

March 5, 2024  
Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom, MN. Present for all or portions of the meeting were: Commissioners Norm Holmen, Larry Anderson, Tom Appel, Donna Gravley, Kevin Stevens; County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, Chief Deputy Auditor/Treasurer Carolyn Rempel, Kathy Marsh, Becky Buchholz, Alex Schultz, Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Jason Purrington, Sherry Sevcik, Bruce Sevcik, and Joel Alvstad. .

Chairman Holmen called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the agenda as amended. Motion by Anderson, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2024, regular meeting and the minutes of the February 26, 2024, special meeting.

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Becky Buchholz, SWCD Program Technician, informed the board that Cottonwood County was awarded \$750,000 for the Clean Water Partnership SSTS loan program through MPCA. Buchholz presented a resolution authorizing acceptance into the agreement and the signing of a Docusign Agreement. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05 Clean Water Partnership SSTS Loan Project 2.0. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator's office.)

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Alex Schultz, Planning and Zoning Technician, met with the board to review the Feedlot Annual Review and Financial Report. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the FY2023 Feedlot Annual Review and Financial Report.

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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.

Dylan Oeltjenbruns, Ditch Inspector, presented bids for the County Ditch #21 repair. Motion by Appel, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve low bid from Noomen Excavating, LLC in the amount of \$199,066.23 for the repair of County Ditch #21. (Bids are on file in the Ditch Inspector's office)

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

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Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the Agreement for Professional Services with Short Elliott Hendricksen, Inc. for FY 2024 Cottonwood County Landfill Services in an amount not to exceed \$39,840.

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Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05A DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant – Attachment A. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator's office.)

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Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05B HSEM Hazard Mitigation Plan Process Update. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

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Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator, met with the board to discuss a number of items. Thongvivong and Commissioner Appel led discussion on how the board wants to proceed after receiving a letter from the Brown-Nicollet Community Health Board regarding their final dissolution date of December 31, 2024. After a short discussion, motion by Anderson, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to notify the Minnesota Department of Health that Cottonwood County will utilize their services beginning in 2025.

The letter of concern from Mike Lohre was discussed and the consensus of the board is that individual Commissioners can respond to Lohre but the board will take no action.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to move Katie Jenkins, Deputy Recorder, to permanent full-time status effective March 11, 2024, after successfully completing her probationary period.

Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to approve the Agreement between Cottonwood and Jackson Counties for Services of a Victim Witness Coordinator.

Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve advertising for a full-time County Attorney to fulfill the remainder of the term. The starting wage will be \$100,000 or dependent upon qualifications.

Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05C 2024 Cottonwood County Sheriff Salary Resolution, which sets the salary at \$125,803. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05E 2024 Cottonwood County Recorder Salary Resolution, which sets the salary at \$87,000. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

Motion by Gravley, second by Appel, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05D 2024 Cottonwood County Attorney Salary Resolution, which sets the salary at \$130,000. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

Motion by Gravley, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to approve resolution 24-03-05F 2024 Cottonwood County Auditor/Treasurer Salary Resolution, which sets the salary at \$99,500. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator’s office.)

Commissioner Anderson led discussion regarding the County Engineer’s salary and possibly giving him a market value adjustment. After a short discussion, motion by Anderson, second by Gravley to change the County Engineer’s 2024 salary to \$138,976.16 and make retroactive to December 18, 2023. Voting Aye – Gravley, Anderson, Stevens, Holmen. Voting Nay – Appel. Motion passed.

Commissioner Appel led discussion regarding the County Coordinator’s and former County Assessor’s 2024 wages. Appel stated that the three Department Head positions, on the matrix, that only received a COLA for 2024 were the County Engineer, County Coordinator, and the former County Assessor, and to be fair, if reviewing one position, the other two positions should be reviewed. No action was taken.

A short discussion was held regarding the Elected Official Health Insurance Policy and a request for a change to the policy. The board consensus is that further clarification is needed.

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Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve March warrants as follows:

County Revenue Fund	\$ 21,023.86
Ditch Fund	\$ 23,433.01
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 43,241.34
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 65.00
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 19,067.28</u>
	\$106,830.49

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Commissioner Appel gave a Courthouse windows update and stated that the County Coordinator is setting up a meeting between herself, Commissioners Holmen and Appel, Jim and Jared Schmidt, and Engen Engineering to get clarification on a few items.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

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Carolyn Rempel  
Chief Deputy Auditor/Treasurer

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Norman Holmen, Board Chair

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Kelly Thongvong, County Coordinator