

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 3, 2020

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on November 3, 2020 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Spencer Buerkle, Steve Heinen, Warren Peschl, Jake Bauerly and Ed Popp 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.

Popp/Bauerly unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2020 as written; 2) accept and file Committee of the Whole Minutes of October 19, 2020 as written; 3) approve Summary of Closed Session conducted October 20, 2020 to continue the evaluation of performance regarding an individual subject to County Board authority; 4) approve Engagement Letter with *CliftonLarsonAllen* for audit of the 2020 financial statements, and authorize the Chair to sign; 5) approve agreement with *Madden, Galanter and Hansen Law Firm* for outside labor attorney services through August 31, 2021, and authorize the Chair to sign; 6) approve request for unpaid leave; 7) approve Application for On & Off Sale of 3.2 Malt Liquor for 2021—*Silver Corners*; 8) approve Application for Exempt Permit for *MN Dark House Association-Central Chapter* to conduct a raffle at Jack & Jim's, 11025 Duelm Road NE, Foley, on February 5, 2021; 9) approve 2021 MPCA Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Program Grant Agreement and Payment, and authorize the Chair to sign; and 10) adopt Resolution 2020-#34, accepting donation to the Sheriff's Office from *American Heritage Bank*, and authorize the Chair to sign.

Amanda Othoudt, Benton Economic Partnership Executive Director, presented the second round of CARES business assistance grant recommendations, totaling \$240,006.00. She noted that she has completed her review of all 67 applications; she is awaiting information from 15 applicants—three additional applications were received after the deadline. Othoudt stated her intent to bring the remaining CARES grant recommendations to the November 17th Board meeting. Bauerly noted that the county may receive unspent CARES funds from several townships as well. Headley stated his hope to further discuss CARES Act funding at the Board's November 10th Committee of the Whole; the Board will consider funding for non-profits and possible additional funding for homeless issues. Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to extend the deadline to the last application date (10/29/2020) to include the three applications that were received after the deadline. Heinen/Popp unanimous to approve awarding "Round 2" CARES business assistance grants, as recommended by the Benton Economic Partnership.

Tim Hanson from *Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA)* provided MMA's recommendation for employee health insurance funding (premium rates) for 2021 based on the renewal from Preferred One. Peschl/Heinen unanimous to approve the recommendations provided by *Marsh & McLennan Agency* in regards to funding for the employee health insurance plan: 1) increase Stop Loss from \$60,000 to \$70,000; 2) increase funding factor by 8% in 2021 and a minimum of 8% for 2022; and 3) use the self-insurance reserves to cover the laser funding.

Roxanne Achman, Department of Development Director, requested Board discussion on the RFP process for building inspection services. Popp/Bauerly unanimous to publish a request for proposals, allowing

two weeks for posting; and appointing Commissioner Peschl to the RFP review committee, along with the County Administrator and the Department of Development Director. Heinen noted that the contract will require County Attorney review as well. Achman outlined the criteria which will be included in the RFP.

Achman expressed congratulations to Benton County on the “phenomenal” Census response rate of 75.1%; the State of MN was the highest response state for the Census.

The Regular County Board meeting was recessed at 9:31 AM to conduct a Human Services Board meeting.

The Regular County Board meeting was reconvened at 9:45 AM.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, explained that he recently received correspondence from MNDOT that they will need some temporary easements on some county-owned property along TH 23 in 2022; these easements are necessary to facilitate future construction work along TH 23 (from Foley to Milaca). Byrd referenced several Early Notification of Acquisition letters from MNDOT advising him of impending improvements on TH 23 in the cities of Foley, Ronneby, Oak Park and Foreston. He explained that the purpose of this project is to improve traffic flow by adding additional turn lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, and a roundabout at Eighth Avenue/Penn Street in Foley. Byrd noted that no action is required at this time; proposed agreements will be brought to the County Board in the future.

Byrd stated that, as previously discussed, there are several bridges in Benton County on township roads that need to be replaced; some of them could be eligible for funding with Township Bridge funds from the Highway Unit Tax Distribution Fund. He noted that the County Highway Department does not have the staff or resources to provide engineering services for these township bridges (four township bridges and one bridge in the City of Foley); Public Works has issued an RFP and solicited several engineering firms. Byrd stated that four proposals were received and staff is recommending that *Widseth* be selected based on quality based selection criteria; cost was also a factor. He noted that the contract is currently under review by the County Attorney’s Office; if approved, the total contract cost would be \$183,995 (includes design services and construction inspection). Byrd will bring the *Widseth* contract to the Board for approval at a future meeting.

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

Under Commissioner Concerns, Popp reported on a call he received last week with a concern related to the front-desk security.

Under Commissioner Concerns, Buerkle stated “...we’ve got some meetings coming up...public hearings...maybe we need to limit the number of people in the room (pandemic related)...” Several suggestions were offered, including moving to a larger venue; the Benton County Public Works Facility was proposed as a potential location.

Popp/Heinen unanimous to set Committees of the Whole: November 5, GSDC Meeting of Investors and Partners; November 10, Fueling Station Repairs at Public Works Facility/Corrections Office Staffing/ County Attorney Paralegal Position/CARES Act Funding; November 20, DDA Classification and Compensation Appeals/Review Non-Profit CARES Act Grant Applications; December 4, SWCD Virtual Tour of Practices; and December 14, Final Budget Review/2021 Fee Schedule Revisions/Elected Official

Salaries. Board members also set a Special Meeting of the County Board for 9:00 AM on November 24th to approve final CARES Act Grants.

Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to adjourn at 10:22 AM.

Spencer C. Buerkle, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator