

**MINUTES OF THE  
OTTER TAIL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
Otter Tail County Courthouse  
Commissioners' Room, Floor 1-B  
Tuesday, January 16, 2001  
9:30 a.m.

**Call to Order**

The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners convened Tuesday, January 16, 2001 at 9:30 a.m. at the Otter Tail County Courthouse with Roger Froemming, Chair; Dennis Mosher, Vice-Chair; Syd Nelson, Malcolm Lee, and Bob Block present.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Lee, second by Nelson, to approve the County Board agenda of January 16, 2001, with the following changes:

10:20 a.m. - add Valley Farmer Participant, Steve Stenerson

10:30 a.m. - add Land & Resource Director for Approval of Block Grant Resolution

Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Mosher, second by Lee, to approve the County Board minutes of January 9, 2001, with the following correction: The revised "Five Year Highway Plan" should read as follows:

**Year 2001**

- The project at the intersection of CSAH No. 8 & No. 67 (NE corner) - moved to 2001 so completed in conjunction with overlay project.
- CSAH No. 45 bridge moved from 2000 to 2001.
- CSAH No. 52 bridge moved to 2001 from 2002.
- Change on the 2001 map - in Parkers Prairie was proposed to do CSAH No 95. The City did not receive funding. Work will be completed on CSAH No. 42 in lieu of the proposed work on CSAH No. 95.

**Year 2002**

- CSAH No. 52 moved to 2001 from 2002.
- CSAH No. 12 rescheduled with City of Dalton project.

**Year 2003**

- Only change is adding on CSAH No. 35 RailRoad crossing west of Perham to be paid from Federal Rail Safety dollars for crossings.
- Project on CSAH No. 35 in Underwood may be delayed because of high cost of City water and utility improvements.

**Year 2004**

- Rescheduled RailRoad signals and gates at crossing in Richville on CSAH No. 14. Proposed for 2000; however, the County may receive federal dollars in 2004.

**Year 2005 and 2006**

- No Changes

Motion carried.

### **Approval of Increased Support Staff Hours**

Extension Educator, Steve Handegaard, requested authorization for an additional four hours of support staff time per week in the Extension Office. The additional hours have been budgeted for CY 2001. Motion by Mosher, second by Lee, to approve four additional hours per week for support staff in the Extension Office as requested. Motion carried.

### **Assistant County Highway Engineer Position**

Highway Engineer, Rick West, briefed the board on the vacant Assistant County Highway Engineer position. He stated that nine applications were received and five applicants have been interviewed. Because of the lack of qualified engineers, Mr. West requested authorization to negotiate a job offer within Grade 25. Discussion followed. Motion by Block, second by Nelson, to authorize flexibility to hire within Grade 25 for the Assistant County Highway Engineer position as requested by the Highway Engineer. Motion carried.

### **Tuition Reimbursement Request**

Mr. West reported that Alexandria Technical College has a program that runs from late January through mid-June with approximately eight different parts to the program. He requested attendance to this educational program by Donn Baker, Design Technician III, with the tuition (\$2,850) paid by the County and one-half of time spent attending the program also paid by the County. Discussion followed regarding Geographic Information Systems, Global Positioning Systems, and the relative importance of education in these areas. Motion by Block, second by Lee, to authorize Donn Baker to attend the program as presented at Alexandria Technical College with Otter Tail County paying for tuition (\$2,850) and one-half of the employee's time spent attending the program. The motion is contingent upon reimbursement to the County of expenses paid for the program if the employee leaves County employment within two years of completion of the course and also, contingent upon a passing grade in the classes/program. Motion carried.

### **Meetings Attended**

Commissioner Block attended the Governor's Council on GIS and had a good discussion of land management reform, which would be parcel mapping, and when more information is received, it will be duplicated for the other members of the County Board.

Commissioner Nelson attended a meeting that included local legislators in Perham. He reported that milk producers are having a difficult time under the current milk pricing system and the group would like to start a new organization to improve the quality of milk pricing in the state of Minnesota. This is a very difficult issue because of competition out of our country and in the southern states that produce milk at a lower cost. Discussion followed regarding options to improve milk prices and the barriers to those options. Mr. Nelson stated that the Milk Producers Association was represented at the meeting and there could be some value in using a current organization rather than form a new organization.

### **Approval to Pay Bills**

Motion by Mosher, second by Lee, to approve payment of bills per Attachment A of these minutes which includes the following lodging payment:

Former Safety Director, Tim Hunt

Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge

Motion carried.

### **Red River Valley Development Association**

Steve Stenerson, a farmer northwest of Fergus Falls, spoke to the Board regarding the Agassiz

Ambassadors program whereby two couples from Otter Tail County are chosen as Ag Leaders. If accepted, the couples must make a commitment of time and money also. The program includes leadership programs in January, February, and March for young ag leaders. Mr. Stenerson previously participated in the Agassiz Ambassadors program, and through the program, met many people he has used as a resource later. He asked for continued financial support from Otter Tail County. Otter Tail County did not participate financially last year. Motion by Nelson, second by Mosher, to authorize \$800 to the Red River Valley Development Association for CY 2001. Motion carried.

#### **Request for Forgiveness of Penalty**

Sandra Barnhouse explained that she is a new property owner in Otter Tail County, has owned property before, but the taxes were paid through an escrow account, and therefore, did not know that the second half of her taxes for her newly acquired property were due last October. The first notice she received was in December because of a miscommunication with her address. She paid her taxes in December but neglected to include the \$91.20 penalty that had accrued; therefore, the payment was sent back and not accepted by the Treasurer's office. Lengthy discussion took place regarding County policy and Ms. Barnhouse's concern that the process of not notifying new property owners of the second half taxes that are due makes it difficult for property owners. Motion by Mosher, second by Lee, not to forgive the penalty of \$91.20 accrued through the end of December because there was no error by the county, however; because the payment was made before the end of the year, the penalty accrued in January, 2001, of \$15.20 is forgiven subject to prompt payment of the second half taxes and initial penalty of \$91.20. The parcel number for the property is 57-000-04-0034-001. Motion carried.

#### **Resolution Authorizing Signature of Board of Water and Soil Resources Natural Resources Block Grant Documents Otter Tail County Resolution No. 2001 - 03**

Commissioner Nelson offered the following and moved its adoption:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners approves of Otter Tail County entering into a Grant Agreement with the State of Minnesota to receive state funds for the implementation of its Comprehensive Local Water Plan, the administration of the Wetland Conservation Act, administration of the DNR Shoreland Program, and MPCA ISTS Program, under the terms of the Grant Agreement and all statutory requirements; and

THAT THE Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners requests the 2001 expenditure of \$77,419 cash and authorizes \$68,193 in-kind contributions, from Otter Tail County and East & West Soil and Water Conservation District, to match the Natural Resources Block Grant and the Grant Agreement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE Chairperson of the County Board of Commissioners and County Auditor or County Administrator are authorized to execute the Grant Agreement together with all related documents.

Commissioner Mosher seconded the motion, and upon being put to vote, was unanimously carried.

Adopted at Fergus Falls, MN this 16th day of January 2001.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ OTTER TAIL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Roger Froemming, County Board Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Krohn, Clerk

**30-Day Waiting Period for Gambling Exemption Permit**

Motion by Lee, second by Block, to waive the 30-day waiting period for Authorization for Exemption from Lawful Gambling license for an event sponsored by the Pelican Rapids Jaycees. Motion carried.

**Contract Extended**

Motion by Block, second by Lee, to authorize the GIS Department to extend an agreement between the NRS and Department of Agriculture to allow for completion of the County soil survey. Motion carried.

**Payment Approvals**

Motion by Lee, second by Block, to authorize payment to Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust (MCIT) for property casualty insurance coverage for Otter Tail County in the amount of \$227,414 for CY 2001, and payment, in the amount of \$145,559, for the same period for workers compensation coverage. Motion carried.

**Recess & Reconvene**

At 10:51 a.m., Chair Froemming declared the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners meeting recessed for a short break. The meeting was reconvened at 10:56 a.m.

**Discussion - Ditch Assessment**

Clarence Venzke, property owner on Ditch System No. 4, spoke to the Board regarding his assessment of \$1,400. He stated that the Ditch does not benefit his property because the drainage does not run anywhere near the ditch line. He alleged a fraudulent signature on a document from 1901 relative to the benefited property owners on the ditch. County Attorney, David Hauser, stated that the time to appeal a signature may be long past; however, he stated that he would look into this matter and report back to Clarence Venzke in 3-4 weeks.

**Adjournment**

At 12:24 a.m., Chair Froemming declared the meeting of the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners adjourned until Tuesday, January 23, 2001. Motion carried.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ OTTER TAIL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Roger Froemming, County Board Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Krohn, Clerk

