

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 6, 2021

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on April 6, 2021 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Beth Schlangen, Scott Johnson, Ed Popp, Jared Gapinski and Steve Heinen present. Call to order by Chair Popp was at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

No one was present to speak under Open Forum.

Johnson/Gapinski unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2021; 2) approve the Committee of the Whole Goal Setting Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2021; 3) Approve the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2021; 4) accept and file a summary of the March 16, 2021 Department Head Performance Evaluations; 5) authorize Public Health Director to transfer to a Community Health Specialist position; 6) authorize to create a Data Analysis position in Human Services and to authorize submitting the position to David Drown and Associates for pay grade assignment; 7) notice to terminate Sentence to Serve agreement with the State of Minnesota; 8) authorize the creation of a County Sentence to Serve Crew Leader position in the Sheriff's Office and authorize submitting the position to David Drown and Associates for pay grade assignment; 9) approve a Resolution amending the Highway Department 2021 Capital Equipment Budget and authorize Chair to sign; 10) approve of application for Exempt Permit for a raffle to be held at Jack & Jim's Convention Center 11025 Duelm Rd NE, Foley, MN on April 30, 2021 and authorize Chair to sign; 11) approve of application for Exempt Permit for Duelm Area Lions Club for a raffle to be held at Jack & Jim's Convention Center 11025 Duelm Rd NE, Foley, MN on June 9, 2021 and authorize Chair to sign; 12) approve Resolution to accept the donation from Rebecca and Kevin Mehrwerth for the K-9 Fund and authorize Chair to sign; 13) authorize the Professional Services Agreement Contract for County Surveyor Services and authorize Chair to sign; 14) approve Administrative Agreement between Maywood Township and Benton County for Bridge Number L0072 over St. Francis River in Maywood Township and authorize Chair to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the Foley American Legion, Duane J. Walter shared the progress of the Veteran's Memorial with the County Board and requested approval of the County Board for the installation of the security cameras at the Veteran's Memorial site. Chief Deputy Neal Jacobson stated the security camera system would benefit the Sheriff's Office and requested the addition of a second security camera. The second security camera would be used for a "safe swap site", where it could be used as a neutral place for parents with child custody exchanges, or property exchanges, or social media. The site would be a secure location with video surveillance. Majority of the funding was covered by the Foley American Legion and the Sheriff's Office would cover the rest of the funding. Walter said there will be a Dedication Ceremony on Monday, May 31 (Memorial Day) at 11:00 AM at the Veteran's Memorial site where the public is invited to attend. There will be a free lunch following the Dedication Ceremony at 12:00 PM at the Foley American Legion, in which all are welcome. Walter then talked about the sidewalk that would

be added to the Veteran's Memorial site. The sidewalk would be constructed later with another construction project. Johnson made a motion to approve the request for the installation of the security cameras with the amendment of the sidewalk addition. Seconded by Schlangen. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Assistant Auditor-Treasurer Julia Robak, on behalf of Auditor-Treasurer Nadean Inman, provided an update to the County Board. Robak said the Property Tax Statements were mailed out on March 26th and the DMV is now taking walk-ins for Tabs and DNR registrations. Appointments for Driver's Licenses and Titles are still required. Currently the DMV has two full-time employees and one person that is half DMV services and half in the Treasurer's Office.

Sheriff Troy Heck asked the County Board to approve the proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week in Benton County from April 11th to April 17th of 2021. Motion by Gapinski to approve the proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week and seconded by Heinen. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Heck gave a presentation of the annual report for the Benton County Sheriff's Office for 2020. Many of the metrics that are used to measure the Sheriff's Office activity each year experienced significant changes due primarily to the paradigm shift brought about by the pandemic. Amid unrest in St. Cloud, our deputies worked with other area law enforcement officers to ensure that peace and security were maintained in Central Minnesota. Jail staff continued to keep watch over the most dangerous inmates and kept them safe and secure within the jail. Dispatch staff had an increased load of 911 calls. The patrol staff fielded calls for service and found ways to serve the people of Benton County in the constant shadow of the pandemic. Investigative staff worked a full load of investigations, clearing 89% of their cases. Working as a team, the entire staff at the Benton County Sheriff's Office contributed to a continued decline in the crime rate in rural Benton County. The top five most committed crimes for 2020 in Benton County were: 1) theft; 2) domestic abuse; 3) fraud; 4) harassment; 5) DUI. Heck also stated that many of the metrics they use to measure their work output declined in 2020 due to changes brought about by COVID-19.

