

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROSEAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 8, 2009

The Board of Commissioners of Roseau County, Minnesota met in the Courthouse in the City of Roseau, Minnesota on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, at 8:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by County Board Chairman Jack Swanson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Commissioners present were Mark Foldesi, Alan Johnston, Jack Swanson and Russell Walker. Orris Rasmussen was excused.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the 2010 Preliminary Budget and Levy was added to Discussion. A motion to approve the revised agenda was made by Commissioner Foldesi, seconded by Commissioner Walker and carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Commissioner Johnston, seconded by Commissioner Walker and carried unanimously.

The Board, by adoption of its consent agenda, approved the proceedings from the August 25, 2009 Board Meeting.

The Board, by adoption of its consent agenda, approved a Storage Area Network hardware purchase from CDWG in the amount of \$21,047.68

COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Walker announced that a cattleman's tour is being organized and he will be assisting with the planning.

DISCUSSION

The Board discussed the proposed rail abandonment of 20.1 miles of the Minnesota Northern Rail between Roseau and Warroad. The Board supports the abandonment and would like to see the rail line remain in the public domain. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is hosting a meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 for State, County and Local officials to discuss the impending rail line abandonment. Commissioner Swanson agreed to deliver a resolution to Tuesday's meeting in support of this project. A motion was made by Commissioner Swanson, seconded by Commissioner Johnston and carried unanimously to adopt the following resolution:

2009-09-01

WHEREAS, The Roseau County Board of Commissioners unanimously supports the Minnesota Northern Railroad's decision to abandon 20.1 miles of track between the cities of Roseau and Warroad and;

WHEREAS, the Roseau County Board of Commissioners believes the corridor should remain in the public domain, as a multi-use trail for off-highway vehicles, including snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles; and for pedestrians, bicyclists, snowshoe and cross-country ski enthusiasts; and for other public purpose as might be later determined;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Roseau County Board of Commissioners believes there is significant public support for this concept.

The Board agreed to defer approval of the 2010 Unorganized Budgets and approval of the 2010 PILT Payment Resolution until the September 15, 2009 Board Meeting.

Auditor Anne Granitz presented the Board with data comparing the 2009 budget and levy with the proposed 2010 budget and levy. The Board agreed to postpone approval of the proposed budget and levy until the September 15, 2009 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Johnston addressed the Board regarding a potential hiring freeze effective September 8, 2009 through May 1, 2010. Commissioner Johnston stated that he is concerned that the County will be using reserves in 2009 and 2010 and until a commitment is made on the levy it would be irresponsible to increase spending for another permanent hire.

Commissioner Johnston noted that more or less the county already has a hiring freeze and he would not be opposed to hiring part-time or temporary employees but would not create any new positions at this time.

Commissioner Swanson asked if this hiring freeze would be a soft hiring freeze or a hard hiring freeze, noting that in a hard freeze if an essential employee resigns or retires the county would not be able to replace that person. Commissioner Swanson stated that he would support a soft freeze but would not support a hard freeze because of the potential of not being able to replace an essential employee.

Commissioner Walker asked if this freeze would affect the previously Board approved hire in the Assessor's office. Commissioner Johnston responded that it would be his recommendation to rescind this approval and not hire a new position into the Assessor's office.

Commissioner Swanson noted that there is in effect a hiring freeze already in place at Roseau County through the Uniform Hiring Policy which requires all hires to be approved by the Board.

Commissioner Foldesi stated that he could support such a freeze but not until the beginning of 2010.

A motion to establish a hiring freeze effective September 8, 2009 through May 1, 2010, due to the economy and current financial situation in Roseau County and to rescind the approval to hire an Appraiser II was made by Commissioner Johnston.

County Attorney Lisa Hanson addressed the Board following Commissioner Johnston's motion, noting that because the motion includes action against the Assessor's office, that this

would be an appearance of impropriety if not a blatant conflict of interest due to things that have happened between Commissioner Johnston and the Assessor's office in relation to Mr. Johnston's criminal charges. Chair Swanson requested Commissioner Johnston remove the portion of the motion which is related to the Assessor's office. Commissioner Johnston agreed. Commissioner Foldesi seconded the motion and the motion failed by a 1-3 vote, with Commissioner Johnston in favor and Commissioners Foldesi, Swanson and Walker opposed.

Commissioner Foldesi inquired about the wage negotiation committee meeting with the labor unions in Roseau County and whether or not they would consider a voluntary wage freeze. Commissioner Walker stated there was not an interest by the bargaining groups to voluntarily freeze their salaries. Commissioner Swanson requested the wage committee meet again with the bargaining groups to review the potential of a voluntary wage freeze in 2010. Commissioners Walker and Foldesi will arrange this meeting.

Assessor Al Heim met with the Board to update them on the status of applications received for the Appraiser II position. To date only three applications were submitted. One application fully met all the qualifications posted in the advertisement for hire. A second candidate would be fully qualified by the anticipated start date. A third candidate would still be one course short of meeting the minimum qualification by the anticipated start date. It was agreed to request an opinion from the county attorney on how to proceed.

NORTHWEST MINNESOTA MULTI-COUNTY HOUSING & RE-DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Executive Director Lee Meier and Wynne Consulting President John Wynne met with the Board to review the Housing and Redevelopment Authority 2009 approved levy and the benefits of this program to the residents of Roseau County.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Engineer Ketring met with the Board to request approval of a culvert installation on CSAH #7. A motion was made by Commissioner Foldesi, seconded by Commissioner Walker and carried unanimously to adopt the following resolution:

2009-09-02

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board does hereby approve project number 09-02, a culvert installation on CSAH #7, to R & Q trucking in the amount of \$2,997.62.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Board discussed setting up a new committee to address Citizen concerns, complaints or commendations. This committee would consist of two Commissioners, the Department head of the employee involved, the County Attorney, and the County Coordinator. A form would be developed and the citizens asked to complete the form documenting the concern, complaint or commendation. The Board agreed to set a specific date and time each month for this committee and requested Administrative Assistant Ann Marie Miller coordinate these dates. A motion to approve the Citizen Committee was made by Commissioner Johnston, seconded by Commissioner Walker and carried unanimously. All Commissioners will serve on this committee.

Upon motion carried, the Board adjourned the regular meeting at 10:45 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for September 15, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Attest:

Date: _____

Ann Marie Miller, Board Clerk
Roseau County, Minnesota

Jack Swanson, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Roseau County, Minnesota