

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
August 4, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Commission Vice Chairman Dave Salberg. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. This meeting is being conducted pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.021, which allows a meeting be conducted by telephone or other electronic means during a health pandemic by the governor of the State of Minnesota in Minnesota Statute Chapter 12. Appearing personally are Dave Salberg, Tom Monson, and Kevin Leininger. Appearing via Zoom is Todd Johnson. Additionally, there are several members of the public listening in through Zoom. The agenda was unanimously approved, 4-0, upon a motion by Monson and second by Leininger.

Highway Department

Chad Gillespie, County Engineer, appeared before the Board. Gillespie gave the Board a department update.

Gillespie is seeking approval for consulting services from Houston Engineering, Inc. for hydraulic analysis and risk assessment for three bridges on CSAH6. Each bridge has a maximum budget for this service of \$4,000. This quote was approved unanimously, 4-0, upon a motion by Monson and seconded by Leininger.

The preliminary budget was handed out so that the Board could look at it and get back to Gillespie with questions.

Gillespie gave updates on the current projects.

Leininger asked if the Highway Department could put chloride down on County Road 9 where the short cut for the detour on Highway 75 is. There is a lot of traffic and it is causing a lot of dust. Gillespie said that the County doesn't have any chloride but he can get a quote from a company. The Board would also like Gillespie to look into what it would take for us to do it ourselves.

Law Enforcement Center

Sheriff Trevor Wright and Brenda Bartz, Jail Administrator, appeared before the Board. Bartz presented the July jail report to the Board with the jail usage at 54.99% for the month. They are working on painting and getting the jail fixed up.

Wright informed the Board they have ordered plexiglass for the booking process, it will go in between the inmates and the staff.

They have received calls asking how the Executive Order is going to be enforced but there hasn't been any complaint calls, if they do receive them the caller will be directed to Public Health.

Wright informed the Board that his office has been busy with the homicide investigation, it is still ongoing.

West Central Initiative

Rebecca Petersen, Director of Development and Jill Amundson appeared before the Board to give their annual update. A video was played as an overview of West Center Initiative. Their work has become more focused on resiliency with the new challenges that our health and economy are facing. They want to work more with Traverse County and the people and communities Traverse County serves.

Viking Library System

Erin Smith, Director, and Bernice Piechowski, Browns Valley Public Library Director appeared before Zoom to give their annual update. Viking Library provides services to member libraries as well as direct services to rural residents and specific communities through the bookmobile and outreach services. They are hoping to get the bookmobile back up and running, with COVID-19 they are limited to the amount of people and social distancing. Right now they have doorstop delivery for Bookmobile patrons and new online library card application option and increased e-content access. For 2021 the Viking Library System Governing Board approved a flat funding request to its six member counties. Traverse County funding for 2021 is \$35,497.00. Jacqueline Peeples, Director of Wheaton Community Library gave a written update and Piechowski gave the Browns Valley Library update.

Soil & Water Conservation District

Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board with a department update.

One permit application was received for the Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) program. There is approximately \$6,000 currently available for SSTS Upgrade Grant funds and we have applied for additional funds for next year.

Wetland Conservation Act: Gronfeld received an application last week for a no-loss project for beaver dam removal and associated temporary stockpile of materials.

Gronfeld mentioned that the city of Campbell requested comments on a water and wastewater treatment project proposal. Campbell and Tintah are looking into several options including sharing a wastewater treatment system which may aid in the sustainability of long-term system maintenance.

The USDA Service Center remains locked with business by appointment only. SWCD staff submitted a RIM Grasslands Easement application for 160 acres in Lake Valley Township. Weed management Grant update: MN Department of Agriculture requested a Conservation Corps Team to assist with treatment of poison hemlock.

Monson asked for the SWCD budget request as soon as possible to look it over and ask questions prior to approving it.

County Coordinator

A motion was made by Leininger to approve the July 21, 2020 Board minutes, with a second by Monson, and approved unanimously (4-0). Upon a motion by Leininger and second by Monson, the following bills were approved unanimously (4-0):

ACCESS	\$2,038.73
FLEET SERVICES	\$3,217.85
HOMETOWN PLANNING	\$2,420.00
HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH	\$6,226.50
SEACHANGE PRINT INNOVATIONS	\$2,984.73
TAFT STETTINIUS & HOLLISTER LLP	\$10,000.00
BROCK WHITE CO. LLC	\$25,756.36
CONTECH ENGINEERED SOLUTIONS, LLC	\$21,022.80
KELLEN/RYAN – 54K LLC	\$6,500.00
SCMITZ/TODD	\$8,275.00

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000 or less were 28, amounting to \$6,713.24.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator, sent out letters to the surrounding counties asking if anyone would be interested in sharing their Social Services Director. Big Stone County didn't reply, Wilkin County said that it wouldn't work right now in their current situation but might consider it in the future, Stevens County would help us out in the interim but they would like to keep their Social Services Director full-time. Grant County would be interested in combining and sent along a proposal. Rhonda Petersen, Social Services Director, appeared before the Board, she looked over the proposal and thought it would be adequate for our Social Services Department. The cost of the proposal would bring Social Services levy request from an increase of 6.56% to a -1.67% for 2021. Some of the benefits of the proposal would be that our fiscal position employee is fairly new and we would have someone with experience to overlook and help guide her in this position. We would have informal access to Justin Anderson and his assistant; they already oversee the child protection and adult protection program, which adds a layer of experience. There is nothing to lose to do the contract for at least one year. One of the biggest concerns with not having someone in charge with experience is the potential for lawsuits. Peterson also mentioned that the staff doesn't want to lose the relationships they already currently have with Grant County. T. Johnson likes the financial efficiency and the savings this contract would bring along with the expertise that we would receive. Monson agrees with T. Johnson and he would like to contract with Grant County. He doesn't think that hiring our own full-time Director would get us the same experience at the cost that they are proposing. Salberg would like to continue to look at all the options out there which include advertising for a full-time Director. He mentioned that all new Directors will need time to get acquainted with the position. Salberg asked about the cost of the other contracts and what the total cost would be. Petersen explained that our current contracts with Grant County total \$122,000 per year and the Director position would be an added \$45,000 per year. Salberg is concerned if we go with Grant County, how the Board will be informed if this is working or not, there are no performance standards in the proposed contract. Salberg would like some time to look it over and ask more questions, he doesn't want to rush this decision. Leininger doesn't want to be merged with Pope County since Grant County works with Pope County as well. But he also wants the levy increase over last year to be zero and this would help with that. T. Johnson made a motion to go with the Grant County proposal, seconded by Monson, with discussion to follow. Leininger is concerned about the possibility of Grant County not renewing the contract after a year, Petersen said that Grant County has made a commitment with Traverse County for eight years with the other contracts. T. Johnson said it should continue.

Salberg said that we are moving too fast and our Personnel Committee should sit down and discuss with Grant County more details, there are too many questions that need to be answered. T. Johnson would like to amend his motion to add that there be quarterly meetings during the year with Commissioners and Supervisors on performance, seconded by Monson and approved 3-1 with Salberg opposed.

We received a resignation from a part-time Case Aide. Petersen would like to hire for a full-time Case Aide. They plan to do some switching of duties between jobs, the chemical dependency assessments that Petersen was doing will be added to the Social Worker position and then transportation and the Drop In Center will be added to the Case Aide position. Hiring of a full-time Case Aide was approved unanimously upon a motion by Monson and seconded by Leininger.

The Preparedness Plan was revised to include the wearing of face masks in all public buildings. The revised version was approved unanimously, 4-0, upon a motion by Leininger and seconded by Monson.

There is an area of sidewalk by the Veterans Office entrance that is hollow under the sidewalk and it needs to be replaced. Chad Gillespie, Highway Engineer took a look and gave some suggestions. Leininger would like Gillespie to get a quote for the whole sidewalk around Social Services, the Courthouse, and Law Enforcement. And also include the area by the drop box and the area at the Drop In Center. We will budget it for 2021.

Salberg adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Dave Salberg, Board Vice-Chairman