Gerry Maciej, District Manager for Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (BSWCD) gave the annual report for 2020. Benton SWCD relies on a variety of revenue sources in order to finance day to day operations. Operational revenue sources include federal, state, county, district and other miscellaneous sources. Approximately \$2.05 million dollars was spent on conservation projects in Benton County in 2020. A large amount of the funds spent for these projects were given to local contractors with approximately \$1.02 million dollars recirculated back into the community. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) provided federal conservation program funds to address local resource concerns. In 2020, Benton County had 20 contracts for \$1,393,080 and was 4th in the state in both number of contracts and dollars allocated. Maciej also talked about various soil erosion control projects water quality and wetland restoration. Benton SWCD purchased a drone in 2020 to take aerial photos of projects to help monitor the projects. A major project in 2020 was the drawdown of Little Rock Lake. Benton and Morrison SWCD's and NRCS have been working with landowners for over 10 years to implement best management practices to reduce runoff in the Little Rock Lake Watershed.

Now that the project has been completed, we are starting to see the water quality benefits with significantly increased water clarity and a decrease in phosphorus levels and algae.

Recess Regular Board meeting to conduct Human Services Board meeting at 10:04 AM.

Regular Board meeting reconvened at 10:07AM.

County Engineer Chris Byrd asked the County Board to review all relevant facts regarding the County's Highway Access policy and to provide a ruling to uphold staff permit denial or approve permit for a driveway approach requested by property owner Jeff Hanson, 8660 1st Ave NE Rice, MN who was present to speak at the Regular County Board Meeting. Also present to speak on this issue were Craig Hanson and Lee Hanson. All shared their concerns and requested the addition of the driveway to be considered by the County Board. Highway staff have denied the permit because it violated the "Only one access per property/parcel will be allowed" and "On minor arterial roadways and on major collector roadways with a current ADT in excess of 1,000 ADT, accesses on the same side of the road shall be located a minimum of 480 feet apart". There is also a wetland on the property which would restrict from placing driveways in certain locations. It was recommended to get wetland delineation approved first. Motion by Johnson to table this request for appeal until the Hanson's can come back with information that shows they can install a driveway. Seconded by Heinen. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Byrd asked the Board to approve the Master Services agreement with Houston Engineering, Inc. and authorize the County Engineer to sign Task Orders. The Master Services Agreement with Houston Engineering, Inc. would provide various engineering services as they pertain to County Ditch matters. A master services agreement allows us to utilize Houston Engineering as needed via Task Orders. This master services agreement incorporates the normal legal requirements needed for County Contracts, while a task order will be specific to the individual ditch or tasks needed at the time. Motion by Johnson to approve the Master Services Agreement and seconded by Gapinski. Motion carried unanimously.

Under Commissioner Concerns, Gapinski suggested to share high-level updates quarterly to employees and possibly residents of Benton County that the County Board is taking action on. Gapinski thought about starting with employees first and if it gains ground, would consider putting the "updates" in the local papers. Headley suggested Commissioners record a short video on Commissioner updates to share on our Social Media sites.

There were no other Commissioner concerns.

Board members reported on Commissioner updates and recent meetings they attended on behalf of the County.

Johnson/Heinen to set Committees of the Whole: April 13, 2021 at 9:00 AM to discuss Homeless Shelters in Benton County and would package that with the tour of Human Services; April 19th, 2021 at 9:00 AM in Benton County Boardroom to discuss the Mississippi Watershed with BSWCD District Manager Gerry Maciej, and to discuss business attraction for Benton County with Benton Economic Partnership Director Amanda Othoudt; BEP Quarterly meeting on April 22nd from 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

at Jack and Jim's in Duelm; and a Road Tour with County Engineer Chris Byrd on Tuesday, May 11th at 9:00 AM. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Johnson to approve the future Committee of the Whole Meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:44 AM.

ATTEST:

Edward D. Popp, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator