

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BIG STONE COUNTY BOARD**  
**February 7, 2012**

The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners met in the Commissioner's Room at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, February 7, 2012. Chairman Wulff called the meeting to order with Commissioners Athey, Olson and Sandberg present. Commissioner Berning was absent. Also present were Mike Swenson of the Ortonville Independent, 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 January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Motion by Sandberg, seconded by Olson and carried to approve the agenda with noted additions.

Commissioners reported on the following committees:

Sandberg – Property; Food Shelf; ESB

Athey – Prairie 5; WACCO; P&Z; Fair Board

Wulff – Toqua Park

Olson – Collaborative; Pioneerland; Supporting Hands; RDC; PrimeWest;  
P&Z

Attorney Watson commented that the Planning & Zoning meeting was a well presented meeting, ran well and informative.

Attorney Watson reported in response to Commissioner Wulff's question regarding a trespass issue, that he typically does not review those issues with the Board. However, he did send a letter to the individual stating why they are not prosecuting.

Attorney Watson reported that there may be some extra costs involved for the extradition process regarding a person of interest in a case.

Attorney Watson presented a draft Economic Development Tax Abatement Financing Policy for the Board's review.

Attorney Watson stated that he has objections and concerns regarding the hiring of a PR firm for the ballot question.

Attorney Watson left the meeting.

VSO Dan Meyer provided information on his office's activities during the past month for the Board's review.

County Recorder Elaine Martig provided the Board with reports on fees collected and vital statistics for 2010 and 2011. Martig reported that her office continues to be in compliance with the recording requirements set by statute in 2007 and is still waiting on new software for several areas in her office. Discussion was held on the back indexing that still needs to be completed and the possibility of former Deputy Karol Scherer assisting with that project.

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

Big Stone SWCD	\$ 2,195.00
Computer Professionals	4,358.17
GovConnection, Inc.	6,621.12
Office Peeps	2,258.03

Plotz Timber Harvest	3,300.00
Office of the State Auditor	5,699.95
United States Postal Service	4,000.00
William Watson	4,145.05
48 Payments Less Than \$2,000	<u>19,679.22</u>
Total	\$52,256.54

Auditor Knutson presented the revised lease agreement with FSA, which the federal leasing contact had asked the Board to consider. Following discussion, motion by Sandberg, seconded by Olson and carried to maintain the Board's original position with the lease agreement approved at the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. The comment was made that if the FSA were to use the cost formula they are using for their new lease, an agreement would already have been reached.

Following discussion on a Findings of Fact and Order Regarding Correction of Benefited Property for County Ditch 20 prepared by Ditch Attorney Kurt Deter, motion by Olson, seconded by Athey and carried to authorize the Auditor to make the necessary clerical corrections so the assessment role for the ditch is correct.

Auditor Knutson asked for questions and/or comments on the year-to-date financial information provided for the Board's review.

Auditor Knutson provided an update on redistricting and her conversations with the Ortonville City Clerk regarding the Board's request to adjust precinct boundaries to be compliant. At this time, the City is not considering changing the boundaries.

Auditor Knutson reported that two letters have been received in support of addressing the possible dissolution of the RC&D.

Commissioner Sandberg stated that he had received a request for a letter of support for the Marsh Lake construction project. Motion by Olson, seconded by Sandberg and carried to provide the letter of support.

County Engineer Nick Anderson reported that the Highway Department will be under with their 2011 budget. The majority of the underage was realized because less than normal snow plowing was required in the month of December.

Engineer Anderson reported that they will be updating the County map this year.

Discussion was held on Meadowbrook Road. Because the last 900' doesn't meet current safety standards, it may not be eligible to be paved with State Park Road funds. Anderson explained that the minimum safety standards were upgraded in 2011 and the new changes pushed this 900' out of compliance. An exception to the rule is being discussed with the State Standards Committee.

Discussion was held on the failing gas pumps at the Highway Department. Motion by Olson, seconded by Athey and carried to authorize the Engineer to replace the pumps.

Engineer Anderson reported on a meeting he attended with the Maas family regarding whether a new ditch should be public or private.

Engineer Anderson provided an update on the tree removal project on Joint Ditch 4. Due to the mild winter and the ground not freezing, the company will be coming back in the fall to finish.

Following a break, Department Heads Cindy Nelson, Elaine Martig, Sandy Vold, Terry Ocaña and Sue Schultz arrived at the meeting.

Upon the request of HR Director Schultz, motion by Olson, seconded by Athey and carried to approve the termination of Office Clerk/Appraiser Ailsa Nowacki effective January 30, 2012. Motion by Olson, seconded by Athey and carried to authorize HR Director Schultz to begin the process to fill the position.

Discussion was held regarding the need to educate the public concerning the ballot question of elected vs. hired. One idea discussed is to publish a series of articles presenting facts from both sides of the question allowing voters to make an informed decision. Overall, consensus was that the education has to occur, but the method of how that will be accomplished needs further discussion.

HR Director Schultz reported that there was no need for a closed session for labor negotiation strategy as the union will not meet until Thursday.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Sandberg and carried to approve hiring Karol Scherer as a fill-in for the Recorder's Office effective February 3, 2012.

Chairman Wulff adjourned the meeting at 11:19 AM.

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Walter W. Wulff, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle R. Knutson, Auditor