

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BIG STONE COUNTY BOARD
July 24, 2007

A joint special meeting was held on July 24, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at the Graceville Community Center, Graceville, Minnesota, between the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners and the Traverse County Board of Commissioners. The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss water drainage issues. The following Big Stone County Commissioners were present: Howard Johnson, Wade Athey, Brent Olson, Doug Tomschin and Roger Sandberg. The following Traverse County Commissioners were present: Gerald Kaus, David Naatz, Clarence Zimmel, William Gibson and Jerry M. Deal. Nick Anderson, Big Stone County Engineer, Larry Haukos, Traverse County Engineer, and Janet Raguse, Traverse County Coordinator and Clerk of the Traverse County Board, were also present. It was agreed that Doug Tomschin act as Chairman.

Chairman Tomschin called the joint special meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Anderson distributed photographs of 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County and Joint Ditch 4 (JD 4) in Big Stone and Traverse Counties. He explained that Big Stone County JD 4 is free of vegetation. However, as was evidenced by the photographs distributed, 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County is overrun with vegetation causing serious drainage issues. The Boards discussed how JD 4 flows into Toqua Lake and then continues in Tara Township in Traverse County. Six to eight sections drain into 12-Mile Creek and JD 4 in Traverse County, where just four or five sections drain into JD 4 in Big Stone County. Mr. Haukos explained that 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County is a private ditch and it is the responsibility of the adjoining landowners to maintain the ditch. Mr. Anderson suggested that the Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BDSWD) gain authority of the ditch and can then proceed to clean the ditch. Mr. Haukos explained that the ditch would need to be cleaned beyond Dumont to the Mustinka River, which would be quite costly. Mr. Anderson pointed out that once they open Toqua Lake, it is difficult for the water to drain through Traverse County without flooding due to the vegetation in 12-Mile Creek. Commissioner Deal inquired about correspondence written to Big Stone County from the BDSWD Attorney. Mr. Anderson clarified that correspondence was received from Jon Roeschlein, BDSWD District Manager, reiterating the terms of the permit to release water from Toqua Lake. He explained that the City of Graceville has a responsibility to protect the City and the County will work with the City of Graceville to maintain the normal water level in Toqua. Mr. Deal expressed that it is the Traverse County Commissioners' responsibility to protect Traverse County. Chairman Tomschin explained that Toqua Lake is opened to protect the City of Graceville, that Big Stone is following the law, and the vegetation in Traverse County's 12-Mile Creek is causing flooding issues. He inquired as to when the adjoining landowners were last assessed to clean 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County. Commissioner Deal expressed that the Big Stone end cannot be drained without taking care of the Traverse end. He asked that Big Stone err in the other direction in the future to see what happens. Mr. Anderson reiterated that the problem is that the water cannot drain through 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County. Mr. Haukos explained that there is no way of assessing the adjoining landowners along 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County for cleaning the ditch. He stated that the ditch was cleaned at one time, possibly in the 1940's. He noted there is a way to clean the ditch, but it would be a very costly, long-term project. Mr. Anderson stated

that the next time flooding occurs, Big Stone will work with the City of Graceville to maintain the water level in Toqua Lake by draining about four inches at one time. He confirmed that taking the Lake down ten-to-eleven inches at one time might be construed as not following the permit requirements, but also stated that the water leaving Toqua Lake is a small percentage of what flows through the City of Dumont. Mr. Anderson suggested that the option of making 12-Mile Creek in Traverse County a public ditch be considered. Chairman Tomschin stated that Big Stone would discuss the matter with the City of Graceville to set some parameters for maintaining the Toqua Lake water level. Commissioner Deal asked that Big Stone abide by the BDSWD permit when releasing water from Toqua.

Chairman Tomschin adjourned the special meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Doug Tomschin, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Michelle R. Knutson, Auditor

(Minutes submitted by Janet Raguse, Traverse County Coordinator and Clerk of the Traverse County Board)