merit raises for her staff.

Kretsch also addressed the board regarding appointment scheduling in the Recorder's office and the comments that have been heard regarding members of the public being turned away.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Thongvivong stated that the Public Works Dept. is down one employee due to helping at the landfill and that there will also be a retirement in early 2022. The Public Works Dept. would like to hire an HEO so that training can be done before snow plowing begins. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to post internally and begin advertising for a Heavy Equipment Operator position out of the Mountain Lake shop.

Thongvivong informed the board that an employee is requesting a Hardship Leave as they have a very limited amount of sick, vacation, comp, and personal time and will be needing to take time off for medical purposes. Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the Hardship Leave request.

Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to move Jennifer Muchlinski, Assessor Office Manager/GIS, to permanent full-time status effective September 8, 2021, after successful completion of her probationary period.

Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the amended Rural Minnesota Energy Board Joint Powers Agreement as presented.

Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to remain with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for health insurance coverage in 2022.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve September warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 82,504.35
County Building Fund	\$ 2,226.78
Ditch Fund	\$ 9,601.37
Agency Fund	\$ 15.44
Road & Bridge Fund	\$ 88,172.02
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 7,044.27
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 82,442.29</u>
	\$272,006.52

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Commissioner Anderson informed the board that MnDOT has talked to landowners about an undersized bridge on Highway 30 that affects CD #42. MnDOT has stated that they will replace the bridge at their expense. Anderson asked for opinions from the board if a petition would be needed. Consensus of the board is that Anderson should contact John Kolb for guidance.

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Chairman Appel gave a brief update on the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Appel stated that guidelines on spending are still unclear at this time, but he would like to hold a work session sometime in November.

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The County Auditor/Treasurer handed out updated 2022 budget sheets for the board to review before the September 21 board meeting.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Thomas D. Appel, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator