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


It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on February 28, 1995 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Ernie Grasso, representing the Senior Officers of the Sheriff’s Department spoke in reference to the offer from their bargaining committee for zero wage increase, zero benefit increase, along with zero layoffs. On the 3rd of March the Senior Officers had a 100% sign off on a tentative agreement and are surprised that at the last County Board meeting it was not ratified. Mr. Grasso hopes the County Board will take action in the Special Meeting following the Committee of the Whole to ratify this agreement.

Don Maki, AFSCME Staff Representative, commented on Agenda Item 14, Millage Election Results. Mr. Maki is looking for the County Board to deal responsively and not narrowly with this issue. He urged them not to go after the Road Patrol as the sole entity for cuts. He is here not only as a Staff Representative but also as a taxpayer and believes the Road Patrol is necessary for the protection of Marquette County citizens. He asked the County Board to think hard and deep about continuing Road Patrol services.

There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Trudell and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved as presented

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period February 24, 1995 through March 10, 1995, in the amount of $948,775.11 be approved.

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The Committee considered a memo from James Kippola, Senior Planner, regarding a 1995 Community Development Block Grant Application. On February 21, 1995 the County Board authorized the Resource Management Development Department to submit a Notice of Intent to apply for a $300,000 CDBG offered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). These block grant funds will be used to rehabilitate low income owner occupied single family homes and duplexes and a small portion of the grant will be held in reserve to complete emergency repairs. A draft of the Block Grant Application was presented to Commissioners for their review. Staff is seeking Board authorization to conduct the required public hearing at the April 5, 1995 Planning Commission meeting and approval of the grant application.

Jim Kippola, Senior Planner, was present and explained that the $99,000 of unexpended funds from a the 1993 CDBG will be utilized by the end of 1995. There are currently ten applicants under consideration. The County’s local match will be provided by the Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) and the Community Home Improvement Program (CHIP). This is the same procedure utilized in past grant applications, therefore, there will be no cost to the County.

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 approve the Grant Application and authorize the Planning Commission to conduct its public hearing on April 5, 1995.

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The Committee considered a memo from the Resource Management/Development Department regarding the Perkins Park Development Plan. At the March 7th County Board of Commissioners meeting, Staff was authorized to publish an announcement soliciting public comment regarding the proposed development of Perkins Park on Tuesday, March 14, 1994.

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

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 notify the Planning Commission that no public comment was received on March 14th regarding the Perkins Park Development Plan; and further that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt a resolution applying for the grant assistance to undertake the Perkins Park Development Project.

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The Committee considered the bid awards for the Service Center Re-roofing Project. Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, was present and explained that two bids were received for repairs to the Service Center Roof which includes removal and disposal of existing shingles, felt, and rotted facia; and installation of new roof ends, ice and water shield, and shingles. This is an approved capital project with an estimated budgeted cost of $24,500. Two bids were received. One from Sunrise Builders and one from Ted’s Paint and Drywall. Both firms bidding are qualified, however, the low bid from Ted’s Paint and Drywall was not accompanied by a 5% bid bond, therefore, may be considered unresponsive. County policy allows the Board to waive minor irregularities.

Ron Koshorek further explained that Ted’s Paint and Drywall did the roof project on the Valente Medical Care Facility, they did good work and completed the project on time. There should be no problem with the 5% bid bond matter, such bond is normally returned upon acceptance of the bid anyway. Staff recommends the bid be awarded to Ted’s Paint and Drywall.

Comm. Rapport, who is also a member of the Board of Health, explained that the Health Department set aside the funds in 1994 for this project and would very much like to move forward with it. Some of the equipment in the Health Department has to be covered up with plastic in order to prevent water from dripping on it.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the bid of Ted’s Paint and Drywall for $19,200 for the Service Center Re-roofing Project.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from George Wright, Facilities Manager, to award the Burster and Tax Processing Equipment Project Bid. Two of this year’s approved CIP projects are to replace the forms burster and the folding inserter equipment. These projects are budgeted at $7,800 for the burster and $15,500 for the folder inserter system. The County advertised and received sealed bids for the project from two companies. Pitney Bowes Company submitted a combined two project bid of $22,814. Bidders were also asked to submit a labor services agreement contract on all parts. Our present costs for contract services is $2,764 per year. Pitney Bowes submitted a combined services contract price of $2,098 which is $666 less than current costs. Staff recommendation is to accept the combined bid from Pitney Bowes Company for $22,814.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the low bid from Pitney Bowes Company for $22,814 for the Burster and Tax Processing Equipment Project bid.

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The Committee considered a memo from Lynn Nelson, Coordinator, Marquette County CCAB, regarding an amendment to the contract with the State Office of Community Corrections. Ms. Nelson was present and explained that the State Community Corrections Board approved the award of Probation Residential Services Funds on January 19, 1995 which increases the availability and utilization of funds for substance abuse treatment services for eligible felony offenders. This proposed contract amendment would provide $18,000 for substance abuse services to two felons currently housed in the Marquette County Jail. The contract amendment would require no County funding.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the FY 1995 Contract Amendment with the State Office of Community Corrections in the amount of $18,000 to provide substance abuse services to eligible felons.

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The Committee considered a memo from Randall Girard, Director of Human Resources, regarding requests for proposals - life and long term disability (LTD) insurance. Mr. Girard was present and explained that in 1994 the County hired the services of Advanced Risk Management Techniques, Inc. (ArmTech) to evaluate our insurance coverage and costs. ArmTech found the levels of life and LTD coverage to be appropriate but recommended that we test the market for costs through a request for proposals (RFP) process. In response to the RFP, 32 proposals for life insurance and 13 proposals for LTD insurance were received. Mr. Girard presented a summary of responses for the best five proposals in each category and recommendation.

Life Insurance

Staff recommends accepting the proposal from AIG Life Insurance Company through Schools Insurance Fund at $.18/$1,000 per coverage. The two lowest proposals were at the same cost, however, AIG is rated A+ and North American Life is rated A. This recommendation would reduce life insurance costs by an estimated $17,043.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Seppanen and unanimously carried the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the proposal from AIG Life Insurance through the Schools Insurance Fund at $.18/$1,000 per coverage for life insurance.

Long Term Disability

Staff recommends accepting a low proposal from CIGNA Group Insurance through Northern Underwriters at .47 percent of covered payroll. This recommendation would reduce our long term disability insurance costs by an estimated $1,633 (or $13,729 from the 1994 rate). The total reduced cost for these recommendations saves the County $30,772 from 1994 levels. Additionally, the costs proposed and recommended are guaranteed for two years.

Jerry Harrington representing the second lowest bidder (and the County’s present LTD carrier) presented a fax from Canada Life through Harrington & Harrington Agency with a bid of .456 percent of covered payroll. Administrator Aloia declared it to be inappropriate for the County Board to consider this proposal after close of the bid process. The Board however could reject the lower bid because their rating is A- and Canada Life is rated A+, but rating was not part of the bid specification.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and carried by voice vote 6 Ayes (Angeli, Bergdahl, Braamse, Seppanen, Trudell, Corkin) to 4 Nays (Arsenault, Joseph, Minelli, Rapport), that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board accept the low proposal from CIGNA Group Insurance through Northern Underwriters at .47 percent of covered payroll for long term disability insurance.

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The Committee considered a resolution to establish a Governance Agreement for the Management and Reuse of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base property. Civil Counsel David Payant drafted the resolution which supports the concept of organizing a K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base Reuse Authority under provisions of Act VII of the PA of 1967 (MCL 124.501 et seq.). What this resolution does is it takes the Airport out of the Governance Agreement. County Commissioners consensus is that no matter where the Airport eventually is located that the County should operate the Airport.

Civil Counsel Payant further explained that under Act VII an agreement can be reached to allow the Counties and Townships to set up an authority to operate the Air Base properties with no liability for the County. The County Board should adopt this resolution and persuade the present Base Conversion Authority to transfer the properties to the new body. Then the County will not inherit any properties or businesses on K.I. Sawyer. This resolution replaces the lengthy draft agreement that has been considered for the governance of K.I. Sawyer, however, a new agreement will have to be negotiated.

Comm. Arsenault reported that in Washington D.C. Doug Bovin met briefly with the Secretary of Defense. It was clearly pointed out to Mr. Bovin that local cooperation on governance is required before any funds are provided by the Federal Government.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the resolution to establish a Governance Agreement for the management and reuse of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base property as presented.

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It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Angeli and unanimously carried by voice vote that a request for $200 to support the operation of the UPRC&D area 1995 be placed on file.

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The Committee considered a letter from Comm. Braamse regarding the March 7th, 1995 millage election results.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl that the letter be placed on file.

DISCUSSION:

Comm. Braamse read her letter in which she stated, "We have no choice but to follow the mandated obligation that the voters gave us; our very credibility is at stake if we do otherwise, that is make cuts in other areas. Had we wanted to do this, then we should have had a general operating revenue millage which would have allowed us to make cuts anywhere we wanted (had that millage failed)."

Comm. Braamse added that she has nothing against the Sheriff's Department but our ballot language asked the voters for the "continuation and enhancement" of the Sheriff's Department Road Patrol. Why did we ask it in this manner? To not follow through will be sending a message that we are saying one thing and doing another.

Comm. Arsenault questioned that even though the millage failed, what are the voters really saying? No road patrol or no more taxes? He believed we cannot just wipe out road patrol at this point, but we will have to deal with this issue during the 1996 budget process. There are many complicated issues involved here. The millage we asked for pertains to the 1996 budget. We have a balanced budget for 1995 and we do not have to act now or cut now but we must take time and think this through. The election was not a waste, we got an answer from the voters, and the Medical Care Facility millage did pass.
Comm. Seppanen concurred. He felt we should deal with the matter during the budget process. It is not necessary to make any cuts immediately. Eliminating the Road Patrol has many ramifications.

Comm. Minelli also concurred that now is not the time to make drastic cuts. It is better to wait for awhile and think this through. He suggested that the County Board seek out potential grants to keep the Road Patrol operating.

Comm. Joseph pointed out that no one wants to make any cuts immediately, right now, tonight, however, he gets the feeling that the Board will be doing the same as in the past, and not make any cuts. This happened during the last budget process. We decided not to follow the administrator’s recommendation, but the longer we delay the harder it gets. It will be no easier to make cuts later than it would be right now.

Comm. Joseph further contended that he has not changed his position. When he left the Ad Hoc Millage Committee meetings he thought all had agreed, should any of the millages fail then the programs would be cut. Now he sees that a delay is coming. It will take six votes to make cuts and Commissioners have the right to change their mind at any time.

Comm. Angeli asserted that the County Board battles every year over the budget. When it is all done we hope that we only have to cut a few services or lay off as few people as possible. He doesn’t like the negative attitude that is being conveyed. The County Board has pulled off a balanced budget for the several years that he has been on the County Board, and Comm. Angeli is sure that we can do it again. He’s tired of the negativism. We should think positive!

Chairperson Corkin pointed out that over the last ten years Marquette County’s revenues have had very little growth. The County Board has made every effort to do all it can to continue its level of services. What better way was there than going to the voters and asking if they would like the level of services continued as in the past.

Chairperson Corkin is confident that on October 14, 1995 a budget will be adopted by the County Board that will serve the citizens of Marquette County the best way possible for every tax dollar.

Chairperson Corkin contended that our Staff and Elected Officials have been reckless and criticized publicly. For the record he wants to make it clear that we have one of the finest County Administrators anywhere in the Country, we have excellent and conscientious Department Heads and Elected Officials. It is okay that the County Board be criticized for its priorities but not staff.

He is proud of our County Staff and the services they provide to the people in Marquette County.

Chairperson Corkin called for a vote on the motion to file the letter from Comm. Braamse. The motion carried by voice vote 9 Ayes to 1 Nay with Comm. Braamse voting Nay.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Ernie Grasso, Sheriff’s Department Jail Administrator, reported that this has been a very emotional issue in the Sheriff’s Department. He appreciates the Board’s first good step in the right direction and taking the time to look at the issue. He hopes that the trickle down effect of eliminating the Road Patrol will be considered. The Sheriff’s Department did the best they could to present and pass the millage in the short time that was available to them.

Don Maki, AFSCME Staff Representative, applauded the County Board. He appreciated the candid comments by the Board and especially noted Comm. Angeli’s positive comments. He agrees with Chairperson Corkin’s remarks that Marquette County does provide good services and has excellent staff. The passage of the Medical Care Facility millage will help considerably. He does not believe that this is a delay by the County Board but rather is taking a good hard look at this issue and letting things cool down. Some Commissioners believe credibility is at stake if you don’t eliminate the Road Patrol, but this is not true.

Stu Bradley, 1530 W. Ridge Street, Marquette, explained that he voted no, but also does not want to see elimination of the Road Patrol. He believes the County Board made a mistake by not presenting its budget issues clear enough and singling out the Road Patrol.
There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin announced that at a recent Base Conversion Authority meeting he learned that there is a major wood products company and a telecommunications company considering locating at K.I. Sawyer. Also, the Base Conversion Authority is in the process of interviewing a permanent director.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia announced that the study on the reuse of the present Marquette County Airport is estimated to cost $126,000, which is too much. They will have to review the scope of work to see what items could be scaled down or delayed for another time. Tonight’s Committee of the Whole recommendation on the Governance Resolution does make our intentions clear on Airport operations, that the County Board wants to run the Airport whether it moves or not. This will help.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, March 14, 1995
Room 231, Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, MI 49855

1. ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. 1995 Community Development Block Grant Application (MSHDA).
8. Service Center Re-Roof Project.
9. Recommendation to Award Burster and Tax Processing Equipment Bid.
10. Agreement between Michigan Office of Community Corrections and Marquette County.
12. K.I. Sawyer Governance.
14. Millage Election Results.

16.

17. PUBLIC COMMENT.
18. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
19. ADJOURNMENT.

NOTICE

* Special Board Meeting to follow Committee of the Whole at approximately 5:30 P.M.