

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 2, 2020

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on June 2, 2020 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Ed Popp, Spencer Buerkle, Warren Peschl, Jake Bauerly and Steve Heinen present. Call to order by Chair Buerkle was at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Peschl/Heinen unanimous to approve the amended agenda: add items—Bend in the River Master Plan; Potential Benton County Appointees to the St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority; and Funding Request from Foley CARE.

No one spoke under Open Forum.

Consent Agenda item #5 (request of Deanna Rosa dba *Rollies, LLC*, for permits to host five special events) was “pulled” for further discussion. Popp/Bauerly unanimous to approve the remaining Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2020 as written; 2) accept and file Committee of the Whole Minutes of May 11, 2020 as written; 3) accept and file Committee of the Whole Minutes of May 27, 2020 as written; 4) adopt 2021 Budget Development Calendar and Budget Development Guidelines as presented; and 6) approve 2020 SCORE Grant Applications Round II as recommended by the Benton County Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Regarding Consent Agenda item #5, Heinen questioned if the Board should approve this request “not knowing when the Governor is going to open everything up”. Nadean Inman, Auditor-Treasurer, noted that there will likely be another Governor’s order before the date of the first event (July 24th). Bauerly/Peschl unanimous to approve the five permits to host special events at *Rollies, LLC*, subject to the Governor’s guidelines (Consent Agenda item #5).

Connie Cardinal, Executive Director of Foley CARE, requested Board consideration of additional funding in the amount of \$5,000 to the CARE Program during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that, since the epidemic, Foley CARE has not only increased the number of current clients needing additional services, but have also increased the number of new clients requesting services for the first time. Cardinal noted that she has been working very hard with local and city legislators to get funding for senior programs like CARE throughout Minnesota; she has applied for a number of grants, but was denied due to the fact that the requests for funding were double the funding dollars available. She also noted that CARE has lost over \$20,000 the first half of this year due to cancellation of their fundraising activities; if social distancing continues, CARE will lose another \$20,000 this fall. Bauerly/Peschl unanimous to approve the funding request of Foley CARE for \$5,000 (from Board contingency account).

Jim McDermott, Emergency Management Director, and Nicole Ruhoff, Community Health Administrator, provided updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. McDermott reported that staff are in the process of closing the physical Emergency Operations Center as it relates to the pandemic. Ruhoff provided an update on COVID cases and reported on public health’s efforts in case contact tracing/investigations. She pointed out that CentraCare has been performing a variety of tests (close to 15,000 tests); about 18% have come back positive (individuals who have been symptomatic).

Roxanne Achman, Department of Development Director, referenced previous Board discussion about the feasibility of hosting Amnesty Day on June 27, 2020; it was requested that staff obtain a legal

opinion from the Benton County Attorney's Office. Achman stated that the Department of Development has prepared a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for this event which basically follows the Benton County COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. She stated the Attorney's opinion that if all the items in the Plan are followed, i.e. individuals must stay in their cars at all times, no public restrooms will be available, then this event should be able to proceed safely based on the current Executive Orders and MDH guidance. There was unanimous support of the County Board to move forward with the June 27, 2020 Amnesty Day Event at Sauk Rapids High School.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, reported that Federal funding was received for the Foley trail project construction; two project bids were received, and Helmin Construction was the lowest responsible bidder. He noted that the bid (\$109,833.20) was 2.1% higher than the engineer's estimate; however, the City of Foley is responsible for all costs above what the Federal grant covers. Byrd stated that the City of Foley is anticipated to concur with the bids at their June 2nd Council meeting; since Benton County is the fiscal agent for this project, the County must award the construction contract. Peschl/Popp unanimous to approve Resolution 2020-#24, accepting the bids and awarding a construction contract to Helmin Construction Inc. of Foley, and authorize the Chair to sign.

The Regular County Board meeting was recessed at 10:02 AM to conduct a Human Services Board meeting.

The Regular County Board meeting was reconvened at 10:08 AM.

Board members noted that there were "great candidates" for possible appointment to the St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority. Bauerly stated his desire to withdraw his previous request to rank these potential appointees; he commented "...we have a meeting next Monday...we have four candidates...we'll see what candidates other counties have...I think it's better to move slowly and get it right..."

Monty Headley, County Administrator, stated that the Benton County Park Commission recommends approval of a new master plan for Bend in the River Park; this plan has been made part of a "Great River Park Complex" Master Plan that includes the Stearns County Mississippi River Park. He explained that the regional park master plan was needed so that both counties could seek regional park designation through the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission, which would provide eligibility for legacy grant funding. Headley clarified that each park will maintain its own identity and each county is responsible for its own maintenance; public input was obtained through electronic surveys prepared by the consultant, HKGi. Headley reviewed the major features of the revised Bend in the River Master Plan—additional trails and shelter buildings; management of the trees rather than aggressive removal of trees; preservation of the farmstead without active restoration or reuse; and the long-term possibility of disc golf and archery facilities. Buerkle inquired of a possible local match should the counties receive a legacy grant; he commented "...these could be some big numbers...I would have some great caution..." Popp agreed that the county budget needs to be respected, noting that it's good to have a Park Commission that is in sync with the County Board. He stated "...this park is an asset to the county...there's a lot of people there..." Heinen commented "...we can use park dedication fees...funding from local businesses...a lot of schools/groups do a lot of education out there..." Popp/Heinen unanimous to approve the Great River Park Complex Master Plan, as recommended by the Benton County Park Commission.

Board members reported on recent meetings they attended on behalf of the county.

Under Commissioner Concerns, Bauerly stated his belief that rural Broadband grants will be a “hot topic” going forward. He commented “...this whole COVID thing pointed out the inequities between people who live in the metro areas and people who live in the rural areas on how they can function... when our county engineer does road projects, we should be looking at putting fiber in the ground...put the conduit in...for economic development in Benton County...”

Also, under Commissioner Concerns, Bauerly commented positively on the CR 78 project. Popp stated “...when we get this all done...we need to pair up with Morrison County... so we can get state aid for that roadway going forward...”

No Committees of the Whole were set.

Heinen/Bauerly unanimous to adjourn at 10:43 AM.

Spencer C. Buerkle, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator