

Traverse County Commissioner Board
Regular Meeting
December 3, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Chair Kevin Leininger. Other commissioners present included Dave Salberg, Don Appel, Jerry Deal and Todd Johnson. The pledge was recited. The agenda was approved with the addition of the Alliance Pipeline Settlement, upon a motion by Deal and second by Appel.

Larry Haukos/Highway Engineer- Haukos discussed the development of a policy for the responsibility of costs for county road ditches for tiling projects. Consensus was it was the responsibility of the tiling company or owner of the project. Salberg recommended having a policy. Haukos agreed to present a draft at the next Board meeting. Haukos reviewed the 2013 and 2014 equipment rental rates. Deal made a motion to approve the rental rates with an amendment to the snow blower rates, and T. Johnson seconded it. It carried unanimously. Haukos discussed the Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) offer to store a snow blower in their heated shop. Highway would use it as needed but SWCD could use it for the storage plus at the rate without an operator. Salberg made a motion to approve the agreement with SWCD for joint use of the snow blower and Deal seconded it. It was approved unanimously. A motion was made by Salberg and seconded by T. Johnson to approve application of salt and sand at the Traverse Care Center for \$50.00 per application. The motion carried unanimously. Haukos also provided a Maintenance and Engineering/Administration department update.

Brion Plautz/Trevor Wright/Sheriff's Department- Plautz discussed the monthly jail report and one inmate with some health issues requiring repeated hospitalizations. He also discussed the Traverse Care Center's cost for the meal contract. The increase will result in an increase of \$3.00 per day. The daily boarding rate for each prisoner will increase by the same rate. Plautz also discussed the need for two new vehicles for 2014. The best rates support leasing 4x4's. Wright discussed leasing is a change for Traverse County. They will be going through the State of Minnesota. The lease is billed monthly on a per day fee. They will have a three year/85,000 mile contract. All maintenance is paid through the Fleet service other than tires and gas. Leininger asked about installation of radios and whether that was included. Wright explained they will attempt to use what they can from the current vehicles but the rate quoted per vehicle estimates 25 hours labor per vehicle at \$80.00 per hour. Plautz's 2014 preliminary budget already included the possibility of the new vehicles. A motion to approve the purchase was made by Salberg and seconded by Appel and carried unanimously. Wright also discussed the purchase of service agreement with Browns Valley. The League of Minnesota Cities requested some verbiage changes, but the substance had no changes.

Kit Johnson/Auditor/Treasurer- K. Johnson discussed a request received regarding waiving a tax penalty. The individual placed his payment in the mail on Veteran's Day, November 11. The postmark date was November 16th. The postal carrier had some days he wasn't able to deliver and the replacement carrier did not pick it up. Salberg did not support making an exception. Appel agreed the situations are regrettable but people should pay them a couple days earlier to avoid potential issues. K. Johnson also discussed the Alliance Pipeline Settlement for taxes payable 2010-2013. It will roughly cost

all of the taxable districts in the county \$140,000.00 total. Rough estimates include \$52,000 specifically to the county, \$19,000 to the school districts, which is mainly Wheaton, \$6,300 to the townships, and \$8,000.00 to the watershed.

Dianne Reinart/Assessor- Reinart requested the Board allow no abatements on special agricultural applications turned in after December 15th. There are ten applications outstanding. Upon a motion by Salberg and second by Appel, and carried unanimously, Traverse County will not allow abatements on agricultural applications turned in after the December 15th deadline.

Kevin Leininger brought up the issue of acronyms and discussed a letter he received about not understanding the minutes when they include acronyms. It was decided that each department will put a list of acronyms on the county website as well on the bulletin board in the court house, should people need a definition. They will also be defined in the minutes the first time they are discussed.

Rhonda Antrim/County Coordinator- The minutes of the November 19, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously, upon a motion by Deal and second by Salberg. The following bills were approved unanimously upon a motion by Salberg and second by T. Johnson:

MARK SAND & GRAVEL DAKOTA CO	2,462.67
Twin Valley Tire Wheaton, Inc.	14,340.34

Per MN Statute 375.12, Subd. 2, 48 invoices with claims of \$2000.00 or less were submitted, totaling \$21,270.52.

The Bois De Sioux Watershed District's overall plan amendment was reviewed and no comments were made. Deal discussed the November 21, 2013, meeting he was at, when wage increases were proposed for the 2014 budget. Deal provided them with the wages of county staff. The Watershed District was to come back with wage recommendations. Management was asking for 3% this year. Deal had to leave the meeting and after he left they addressed the salary increase. A study committee was appointed and they are recommending 3%. Deal had Antrim read from a letter he received after requesting a copy of the recording from the open meeting. The letter indicated, among other things, that the request must be made in writing. This letter was actually the policy around data practices of the Watershed. Deal is requesting Traverse County staff write a letter to request the recording. His understanding was that the meeting was not closed, so the data does not fall under private data, hence, is not subject to the data practices policy. County Attorney, Franzese, will write the letter requesting the recording from the meeting.

The Law Enforcement union contracts for 2012 and 2013-2014 were approved unanimously upon a motion by Salberg and second by Appel. The Traverse County recognition policy was amended and approved unanimously upon a motion by Salberg and second by Deal. The Traverse County hiring policy was approved unanimously upon a motion by Salberg and second by Deal. The Traverse County Flexible Spending Account agreement was amended upon a motion by T. Johnson and second by Deal. The Board also set aside two possible dates for a special budget meeting to discuss implementation of the Springsted wage study and salaries of the Elected Officials, that must be set prior to January 1, 2014. Those possible dates are December 18th or 19th at 8:30 AM. Antrim will follow up with Justin Anderson, Human Resources Professional, to see which date he could attend.

Todd Johnson discussed his concern for hiring a full-time /37.5 hour per week Extension Office Manager. He didn't know whether the need for a full-time person had been established. Historically the department was funded 50/50 state and county, and he wanted to see the state restore the funding. Estimates are \$600.00 per county household is being spent on the Extension Department's one staff and contract with the University of Minnesota. The total annual budget is approximately \$135,000.00 per year. T. Johnson said that there are 3 public schools and two libraries in the county that also need county support. He has a number of constituents that are not in support of the 4-H department. They'd like the state to restore funding but also have the county support other areas before 4-H. Deal asked about the state reducing funding for the agent. Extension used to pay for two educators 50/50 and now they are one educator that the county pays for through the contract. Office staff has always been paid by the county. Financially the state and federal governments provide no assistance for the educators. Ben Anderson, Regional Director out of the Moorhead office, was also present. T. Johnson is requesting support from the Board to research why there is no funding other than local dollars. The challenges locally are making it difficult to sustain 4-H in the region. Anderson said the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) has an Extension committee where one could pursue legislative initiatives for increased state funding. Persing said there is also a local county extension committee that helps with understanding the breadth of the service. Deal asked Anderson what his role was in the program. He indicated that he provides facilitation of the Extension Committee meetings, budget proposal, program promotion and outreach. Deal asked if there is any directive provided to Persing regarding reports that must be written, submitted, etc. Anderson is not Persing's direct supervisor. Her supervisor shares policies and procedures as necessary. T. Johnson asked Angela Serocki, previous Extension Department Office Manager, how long she was in the office and what time was necessary for the position. Serocki discussed the push and pull and limitations placed on the support level while she was providing human resources and office support for extension. T. Johnson is willing to follow up with the state AMC extension committee and they'll be meeting at the annual meeting next week. One reason Persing indicated that she is requesting a 37.5 hour position is because she's concerned the position will become a stepping stone to future openings in the county and the constant re-training would be detrimental to the program. T. Johnson doesn't support the trend of each department needing full-time, and wants Departments to collaborate and share resources. Persing reminded the Commission that this is not a new position. Persing discussed that Traverse County is not only providing all of the programs that larger counties are providing, but other programs as well. Providing a positive quality of life is important and helps keep people in our community. Persing offered data to support the programming and request. T. Johnson said there are still funding issues that need to be followed up on. The program is not mandated and they need to assess whether the program should stay without State or Federal support in funding. The vision is to try to build support from the state. Persing reviewed the history of when she was hired and the Board ten years ago wanted to know numbers of kids in the program as a measurement of sustainability and funding allocations. Persing offered data showing the 2011-2012 participant totals and there were 239 children in the program including the community club program and other programs at a level of 6x or more contacts. Persing acknowledged that if revenue building is an expectation, she can do that. She just needs time and full-time office support to do that. T. Johnson had concerns with grants and one-time revenue supports that are still not sustainable. He would like to pursue 50% state funding being restored. He would like to make it clear that the position is office

support for not only her office, but for other departments as well. Deal asked about ten years ago whether there was state or federal funding. He does not support state and federal oversight without a financial contribution. Anderson discussed the contract and position and indicated the University of Minnesota provides training and other benefits across the state. T. Johnson acknowledges the in-kind contribution but said that at the end of the day there is no financial resources provided and there should be. T. Johnson discussed the Browns Valley pre-school program now being funded by local dollars now that Head start was cut. The demographics and challenges are similar. Persing also discussed the STEM program to build Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, and Antrim discussed Collaborative funding, earned through Social Services in collaboration with the schools, which is ear-marked primarily for child protection and child welfare services. Currently those dollars are primarily directed to the schools for after-school programs. Appel also asked about the 4-H Endowment and intentions for that. Persing discussed the return on the endowment may be used to help off-set costs such as the State Fair. The final consensus of the Board was that this position, when hired, will need to provide office support assistance to any department in the County that needs it and will continue to be evaluated.