

May 2, 2023  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 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, Tom Appel, Norm Holmen, Kevin Stevens, Donna Gravley, County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Mitchell Chmielewski, Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Gale Bondhus, David Grev, Tiffany Lamb, Nick Klisch, Alex Schultz, Ed Iverson, Jeffrey Strand, Kim Jeppesen, Joe Caruso, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2023, regular meeting.

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A public hearing was held in regard to the residential property tax abatement applied for by Todd and Darla Deutchman for the construction of a single-family home on parcel number 05-024-0300. No opposition to the abatement was heard prior to or at the hearing. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote to approve the Home Initiative – New Construction application and resolution 23-05-02 contingent on septic system approval. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

A public hearing was held in regard to the residential property tax abatement applied for by Arlen and Cynthia Klassen for the construction of a single-family home on parcel number 08-021-0400. No opposition to the abatement was heard prior to or at the hearing. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to approve the Home Initiative – New Construction application and resolution 23-05-02A. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

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Mitchell Chmielewski, Veterans Service Officer, met with the board to discuss his concerns regarding the volunteer driver program. Chmielewski stated that it has been requested that he ask the board if the mileage rate could be increased from the current federal mileage rate and if volunteers could be compensated for time spent at veteran appointments. Chmielewski also stated that he is looking into if the DAV would donate a van that would be assigned to Cottonwood County and that a representative at Sioux Falls VA would handle the scheduling of rides. Consensus of the board is to stay at the Federal mileage rate, do not pay for time spent at veteran appointments, continue trying to recruit new volunteer drivers, and that Chmielewski should do further research on the donation of a van and then bring back to the board.

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Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Ditch Inspector, met with the board regarding the purchase of a pick-up. Oeltjenbruns presented two quotes: Higley Ford – 2019 Ford F-150 - \$43,524.00 (includes \$4,050 maintenance contract) and Olson Chevrolet – 2018 Silverado 1500 - \$43,387.50 (no maintenance contract). After discussion, motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the

purchase of the Higley Ford 2019 F-150 for \$39,474.00 (\$43,524 less \$4050 maintenance contract) contingent on test drive and prior ownership.

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Tom Appel, Commissioner, on behalf of Kay Gross, SWCD District Administrator, requested a motion to approve opting out of the policy portion of the Blue Earth 1W1P but requesting a position on the advisory committee as Cottonwood County only has approximately 841 acres in this watershed. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve opting out of the policy portion of the 1W1P of the Blue Earth Watershed, and request notification of Advisory Committee meetings for a County Commissioner to attend if able.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Thongvivong presented revisions to Policy #445 "Offensive Conduct, Harassment, and Violence Policy." Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve the 30-day posting period for comments to be received on Policy #445 "Offensive Conduct, Harassment, and Violence."

Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to accept the resignation from Brent Schroeder, Heavy Equipment Operator, with appropriate payout of benefits effective April 26, 2023.

Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow for internal posting and advertising for the vacant Heavy Equipment Operator position.

Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the hire of Joshua Hedman (2nd year) pending successful completion of all hiring requirements.

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Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve May warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 15,411.54
Ditch Fund	\$ 940.50
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 65,176.37
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 6,065.00
Landfill Enterprise Fund	\$ 9,635.35
	<u>\$ 97,228.76</u>

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, gave an update on the bridge replacement on County Road 6, pavement projects starting after July 4, County Road 13 through Windom, and tree and shrub planting at the new Public Works site.

Commissioner Appel gave an update on the .25 acre cemetery in Section 14 of Dale Township.

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Joe Caruso, Summit Carbon Solutions, gave a presentation to the board.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

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Larry Anderson, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator