

REGULAR MEETING AS POSTED
BECKER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DATE: TUESDAY, September 9, 2014 AT 8:15 a.m.
LOCATION: Board Room, Courthouse

Agenda/Minutes

1. Meeting was brought to order by Board Chair Okeson. Commissioners in attendance: Okeson, Grimsley, Knutson, Nelson, and Skarie; County Administrator, Jack Ingstad; and Minute Taker, Cindy Courneya.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda with no changes. (Grimsley, Knutson), carried.
4. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of August 26, 2014, with the requested changes. (Nelson, Skarie), carried.

Commissioners

1. Open Forum:
 - a. Dave Goebel, Secretary of the Smokey Hills Chapter of the Minnesota Deer Hunter's Association; Katie Kueber, on behalf of her family's business, the Two Inlets Mill; and Steve Lindow, resident of Becker County, spoke in opposition to a moratorium on timber cutting and auctions, noting the negative effects this would present on logging families, the local economy, wildlife, and the sustainment of healthy, diversified forests.
 - b. Board members clarified that this meeting was not to approve a timber harvest moratorium. They further explained that at the August 26th Board of Commissioners meeting, members of the Resource Stewardship Association (RSA) approached the Board with a request for a temporary postponement of timber cutting and auctions, and the RSA was asked to provide more information. The board was pleased with the turnout for today's meeting, noting that it is good to receive input and feedback from both sides; that their intent is to review timber policies and the update of the forest plan, with the goal in mind to reach a "balance" for forest management in Becker County.
2. Reports and Correspondence: The Commissioners reported on the following meetings:
 - a. Commissioner Knutson: Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority (PLMSWA), Mahube-OTWA, and Environmental.
 - b. Commissioner Okeson: Transit Committee and attended the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Policy Committee meeting in Alexandria, Minnesota, where he was asked to serve as Chair of the AMC Transportation Committee. He

asked for the Board's support in running for the seat and the Board supports this request. Commissioner Okeson also reported that he and County Administrator, Jack Ingstad, have received a letter of resignation from Marty Wiley, Director of Natural Resources Management, effective October 10, 2014. It was moved and seconded to accept the letter of resignation from Marty Wiley, as presented, with his resignation effective October 10, 2014. (Knutson, Skarie), carried.

- c. Commissioner Grimsley: Becker County Historical Society, Recreational Advisory Committee (RAC), Human Services Committee, Finance Committee, and attended the Development Achievement Center (DAC) Union Negotiation meeting.
 - d. Commissioner Nelson: Joint Powers Board, Highway Committee, and attended the AMC Policy Committee meeting in Alexandria, Minnesota.
 - e. Commissioner Skarie: Human Services Committee and Safety Committee.
3. Appointments: There were none.
4. Budget Discussion: County Administrator, Jack Ingstad, presented:
- a. Mr. Ingstad provided an update on the budget planning process for 2015 and an overview of the 2015 Preliminary Property Tax Levy Memo. He reported that the date for counties to set their preliminary property tax levy is September 30th.

He also reported that the current budget is in balance with existing levy dollars, noting that the Human Services (HS) budget is the largest budget for the county. The Human Services budget is also more complicated due to state and federal funding requirements and mandates. Other departments that fall under "General Government" have decreased their budgets by \$400,000 for 2015. The Sheriff's Office will have a personnel request for a Transportation Coordinator, for transporting inmates to Hubbard County, with the results of a recent cost-analysis showing that it would be more cost-effective to hire a coordinator versus utilizing the current deputies.

Mr. Ingstad also pointed out that there will be EDA budget changes with the transfer of the Becker County's HRA over to the Detroit Lakes HRA. He commented on the many changes in key positions over the last year, adding that there will be more major changes in leadership in 2015, with a change in the Sheriff, Recorder, and Natural Resources Management Director positions.

- b. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1K, to approve setting the proposed Becker County maximum tax levy for 2015 at \$19,106,460, representing a 3% increase, with the final levy for 2015 to not exceed this proposed levy, and with an addition to the resolution, to approve setting the date and time of the Budget Hearing for December 2, 2014 at 6:01 p.m. in the Board Room of the Courthouse. (Skarie, Nelson), carried.

- c. Jon Thomsen, EDA Director, requested to approve setting the HRA Levy today for the 2015 budget, reporting that the EDA Board has met and is suggesting a 0% increase from last year. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1J, to approve the Housing & Redevelopment Authority Tax Levy in the amount of \$160,748.00 in the 2015 budget, for the purpose of funding housing and economic related activities of the Becker County Economical Development Authority. (Nelson, Knutson), carried.
5. Commissioner Nelson reported that he and Commissioner Grimsley will be attending the Zebra Mussel Tour on Pelican Lake today at 2:00 p.m. (Fair Hills Resort).

Commissioner Skarie will be attending the State Audit Exit Interview, in Commissioner Okeson's absence, along with County Administrator, Jack Ingstad; Deputy Auditor-Treasurer, Mary Hendrickson; and other staff, in the Board Room of the Courthouse at 2:00 p.m. today.

It was also noted that the commissioners will be attending a joint meeting with Hubbard County on September 11, 2014 at 9:00 a.m., at the Hubbard County Courthouse, Third Floor Board Room, in Park Rapids, Minnesota for continued discussions on the jail and the concept of a Regional Human Services Director.

6. AIS Inspector and Decontaminator Seasonal Position Discussion: Barb Halbakken-Fischburg, representing the Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA), presented:
 - a. Ms. Fischburg requested the use of AIS funds to hire multiple, seasonal AIS Watercraft Inspectors at lake access site operations and an on-site AIS Decontamination Unit Watercraft Operator, plus an inspector at the site, as outlined in the request. The decontamination unit is on order and should be in place by October, with a plan to have it operational for the month of October, to allow time to get it up and running prior to next spring. She also reported that many of the ambassadors that were hired for this summer have expressed interest. The DNR will be offering AIS Inspector Training on September 15th and 16th, with supplemental training on October 1st and 2nd. All of these positions will remain seasonal part-time and employed only through the month of October.
 - b. It was reported that the AIS Panel will be meeting tomorrow and it was suggested to return to the Board with their recommendations before moving forward.
 - c. A motion was made by Commissioner Grimsley to approve spending up to \$13,779 for the hiring of one (1) AIS Watercraft Decontaminator Operator and one (1) Inspector for the Decontamination Unit Operation, as presented, and to post and hire for the positions, contingent upon approval by the AIS panel. Motion died for lack of a second.
 - d. There was discussion and a request for clarification on the current process for bringing AIS related requests forward to the Board for consideration. Ms. Fischburg commented that the Coalition of Lakes Associations had asked that she bring this request forward at this time, due to time constraints.

- e. County Administrator, Jack Ingstad, commended Ms. Fischburg for all of her efforts, pointing out that Becker County is considered a leader in the State of Minnesota in the prevention of the spread of AIS and encouraged moving forward at this time.
- f. It was moved and seconded to approve spending up to \$13,779 for the hiring of one (1) AIS Watercraft Decontaminator operator and one (1) Inspector for the Decontamination Unit Operation, as presented, and to post and hire for the positions, contingent upon approval by the AIS Panel. (Nelson, Grimsley), carried.

Auditor-Treasurer: Mary Hendrickson presented:

1. Licenses and Permits: There were none.

Finance Committee: Mary Hendrickson presented:

1. It was moved and seconded to approve the Regular Claims, Auditor's Warrants, and the Over-90-Day Claim, as presented:
 - a. Auditor's Warrants (Tuesday Bills):
 - i. 09/02/2014 in the amount of \$5,035.09.
 - b. Over 90-Days:
 - i. Arvig Communications - misapplied payment, correction: \$1.37. (Knutson, Grimsley), carried.

Human Services: Christy Ramsey and Ronda Stock presented:

1. Christy Ramsey reported a change in the Human Services agenda, the removal of Item Number 2: Title VI Plan: Resolution 09-14-1H.
2. It was moved and seconded to approve the extension and amendment of the MIECHV – MDH Grant Project Agreements, until March 31, 2015, as presented. (Grimsley, Skarie), carried.
3. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1I, to advertise if necessary and then hire from the Minnesota Merit System, one (1) full-time Nutrition Coordinator/ Dietician, and if the position is filled by an internal R.N., to backfill for the vacant R.N. Position. (Skarie, Grimsley), carried.
3. It was moved and seconded to approve the Human Services Claims for Human Services, Community Health, and Transit, as presented. (Grimsley, Skarie), carried.

Planning & Zoning/Parks & Recreation: Guy Fischer presented:

1. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1A, that Becker County supports the initial Step 1 Application to request that the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission give every consideration at this juncture for designating the Heartland Trail Extension through Becker County as a regional trail in Greater Minnesota, as outlined in said resolution. (Grimsley, Skarie), carried.

Environmental: Guy Fischer, Steve Skoog, and Tara Guetter presented:

1. It was moved and seconded to approve moving forward with the grant funding request to the Initiative Foundation for Pilot AIS projects, as presented, with the total estimated costs for the AIS Pilot Project at \$547,400, and to submit an AIS letter of intent detailing the proposed AIS project by September 15, 2014, and if grant funding is awarded, to authorize the county's match of up to \$54,740. (Grimsley, Nelson), carried.
2. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1B, to hire one (1) Part-Time Transfer Station Worker, due to a resignation. (Knutson, Skarie), carried.

Highway: Jim Olson presented:

1. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1C, to accept the low bid of \$365,006.50 from Anderson Brothers Company of Brainerd, Minnesota for Project CP 003-999-001, for Bituminous Surfacing and Aggregate Shouldering of Otto Zeck Road, as presented, and to authorize and direct the County Board Chair and County Administrator to execute and enter into said contract. (Nelson, Okeson), carried.
2. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1D, to authorize the County Highway Engineer to purchase a Day Cab Semi-Tractor with Wet Kit (Hydraulic Pump and Tank for Lowboy Trailer), as presented in the Capital Outlay Request, and not to exceed \$50,000, with final approval from the Highway Committee. (Nelson, Knutson), carried.
3. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1E, that the County Board Chair and County Administrator are hereby authorized and directed, for and on behalf of Becker County, to execute and enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Transportation as set forth and contained in "MnDOT Agency Agreement 06445", for Federal Participation in Preliminary Engineering for S.P. 003-591-001; M.P. TA 0315 (068); to conduct preliminary engineering for safe routes to school improvements in the City of Frazee, a copy of which said agreement was before the County Board and which is made a part thereof by reference. (Skarie, Okeson), carried.
4. The Highway Road Tour initially scheduled for September 16th is cancelled and will be discussed at the next Highway Committee meeting, for their recommendation on an alternative date.

Solid Waste Public Hearing: Steve Skoog presented:

1. Steve Skoog, Environmental Services Director, presented information in reference to the proposed 2015 Solid Waste Assessment rates, reporting that the Environmental Services Committee has been considering different options and is recommending a solid waste assessment fee be considered on all residential type structures in 2015, due to increased municipal solid waste disposal costs in 2015, along with other program costs. There are also plans for major changes in 2015 with the construction of the new transfer station and the beginning construction of a new recycling facility.

Board Chair Okeson opened the public hearing to allow for public comment. Clarence Suvanto, resident of Becker County, asked for clarification on what the \$25.00 fee would apply to; i.e., \$25.00 for each parcel, building site, or homeowner? Mr. Skoog reported that the \$25.00 would be assessed against each residential structure.

Being no further comment, Board Chair Okeson closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1G, that the Becker County Board of Commissioners hereby declare that the solid waste assessment schedule changes be made to the annual Solid Waste Assessment Rates, as presented and as outlined in Attachment A, the "2015 Solid Waste Assessment Rates". (Knutson, Skarie), carried.

Public Hearing: 2015 SMART Tax: Highway Engineer, Jim Olson, presented:

1. Highway Engineer, Jim Olson, provided a presentation on the proposed continuation of the SMART Tax, reporting that this tax provides approximately 2 million annually and can be used to fund county, city, and township transportation projects. He also outlined the SMART goals and the 2015 SMART proposal, with a request to reaffirm the sales tax for transportation projects annually and for the Board to consider approving the 2015 SMART Phase II Projects. He provided a map detailing the 2015 potential SMART projects for Phase II and a Highway Project List, including 2015 CIP Projects, approved SMART Projects, and 2015 SMART Candidates.
2. The public hearing was opened by Chair Okeson. Ron Zeman from the Detroit Lakes City Council presented a letter from Matt Brenk, Mayor of Detroit Lakes, supporting the continuation of the SMART Tax, which also included a list of potential projects for the use of the SMART Funding. Other comments presented were in support of continuing the SMART Tax.
3. It was moved and seconded to approve Resolution 09-14-1F, as presented, to approve the reaffirmation of the Becker County Transit Sales and Use Tax for 2015, to be dedicated exclusively to Becker County Road Projects and SMART at the rate of one-half of one percent (.5%) pursuant to M.S. 297A.993. (Skarie, Nelson), carried.
4. Discussion and final approval of the proposed projects will be considered at a later date.

Natural Resources Management (NRM): Presentation on Current Timber Policies and Update on Forest Plan: NRM Director, Marty Wiley, presented:

1. Marty Wiley provided a presentation on current timber policies and an update of the forest plan. He presented an overview on background history, forest management principles, goals, forest conditions, decision process leading to a harvest decision,

economic value, and forest management plan. He reported that a draft of the Forest Management Plan is approximately 90% complete.

2. Chair Okeson opened up the meeting for public comment. There were several citizens in attendance, many of them loggers who voiced their concerns and opposition to a timber harvest moratorium. The Board again reassured everyone that there was no intention by the Board to approve a moratorium. However, the Board felt it was good to hear from the opposing side of the issue as well. Those that spoke in opposition to a moratorium included Earl Johnson, Howard Mooney, Paul Lundquist, Ray Smith, Lyle Hodgden, Kelly Kimball, Dave Hensel, and Tim O'Hara. There were also several individuals that sent e-mails prior to the meeting that also were opposed to a moratorium. Individuals representing the RSA that were interested in a temporary postponement of timber cutting and auctions included Chuck Church, Willis Mattison, and Ruth Bergquist.

Paul Lindquist spoke referencing that he is not on either side; however, as a hunter he stressed the need for careful consideration on how the land is viewed, noting that he himself has not seen a lot of new growth in the woods.

There was also a brief discussion on the announced resignation of Marty Wiley, NRM Director, with overall support to hiring a land commissioner as soon as possible.

The Board confirmed that the October 10th auction will go on as scheduled and the Board has no intention of placing any moratorium on timber auctions at this time, nor into the foreseeable future. The Board also thanked everyone for attending the meeting today, noting the importance of hearing from all sides when developing and completing a forest management plan for Becker County.

Being no further business, Board Chair Okeson adjourned the meeting.

Jack Ingstad

Jack Ingstad
County Administrator

John Okeson

John Okeson
Board Chair