

January 2, 2024
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 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, Donna Gravley, Norm Holmen, Kevin Stevens; County Attorney Nick Anderson, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Auditor/Treasurer Donna Torkelson, Kathy Marsh, Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Becky Buchholz, Nick Klisch, Jed Rhubee, and Joel Alvstad.

Commissioner Anderson, 2023 Chair, called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Anderson asked for nominations for 2024 Board Chair. Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to elect Commissioner Holmen and to ask that all nominations cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Holmen as Board Chair for 2024. Presiding over the remainder of the meeting was Chair Norm Holmen.

Holmen then asked for nominations for 2024 Board Vice-Chair. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to elect Commissioner Stevens and to ask that all nominations cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Stevens as Vice-Chair for 2024.

Motion by Anderson, 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 December 19, 2023, meeting.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- Approve the 2024 meeting dates for the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month as presented; that all meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. with the exception of June 18 – Board of Equalization and December 3 – Budget Discussion Meeting (TNT) which will be afternoon meetings; and that 12 additional work sessions can be scheduled with no per diems.
- Approve the commissioner assignments for 2024.
- Approve to pay Auditor warrants with regular and customary payments for 2024, which might include: payroll and associated payables; utilities; bond payments; contract payments; payment to other government entities; tax settlements; refunds; reissue voids; well sealing; sewer loan contract payments; insurance payments, lease payments, and payments, which if not made, would result in additional penalties, interest or late fees.
- Approve blanket approval for year-end 2024 Commissioner Warrants that will be paid after the December 17th board meeting.
- Approve authorizing the County Auditor/Treasurer and staff to make electronic transfers.
- Approve re-designating official Cottonwood County Depositories as follows: Bank Midwest – Windom; Bank of the West – Windom; United Prairie Bank – Mt. Lake; First Security Bank – Storden; Stifel Nicolaus & Company – St. Louis, MO; Multi-Bank Securities – Southfield, MI; Wells Fargo Advisors – Minneapolis; MN Magic Fund, and Moreton Capital Markets.

- Approve re-designating official Cottonwood County Brokers as follows: Stifel Nicolaus & Company – St. Louis, MO; Multi-Bank Securities – Southfield, MI; Wells Fargo Advisors – Minneapolis; MN Magic Fund, Moreton Capital Markets, and Bank Midwest-Windom.
- Approve \$3,000 Contingency Fund for the County Attorney’s Office in 2024.
- Approve to set the per diem for committee members other than commissioners at \$85 per meeting for 2024.
- Approve resolution 24-01-02 - Resolution to Use Alternative Method to Disseminate and Receive Bids and Requests. (Resolution on file in County Coordinator’s office)
- Approve to set the Cottonwood County crop damage rates at \$900/acre for corn and \$600/acre for soybeans for the 2024 growing season.
- Approve one-time half-price tipping fee of \$31.67/ton plus \$6.67/ton surcharge plus \$5.38 waste tax billed to the cities in Cottonwood County for the use of a city wide clean up in 2024 and allow the Solid Waste Department to pick up mattresses at the city-wide events at a charge of \$2 per piece. The pick-up price does not include the \$15 fee for disposal.
- Approve the 2024 Fees Charged by County Offices listing as presented.
- Approve Resolution 24-01-02A - Big Bend Snowriders Club. (Resolution on file in County Coordinator’s office)

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

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to re-open the public hearing for the petition of Harris Byers for a lateral to Cottonwood County Ditch #38 and appoint Commissioner Holmen as Chair.

Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to adopt the Findings and Order for Detailed Survey and Detailed Survey Report for a lateral to Cottonwood County Ditch #38.

Chairman Holmen declared the public hearing closed.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to set the 2024 County Ditch assessment interest rate at 3%.

Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Ditch Inspector, asked for approval to collect bids for tree and brush control on open ditches. Oeltjenbruns stated that B&W Control Specialists have not sprayed this year and trees and brush are starting to get out of hand. Consensus of the board is to approve the Ditch Inspector collecting bids for tree and brush control in open ditches.

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to move forward with the redetermination of benefits on the list of ditches presented.

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

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Becky Buchholz, SWCD Program Technician, met with the board to get approval to apply for SSTS loan funds. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve applying for MN Pollution Control (MPCA) Clean Water Partnership (CWP) loan funds in the amount of \$750,000 for SSTS replacements.

Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to set the interest rate at 3% for 10 years homeowner SSTS loan repayments.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, presented and reviewed the 5-year construction plan and a bridge priority listing.

Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-01-02B "Bridge Replacement Priority List". (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator's Office.)

Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the 5-year construction plan as presented and allow the County Engineer to advertise 2024 projects for bids.

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution 24-01-02C – Establishing County State Aid Highway. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator's Office.)

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Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the Mountain Lake Golf Development, Inc. liquor license renewal.

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a few items. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to promote Susan Horkey to Chief Deputy Recorder effective January 1, 2024, on Range 13, Step 5 (\$27.93 per hour).

Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to set meal rates for 2024 at \$11.00 for breakfast, \$17.00 for lunch and \$22.00 for evening meal. These amounts include a 20% gratuity.

Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to set 2024 seasonal wages as follows: \$14.75 – 1st year; \$15.25 – 2nd year; \$15.75 – 3rd year; \$16.25 – 4⁺ years.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve *Cottonwood County Citizen* as the official county newspaper for 2024.

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Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve January warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 1,580.69
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 33,742.21
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 14,814.23</u>
	\$ 50,137.13

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, informed the board that the federal mileage rate for 2024 is \$0.67.

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Commissioner Appel led a brief discussion on the Courthouse windows and the small historical grants. Appel also led discussion regarding the new Minnesota flag and gave an update on a meeting pertaining to Highway 60 – Mountain Lake.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Donna Torkelson, Auditor/Treasurer

Norman Holmen, Board Chair

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator