BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY OF MARQUETTE MAY 9, 1995

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, May 11, 1995 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on April 25, 1995 be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Ellwood Mattson, 355 E. Ridge Street, Marquette, requested the right to speak later regarding Item 6.

Cynthia Nyquist, 901 Grove Street, read a letter on behalf of the Marquette Ambassadors urging the Commissioners to support moving the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer. Such a move would be a benefit to all of the Upper Peninsula and needs Commissioners’ immediate attention.

Margaret Edge, 322 N. Front Street, also spoke in favor of moving the Airport to K.I. Sawyer. If the Airport is not moved it will stifle economic growth and K.I. Sawyer’s full potential will not be reached.

Bob Beams, Richmond Township, pointed out that the April 25, 1995 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes shows that the County Board went into closed session to discuss pending litigation for two items and Item b) Northern Michigan Aviation Complaint against the Marquette County Airport. No Court action has been filed regarding this matter, therefore the County Board went into closed session in violation of the Open Meetings Act. He put the Board on notice that he has up to 180 days to file an injunctive suit.

Civil Counsel, David Payant, explained that Northern Michigan Aviation has filed a complaint with the Federal Aviation Administration which will be handled under the Administrative Procedures Act. This Complaint could have severe legal and financial consequences for Marquette County and therefore must be handled like any other legal action. He disagrees with Mr. Beams.

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

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

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period April 22, through May 4, 1995 in the amount of $1,773,568.24 be approved.

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The Committee they considered a resolution from the Marquette Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors urging the County Board of Commissioners to move the Marquette County Airport to K.I. Sawyer.

Ellwood Mattson, 355 E. Ridge Street, Marquette, Chairperson of the K.I. Sawyer Base Conversion Authority also presented a resolution from the Base Conversion Authority encouraging the Marquette County Board to vote in favor of moving the Airport to K.I. Sawyer. Mr. Mattson contended that K.I. Sawyer has much superior facilities and the economic future of the Central Upper Peninsula will depend on the move. Moving the Airport would also attract tenants to K.I. Sawyer. Yes there are risks involved, but they can be overcome. He urged the County Board of Commissioners to vote yes.
Herb Parsons, a member of the Base Conversion Authority and Chair of its Economic Development Committee, explained that it is the intent of the Authority to operate K.I. Sawyer as a public airport for the next two years. This is a commitment and a good faith step, however, he urged the County Board to move off center and vote in favor of moving the airport.

Chuck Prusi, Neguanee Township Supervisor, expressed concern regarding moving the Airport and wondered where all the enthusiasm is coming from. The final figures on financing such a move and closing the County Airport are not available yet. He is concerned that the County will move and in a couple of years the funds that are promised do not materialize. The Greiner report also indicates that $2.50 per square foot is needed from leaseholders to generate enough revenue to run the Airport, but the present four leaseholders at K.I. Sawyer are now paying only $1.00 per square foot. It doesn’t make sense.

Jim Alderton, Chairperson of the County Airport Board, understands the enthusiasm for moving the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer, but pointed out that the Airport Board has taken the position to wait until all the facts are available. All the financial data will be ready in a couple of months. Even then the Airport Commission only makes a recommendation anyway so it is the County Board’s decision.

"It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Minelli, that the Committee of the Whole recommend that "Marquette County be granted a 99 year lease or ownership from the K.I. Sawyer Base Conversion Authority for the purposes of relocating the Marquette County Airport."

In addition, the Federal Aviation Agency approves the financial viability of the Marquette County Airport in consultation with Marquette County and the K.I. Sawyer Base Conversion Authority, then the Marquette County Board of Commissioners recommends transferring the National Plan of Integrated Airport System (NPIAS) and State Airport System to the facility at K.I. Sawyer."

A lengthy discussion regarding the moving the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer took place among Commissioners and Staff. Commissioners in favor of the move generally thought the County Board must make its intentions clear to all public agencies and private businesses. This will greatly improve future plans to develop K.I. Sawyer and establish a regional airport there. The motion is only a first step in a many step process. At any time should the move become unfeasible, the County Board could back off. The motion is not a financial commitment.

Commissioners against the motion generally thought that in the long run moving the Airport to K.I. Sawyer would be in the best interest of Marquette County, but expressed concerns about financing such a move. All information is not available yet and these Commissioners were reluctant to vote in favor of the move immediately without having all of the information.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport to table the motion for one month. Motion died for lack of support.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Rapport that the vote on the motion be tabled until next week which would allow time for the Airport Commission to review the matter and make its recommendation. Motion failed four Ayes (Comm. Seppanen, Arsenault, Rapport, Corkin) to six Nays (Comm. Angeli, Bergdahl, Braamse, Joseph, Minelli and Trudell). Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, reported that it is important to find a way to move the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer. Regarding the motion on the floor, he understood that Commissioners wanted ownership of the Airport, however, under the circumstances a lease may be acceptable on a temporary basis. Administrator Aloia explained that he could not recommend moving the Airport at this time. All of the financial information is not available such as the cost of the move, how to use the current airport, reinvestment costs, etc. Having the FAA involved in the process makes him more comfortable. He would hope that if the financial indicators show that this is not a feasible move, Commissioners would then decide to stop. He also hopes that the Base Conversion Authority will continue in its efforts to seek grant funds for infrastructure, etc. rather than rely on County intentions of moving the airport.

Chairperson Corkin called for a roll call vote on the Motion. *The motion carried Six Ayes (Comm. Bergdahl, Angeli, Braamse, Joseph, Minelli, Trudell) to four Nays (Comm. Arsenault, Rapport, Seppanen and Corkin)."
The Committee considered the Economic Adjustment Preapplication for K.I. Sawyer/Marquette County to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Jay Scherbenske, Executive Director of the Marquette County Economic Development Corporation, was present to review the preapplication request and answer questions.

The estimated total project cost is $3,333,160 with an EDA funding request of $2,499,870. A local share is being sought from the State of Michigan amounting to $833,290. This grant is a 25% local match grant. Should the State of Michigan not provide all of the $833,000 local share then the project overall preapplication request would also have to be scaled back proportionately. The list of projects involved resulted from eight weeks of discussions by a Committee made up of members of County Staff, Airport Staff, Conversion Authority, CUPPAD, NEI Corp. and the EDC. This application was sent April 28th, just under the April 30th deadline for FY 1995. Any projects not on this project list will be included in future funding requests for 1996 and 1997.

Mr. Scherbenske requested that the County Board, for the benefit of the Economic Development Administration, give its approval for the preapplication request.

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 approve the Economic Adjustment Preapplication Request for K.I. Sawyer/Marquette County as presented.

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The Committee considered a revised scope of work for the Marquette County Airport Reuse Study. The funding for the study was reduced to $50,000 therefore the scope of work has been reduced to cover the basic information only that will be required.

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 request from Edward A. Quinnell, Circuit Judge, that the County Board schedule a Special Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss legal counsel for indigent defendants.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board direct Chairperson Corkin to communicate with Judge Quinnell and schedule a Special Committee of the Whole meeting sometime in June.

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The Committee considered a request from Sheriff Joseph Maino to transfer two bicycles that are in the County's possession to the Forsyth Township Police Department. Forsyth Township is in the process of beginning a bicycle patrol for afternoon shift, and the bikes were received as part of investigations by our County Sheriff's Department. Normally such bikes are held until there are a sufficient number of them to put out in an auction in conjunction with the City of Marquette.

Administrator Aloia also enclosed a copy of the policy for distribution of County surplus property. There is no provision in that policy for giving County property to public entities, so it requires action by the County Board.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve Sheriff Maino's request to transfer two bicycles to the Forsyth Township Police Department.

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It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote that a communication from U.S. Senator Carl Levin regarding federal unfunded mandate legislation be accepted and placed on file.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Bob Beams, Richmond Township, pointed out that there were only two airplane pilots in the room during the discussion about relocating the airport. Many of the questions raised during the discussion, in his opinion, were silly. He knows of a bridge that is for sale in New York should any Commissioners be interested.

Don Bengstrom, from Gwinn, supported the Commissioner’s vote to relocate the County Airport at K.I. Sawyer. It is important to the future of Marquette County and to the Upper Peninsula.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin announced that the Base Conversion Authority has offered the position of Executive Director to Mr. Thomas Rumora of Upper Arlington, Ohio. Mr. Rumora is very highly qualified and has much previous experience in working with government agencies. He is currently employed by a consulting firm helping to redevelop the Rickenbacker Port Authority near Columbus, Ohio which was a former U.S. Air Force Base. Contract negotiations are underway and hopefully he will be on board by June 1st.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, May 9, 1995, 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. The Board of Directors of the Marquette Area Chamber of Commerce Unanimously Supports a Resolution to Move the Marquette County Airport to K.I. Sawyer.
8. Revised Scope of Work for Marquette County Airport Reuse Study.
10. Donation of Bicycles to Forsyth Township.
12. PUBLIC COMMENT.
13. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
14. ADJOURNMENT.