

April 5, 2022  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Larry Anderson, Norman Holmen, Donna Gravley, Kevin Stevens, Tom Appel, County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Jim Hartshorn, Kelly Smith, Paul Johnson, Dan Quade, Jason Purrington, Kyle Pillatzki, Nick Klisch, Mike Meeks, Alex Schultz, Gale Bondhus, David Grev, Gary Bennett, Brian Bennett, Nate Bennett, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Gravley called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2022 regular meeting and the March 22, 2022 special meeting.

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A public hearing was held in regard to the residential property tax abatement applied for by Kenneth Derickson for the construction of a single family home on parcel number 25.819.0050. No opposition to the abatement was heard prior to or at the hearing. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote (Commissioner Appel absent) to approve the Home Initiative – New Construction application and resolution 22-04-05. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

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Paul Johnson, Emergency Management Director, met with the board to get approval for the 2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). Johnson stated that this grant is used towards the Emergency Management Director’s salary. Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote (Commissioner Appel absent) to accept the 2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant agreement and allow the Board Chair and Auditor/Treasurer to sign the agreement.

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Dan Quade, Jail/Dispatch Supervisor, met with the board to get approval of a Proclamation for Telecommunicators Week in recognition of the work that the dispatchers do for the county. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote (Commissioner Appel absent) to recognize the Telecommunicators Proclamation and declare the week of April 11-16, 2022 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and to allow Board Chair to sign.

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Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to accept the resignation from Kristin Porath, Sheriff/EM Administrative Assistant, effective May 31, 2022, with appropriate payout of benefits and post internally and advertise, if necessary, for the position of Sheriff/EM Administrative Assistant.

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Kelly Smith, IS Director, met with the board to discuss a few items. Smith informed the board that approximately 10 years ago MNIT initiated a pilot program (Checkpoint) to assist Counties with the purchase of firewalls and gave assistance maintaining logs and firewall management for each participating county. Smith stated that MNIT is now stepping out of the program. Smith gave the board three options: (1) stay with Checkpoint and migrate the management of firewalls to the counties; (2) migrate to Cloud based management and logging with Checkpoint; and (3) move to a different firewall vendor. Smith recommended option 1 which would have a cost of \$6,167.00. Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the expense of \$6,167.00 from SHI for Checkpoint firewall management software and Checkpoint extended service support for internal firewall management.

Smith also gave an update on the BCA recently establishing a policy that requires all firewalls and VPNs connecting to the Criminal Justice Data Networks to have Federal Information Processing Standards mode enabled. Smith explained how this could cause potential issues with various departments. Smith explained two different options on how to handle this and will keep the board informed as more information is available.

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Kyle Pillatzki, Assistant County Engineer/Solid Waste Administrator, met with the board to get approval for out-of-state travel to attend the 2022 Waste Expo in Las Vegas. Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow out-of-state travel for the Solid Waste Administrator to attend the 2022 Waste Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada, May 9 – 11, 2022.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss several items. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow Public Works to order from state bids two International trucks from Astleford International at \$125,142.08 per truck and plow equipment and outfitting from TBEI at \$108,656 per truck to be paid for and delivered in 2023.

Klisch stated that MnDOT has two 2004 single axel trucks all set up with a right hand wing and can purchase them directly. Klisch stated that this could replace the 1990 International truck. Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to inspect and possibly purchase one 2004 single axel truck from MnDOT at a price not to exceed \$15,000.

Klisch asked that the County Board allow the Public Works Department to sell surplus equipment via minnbid online auction. Klisch stated that the surplus equipment include: two crack routing machines, oil storage system, obsolete power tools and other tools, 2009 Chevy ¾ Ton pickup, and a 2001 Chevy ½ Ton pickup. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous vote to sell surplus equipment via minnbid online auction.

Klisch presented bids for Project 017-599-110 – Bridge L9425 replacement in Mountain Lake Township. Bids were as follows: Midwest Contracting, LLC - \$255,903.95, R&G Construction Co. - \$271,487.61, Mathiowetz Construction Co. - \$277,638.61, and Landwehr Construction, Inc. - \$304,592.55. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to accept the low bid from Midwest Contracting, LLC, in the amount of \$255,903.95 for Project 017-599-110.

Klisch informed the board that Cottonwood County was awarded a judgement of \$4,010.16 plus fees of \$70 against Matthew Buckentin for unpaid tipping fees at the landfill. Klisch asked for approval to send this judgement to collections. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous vote to allow the Public Works Department to hire a collections firm to collect the debt from Matthew Buckentin but giving the board the option to deny after reviewing the contract.

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Nick Anderson, County Attorney, informed the board that he has been contacted by a law school student about a summer internship. Anderson asked for the boards thoughts regarding this. After discussion, motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow the County Attorney to hire a law student for a summer internship for up to 12 weeks at a rate of \$11.00 per hour.

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Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to accept the resignation from Susan Ebeling, Accounting Assistant, effective May 2, 2022, with appropriate payout of benefits and post internally for the position of Accounting Assistant. It was noted that if no internal applications are received, discussion will be had at the April 19 meeting on revising the job description and as to how to proceed in advertising.

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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 Bennett Trucking, Inc. for a shop in shoreland in Lakeside Township, Section 10. Motion by Appel, second by Holmen, unanimous roll call vote to approve the Conditional Use Permit from Bennett Trucking, Inc. for a shop in shoreland in Lakeside Township, Section 10 with the following conditions: (1) be compliant with Cottonwood County Zoning Ordinance #28; (2) shall obtain all necessary Federal/State/Local permits and fees; (3) keep a waste receptacle on site during construction; and (4) soil erosion control measures are taken.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve a reimbursement of \$575 to Jim Schmidt for time spent on the Courthouse Window Grant project to date.

Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to add the Veterans Service Officer to the Cell Phone Allowance listing and to be reimbursed \$60 per month.

Thongvivong informed the board that the U of M - Extension has not been able to find a college student to intern with Cottonwood County Extension this summer and that last summer's intern has graduated and does not qualify as a summer intern but would qualify as a summer coordinator. The summer coordinator position pays more but the U of M – Extension is willing to pay the difference. Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the Addendum II to the agreement between the University of Minnesota and Cottonwood County for providing Extension programs locally and employing Extension staff.

Thongvivong also stated that Crystal Reith, 4-H Extension Educator, has asked to work remotely one day per week and asked for the boards thoughts. After

discussion, the board recognizes that Reith is not a county employee but would be okay with Reith working remotely one day per week but no more.

Thongvivong updated the board on a meeting that was held on Friday, April 1 that herself, Commissioner Appel and Commissioner Stevens attended with Robert Bjorklund of Bjorklund Compensation Consulting, LLC, regarding a pay study. After discussion, motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to enter into a contract with Bjorklund Compensation Consulting, LLC for a pay study not to exceed \$7,500.

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Commissioner Holmen gave an update on a meeting held March 31 in Mountain Lake regarding broadband. Holmen asked that a per diem be paid for attending this meeting. Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow Commissioners be paid a per diem for attending broadband meetings.

Commissioner Anderson gave an update and asked for input from the board regarding a repair on County Ditch #35. Anderson also gave an update on MRC.

Commissioner Gravley stated that she is going to bring the TH60 Corridor Study Implementation Plan resolution back to the board on April 19.

Commissioner Appel gave an update on wind tower production tax. Appel also gave a progress update on the new Public Works site. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to pay Gene Pankonin \$2,500 for an additional 7.7 x 540.13 foot strip of land.

Appel also asked for an explanation on the Property Tax Statement error that occurred.

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Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve April warrants, as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 73,864.36
County Building Fund	\$ 225.00
Agency Fund	\$ 20.76
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 38,623.31
Waste Abatement/Score Fund	\$ 12,395.84
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 17,441.92</u>
	\$142,571.19

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Donna L. Gravley, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator