

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on September 18, 2018 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Ed Popp, Warren Peschl, Jake Bauerly, Jim McMahon and Spencer Buerkle present. Call to order by Chair Popp was at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Peschl/Buerkle unanimous to approve the agenda as written.

No one was present to speak under Open Forum.

Consent Agenda item #6 was “pulled” for further discussion. Buerkle/Bauerly unanimous to approve the remaining Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 4, 2018 as written; 2) accept and file Committee of the Whole Minutes of September 10, 2018 as written; 3) accept and file Veterans Service Officer Quarterly Report as presented; 4) accept and file Administrator’s Report/ Monthly Financial Report as presented; 5) authorize Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District to submit the Benton County Water Plan, as updated September 2018, to the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources; 7) approve Resolution 2018-#29, authorizing submittal of application to designate Bend in the River Park as a Regional Park by the Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission, and authorize the Chair to sign; and 8) Board certification of the Benton County Solid Waste Service Fee Assessment to the County Auditor-Treasurer for tax year 2019, and authorize the Chair to sign. Regarding Consent Agenda item #6, McMahon commented “...I do not believe the POST Board authorizes any part-time licensed peace officers...it’s a matter of the wording...rather full-time licensed officers working part-time...” Monty Headley, County Administrator, noted that the language in the proposed resolution, for the most part, came from PERA; the resolution itself does not reference “part-time licensed”. With that clarification, McMahon/Bauerly unanimous to adopt Resolution 2018-#28, designating licensed deputies of the Sheriff’s Office, working part-time, to be eligible for the PERA Police and Fire Retirement System, and authorize the Chair to sign.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, explained that the bid opening for the reclaim project on CR 58 in Minden Township was on September 14th; three bids were received with the lowest responsible bidder being 3.5% below Engineer’s Estimate. Peschl/McMahon unanimous to award a construction contract for project CP 005-058-004, reclaim project on CR 58 in Minden Township, to Knife River, as lowest responsible bidder, and authorize the Chair to sign the contract.

Byrd reported that the bid opening for the reclaim project on CSAH 22 in Alberta Township was on September 14th; the lowest responsible bidder was just over 4% below Engineer’s Estimate. McMahon/Buerkle unanimous to award a construction contract for project SAP 005-622-014, reclaim project on CSAH 22 in Alberta Township, to Knife River, as lowest responsible bidder, and authorize the Chair to sign the contract.

Chair Popp inquired if Benton County ever “teams up” with the townships on paving/overlay projects. Byrd stated that this has occurred in the past; it can be considered when part of a locally-funded project.

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

The Regular County Board meeting was recessed at 9:27 AM to conduct a Human Services Board meeting.

The Regular Board meeting was reconvened at 9:38 AM.

Under Commissioner Concerns, Commissioner Peschl reported that he receives emails from constituents and, in some instances, he refers those individuals to Administrator Headley for a response.

Administrator Headley provided an overview of the budget process to date, noting the County Board's goal of limiting the increase in levy to the percentage growth in new construction and not changes in value. He provided a summary of major factors in the proposed 2019 budget and levy:

- The proposed 2019 levy increases 0.95%, or \$186,446 from 2018, to a total of \$19,761,401
- With this proposed change for 2019, the ten-year average levy change for Benton County is a 0.1% reduction (the proposed 2019 levy is \$212,364 less than the 2010 County levy)
- The proposed levy keeps the increase below the 6.4% expected growth in the County's payable 2019 tax capacity, which translates into a reduced County tax rate in 2019; the County tax rate will fall from 64.36% to 61.09% (estimated) of tax capacity (down from a peak of 77.74% in 2013)
- The proposed 2019 operating budget totals \$45,671,926, an increase of \$2,658,931, or 6.2% from 2018
- Of this total spending increase, \$2.2 million is related to a larger 2019 road program (primarily the County Road 78 reconstruction project from CSAH 2 to the Morrison County line, which is funded from accumulated levy funds, County Program Aid and wheelage tax)
- The proposed budget includes the following "policy issues":
 - \$422,990 to allow the Human Services Department to expand its electronic document management system to the Social Services units (Child Protection, Mental Health/Licensing and Adult Services)
 - \$40,000 for the Sheriff's Office to purchase body cameras for its Deputy Sheriffs
 - An additional Social Worker for Human Services Child Protection to address increased caseloads
 - \$88,934 to allow the Auditor-Treasurer's Office to replace all the County's voting equipment
 - \$140,000 added to the Highway Department "patch" budget for increased maintenance overlays of County roads
 - \$15,000 to upgrade the County's emergency operations center (where the County's responses to disasters are coordinated)
 - Approved 2019 policy issues total \$633,252; reserves fund most one-time capital purchases (Human Services EDMS, body cameras, election equipment and EOC upgrade)
- Employee compensation and benefits add \$416,758 to the 2019 budget; this amount funds a 2% general wage increase in labor agreements, plus step and longevity increases; the County will have no health insurance premium increase in 2019
- Increased spending is partially offset by \$75,287 in additional County Program Aid
- The proposed 2019 budget also uses \$140,000 from inmate boarding revenue as a levy offset instead of following the past practice of dedicating this amount of inmate boarding revenue to capital projects (Revenue Fund reserves are adequate to fund the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, allowing the County to use inmate boarding revenue to reduce the property tax levy).

Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to approve Resolution 2018-#30, setting the proposed 2019 levy at \$19,761,401, and authorize the Chair to sign. Buerkle/McMahon unanimous to approve Resolution

2018-#31, establishing the proposed 2019 Benton County budget as presented, and authorize the Chair to sign. Headley noted that final budget/levy adoption will occur at the last Board meeting in December.

Chair Popp announced that the Benton County Board of Commissioners will conduct a Truth in Taxation public meeting on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, at 7:00 PM in the Benton County Board Room.

Amy Diedrich from Marsh & McLennan Agency (the county's insurance broker) was present to provide a recommendation on 2019 employee health insurance premium contributions. She referenced the county's move to a self-insured health plan for 2018, stating "...it's been a good year...we are recommending a 0% increase in health insurance premiums for 2019...this is the beginning of a process to better manage health insurance costs and we are going to continue to do that throughout the year..." Diedrich provided renewal summary detail leading to Marsh & McLennan's recommendation of no change to the prior year's rate structure. Bauerly commented "...we've got to keep working on wellness...Benton County is below average according to the community health assessments..." McMahon/Bauerly unanimous to approve the recommendation of Marsh & McLennan Agency for 2019 Preferred One employee health insurance premium contributions (no increase in premium from prior year).

Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to set Committees of the Whole: October 17, Discuss Sales Tax for Transportation; October 30, Joint Planning Commission/County Board Meeting to Review Draft Goals/Policies for the Comprehensive Plan.

Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to adjourn at 10:03 AM.

Edward D. Popp, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator