

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BIG STONE COUNTY BOARD
March 6, 2007

The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners met in the Commissioner's Room at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, March 6, 2007. Chairman Tomschin called the meeting to order with Commissioners Athey, Sandberg, Olson and Janssen present. Also present were Elsie Perrine, Mike Swenson of the Ortonville Independent, Deputy Auditor Sharon Finke, County Attorney Bill Watson and County Auditor Michelle Knutson. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried to approve the minutes of the February 20th regular meeting.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Janssen and carried to approve the agenda with noted addition.

Committee reports were presented.

Commissioner Olson introduced the idea of broadcasting the board meetings to Departments Heads, and possibly video taping them for public viewing. A camera was set up to demonstrate how it would work. Commissioner Olson listed the advantages of Department Heads being able to view the meeting from their computer. Deputy Auditor Finke explained the options available. Commissioner Tomschin expressed the possible need for unbroadcasted work sessions if this was done. Commissioner Sandberg stated it would provide transparency to the public. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Attorney Watson reported that the Court had dismissed the County with prejudice in the Mueller/Croatt litigation.

Discussion was held on Big Stone Area Growth (BSAG) regarding an agreement with the Auditor's Office for admin services. The Board's degree of control allowed by BSAG's proposed bylaws was also discussed.

Watson left the meeting.

Randy Nelson of Prairie Country RC&D presented an overview of 2006 projects and activities.

Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried to adopt the following resolution as presented by Sheriff John Haukos:

2007-12

WHEREAS under the provisions of M.S. Section 86B.105, the Sheriff of each county is required to carry out the provision of Chapter 86B and the Boat and Water Safety Rules, hereinafter referred to as the "Minn. Rules", including patrol, enforcement search and rescue, watercraft inspection, waterway marking and accident investigation, all hereinafter referred to as the "Sheriff's Duties"; and

WHEREAS in connection with the Sheriff's Duties, M.S. Section 86B.701 provides that the County submit to the Commissioner of Natural Resources a budget to carry out the Sheriff's Duties; and

WHEREAS M.S. Section 86B.701 and the Minn. Rules provide for the allocation of funds by the Commissioner to the County based on certain criteria and conclusions to assist the funding of the Sheriff's Duties; and

WHEREAS the County has submitted a proposed budget to the State.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State shall reimburse the County up to \$2,267.00 for the activities stated in Chapter 86B.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Janssen and carried to execute the Annual County Boat and Water Safety Grant Agreement.

Motion by Sandberg, seconded by Athey and carried to adopt the following resolution:

2007-13

WHEREAS Minnesota Statutes 244.19 subdivision 6 outlines a process for State reimbursement to participating counties for 50% of the cost of their probation officer salaries, and

WHEREAS 28 County Probation Officer counties and 27 Department of Corrections contract counties participate in this process, and

WHEREAS appropriations from the State have steadily decreased from 50% in 1996 to as low as 38% in 2004, and

WHEREAS the 55 counties participating in this process have been forced to make up the deficit in the reimbursement funding for their probation officers, and

WHEREAS the 2007 Legislative Session will be setting and passing the FY 08 and FY 09 appropriation for probation officer salary reimbursement for these 55 counties, and

WHEREAS the Minnesota Association of County Probation Officers has been working with the Department of Corrections and legislative staff to ensure that an accurate FY 08 and FY 09 appropriation amount is determined.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners strongly requests the 2007 Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to reimburse the 55 participating counties for the full 50% of the cost of their probation officer salaries.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Janssen and carried to designate funds remaining from K-9 donations for future use by that program.

Sheriff Haukos updated the Board on the Beardsley tower grant.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Sandberg and carried to authorize payment of the following claims as presented by Auditor Knutson:

General	\$16,233.33
Highway	16,708.93
Ditch	<u>447.25</u>
Total	\$33,389.51

Motion by Janssen, seconded by Sandberg to ratify payment of the following Auditor's warrant for the Deputy Sheriff squad car:

General	\$20,652.00
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Following break, Probation Officer Dennis Larson was present to update the Board on his office's activities the past year.

Rhonda Thielke, Paul Strong and County Engineer Nick Anderson were present for a discussion on County Road #68. The Board was made aware of some of the concerns with the road. The possibility of seal coating it this spring was discussed. Engineer Anderson recommended that it be addressed again at the annual Highway meeting.

Motion by Olson and seconded by Sandberg to adopt the following resolution:

2007-14

WHEREAS all Minnesota counties benefit from an efficient and adequately funded transportation system that offers diverse modes of travel; and
WHEREAS due to budget constraints, counties are increasingly deferring maintenance on their 30,000 miles of county state aid highways, 15,000 miles of county roads, and over 7,000 bridges; and
WHEREAS local cost participation requirements for trunk highway projects are putting undue pressure on county highway budgets; and
WHEREAS lack of state funding has delayed regionally significant road construction, such as repair of US 75 from Graceville to Ortonville; and
WHEREAS the main source of funding, County State Aid Highway Funding, is declining and property taxes and local bonding are having to shoulder more of the burden; and
WHEREAS the recently approved constitutional amendment that phases in dedication of 100 percent of the motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) for transportation purposes will address only a fraction of the transportation funding needs in Minnesota and total MVST revenues are not meeting projections; and
WHEREAS transportation infrastructure maintenance and improvement costs significantly contribute to rising property taxes; and
WHEREAS many rural roads are not built to modern safety standards and are not meeting the needs of industries that depend on the ability to transport heavy loads; and
WHEREAS current funding for roads and transit systems across all government levels in Minnesota is inadequate and this under-investment hinders Minnesota's economic competitiveness.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners that this County requests that in 2007 the Minnesota Legislature pass a comprehensive transportation funding package that permanently increases dedicated funding for transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Big Stone County requests that in 2007 Governor Tim Pawlenty allow a comprehensive transportation funding package that permanently increases dedicated funding for transportation that is passed by the Legislature to become law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Big Stone County supports funding options including, but not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the gas tax of 10 cents phased in over a two-year period.
- Indexing of the gas tax;
- Increases in vehicle registration taxes;
- Trunk highway bonding of \$100 million per year over a 10-year period;
- General obligation bonding for local roads and bridges

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Big Stone County defines a comprehensive transportation funding package as an initiative that permanently increases dedicated funding for state and local road and transit systems in Greater Minnesota and the Metropolitan Area.

Motion carried with Athey and Tomschin voting Nay.

Engineer Anderson updated the Board on County Ditch #20.

Anderson also reported that the viewer's report has been completed on County Ditches #5 and 21. The public hearing was set for May 15, 2007, following the Board meeting.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Janssen and carried to authorize Engineer Anderson to attend the National Association of County Engineers Conference in Wisconsin and authorize out-of-state expenditures related thereto.

Discussion was held on replacement of the highway shop in Correll.

HR Director Sue Schultz presented Section 320 of the Employee Handbook for the Board's review.

HR Director Schultz informed the Board of upcoming training sessions.

Motion by Sandberg, seconded by Olson and carried to authorize the restructuring of the Safety Committee to be in compliance with OSHA standards.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Sandberg and carried to authorize the hiring of Laura Berger for the temporary Deputy Recorder position. She will also continue to work in the Treasurer's Office during this time.

Motion by Janssen, seconded by Olson and carried to set the County Auditor's 2007 salary at \$60,762.

Big Stone Lake Area Chamber representatives Donnette Herberg, Mary Ann Ulrich, Sue Kaercher-Blake and Artie Arndt were present to request additional funding. Following discussion, it was recommended that they explore other revenue streams including contacting Grant and Roberts Counties in South Dakota.

Discussion was held on plans to hold the Border Walleye Challenge on Big Stone Lake on May 19, 2007. The Chamber requested that the Board invite the Governors from Minnesota and South Dakota to participate. Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried to offer a letter of invitation to Governors Pawlenty and Rounds.

Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried to authorize the Chamber to hold a Farmers' Market on the Museum grounds on an on-going basis.

Engineer Anderson presented the Big Stone County Highway Department's 2006 Annual report to the Board for their review.

4-H Program Coordinator Suzanne Souza was present to update the Board on the 2007 County Fair. Souza reported that there is concern that there will not be safe and adequate space available to house all of the livestock. Discussion was held on the various options available to meet the space needs. Souza will follow-up on suggestions given. Discussion was also held on having a member of the County Board serve as a liaison to the Fair Board so that the Board is aware of these types of issues. Motion by Sandberg, seconded by Olson and carried to appoint Commissioner Athey as the County's liaison to the Fair Board.

Chairman Tomschin adjourned the meeting at 12:11 PM.

Doug Tomschin, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Michelle R. Knutson, Auditor