

June 6, 2023  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 6, 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, Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Simoine Bolin, Gale Bondhus, David Grev, Jay Trusty, Mitchell Chmielewski, Roy Schmidt, Justin Jacobs, Tiffany Lamb, Harris Byers, Alex Schultz, Nick Klisch, Jed Rhubee, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2023, regular meeting.

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Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer, met with the board to discuss a few items. Torkelson reviewed the list of properties up for tax forfeiture this year and asked that minimum bid amounts be set for the properties. Torkelson added that she would like to offer one property to the adjoining landowner. Torkelson also stated that the tax forfeiture auction has been set for October 6, 2023. Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve resolution 23-06-06B "Notice of Public/Private Sale of Tax-Forfeited Lands."

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set the minimum bids for parcels on the List of Tax-Forfeited Land #24 at \$200 except parcel 25-838-0030 to be set at \$100 and offer to the adjacent landowner.

Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to allow the Auditor/Treasurer to advertise for bids for the clean-up and/or removal of buildings on tax forfeiture parcels, if needed.

Torkelson stated that David Grev, Deputy Assessor, has requested a credit card with a limit of \$5,000. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, to issue a credit card to David Grev in the amount of \$5,000. Voting Aye – Gravley, Appel, Stevens, and Anderson. Voting Nay – Holmen. Motion passed.

Torkelson stated that she received a letter from Tom Seigfreid, CFO and Senior Director of Business Operations, HyLife Foods Windom, LLC, asking for forgiveness on the 4% late fees that were charged on the first half property tax payment. No action was taken.

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Jay Trusty, SWRDC Executive Director, met with the board and reviewed the SRDC programs and projects.

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Tiffany Lamb, Windom EDA Director, stated that she has received a Home Initiative application from Myron and Catherine Vonk for a new, single-family home and that a date for a public hearing needs to be set. Lamb stated that all requirements have been met. Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 23-06-06A "Resolution Calling for a Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Abatement for new Residential Project." (Resolution is on

file in the County Coordinator's office.)

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Mitchell Chmielewski, Veterans Service Officer, met with the board to get approval for funding for an Event. Chmielewski stated that he is collaborating with the Nobles County VSO to put on a regional veterans outreach event in Round Lake in August. The event is being hosted as a non-profit event so the only charge will be for catering. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the funding of \$1,203.60 for catering for a regional veterans outreach event in August and the funds should come from the Veteran's Long-Term account.

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

Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Ditch Inspector, presented a petition and bond filed by Harris Byers. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the petition and bond, filed by Harris Byers, for a lateral to be added on County Ditch #38.

Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to appoint ISG as the engineering firm for County Ditch #38.

Oeltjenbruns led discussion regarding using H2Over Viewers for future redetermination of benefits.

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

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to discuss a few items. Klisch presented bids for safety projects 017-070-011 and 017-070-013, ground-in wet reflective pavement markings and shoulder rumble strips. Klisch stated that these projects are partially funded by Federal Safety Grants. Bids were as follows: Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC - \$1,252,403.56 and Century Fence Company - \$1,493,909.21. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to accept the low bid from Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC in the amount of \$1,252,403.56 for Projects 017-070-011 and 017-070-013.

Klisch led discussion regarding raising the Wheelage Tax from \$10 to \$20. After discussion, motion by Holmen to increase the Wheelage Tax to \$20. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

Commissioner Appel and Klisch wanted to clarify the pickup purchase orders that were made as five pickups will be received. Klisch stated that three pickups were ordered in August of 2022 and he was notified in December of 2022 that two of the pickups were being cancelled by Ford. Klisch then asked for approval to purchase two Dodge pickups at the January 6, 2023 meeting to replace the two cancelled pickups. Klisch received notice in the Spring of 2023 that he would be receiving the two pickups from Ford that were thought to be cancelled. Appel asked that a motion be made to clear up any confusion in the minutes. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow Public Works to purchase the two Ford pickups that were thought to be cancelled by Ford and for the Ditch Inspector to use Buffer funds to purchase one of the two Dodge pickups that were purchased in December 2022.

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Commissioner Appel led discussion regarding a N71 Feasibility Study. Appel stated that ISG has been contacted to see they would conduct a Feasibility Study for a potential North 71 Campus to include the N71 Office Building and the S71 former church. Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to allow the Board Chair to sign the Professional Services Proposal for Cottonwood County Space Needs with ISG in the amount of \$10,400.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Thongvivong presented a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for financing the construction of the new Public Works facility in the amount of \$13,000,000. Commissioner Appel gave an update of the process to date. After much discussion, consensus of the board is to wait until late August/early September to get more accurate estimates and then proceed with the CIP in the amount needed.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to adopt revised Policy #445 “Respectful Workplace: Offensive Conduct, Harassment, Discrimination and Violence Policy” as presented.

Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to add Juneteenth (June 19) to the holiday listing in the Personnel Policy.

Thongvivong informed the board that our Drug and Alcohol policies will need to be revised due to the new law regarding the legalization of marijuana. Thongvivong asked that the County Attorney review the existing policies and make suggested revisions to comply with the new law. When revisions have been made, the policies will be brought back to the board.

Thongvivong informed the board that she has had a request from the Public Works Director to move Kayla Clark, Landfill Scale Operator, from part-time to full-time. Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, stated that Clark could work Landfill – 60% and Parks – 40% during six months of the year and then work Landfill – 60% and Highway – 40% six months of the year. After much discussion, motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to move Kayla Clark from part-time to full-time effective June 5, 2023. Clarks job description and wage will stay the same.

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Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve June warrants, as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 18,088.35
Ditch Fund	\$ 1,298.00
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 62,708.27
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 14.59
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 4,596.98</u>
	\$ 86,706.19

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Commissioner Anderson gave an update on broadband and stated that if we want to apply for grants the county needs to commit funds to the project. After much discussion, motion by Holmen to commit the funds from the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds towards applying for grants for broadband. Motion failed due to lack of a second. Consensus of the board is to find out what is needed from

Federated Broadband and bring back to the board at the next meeting.

Anderson also led discussion regarding ARPA funds and the possibility of non-designated funds being taken back. Consensus of the board is to have a financial discussion at the next meeting.

Commissioner Appel informed the board that there will be a meeting between the County Recorder, County Auditor/Treasurer, County Attorney, and County Assessor in regards to the Hauge Cemetery ownership question.

Appel also led discussion regarding the future public works site and the possibility of future building expansion.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:54 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