The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, November 29, 1994 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. Braamse, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on November 8, 1994 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Earl Yelle, Sands Township Supervisor, member of the Base Conversion Authority, and a member of the Base Disposal Authority was present. Mr. Yelle also works as a heavy equipment operator at K.I. Sawyer and pointed out that K.I. Sawyer currently has on hand 15 snowblowers, 20 Oshkosh Trucks worth about $9,000,000. There is also fire equipment worth approximately $1,500,000. All this equipment will leave K.I. Sawyer if there is no firm commitment in place to utilize the equipment locally and have a permanent runway there. There is not much time. After the snow removal season they will only leave the equipment we have demonstrated a need for.

Jackie Lykins, Chapter Chairperson, Local Unit 2914 AFSCME, was present and encouraged the County Board to seek millages and pledged the support of the bargaining unit to work with the Board to see the millage passed.

Ms. Lykins on behalf of the Union Negotiating Team made an offer to extend the current contract for one year, keeping all salary, language and benefits in place with no layoffs. This would allow time for the County Board to stabilize its financial condition. The offer is also contingent upon the County Board treating all County Employees the same, that is no raises for elected officials and non-union staff.

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

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole Consider the Union offer during the closed session to discuss labor negotiations.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following late additions: Item 9) Soil Conservation District presentation on the Soil Erosion Act, Item 10) update on specific tax legislation and Item 11) Senate Bill 763, the Base Closure Act.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period November 4, through November 23, 1994 in the amount of $1,501,595.35 be approved.

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The Committee considered a request from Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, to amend the 1994 Service Center operating budget to allow payment of utility bills through the remainder of FY 1994. The present budget for electrical service for 1994 is $16,000, however, Ron Koshorek anticipates that it will cost approximately $19,500 to cover the electrical bills for the remainder of the year. The appropriate source of funds for this budget amendment would be fund equity, and as of September 30, 1994 it has a cash balance of $266,154.
Ron Koshorek further explained that an electrical rate increase is not a major factor in the increase of electrical bills. In the year 1988-1989 the electric bill was $21,000 for the Service Center, however, Simmons Airlines had a lot of equipment and was a tenant at that time. In 1991 the electrical charges went down to a low of $14,000 has been steadily climbing by $1,000 to $1,500 per year since. Mr. Koshorek’s only explanation is that the Health Department is utilizing more machinery and more staff, and weather can play a significant roll. During a hot summer air conditioning can be as much as 40% of a monthly electric bill. He is confident that this electricity line item will cap out at a maximum of $20,000.

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the budget amendment for the 1994 Service Center operating budget to allow an additional $3,500 for the payment of the utility bills for the remainder of the year.

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The County Board considered a letter from John Beerling, Superintendent/Engineer of the Marquette County Road Commission explaining that they have no expertise on staff to evaluate traffic studies in regards to traffic signals on State Trunk Lines. Mr. Beerling further pointed out that the Road Commission does not dispute the MDOT findings but is a bit concerned over the fact that Marquette Township, Marquette City, and the Marquette County Board of Commissioners pressured MDOT for the Traffic Study and as a result the Road Commission was left with the bill. Comm. Potvin questioned how did the Road Commission get stuck with the bill? Comm. Arsenault explained that it was a suggestion by the County Board that the Road Commission ask the Marquette Township EDA for the money to do the traffic study however, the Road Commission decided not to ask but rather pay the bill. Mr. Beerling didn’t want to pay the bill.

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 an informational item from the U.S. Department of Justice regarding the COPS Ahead Program. On behalf of the United States Department of Justice, John R. Schmidt, Associate Attorney General, thanked Marquette County for submitting a Letter of Intent to participate in the COPS Ahead Program. There has been a high level of response which will cause a slight delay in the processing schedule. To review the requests responsibly, a small amount of additional time is needed for the COPS Office to examine the requests in light of available grant funds. In this period they will be contacting many applicants to confirm some of the information on their Letter of Intent. They will then advise all applicants of an authorized hiring level during the first week of December.

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

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The Committee considered a proposal and presentation by Laurie Dhondt, Marquette County Soil and Water Conservation District, to administer the State mandated Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act (PA #347) for Marquette County. The District also requests $43,507 to administer this program.

Laurie Dhondt explained that for forty years the Soil Conservation District has been providing residents of Marquette County with technical and financial assistance for resource management projects. Current district programs include forestry, water quality, agriculture and soil erosion control. The Soil and Water Conservation District feels that administering PA 347 is a logical and beneficial decision for Marquette County and its residents. The proposal will also provide Marquette County with a service that is more efficient and more easily understood. Also, assisting Marquette County with the Soil Erosion Program will enhance the Soil Conservation District to secure additional outside funding.
County Administrator Dennis Aloia pointed out that the Health Department has requested that the Soil Conservation District take over the soil erosion program. But before the County begins an extensive and time consuming process to develop the program, he wants to be sure the County Board is willing to go ahead with this proposal. If the Board has no interest then it should say so now so the matter can be dropped. Then the administration of PA 347 will stay in the hands of the Health Department.

Administrator Aloia added that in the past the Health Department had been criticized by the Soil Conservation District for not appropriately administering PA 347. Dr. Johnson acknowledged that the Health Department did not have enough staff or financial resources to adequately administer and enforce the PA 347. This lead the County Board to consider adopting a Soil Erosion Control Ordinance, however, approximately one year ago the Board voted to drop the Ordinance.

Comm. Angeli expressed concern with the Soil Conservation District administering the Soil Erosion Act. He has been contacted by several contractors who are opposed. We would be allowing an outside agency to administer a program for which the County Board was ultimately liable and responsible for. What happens should the federal government cut funding for soil conservation districts in the future?

Comm. Bergdahl pointed out that this is not the ordinance that we turned down last year, but the administration of PA 347 which currently is being handled by the Health Department who is in favor of turning it over to the Soil Conservation District. The Soil Conservation District has been administering soil erosion and sedimentation for forestry and agriculture projects for forty years in Marquette County. This is merely an extension of services which would include residential and business properties.

Comm. Arsenault reiterated that there will be lots of work involved in developing this proposal. He too received a few calls against it. If Commissioners have their minds made up against it, then we should not waste staff time on this proposal but decide to end it here tonight.

Dennis Aloia further pointed out that should the County Board decide to proceed with the proposal he will request that Dr. Johnson work out a way to fund the $43,507. He will also request that the Health Department help with detailed development of the proposal.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and carried by voice vote 9 Ayes to 1 Nay (Comm. Angeli), that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board direct County Administrative Staff, and Health Department Staff to work with the Soil Conservation District to further develop the proposal.

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Chairperson Corkin gave an update on specific tax legislation, House Bill 5680 and House Bill 5940, which will capture part of the CFA and Iron Ore Taxes that previously went to the schools for the State. Representative Tesanovich and State Senator Koivisto have been both contacted to get this legislation derailed. It will be considered in the House Wednesday, November 30th. If it cannot be stopped it may cost Marquette County an additional $300,000 in revenue. We have done basically all we can do. We have contacted all Upper Peninsula Counties. The Michigan County Treasurers and the Michigan Township Association are opposed to it. We will have to wait and see what happens.

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Comm. Potvin distributed a copy of Senate Bill 763 which was adopted in 1993, known as Base Conversion Authority Act. Comm. Potvin contended that the Authority does not have enough dollars and enough time to see a project of this scope through. Comm. Potvin has contacted Senator Koivisto’s Office and is waiting for a response. His main concern is with Section 10 of the Act says that upon dissolution of the Authority, all the property, books, records, files and funds of the Authority shall become property of the County. This paragraph should be permissive rather than “shall.” It should be up to the County at the time of the dissolution of the Authority whether or not they want this property. There could be tremendous amount of liability
with the remaining property at the end of the five year/plus five year period in which the Authority is in place.

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The Committee considered a proposal from Jackie Lykins, Chapter Chairperson, Local Unit 2914 AFSCME, that the County Board consider extending the present union contract for one year, as is, with no salary, language, or benefit changes, and no layoffs.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried on a roll call vote (Comm. Seppanen, Angeli, Arsenault, Bergdahl, Braamse, Joseph, Minelli, Potvin, Trudell and Corkin) to 0 Nays that the Committee of the Whole go into Closed Session to discuss labor negotiations.

Chairperson Corkin declared a two minute recess to clear commission chambers.

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CLOSED SESSION

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The Committee of the Whole came back into open session.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and carried on a voice vote 9 Ayes to 1 Nay (Comm. Potvin), that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board entertain the offer and direct the negotiating team to meet with the Union (LU #2914 AFSCME) to develop language to extend the Contract based upon the proposal that the Union has presented tonight.

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Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Jackie Lykins, Chapter Chairperson, Local Unit 2914, thanked the County Board for consideration and tentative approval of their offer. Comm. Corkin, on behalf of the County Board, thanked Ms. Lykins and the Union Representatives for their offer. Hopefully layoffs can be avoided.

Commissioner Comment

Comm. Braamse will be attending a County Health Board meeting where they will be considering naming the Marquette County’s Home Health Care Program. Several names are under consideration. The Commission consensus was that the words Marquette County should be in the title.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, November 29, 1994, 4:30 p.m.
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. Request for Budget Amendment to allow Payment of Utility Bills for the Service Center for the remainder of 1994.
8. Letter from the U.S. Department of Justice regarding the Accelerated Hiring, Education and Deployment (COPS AHEAD) Program.
9. S.C.O. Erosion Control Act Amendment
10. SPECIFIC TARIFFS LEGISLATION
11. SB 763 BUREAU CLAIMS ACT (P)
12. CLOSED SESSION to Discuss Labor Negotiations.
13. PUBLIC COMMENT.
14. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
15. ADJOURNMENT.