

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 6, 2020

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on October 6, 2020 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Jake Bauerly, Ed Popp, Spencer Buerkle, Steve Heinen and Warren Peschl 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 agenda as written.

No one was present to speak under Open Forum.

Bauerly/Popp unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020 as written; 2) accept and file Administrator's Report/Monthly Financial Report as written; 3) accept and file Veteran Service Officer Quarterly Report as written; 4) reappoint George Fiedler as the County Veteran Services Officer to a four-year term from June 6, 2020 to June 5, 2024; 5) approve Amendment No. 1 to service contract with *Service Master Professional Services of St. Cloud* for provision of cleaning services for Benton County Government Buildings, extending the contract to cover one additional year, and authorize the Chair to sign; 6) approve renewal application for On-Sale & Sunday Sale liquor license for *Oak Hill Golf Club*, 8852 Indian Road NW, Sauk Rapids, for the period October 28, 2020 to October 28, 2021, and authorize the Chair to sign; and 7) approve Application for Exempt Permit for *Duelm Area Lions* to conduct a raffle, bingo, and tipboards to be held at Jack & Jim's Convention Center, 11025 Duelm Road NE, Foley, on November 14, 2020.

Board members welcomed Amanda Othoudt, the new Benton Economic Partnership (BEP) Executive Director. Othoudt thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and provided background on her past employment, education and experience. She stated that she grew up on a dairy farm in Benton County; she is the former Economic Development Director for the City of Elk River, where she managed the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Economic Development Authority for the city. Othoudt updated the Board on the CARES business assistance grant program being administered by the BEP. She stated that 67 grant applications have been received to date for a total requested dollar amount of \$868,589.00; while a few of the applications do not meet the established grant criteria, the majority meet the criteria and are able to validate need for the grant. Othoudt stated BEP's request for an additional \$134,000 of CARES funding which would fund all the applications received to date. Chair Buerkle stated that further discussion on CARES funding will occur at the County Board's Committee of the Whole meeting tomorrow at 9:00 AM.

Jessica Green from *Northland Securities* presented options and potential savings associated with refunding bonds issued in 2014 for the construction of the "roundabout" corridor on County Road 3 (from CR 1 to Highway 10); options included advanced and current refunding. Green explained that, typically, the county would want to see at least a 3% savings in interest to move forward with refunding. She commented "...if you are in a position that you believe that rates will stay low for the foreseeable future, or at least until the point where we can essentially call the bonds as a current refunding and issue tax exempt debt, the savings would be just so much greater...nearly double where we are today... but we are certainly happy to move forward if the Board says...we just want to do this taxable because rates are low now....let's take advantage of that..." Bauerly suggested "...we could watch the rates...see where they are trending...postpone our decision..." Following brief discussion, there was consensus of

the Board to delay action on refunding at this time. Green stated "...we will keep an eye on it...if rates are moving and it seems like a better opportunity to move now, we will certainly reach out to Monty..."

The Regular County Board meeting was recessed at 9:37 AM to conduct a Human Services Board meeting.

The Regular County Board meeting was reconvened at 9:40 AM.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, explained that, at a Committee of the Whole on February 19th, direction was given to the Highway Department to proceed with a shoulder-widening project on CR 55 to be constructed in 2021; at that meeting, a couple of options were presented. He stated that they are proceeding with direction to do a shoulder widening from 105th Street to just south of the Walnut Ridge development; this is the point at which it has been previously discussed that CR 55 may be realigned to the west—a mill and overlay is planned from just south of the Walnut Ridge development to CSAH 2. Byrd clarified that the shoulder widening is primarily for traffic safety and not for pedestrian/ bicycle safety; however, some people will use the shoulders to walk and ride bicycles. He commented "...we discussed whether to make this a bike lane or not...the guidance was it's not going to be signed or designated as a bike lane..." Byrd indicated that utility relocations are currently underway in the area where the shoulder widening is occurring. Popp suggested that Byrd contact the City of Rice to see if they are interested in doing shoulder-widening on the short segment of roadway from the south side of the Walnut Ridge development along CR 55 to the north side of the Walnut Ridge development. Bauerly suggested that the City purchase the right-of-way if they want it widened. Byrd noted a concern with purchasing right-of-way from the trucking company on the one side of the roadway due to limited space; Bauerly suggested widening the shoulder on the one side only. Byrd commented "...I do have some engineering concerns with having a shoulder on one side of the road and not the other...and not designating it as a bike lane...we are giving the impression of a bike lane...providing a shoulder on only one side of the roadway...that sends mixed messages...is it a bike lane or is it for traffic safety..." Heinen added "...I'm not willing to buy road right-of-way for the city if it's in the city limits...if they want that widened, let them buy it...if we did it for one city, we'd have to keep maintaining it for all the other cities...if they aren't willing to do that, I'm not willing to widen the road...or do the shouldering..." Bauerly added "...I would support the county doing the paved shoulders and doing the road...but not the right-of-way..." He questioned the need for a mill and overlay, suggesting an overlay only. Byrd stated that he will have a conversation with the City of Rice on widening the roadway further north and their desire to purchase right-of-way to widen both sides of the road.

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

Under Commissioner Concerns, Bauerly reported on a concern of one of his constituents about a large gathering of people at a recent car show at Rollie's; the constituent's concern related to the enforcement of the Governor's orders on local businesses. There was consensus of the Board to refer the constituent to the Sheriff's Department.

Popp/Peschl unanimous to set Committees of the Whole: October 19, Employee Health Insurance Renewal Discussion; October 22, Benton Economic Development Quarterly Meeting; and October 26, Association of MN Counties District Five Virtual Meeting.

Monty Headley, County Administrator, presented the request of Foley CARE for a County Board member to appear in a promotional video for the Foley CARE Program. Commissioner Bauerly volunteered.

Peschl/Heinen unanimous to conduct a closed session of the County Board under MN Statutes §13D.05, Subdivision 3, to evaluate the performance of the County Administrator (at 10:29 AM).

The Regular County Board meeting was reconvened at 12:22 PM.

Popp/Heinen unanimous to adjourn at 12:23 PM.

Spencer C. Buerkle, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator