

December 7, 2022  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 7, 2022, at 3:45 p.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, Ann Goering, Jed Rhubee, Kyle Pillatzki, Donna Stresemann, Mike Johnson, Rocky Kolar, Dennis Phelps, Michelle Larson, Steve Nasby, Gale Bondhus, Sharon Vollmer, Barb Herrig, Allan Herrig, Donna McTighe, Mike Bralborn, 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 Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022, regular meeting and the minutes of the November 21, 2022, special meeting.

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Chairman Gravley stated that a written request was received from the employee asking that the meeting to discuss allegations against said employee be open to the public. Ann Goering, Labor Attorney, reviewed the allegations against the employee and that the last chance agreement that was offered was not accepted. Goering stated that the board had two options, (1) termination, or (2) 12 days suspension. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, to give the employee a Notice of Suspension and Directives to be effective December 8, 2022. Voting Aye – Holmen, Gravley, Stevens, Appel. Voting Nay – Anderson. Motion passed.

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Kyle Pillatzki, Assistant County Engineer/Solid Waste Administrator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the final payment of \$256,614.47 to Midwest Contracting, LLC, for project 017-599-110 - bridge L9425 replacement in Mountain Lake Township.

Pillatzki informed the board that Cottonwood County had approximately \$90,000 in damage to major collectors in 2018 due to the flooding and that major collectors are reimbursed 80% through the Federal Highway Administration. Pillatzki stated that resolutions need to be passed appointing the Commissioner of Transportation as the agent for Cottonwood County in accepting the federal funds. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution 22-12-07 "Resolution for Agency Agreement," MnDOT Contract 1052019. (Resolution on file in the County Coordinator's office.)

Motion by Anderson, second by Holmen, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution 22-12-07A "Resolution for Agency Agreement," MnDOT Contract 1052020. (Resolution on file in the County Coordinator's office.)

Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution 22-12-07B "Resolution for Agency Agreement," MnDOT Contract 1052267. (Resolution on file in the County Coordinator's office.)

Pillatzki then updated the board on the new recycling carrier and how

assessments are set up. Pillatzki reviewed the size and quantity of containers that each residence/business receives, how to obtain additional containers, the assessment amounts, and the use of the recycling sheds.

Pillatzki led a short discussion on possible PFAS testing at the landfill.

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Michelle Larson, Mountain Lake Public School Principal, met with the board to discuss the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program. Larson stated that the program is a joint effort between Mountain Lake Public, Mountain Lake Christian, Windom Public, and Jackson County Central schools. Larson stated that the start up funds have been provided from a grant through the Southwest Initiative Fund, regular funding comes from businesses and government entities, and that 35 to 50 investors are needed. Larson asked if Cottonwood County would commit \$1,000 each year for three years. After discussion, more research should be done to see if the county can contribute and, if so, where the funds can be taken from.

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Steve Nasby, Windom City Administrator, met with the board to discuss the renewal of Cottonwood County’s participation in the Home Initiative program for another three years and updating of the guidelines. The draft guidelines were reviewed and amended to add the residential portion of shouses and to increase the limit on a single-family home eligible for tax abatement by Cottonwood County to \$320,000. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, to adopt resolution 22-12-07C “Resolution Approving Guidelines and Renewal of Participation in Cottonwood County Home Initiative Program.” Voting Aye – Holmen, Gravley, Anderson, Appel. Voting Nay – Stevens, as he was not in agreement with having a limit on single-family homes.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer, led a short discussion on a few 2023 budget adjustments and asked if the board would like to hold a work session. Consensus of the board is to discuss at the December 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

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Kelly Thongvong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Anderson, second by Appel, unanimous vote to accept Dennis Erickson’s retirement resignation effective January 31, 2023, with appropriate payout of benefits; and to post internally and externally for the vacant HEO position.

Thongvong informed the board that a Joint Powers Agreement Amendment was received from A.C.E of SW Minnesota for the purpose of adding Pipestone County. Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve Amendment #3 of the Joint Powers Agreement for A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota.

Donna McTighe and Mike Bralborn, Summit Carbon Solutions, were present for the discussion of a proposed Easement Agreement between Cottonwood County and Summit Carbon Solutions, LLC, in Section 28 of Springfield Township. No action was taken but discussion was held regarding holding an open, public meeting to be held after the new year.

Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the retirement resignation of Sheli Fast effective December 31, 2022, with appropriate payout of benefits.

Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow a cell phone reimbursement of \$30 for the position of Public Works Intermittent Foreman.

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Commissioner Holmen gave an update on PrimeWest. Holmen stated that a Promissory Note needs to be signed and a payment of \$306,956 made by June 1, 2023, for Cottonwood County to become an established member of PrimeWest Health. Holmen stated that approximately \$290,544 of this payment will come from Southern Prairie Community Care for Cottonwood County's portion of that Joint Powers Agreement, leaving a balance to be paid of approximately \$16,600. Motion by Holmen, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the Promissory Note with PrimeWest Rural Minnesota Health Care Access Initiative.

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Motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to post internally and externally for a part-time (20 hours per week) legal secretary.

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

County Revenue Fund	\$ 53,413.06
County Building Fund	\$ 3,525.25
Ditch Fund	\$ 3,831.66
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 89,287.80
Waste Abatement/Score Fund	\$ 8,567.34
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 23,979.32</u>
	\$182,604.43

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Donna Gravley, Commissioner, gave an update on Explore Minnesota. She informed the board that she has sent a letter to all City Clerks in Cottonwood County asking for event information or a contact for event information.

Larry Anderson, Commissioner, led discussion regarding the Drainage Workshop being held in February 2023.

Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous vote to pay a per diem to Commissioners that helped at the tax forfeiture open house on November 19, 2022.

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Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to close the meeting at 5:40 p.m. to discuss strategy for upcoming labor negotiations. Present for the closed session were: Norm Holmen, Donna Gravley, Kelly Thongvong, Larry Anderson, Kevin Stevens, Tom Appel, Donna Torkelson, and Kathy Marsh.

Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to recess the closed meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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At 6:00 p.m., the Truth in Taxation meeting was held. One member of the public was there to ask questions regarding the taxable market value of their home. Commissioner Holmen explained the purpose of the Truth in Taxation meeting was to discuss the proposed 2023 budget for the county.

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At 6:15 p.m. the recessed, closed meeting for discussing strategy for upcoming labor negotiations was called back into session.

Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to open the closed session at 6:30 p.m.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.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