The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, February 14, 1995 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 24, 1995 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. None was forthcoming.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried that the agenda be approved with the following late addition: Item 23) A memo from Comm. Seppanen on the County Millage Proposals and Item 24) The retirement of George G. Johnson, Marquette City Police Chief.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 21, 1995, through February 2, 1995 in the amount of $1,425,801.14 be approved.

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Linda Rossberg, County Extension Director, introduced Karen McClenny, MSU Extension Children, Youth and Family/Human Services Education Coordinator. Ms. McClenny was hired through a combined grant by MSU, the Kellogg Foundation, and Community Mental Health. It is a one year grant that will be renewed on a yearly basis. This is a two-county position which will provide prevention services for Families At Risk. The hiring of Ms. Karen McClenny for this position needs County Board approval.

Karen McClenny was present to further introduce herself. She came to Marquette County in 1986 when her husband was stationed at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. Ms. McClenny has worked with the Gwinn Schools, the Peter White Library as Director of Children’s Services, directed various training programs at K.I. Sawyer and has been director of the Youth Center at K.I. Sawyer.

On behalf of the County Board, Chairperson Corkin welcomed Karen McClenny to the Marquette County Extension Staff.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the hiring of Karen McClenny as MSU Extension Children, Youth and Family/Human Services Education Coordinator.

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The Committee considered a proposal from the Marquette County Health Department for fee reductions for nine required State cost-sharing services. Dr. Randall Johnson, Health Department Director, was present to explain the proposal and answer questions. Because the State of Michigan was not meeting its 50% match requirements the Health Department and the County Board approved an increase in fees for a number of services in 1988. At that time a promise was made that when the State increased its funding to a more appropriate level these fees would be reversed. Seldom has Dr. Johnson had the opportunity to come before the County Board with a proposal to reduce fees.
Dr. Johnson further explained the increased State funding for these required services was to be partially offset by the elimination of cost-sharing for allowable services and by an anticipated reduction in license fee revenue. Required programs are currently largely funded by user fees (i.e., food protection, on site sewage disposal management, management of private water supplies, vision screening, and hearing screening). Although the full 50% State funding cost-sharing ratio has not been achieved, Marquette County will be receiving approximately $135,000 net increase in cost sharing. Dr. Johnson presented an attachment showing the present fees, the new proposed fees, which show a reduction averaging approximately 28%.

Comm. Arsenault remembered when the County Board had to raise the fees, which upset many people, and he appreciates Dr. Johnson and the Board of Health’s efforts to reduce the fees to a more reasonable level and keep a promise.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the proposed fee reduction schedule for various Health Department Services.

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The Committee considered a request from the Marquette County Board of Health that the County Board of Commissioners discontinue further consideration of the Marquette County Soil and Water Conservation District’s proposal to take over the Soil Erosion Program. Dr. Randall M. Johnson, Health Department Director, was present and explained that despite several meetings identifying a funding source from where the Soil and Water Conservation District would get approximately $43,500 to take over the Soil Erosion Program has not occurred. The current fee structure generates only $8,000 to $10,000 per year resulting in a revenue shortfall of approximately $35,000. No matter what option is considered, it increases the cost to someone and involves significant policy questions. Until the financial issues are resolved, it is inappropriate to spend a significant amount of Health Department Staff time needed to help the S&WCD develop the many programmatic components of a complete proposal.

It was moved by Comm. Angeli, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried to recommend the County Board discontinue further consideration as requested. Comm. Arsenault suggested that because Comm. Bergdahl was not present and is the present Chair of the Soil and Water Conservation District, that the Committee wait until he gets back to discuss the matter. Comm. Angeli withdrew his motion.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole send the request by the Health Department to the full County Board Meeting on February 21st without a Committee of the Whole recommendation.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from George Wright, Facilities Manager, to award the ADA Signage Bid to Michigan State Industries. Mr. Wright distributed a letter from Cary Adragna, Sales Representative, Michigan State Industries, which explained the functions and background of Michigan State Industries. MSI believes they do not have an unfair advantage over competition in view of the fact that MSI can only sell to tax exempt organizations, which include the State, Counties, Cities, YMCA’s, schools, universities, churches, and hospitals.

Comm. Joseph could see no other way than to accept the bid from Michigan State Industries, however, he pointed out that the local vendors must pay overhead such as taxes, wages, benefits, etc., therefore, Michigan State Industries has a tremendous advantage. Also, the money made by private business recirculates several times, whereas, money sent to Michigan State Industries is gone from the area.

Comm. Angeli felt this to be a very difficult issue. He is opposed more on principal than anything. He knows that Marquette County is short of revenues but disapproves of the County buying from Michigan State Industries. MSI’s list of non-profit corporations that they can sell to leaves very little for the private vendor.
County Administrator Dennis Aloia, explained that with this particular bid we are saving $6,400 by purchasing the signs from Michigan State Industries. Adding all purchase made by Marquette County, less than one percent goes to this particular agency. We really do limit the use of MSI.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and carried by voice vote 6 Ayes to 1 Nay (Comm. Angeli), that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the ADA Signage Bid for 416 signs to be awarded to Michigan State Industries for the amount of $5,428.83.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from the Resource Management Development Staff that the County Board apply for an allocation to continue the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program through 1997. A 25% match must be provided by the County but the County’s participation in the Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) and the Community Home Improvement Program (CHIP) will serve as a local match and make it possible for the County to avoid any cash contribution.

Ron Koshorek, Director of Resource Management, further explained that in early 1994 a $300,000 Community Development Block Grant was received from MSHDA for house rehabilitation loans targeting low and very low income households. Thirteen to fourteen households have been assisted to date by this program with another eight applications in the review process. To date, $146,000 in funds has been authorized by the Planning Commission and $81,000 from the RAP/CHIP sources.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the application for an allocation to continue the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program through 1997 in the amount of $300,000 and further authorize Staff to sign and file the required Notice of Intent form (March 1st deadline) with MSHDA.

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The Committee considered a memo from the Marquette County Planning Commission regarding the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Application for a Casino.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from the Resource Management/Development Department Staff that the County Board authorize them to apply for a $22,000 Coastal Management Program Grant for the repair and extension of the Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead. Ron Koshorek, Director, Resource Management Development, was present and explained that in 1994 they were authorized to submit grant applications totaling $44,000 to repair and extend the Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead. The DNR’s Waterway Division approved $22,000 for the project (available until 1997), however, the Coastal Management Program did not fund the remaining $22,000. If the County is successful in securing the $22,000 Coastal Management Program Grant then the project would be 100% funded.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the grant application for a $22,000 Coastal Management Program Grant for the repair and extension of the Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead.
The Committee considered a recommendation from the Resource Management/Development Department that Marquette County pursue a Small Business Administration Urban and Rural Tree Planting Initiative Grant Application. Ron Koshorek, Director, Resource Management Department, was present and explained that the Natural Resource Development Program of the U.S. Small Business Administration has developed a tree planting initiative for the purpose of contracting with small business to plant trees on non-federal public lands. The Marquette County Forestry Commission has utilized this funding source in the past ($46,173 to date) to accomplish tree planting necessary to reach the objectives of the Forest Management Plan. The present application currently under consideration would request $25,544 for the 1996 tree planting.

The long term impact of this grant is that funding would provide forested lands for recreation of County residents and eventually a marketable timber stand producing County revenues. The short term impact would be an increase in local employment at tree nurseries, for tree planters, equipment operators, etc., which is the main objective of the Small Business Administration in offering this initiative.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the application to the Small Business Administration for an Urban and Rural Tree Planting Initiative Grant Application in the amount of $25,544.

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The Committee considered a proposed settlement agreement and recommendation from Civil Counsel, David Payant, regarding a class action suit on behalf of all the fifty States in the United States, and All Local Units of Government vs. a Group of Domestic Airlines. Civil Counsel Payant was present and explained that the lawsuit alleged that the Airlines fixed prices and harmed the governmental units. The lawsuit is now near settlement and the governmental units will receive a discount on future airline fares across the board.

Civil Counsel Payant explained the County has several options: We may do nothing and remain a member of the class and receive fare discounts, or we may hire our own attorney and intervene in the lawsuit, or we may request exclusion from the class. Mr. Payant recommends that Marquette County do nothing and remain a member of the class and use the fare discount.

A discount of 10% off any published fare for domestic air transportation services is available when used for official governmental travel by employees, agents, or invitees. The 10% discount is available on any published full fare in excess of $50 and will be available for a period of eighteen months or until the total discounts to the class of $40,000,000 have been reached, whichever occurs first.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board concur with the Civil Counsel recommendation to do nothing but remain a member of the class and receive the fare discounts as per the proposed settlement in US District Court Civil Action No. 94-2429-LFO.

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The Committee considered a list showing the medical care debt levies for the years 1986-1995.

Comm. Arsenault, Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Millage Committee, pointed out that the average millage levied for the debt retirement for the construction of the Medical Care Facility since December of 1986 has been .97 mills. It should be noted to the public that by supporting the two millage proposals, which total 2 mills, it really only requires an additional 1 mill. The Debt Care Millage will be levied in December 1995 for the last time.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board go on record as not seeking a renewal of the Medical Care Debt Levy, which has averaged .97 mills for the last ten years, but rather allow that millage to sunset in December of 1995, and inform the public that although the County is seeking a 2 mill increase on March 7th, the net increase will only be about 1 mill.
The Committee considered a memo from the Marquette County Planning Commission regarding the proposed zoning plan for K.I. Sawyer from Sands Township. It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried to place the communication on file.

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The Committee considered a letter written by Orin E. Bailey, Director, Six County Consortium to Mr. Robert Pendleton of the Michigan Jobs Commission. The subject of the letter is retraining services for military personnel at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. Mr. Bailey pointed out that under the initial Grant Application to deliver JTPA Title III EDWAA Services as a result of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base Closure, 140 military personnel would be separating from the Air Force. Of those 140 military personnel the Six County Consortium Grant Application targeted 80 for retraining.

According to the EDWAA eligibility guidelines for National Reserve Account Funds, military personnel must be involuntarily separated under other than adverse conditions. The issue facing the Six County Consortium is that it appears, by definition, that no one will be taking an involuntary separation from K.I. Sawyer. Our community faces a dilemma because Marquette County cannot provide retraining services to military personnel who are separated as a result of closure of the Base, even though 300 of our military personnel currently face separation. This is an unfair situation and Mr. Bailey hopes that with the intervention of the Michigan Jobs Commission retraining services could be offered to military personnel.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to Mr. Robert Pendleton of the Michigan Jobs Commission supporting Orin Bailey’s efforts to allow the retraining of military personnel being separated as a result of the closure of K.I. Sawyer.

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The Committee considered a letter from the Marquette County Airport Commission to Bill Malinowski, Greiner Inc., regarding the Airport Relocation Feasibility Study.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file.

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The Committee considered a letter from John K. Boerema, Commissioner, Michigan Aeronautics Commission, concerning what is happening to the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). A meeting to discuss funding for the AIP and other concerns is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 1995, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., at the Sheraton Hotel, 925 S. Creitz Road, Lansing, Michigan. Chairperson Corkin pointed out that the Airport Manager, Hal Pawley will be attending this meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file.

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It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Seppanen and unanimously carried by voice vote to accept and place on file the Project Listing and Project Completion and Certification Report for FEMA-DR-1028 Disaster Assistance Projects approved for Marquette County from Michael E. Zorza, Emergency Program Manager.

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The Committee considered a notice from the Marquette County Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention of their meeting set for Tuesday, February 14, 1995 at 11:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Marquette County Health Department.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file.

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Comm. Seppanen read the following letter into the record regarding the March 7, 1995 millage issues:

Dear Fellow Commissioners:

I need to start by correcting the Editorial in last night’s Mining Journal. It stated that the “Marquette County Board of Commissioners has dismissed a proposal from Administrator Dennis Aloia that called for 60 jobs and 15 programs to cut if the March 7 millage increase vote fails.” The correction is that the Board has not taken a position on how the cuts are to be made if the proposals fail in the election. I’m hoping we can discuss these issues tonight.

As a member on the Millage committee I spent many hours discussing that possibility with other commissioners as we debated the revenue problems faced by the County. The committee rejected the first proposal suggested by the Administrator in the ’95 budget, which was to have a Health Care Millage with Community Mental Health, the Health Department and the Medical Care Facility as the three organizations up for the vote. We rejected them as an option because Community Mental Health and the Health Department are programs that we would continue to fund at high levels even if the millage failed. It was our belief that this would not be fair to the voters. We looked in our budget for non-mandated programs that would generate the money needed to offset the revenue shortfall that we face in 1996. The only two programs that fit that description were the Road Patrol and the County Medical Care Facility. The question that the Board members have been wrestling with for the last several weeks has been "how do we handle the cuts to the County budget if these millages fail?"

The Millage Committee discussed this issue at length. We told the Sheriff that we would reduce the Road Patrol but not eliminate it if the millage failed. This information was discussed with the other commissioners but we have yet to take an official position on the issue. The Millage Committee asked the Administrator to put together a list of his recommendations of the reductions that we would have to make if both millages failed. This was done so that we, the Board, can start the discussions and enlighten the public on our possible cuts.

There appears to be some confusion on where this process is going, and I agree there is confusion on the part of the Board. There is also a great amount of concern over the issue of how to handle the large cuts that will be necessary if the millage fails. I believe that these concerns have added to the confusion. The concerns are these:

1) We have staffing levels that are well below those of our sister counties. Our county workers are more efficient and work harder to get the job done. If there was "fat" it has already been trimmed. We are down to the "bone" in our operations.

2) Our revenue has been continually hit over the last ten years by unfunded mandates from the state and federal governments. At the same time we have revenue problems not faced by many counties with our population. Much of our land is under special reduced tax laws such as the Specific Ore Tax and the CFA lands.

3) Fixed cost, such as insurance and retirement, have been dramatically increasing.
4) With reduced staff and revenues our employees have been, up to this point, providing a level of service and programs that has been demanded by our citizens.

5) We now may have to reduce this already tight budget of the general fund by 10%.

6) All the choices in regard to cuts this large, $1,290,000 out of an approximate $12,900,000 general fund, will be very hard, hurt many people and dramatically cut services to the County.

These are the concerns that are going through my mind and I’m sure the minds of the other commissioners. Are these the points that the Board needs to further discuss and give their position to the voters of the County? I believe so. We need to focus not on the missteps we made, but on the real issues of the need for these County services. To do this we have to send a clear message to the voters on where we stand.

I’m willing to start that debate by restating my position that I took in the discussions on the Millage Committee:

1) If the County Medical Care Facility millage fails we should sell the operation. The beds would remain in the County but, unfortunately, the client make-up would change.

2) The Millage Committee recommended and the Board agreed that an enhanced Road Patrol millage would be offered to the voters. We did this because of the obvious need coupled with the increased law enforcement activity in the County. To go from recognition of the need for more coverage to the complete elimination of the road Patrol, to me, is not practical. That’s why I believe that if the Road Patrol millage fails we should reduce the Patrol but not eliminate it. I believe that there are certain County functions and responsibilities that make it critical for the need of the deputies. Let there be no mistake, it will not be the same program we have now with around-the-clock coverage.

3) If we did this, additional cuts would have to be made in other departments to reach the $1,290,000 worth of reductions. I would request the Administrator to present his recommendations of reductions and cuts so that we can make an informed decision.

I’m offering this as a starting point for our discussions.

Respectfully,

Gregory J. Seppanen
Commissioner

Motion was made by Comm. Seppanen that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board request a list of additional budget cuts that would have to be made in other County Departments to reach the $1.29 million worth of reductions. The motion died for lack of support.

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The Committee considered an invitation to attend a dinner in honor of retiring Marquette Police Chief George G. Johnson. The dinner will be held March 10, 1995 at 6:00 p.m. in the Great Lakes Rooms of Northern Michigan University. Comm. Angeli contended that someone should represent Marquette County and a presentation be made on behalf of the County to Chief Johnson.

It was moved by Comm. Angeli, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board be represented at the retirement dinner in honor of Marquette Police Chief George G. Johnson, and that we offer our appreciation to Mr. Johnson for his many years of service to the City of Marquette and cooperation with Marquette County.

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Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. None was forthcoming.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Linda Rossberg, County Extension Director will introduce Karen McClenny, MSU Extension Children, Youth and Family/Human Services Education Coordinator.
7. Health Dept. proposed Fee Reductions from Dr. Randall M. Johnson, Director.
8. Memo from Dr. Randall M. Johnson, Director, Health Department, regarding the Soil Erosion Program.
9. Recommendation from George Wright, Facilities Manager, to Award ADA Signage Bid.
10. Update on County Housing Program from Resource Mgt/Dev Staff.
11. Memo from James Kippola, Senior Planner, regarding Michigan State Housing Development Authority 1995 Housing Allocations.
12. Memo from the Marquette County Planning Commission regarding Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Application for a Casino.
13. Memo from the Resource Management/Development Staff regarding the Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead Grant Application.
15. Memo from David Payant, Civil Counsel regarding Settlement Agreement with a Group of Domestic Airlines on Future Airline Fares.
19. Comments by Marquette County Airport Commission regarding Airport Relocation Feasibility Study.
20. Letter from John K. Boerema, Commissioner, Michigan Aeronautics Commission, regarding Airport Improvement Program.
21. Project Listing, Completion, and Certification for Disaster Assistance Projects for Marquette County from Michael Zorza, Emergency Program Manager.
22. Meeting Notice: Marquette County Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention, Tuesday, February 14, 1995, 11:00 A.M., Health Department Board Room.
23. 
24. Retirement of George Johnson
25. PUBLIC COMMENT.
26. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
27. ADJOURNMENT.