

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

The Cottonwood County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 2, 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, Auditor/Treasurer Carolyn Rempel, Kathy Marsh, Becky Buchholz, Nick Klisch, Kathy Kretsch, Bonnie Christianson, Crystal Reith, Teresa Determan-Schwartz, Angela Larson, Galen Kauffman, and Joel Alvstad.

Chairman Holmen 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 Anderson, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024, regular meeting.

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Bonnie Christianson, Extension Regional Director, Crystal Reith, 4-H Extension Educator, and Teresa Determan-Schwartz, Extension Office Manager, met with the board to give an update on Extension and 4-H activities from the past year and future events that are being planned.

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Angela Larson, UCAP, met with the board to discuss how United Community Action can help Cottonwood County with utilizing the Statewide Affordable Housing Aid funds and answered questions that the board had.

Galen Kauffman, Rebuilding Together Minnesota, gave a five-minute presentation on the Rebuilding Together Minnesota Organization and stated they could also help utilize the funds in Cottonwood County. Consensus of the board is to have Kauffman bring a presentation to the board at the next meeting.

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Becky Buchholz, SWCD Program Technician, met with the board to get approval for the Clean Water Partnership (CWP) General Obligation Note and resolution needed for Cottonwood County SSTS Loan Project 2.0. Motion by Appel, second by Anderson, unanimous roll call vote to adopt resolution 24-04-02 Resolution Relating to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Clean Water Partnership; Authorizing the County to Borrow Money from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and to Lend Money to Eligible Participants and Eligible Lenders to Fund Projects for the Control and Abatement of Water Pollution. (Resolution is on file in the County Coordinator's Office.)

Motion by Stevens, second by Appel, unanimous vote to approve the General Obligation Note for Cottonwood County SSTS Loan Project 2.0 in the amount of \$1,500,000.

Buchholz stated that Ulland Brothers, Inc. has submitted a Wetland Conservation Act application and that there will be wetland impact area of .09527 that will need .1905 acres of wetland bank credits. Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to approve the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act Notice of Decision – Wetland Boundary/Type and Replacement Plan for Ulland Brothers, Inc.

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Nick Klisch, Public Works Director, met with the board to review the bids received for Projects 017-599-112, Bridge L6527 replacement, and 017-599-113, Bridge L6523 replacement, in Westbrook Township. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to accept the low bid of \$333,125.30 from R & E Enterprises of Mankato, Inc. for Projects 017-599-112 and 01-599-113. (Bids are on file in the County Coordinator’s Office).

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Kathy Kretsch, County Recorder, met with the board for approval to purchase Optical Character Recognition Software. Kretsch explained how this software will help with real estate recordings in her office. Kretsch stated that a perpetual license would be \$21,600 and a 5-year OCR maintenance cost would be \$20,700. Motion by Stevens, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to approve the purchase of Optical Character Recognition Software and maintenance from West Central Indexing in the amount of \$42,300 and pay the expense from the Recorder Technology Fund.

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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 recognize the Telecommunicators Proclamation and declare the week of April 14-20, 2024, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and to allow the Board Chair to sign.

Thongvivong stated that interviews were held on April 1 for seasonal applicants. Thongvivong stated that the Public Works Department had asked to hire eight employees, but after interviews, would like to hire nine employees. Motion by Anderson, second by Gravley, unanimous vote to hire nine seasonal employees pending successful completion of all hiring requirements. Thongvivong stated that the names of the seasonal employees will be brought to the next meeting.

Thongvivong presented quotes for the removal of a tree on a tax forfeiture property. Quotes were as follows: Keck Tree Service - \$5,800; Carr’s Tree Service - \$5,000; Thate’s Tree Service - \$12,000; and Kolander Tree Service - \$9,500. Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to accept the low bid from Carr’s Tree Service in the amount of \$5,000 to remove the co-dominant Cottonwood tree and haul all debris from tax forfeiture property 25.833.0010.

Motion by Gravley, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to enter into a lease agreement with BARC for the rental of office space for the Cottonwood County A.C.E. Director at \$200 per month beginning April 1, 2024.

Motion by Appel, second by Stevens, unanimous vote to accept the retirement resignation from Ricky Oeltjenbruns, Heavy Equipment Operator, effective April 30, 2024, with appropriate payout of benefits. Oeltjenbruns last working day will be April 9, 2024, and will use comp and vacation time until April 30th.

Motion by Stevens, second by Anderson, unanimous vote to allow the County Coordinator to post and advertise for the position of Heavy Equipment Operator.

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Commissioner Gravley gave an update on Explore Southwest Minnesota.

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

County Revenue Fund	\$ 15,181.77
Long Term Capital Outlay	\$ 1,030.00
County Building Fund	\$ 25,439.05
Ditch Fund	\$ 16,925.75
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 17,817.77
Waste Abatement/SCORE	\$ 100.00
Landfill Enterprise Fund	<u>\$ 17,550.95</u>
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Chairman Norm Holmen appointed himself, Commissioner Tom Appel and County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong to the negotiation team for union contracts.

Chairman Norm Holmen appointed himself, Commissioner Tom Appel, County Coordinator Kelly Thongvivong, and Human Resources Technician Kathy Marsh to a health insurance committee.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Carolyn Rempel, Auditor/Treasurer

Norman Holmen, Board Chair

Kelly Thongvivong, County Coordinator