

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BIG STONE COUNTY BOARD**  
**February 3, 2015**

The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners met in the Commissioners' Room at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, February 3, 2015. Chairman Sandberg called the meeting to order with Commissioners Athey, Backer, and Olson present. Commissioner Berning was absent. Also present were Mike Swenson of the Ortonville Independent, County Attorney Bill Watson, Deputy Auditor Sharon Finke and Harold Dimberg III. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Backer and carried to approve the minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

Motion by Athey, seconded by Olson and carried to approve the agenda.

Commissioners reported on the following committees:

Olson – Pioneerland

Sandberg for Berning – Supporting Hands

Sandberg – MSI; Beyond the Yellow Ribbon; Museum; Property

Athey – Fair Board; Prairie 5; WACCO

Backer – New Commissioner Training

Motion by Athey, seconded by Backer and carried to authorize payment of the following claims as presented by Deputy Auditor Finke:

John Cunningham	\$2,107.15
GovConnection, Inc	4,907.96
Hasslen Construction	49,954.00
Office of the State Auditor	3,811.05
Traverse County	21,126.28
Traverse County Sheriff	2,627.79
William Watson	4,413.00
47 Payments Less Than \$2,000	<u>15,649.74</u>
Total	\$104,596.97

Deputy Auditor Finke asked for questions and/or comments on the year-to-date financial information provided for the Board's review. She also stated that the County Recorder's annual report had been included in the Board's packet for their review.

Environmental Officer Darren Wilke was present to discuss the number of members on the Planning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Ordinance states that there should be 9 members. However, there are currently only 7 members. An amendment to the Ordinance would be required in order to change it. Board consensus was to seek an additional 2 members rather than lower the number. Commissioner Sandberg recommended advising those in attendance at the annual township meeting in April about the need.

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

IT Director Terry Ocaña was present to discuss the successful grant application by Federated Telephone for Broadband Expansion in Big Stone County. Federated Telephone will be submitting another grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture to assist in funding the same project and is requesting the County's

support for that application. Following discussion, motion by Athey, seconded by Backer and carried to adopt the following resolution:

**2015-07**

WHEREAS, Big Stone County is aware of Federated Telephone Cooperative's intent to apply for the Community Connect Broadband Development Grant Program to be submitted to United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) for funding to provide fiber to the premise in rural Big Stone County to areas that are underserved or unserved with broadband; and

WHEREAS, Big Stone County agrees that broadband is an essential part of community infrastructure because it offers many opportunities including but not limited to: promoting access to government resources and information such as GIS, tax records, permits, or paying taxes online; opportunities to buy and sell goods especially for home-based businesses, agricultural businesses and offers access to healthcare including VA medical records for veterans while expanding educational opportunities for all ages; and

WHEREAS, the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners feels it is in the best interest of the County to endorse said project because having a variety of broadband options is an expectation of future residents and business and is directly connected to opportunities that could increase the economic prosperity in the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners hereby endorses Federated Telephone Cooperative's Fiber to the Premise project and supports their efforts to develop and increase broadband access in Big Stone County.

Gary Haugen and Kent Morrill arrived at the meeting during the discussion.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Backer and carried to open the public hearing to take public comment on establishing a County EDA. Attorney Watson reviewed the various options regarding the operation of a county-wide EDA and the possible makeup of the EDA Board based on an enabling resolution which he had written. Various scenarios were discussed, such as the Big Stone Area Growth Board or the County Board serving as the EDA Board. Both Harold Dimberg III and Kent Morrill expressed interest in serving on the EDA Board.

At 9:59 AM, motion by Olson, seconded by Backer and carried to close the public hearing.

Board consensus following the public hearing was to wait until the February 17th meeting before acting on the resolution to establish a County EDA. This will allow Board members time to poll their constituents regarding their interest in serving on an EDA Board.

Chairman Sandberg adjourned the meeting at 10:01 AM.

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Roger Sandberg, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Finke, Deputy Auditor