

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
April 16, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commission Chair Todd Johnson. Other commissioners present included Dave Salberg, Tom Monson, Mark Gail, and Kevin Leininger. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Upon a motion by Monson and second by Salberg, the agenda was approved unanimously with the following additions: approval to hire for Deputy Auditor/Treasurer position and zoning map draft.

West Central MN Communities Action

Missy Becker-Cook, Chief Executive Officer and Carol Boyer, Chief financial Officer, appeared before the Board. They presented the West Central Minnesota Communities Action Inc. 2018 Annual Report. Energy assistance is one of their largest funded programs, in Traverse County last heating season they served 228 households with \$171,000. They also served 10 families with an early Head Start program. They have a new Region 4, Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) which will combine all the transportation that we have in our nine counties (Traverse, Wilken, Clay, Becker, Otter Tail, Grant, Douglas, Stevens, and Pope) as well as try to expand in areas like the volunteer drivers program, Rainbow Rider, etc. to provide a more seamless system. Their hope for the program will be that if someone needs a ride from Wheaton to Fargo for a doctor's appointment they can call and the RTCC will be able to set up that ride for them.

Highway Department

Chad Gillespie, County Engineer, along with Brian Koch, Highway Maintenance Supervisor and Lynn Siegel, Emergency Manager appeared before the Board. Gillespie gave a department update. There was unanimous approval to accept the dust control quote from Knife River in the amount of \$1.169 per gallon for a total of \$32,147.50, upon a motion by Leininger and second by Monson. The Highway Department will coordinate the application and residents receiving the application will pay the applied cost.

Emergency Management and the Highway Department are working on flood documentation. Siegel explained that the Governor declared a state of emergency for the State of Minnesota, 66 out of the 87 counties have already declared.

Starting on box culvert plans in house for old bridge structure 78J21 on CSAH 16. Location is 0.3 miles west of CSAH 11 on CSAH 16.

Soil & Water

Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board to present an update. Conservation Corps apprentice placement is finalized and the term begins May 20, 2019. Soil Health Field Demonstration and Tillage Field Day will be scheduled for August.

Soil & Water approved a permit for the replacement of a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) in an Ag zone. There are still grant funds available for SSTS upgrades.

The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is looking at revising one of the access for the Wheaton Dumont Co-Op Elevator Tintah terminal project, so there will be access to the highway. About 8 years ago the Upper MN River Watershed District went through the wetland replacement process for the Toelle Coulee Project these decisions expire after 5 years so we will need to process the replacement plan decision at the next WCA meeting. They will be assessing if there are any wetlands on the 5 tax forfeited parcels, if so then they will need to be sent to the State for their review.

Wheaton Dumont Co-Op Elevator

Philip Deal and Vaughn Maudal appeared before the Board to discuss a tax abatement for the Tintah grain terminal. Their proposed tax abatement is \$50,000 per year for ten years. They plan to serve the county forever and this will provide new employment opportunities within the County, expand the tax base within the county by constructing new structures and the benefits of the abatement will exceed the costs. Abatements are there to help with economic development of towns and counties. Salberg would prefer 5 year abatement for \$50,000 per year. T. Johnson said that he understands that the spirit of this is economic development but we continue to lose our population, with other small businesses the owner pays their property taxes. He would be in favor of a 5 year but would like to hear feedback from the public; he would like to move forward with a public hearing on May 7. Maudal mentioned that this is owned by a co-op so all producers in the County will benefit from the abatement. Monson is in favor of the \$50,000 per year for 10 years, it will bring new jobs to the County. Monson made a motion to move ahead with the abatement process. Deal said that he would like the 10 years because it takes time for the taxes to build up, during the first 5 years the County portion of the taxes may be less than \$50,000. Monson said that farmers need the grain terminal and the County needs it. T. Johnson said that it would help everyone to have the County Program Aid replaced to the amount it used to be. Monson said that even with the tax abatement we will be getting more taxes in than we had before. Monson took back his first motion and made the following motion, to move forward with the public hearing for up to \$50,000 per year tax abatement for 10 years, second by Leininger. Leininger commented that he thinks 10 years it too long, the motion was passed unanimously.

Veterans Services/Solid Waste

Dustin Kindelberger, VSO Officer, appeared before the Board and gave a department update. Unanimous approval was received to appoint Dustin Kindelberger for another 4 year term as the Veterans Service Officer upon a motion by Monson and second by Salberg. The annual electronics pick up will be the day following the city wide clean up in June. We will be having our household hazardous waste pick-up on September 13, 2019. The Solid Waste department will be using the 2003 Ford F150 that was repossessed by the Sheriff's office, it will be used to go to the Tintah, Dumont, Browns Valley, and the County Park to clean out the recycling facilities. The truck will be shared with the Maintenance Department. The State wide tornado drill was cancelled due to the flood and blizzard.

Assessor

Dianne Reinart, Assessor, appeared before the Board to discuss assessment fees. Walter Schmidke retired as a local assessor, he had 7 jurisdictions. The Townships have 90 days to find another local assessor or they can contract with the County. If the Township doesn't find anyone within the 90 days the County has to take over the assessing and the Township won't have the option to hire a local assessor in the future. The Townships would like to know what we charge; the price needs to be set by the County Board. There was a survey sent around to other counties and the average cost was \$12.00-\$15.00 per parcel, Reinart suggested the price be set at \$12.00. Leininger asked if we would need to hire if we start assessing, Reinart said that we need to wait to see how many Townships, if any, we get. If we start to assess we were thinking of hiring part-time. The first step would be to set a price and a contract length, the suggestion is a 3 years. There was a motion by Monson to set the fee at \$12.00 per parcel, seconded by Salberg, followed by discussion. Leininger would like it to be more for the areas outside of Wheaton. T. Johnson would like to increase it each year, \$12.00/\$13.00/\$14.00 for a three year contract. Salberg suggested setting a price plus mileage, Reinart mentioned that no other counties charge mileage. Monson amended his motion to set the price at \$14.00 per parcel for a 3 year contract, second by Salberg and passed by a vote of 4-1 with Leininger opposed.

Auditor/Treasurer

Kit Johnson, Auditor/Treasurer gave a department update. Kit received a resignation from Sarah Dawson, Deputy Auditor/Treasurer. The Personnel Committee met and the decision was made to restructure the Auditor/Treasurer department. Currently there are four Deputy Auditor/Treasurer positions this will be cut to three. The Deputy whose position is being cut was offered Sarah's position and declined. Unanimous approval was received to hire for the Deputy Auditor/Treasurer position upon a motion by Monson and second by Salberg.

There are nine parcels up for forfeiture, the list has been sent to the cities, they have the first option of buying the parcels. Once K. Johnson hears back from the cities he will come back to the Board to set the date of the sale, terms, and prices. Expiration of redemption was put in the paper this week. Tax Statements went out in the mail at the end of March.

County Coordinator

A motion was made by Leininger to approve the April 2, 2019 Board minutes, seconded by Monson, the minutes were approved unanimously. Upon a motion by Gail and second by Leininger, the following bills were approved unanimously:

CARDMEMBER SERVICES	\$5,068.43
GAZETTE PUBLISHING CO	\$2,783.22
MEND CORRECTIONAL CARE, PLLC	\$2,532.00
WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL JUVENILE CTR	\$2,715.00
BORDER STATES COOPERATIVE	\$2,449.93
CRYTEEL TRUCK EQUIPMENT INC	\$2,317.50
GOODHART EXCAVATING, INC.	\$18,850.00
KRIS ENGINEERING, INC.	\$6,699.20
L & O ACRES TRANSPORT, INC.	\$4,225.27
LITTLE FALLS MACHINE, INC.	\$2,974.39

TRI COUNTY COOP	\$22,813.22
WHALEY EXCAVATING, INC.	\$23,500.00
ZIEGLER, INC.	\$4,734.79

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000.00 or less were 71, amounting to \$32,969.34.

The Board reviewed the zoning report submitted by Ben Oleson.

Upon a motion by Salberg and second by Leininger John Fridgen, Ag Inspectors cell phone stipend was approved unanimously.

The Board reviewed the Zoning Map draft and will wait for Ben Oleson's report after he speaks with the Townships regarding their ordinances.

T. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Todd Johnson, Board Chairman