

June 20, 2023
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 3:30 p.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, Becky Buchholz, Alex Schultz, Tiffany Lamb, Nick Klisch, Dominic Jones, Jason Purrington, Tim Evers, Steve Nasby, Gale Bondhus, David Grev, Michael Schuman, Chris Wolf, Rebecca Tolan, Hilary Mathis, Tracey Hildebrandt, Clark Lingbeek, Mindy DeWall, Diane Kruger, Sharon Drew, Nashar Alqadi, Scott Arndtson, John Hoscheid, Peggy Klasse, Michael Mueller, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Holmen, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2023, regular meeting.

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Chairman Anderson, along with Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer, led a financial discussion. Torkelson presented a cash balance spreadsheet as of May 31, 2023. After much discussion, motion by Holmen, second by Appel, unanimous vote to designate \$240,000 of the ARPA funds for the Landfill for test wells and vinyl chloride expenses; the remaining \$1,581,323 of ARPA funds will be designated for the new Public Works building.

Anderson led discussion on Broadband and the need for a commitment of funds.

Due to time constraints, Anderson stated that the financial discussion will continue at the end of the meeting.

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Becky Buchholz, SWCD Program Technician, led discussion on the SSTS loan policy. Buchholz asked the board if they wanted to revise the policy to include new construction or keep the policy as it is. After much discussion, motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, to keep the SSTS loan policy as is, for repair/replacement, and do not include new construction. Voting Aye – Gravley, Holmen, Stevens, Anderson. Voting Nay – Appel. Motion passed.

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Alex Schultz, Planning & Zoning Technician, met with the board to get an extension for a Conditional Use Permit that was applied for by Neuhof Brethren on April 25, 2023. The County has 60 days to approve permits and the Planning Commission has not been able to get a quorum together. The deadline for acting on this permit is June 25, 2023. Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve a 30-day extension for the Conditional Use Permit applied for by Neuhof Brethren for a fabrication shop.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to get approval for an agreement for the replacement of culverts on CSAH 3. Motion by Appel, second by

Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the Construction Cooperative Agreement between Cottonwood County and Midway Township Section 12 & 13 Private Ditch Watershed Landowners for the Replacement of Culverts on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 3: County Project (CP) 2023-01.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Thongvivong stated that the resignation of the Sheriff’s Administrative Assistant was scratched from the agenda, at this time, to look at different options that could possibly be implemented.

Thongvivong stated that the HEO position was offered to a candidate and declined. No action is needed at this time.

Thongvivong informed the board that Policy #198 “Utilization of Paid Leave During a Public Health Emergency” was developed as a result of COVID and remains in effect until the County Board declares it inactive. Motion by Holmen, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to declare Policy #198 “Utilization of Paid Leave During a Public Health Emergency” is inactive as of June 20, 2023.

Thongvivong stated that since the new law regarding the legalization of cannabis will take effect August 1, 2023, the County Attorney has made revisions to the personnel policies necessary to meet the requirements of the new law. Motion by Gravley, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to allow for a 30-day posting of proposed revised Policy #730 “Drug, Alcohol & Cannabis Free Workplace” and Policy #740 “Drug, Alcohol & Cannabis Testing Policy” as presented.

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Chairman Anderson led discussion regarding Cannabis in Cottonwood County. County Attorney Nick Anderson stated that all licenses would go through the State but that the County will need to plan and draft an ordinance regarding placement of establishments, etc. Anderson stated that cities can defer to the county or set their own ordinance, but that the county will need one for the townships. Consensus of the board is to work on a Cannabis ordinance. Chairman Anderson appointed Commissioners from District 3 (Gravley) and District 1 (Anderson), the County Attorney, and the Sheriff to the committee to work on an ordinance.

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A public hearing was held regarding the residential property tax abatement applied for by Myron and Catherine Vonk, for the construction of a single-family home on parcel number 15.036.0100. 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 resolution 23-06-20 “Resolution Approving Tax Abatement for Certain Property Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 469.1813.” (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

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Sharon Drew met with the board requesting to repurchase property #24.827.0370 that is up for tax forfeiture. Drew stated her reasoning for the lapse in property tax payments.

Scott Arndtson met with the board requesting to repurchase property #21.414.0500 that is up for tax forfeiture. Arndtson stated his reasoning for the lapse in property tax payments.

John Hoscheid met with the board requesting to repurchase property #21.417.0370 that is up for tax forfeiture. Hoscheid stated his reasoning for the lapse in property tax payments.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer, informed the board that for someone to repurchase their tax forfeited property they must pay 10% of their delinquent taxes and the first half of 2023 taxes by a set deadline, current year taxes have to stay current, and installments of delinquent taxes must be made each year by December 31st.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to allow Scott Arndtson to repurchase tax forfeiture property #21.414.0500 under the following conditions: (1) must pay property taxes under the terms set by the Auditor/Treasurer by July 5, 2023, and (2) property must be cleaned up and presentable within 30 days.

Motion by Anderson, second by Appel, unanimous vote to allow Sharon Drew to repurchase tax forfeiture property #24.827.0370 and John Hoscheid to repurchase tax forfeiture property #21.417.0370 under the following conditions: (1) must pay property taxes under the terms set by the Auditor/Treasurer by July 5, 2023, and (2) property must be cleaned up and presentable within 30 days.

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Motion by Stevens, second by Holmen, unanimous vote to approve June warrants, as shown below, and pay Sanow and Company, LLC in the amount of \$43,175.00 (bid - \$42,750 and additional \$425 for shingling garden shed).

County Revenue Fund	\$ 49,510.10
Ditch Fund	\$ 5,335.24
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 75,336.73
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 2,862.00
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 66,828.20</u>
	\$199,872.27

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Donna Gravley, Commissioner, informed the board that Explore Minnesota will be asking for \$1,500 instead of \$1,000 in 2024 due to new website. Gravley also stated that the SRDC lost two employees and will be doing some reorganization.

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The meeting recessed at 5:49 p.m. and then reconvened at 8:52 p.m.

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Chairman Anderson led continued financial discussions. Anderson stated that 2024 budget discussions will start with the July 18th meeting so that the Auditor/Treasurers office can close out the month of June and give all departments budget sheets with 6-months of income and expenses.

A short discussion was held regarding the budget adjustment for DVHHS – PrimeWest reserves that should come back to the county. Torkelson stated that we won't be paying July – October and half of November's appropriation to DVHHS.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

Larry Anderson, Board Chair

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator