

Traverses County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
October 5, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Dave Salberg. Other Commissioners present were Todd Johnson, Kayla Schmidt, and Mark Gail. Tom Monson was absent. The pledge of allegiance was recited. The agenda was approved unanimously with the following addition: newly acquired property, upon a motion by Schmidt and second by T. Johnson. A motion was made by T. Johnson to approve the September 21, 2021 Board minutes, with a second by Gail, approval was unanimous.

Highway Department

Chad Gillespie, County Engineer, appeared before the Board. Gillespie Provided the Board with his department's 5-year Roadway Plan and highlighted the projects that are scheduled each year depending on the availability of funds. Gillespie pointed out the different sources of funding and highlighted the grant dollars received from the Local Road Improvement Plan, these dollars make it possible to get started on projects sooner than projected. Gillespie provided the Board with the Highway Department's Snow and Ice Policy that was implemented in 2019. He provided the Board with the typical time it takes per route depending on the amount of snowfall and barring any breakdowns or accidents. Other items communicated were the progress on the Gap Depression Crack Filler on CSAH 15, at the time of the meeting there was one lane for one mile to go for completion. The CSAH 16 Box Culvert is projected to completed by the week ending October 15,2021. The Fuel Tax Audit that took place went well and the highway portion of annual 2020 audit also went well. New gravel has concluded for the year because supply has been depleted and in the meantime the department is working on clearing rock piles, mowing ditches, and trimming trees with the brush cutter in preparation for winter snow removal. Salberg inquired as to the cost share that Riverview Dairies contribute to road maintenance. Gillespie explained that that there is an agreement in place for Riverview to contribute up to \$10,000 annually but is not specifically earmarked for any one project.

Law Enforcement Center

Sheriff Trevor Wright appeared before the Board with a department update. Wright reported that the LEC was at capacity for the month of September was at 70%. The bi-annual Department of Corrections inspection will be taking place October 7, 2021 and the Deputy Sheriff position remains open.

Soil and Water Conservation District

Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board with her department update. There were no new permit applications for the Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Program. The 2022 Low-Income Septic System Upgrade Grant was awarded and yielded an increase in funds over last year. For the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) the sow barn expansion project north of town, a Wetland Boundary and No-Loss application was approved with no conditions. MPCA Feedlot re-registration deadline is December 31, 2021. Gronfeld informed the Board that at a future meeting she will be presenting a Local Water Plan Resolution to extend the current plan. Gronfeld provided a budget summary prior to the meeting, then fielded questions. Gronfeld went on to add that the staff is currently working on the installation of lined waterway outlet projects to curb erosion along field edges that are going into public ditches.

Public Hearing on Zoning/Subdivision Ordinance Amendment Changes

Ben Oleson, Zoning Administrator, appeared before the Board for the public hearing to obtain comment on Zoning/Subdivision Ordinance Amendment changes. He reported that the planning commission has been working for many months to draft changes to the floodplain zones of Traverse County. T. Johnson

asked Oelson about a stipulation for boundary line adjustments to properties along Lake Traverse to which Oleson affirmed there was such language in the amendments to accommodate that concern. Jamie Beyer appeared on behalf of the Bois De Sioux Watershed District to provide comment on a change they proposed to the text regarding floodplain designation. It was the BDSWD recommendation to focus the definition of floodplains on lands that are already identified on official FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). A comment was received from a Traverse County Resident asking the Zoning Administrator to increase the distance from one-half mile to one mile regarding industrial livestock operations. Oleson indicated that the DNR is currently reviewing the language and that he will review the comments received today for possible further amendments and meet back with the Board at a future Commissioners Meeting after the DNR comments are received.

Troy Fridgen

Fridgen appeared before the Board with a request to purchase a county owned property near his home. Fridgen experienced an incident with a shotgun slug that penetrated his deer stand. Although Traverse County is not currently storing large amounts of bituminous millings, some remain, and Traverse County shares storage space with Minnesota Department of Transportation. County Engineer Chad Gillespie recommended that the County post “No Trespassing” and “No Hunting” signs and request additional patrol from the DNR and that it would be beneficial for the County to maintain ownership of this property. Discussion took place regarding any potential sale and sealed bids would be the process for any such sale. The Board will proceed per Gillespie’s recommendations and the property was not sold.

Assessor

Dianne Reinhart, County Assessor was before the Board with an update to the Traverse County’s Abatement Policy. Modifications were recommended arising from a Department audit. The existing Abatement Policy has been in place since 2014 and needed only a few minor revisions to the text to align with Minnesota Statute 375.192. Upon motion by Gail and second by Schmidt the changes were approved unanimously.

Veterans Services

Dustin Kindelberger county Veterans Service Officer could not attend today’s meeting, will be on the October 19 agenda.

County Coordinator

A motion was made by Gail and a second by Schmidt to approve bills, the motion to approve the following bills passed unanimously:

Fleet Services	3,055.12
Guardian Fleet Safety	10,272.75
Hometown Planning	2,450.00
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES, INC.	3,836.06
WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL JUVENILE CTI	4,377.00
CENTRAL SPECIALTIES INC.	3,515.72
HANCOCK CONCRETE PRODUCTS CO.,IN	2,971.80

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2000 or less were 43, amounting to \$14,249.76

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator, informed the Board that she submitted Requests for Proposals to 13 companies and placed an ad in the Wheaton Gazette. Schmidt reported that she heard back from her inquiry to SiteLogic regarding and RFP, and SiteLogic only designs schools. T. Johnson remarked that he would like to see County Program Aid restored to 1990's levels, and that would be a more viable option for funding than a one-time grant or program.

The Executive Committee has not met again, they are waiting on more quotes to come through for potential funding for the American Rescue Plan fund disbursements.

The County has purchased a computer virus protection plan through the State of Minnesota named CrowdStrike. CrowdStrike was presented as the most effective product from the State of Minnesota.

The health insurance RFP's have come back and there are a couple of good options. The Insurance Committee will meet again to approve a recommendation and it will be brought to the Board for final approval.

The Truth in Taxation meeting date was set for December 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's room. The December 7, 2021 Commissioner's meeting was rescheduled to December 14, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

West Central Initiative requested that the county earmarks the annual contribution to their Annual Fund which gives them greater ease of access to the funds. Upon motion by T. Johnson and second by Schmidt the motion was passed unanimously to allocate those funds to the WCI Annual Fund.

Viking Library System would like to know if the County Board would appoint a 2022 Commissioner Representative to sit on their Board ahead of their usual time frame. Schmidt is currently serving through the end of 2021; no decision for a replacement was made at the time of the meeting. As a Board they agreed to have Zahl contact VLS indicating that a change to their meeting schedule was recommended by all Commissioners present.

Salberg would like to add an additional half hour to the Social Services department update, making her update period an entire hour. Stacy Hennen Traverse County Social Services Director agreed that this would be a good idea for her to be able to provide more thorough explanations of department business. The Board agreed by consensus.

Zahl was informed by the Assessor that to complete the property tax exemption form it would require that there be a specific use applied to the property. Outdoor storage was agreed upon by the Commissioners.

Commissioner's Reports

T. Johnson attended the AMC Environmental Policy Committee and demolition of solar panels and wind turbines was a major point of discussion. T. Johnson learned that the life expectancy of a solar panel is 25 years. He added that in the future if Traverse County were to be approached regarding that energy alternative, that the cost of demolition or recycling would need to be addressed to protect the interest of the county.

Salberg attended a West Central Community Action meeting at which he learned that the initial health insurance bids were up about 10%. WCCA reviewed the financial programs they offer, all of which are

funded by grants, these programs are all income eligible. Salberg attended a Counties Providing Technology (CPT) meeting, the main topic was the new tax program which will be ready by the end of 2022. Salberg also attended a West Prairie Human Services meeting with Pope and Grant County. WPHS is working to combine operational items and issues by the end of the year deadline when they two counties will merge into the WPHS.

Chairperson Salberg adjourned the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Dave Salberg, Chairman