

October 18, 2022
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, October 18, 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, Nick Klisch, Steve Nasby, Brad Odegard, Shanell Schneider, Jenny Quade, Gale Bondhus, Kay Gross, Breanna Wagner, Nathan Harder, Alex Schultz, Jed Rhubee, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Gravley 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 Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2022, regular meeting.

* * * *

Brad Odegard, Shanell Schneider, and Jenny Quade, MN Department of Corrections, met with the board to give an overview of the services provided to Cottonwood County and answer any questions the board had.

* * * *

Steve Nasby, Windom City Administrator, met with the board to review the Home Initiative Program. Nasby informed the board that since its inception in 2017, 36 tax abatements have been given and the county's portion of those abatements totals \$189,860. Nasby stated that the program is due to expire December 31, 2022, and that he will be attending the November 15 board meeting to approve the guidelines of the program and extend the program for another three years.

* * * *

Kay Gross, SWCD District Administrator, met with the board regarding the Des Moines River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Gross stated that approval is needed to submit the plan to Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and approval is needed for the Joint Powers Agreement between the counties of: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lyon, Martin, Murray, and Nobles. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve submission of the Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (2023 – 2032) to the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR).

Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve and authorize appropriate parties to sign the Des Moines River Watershed Partnership Joint Powers Agreement.

Gross also stated that there will be a meeting held on November 30 for the Cottonwood Watershed (counties of: Cottonwood, Watonwan, Redwood, and Lyon) and representation is needed. Chairman Gravley appointed Commissioner Tom Appel to the committee and Commissioner Larry Anderson as alternate.

* * * *

Alex Schultz, Planning & Zoning Technician, informed the board that he has been contacted by MNIT regarding updating of the Lidar system. Schultz stated that the current Lidar system is over 10 years old. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to commit to pledging \$15,000 for updating the Lidar

system for our area and use buffer monies for the expense.

* * * *

Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to get approval for final payments on three projects. Motion by Anderson, second Appel, unanimous vote to approve final payment to JAAK, LLC, in the amount of \$89,606.81 for Project 017-070-0012 pending MnDOT requirements.

Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve final payment to R&G Construction in the amount of \$197,399 for Projects 017-598-007 & 017-598-008 (Contract 202109) and 017-606-027 & 017-611-017 (Contract 202110) pending MnDOT approvals.

* * * *

Chairman Gravley informed the board that the full-time Legal Secretary would again be internally posted and advertised as the applicant offered the position has declined the position.

* * * *

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to get approval for several items.

Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to move Ricky Oeltjenbruns, full-time Heavy Equipment Operator, to permanent full-time status effective October 24, 2022.

Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to move Michael Watkins, full-time IS Technician, to permanent full-time status effective October 18, 2022.

Thongvivong informed the board that a request for a cell phone reimbursement was received from the Assessor Office Manager/GIS. The request was denied due to lack of a motion.

Nick Anderson, County Attorney, asked that the Assistant County Attorney be reimbursed for her cell phone usage at the rate of \$60 rather than \$30 as she does receive emails on her phone. Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to reimburse the Assistant County Attorney \$60 per month for cell phone.

Thongvivong informed the board that she has received a Hardship Leave Request for 120 hours from an employee. Thongvivong stated that the employee requesting the leave does not have enough banked hours for time off and that employees wanting to donate could donate vacation time only. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the Hardship Leave Request.

Thongvivong led discussion regarding a request from a Public Works employee requesting four weeks of non-consecutive unpaid leave. After much discussion, motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to allow Brent Schroeder, Heavy Equipment Operator, up to 40 hours of unpaid leave to be used by December 18th and at supervisor's discretion.

Personnel policies #605 - #680 were reviewed.

* * * *

Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve October warrants, as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 39,759.19
Long Term Capital Outlay	\$ 538.55
Ditch Fund	\$ 14,861.01

Taxes and Penalties Fund	\$ 226.00
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 52,382.04
Waste Abatement/Score Fund	\$ 1,482.03
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 29,232.05</u>
	\$138,480.87

* * * *

Commissioner Anderson gave an update on MRC (Minnesota Rural Counties) and the Broadband Committee.

Commissioner Gravley gave an update on Transit. Gravley also wanted clarification on the job description that the Ditch Inspector reports to the Auditor/Treasurer. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to revise the Ditch Inspector job description to remove "This position is appointed by the Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners" and replace with "This individual reports to the Auditor/Treasurer."

* * * *

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

Donna L. Gravley, Board Chair

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator