The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, August 14, 2002, 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Courthouse Annex, Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the July 23, 2002 Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment, none was forthcoming.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following late additions: Item 11) Lease Agreement with O'Dovero Properties, and Item 12) Sale of Sawyer Buildings 1205, 3122, 800 and 812, and the following deletion: Item 10) Letter Supporting Value Added Development Grant Application.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period August 2, 2002 through August 8, 2002 in the amount of $720,390.40 be approved.

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The Committee considered a County Road Commission Fact Sheet regarding 2002/2003 Winter Level of Service. Commissioners raised several concerns regarding the Road Commission fact sheet which included: The main roads are critical to workers and schools and must be kept open. If we are to attract new business to the Upper Peninsula we must demonstrate we can keep our roads open during the winter. The number one priority for the Road Commission is snow plowing in Marquette County, and funds must be reallocated to provide that service if necessary.

Bob Menard, Chairperson, Marquette County Road Commission, was present and contended it is the intention of the Road Commission to provide the best possible services utilizing all its available assets to keep Marquette County Roads open during the winter of 2002/2003. The Citizens of Marquette County are accustomed to a high standard of service during a major snow event by the Marquette County Road Commission, however at times there may be a delay in services because of reduced staffing.

Mr. Menard noted M-553 is a State Highway and during a major snow event (storms of six or more inches) the main route kept open to KI Sawyer will be along the U.S. 41 corridor to McClelan Street in Marquette City through to M-553. County Road 480 will be plowed after the main roads have been opened. This may occur several times during the winter.

Mr. Menard also noted the County Road Association of Michigan has long been attempting to get the Michigan Legislature to increase its road funding with an Indexed Gas Tax. The price of a gallon of gasoline may vary in Michigan from $1.35 to $1.55 in one day, so a 2 cent increase in the gas tax would be of little consequence to drivers. An Indexed Gas Tax would be a fair user tax which is the appropriate place for funding road maintenance.

It was moved by Comm. Girard, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send comment to the Marquette County Road Commission requesting they prioritize their resources to maintain its high standards of snow removal in Marquette County.

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The Committee considered the Marquette County Road Commission Fact Sheet on the 2002/2003 Winter Level of Services. Comm. Seppanen forwarded written comment to the County Board because he was unable to attend the meeting. He suggested 1) Planning Commission and Planning Staff be directed to review the Winter Service Plan and present any insights and suggestions to the County Board and the Road Commission for their consideration, and 2) Request the Road Commission reconsider closing County Road 480 during snow events.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board forward the Road Commission 2002/2003 Winter Level of Service Fact Sheet to the Planning Commission and Planning Staff for their review and recommendation.

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The Committee considered the purchase of Marquette County Building Authority Properties by Pathways. Doug Morton, CEO, Pathways, was present to discuss the purchase and answer questions.

On November 24, 1992 the Marquette County Building Authority issued Building Authority Bonds in the amount of $1,705,000 in order to finance several facilities to be used by Mental Health Services. The facilities were leased by the Building Authority to Marquette County and subleased to the Mental Health Services Board. There is currently $735,000 of principal outstanding on the bonds. Principal payments are due on April 1 and October 1, and the remaining Bonds bear interest at 6%.

At the original time the bonds were issued, the Mental Health Code did not allow the Community Mental Health Services Board to hold title to property. Pathways is now formed as an authority and has the authority to hold title to property.

Pathways Bond Counsel, recommends the authorizing Resolution which requires Pathways to pay the debt service on the Marquette County bonded properties and the property transfer to Pathways when the bonds are paid off. In addition to allowing Pathways to own property the Mental Health Code (amended on May 31, 2000) also allows a Community Mental Health Authority to directly issue debt for the purchase of these facilities. To that end, Pathways distributed RFP’s and five proposals from Upper Peninsula Banks were received. They received a favorable proposal from the State Bank of Escanaba for refinancing the bonds at a rate of 3.91% for a 5-year period. Pathways hopes to close on the refinancing by August 28, 2002 so the bonds can be paid off on October 1st.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted the purchase of these properties by Pathways will have several benefits to both Marquette County and Pathways. The purchase will relieve the County of its liability for payment of the Building Authority Bonds and the purchase will allow Pathways to have title to the property and equity on Pathways balance sheet. Also, because of the favorable interest rates and the current market Pathways will obtain interest cost savings.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the Resolution Authorizing Redemption of Bonds currently held by the Marquette County Building Authority and Subleased to the Alger-Marquette Community Mental Services Board and further the property be transferred to Pathways when the Building Authority Bonds are paid off.

There are provided for Division 10, AFSCME Local 1613, Marquette County Health Department. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that retirement provisions were included in the overall compensation approved in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Marquette County Health Department and AFSCME. The amended retirement benefits are now the same for the Health Department as for all Marquette County Employees even though the Health Department Employees are in a separate MERS division.

MERS requires the County Board of Commissioners to approve the Resolution because the Marquette County Board of Health is not a governing body.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Resolution for amending MERS Benefits for Marquette County Health Department Employees, Division 10, AFSCME Local 1613.

The Committee considered a letter to Ken Brzozowski, Administrator, Office of Community Corrections, Michigan Department of Correction, requesting the State Community Corrections Board approve FY 2003 funding at the FY 2002 level.

Tim Quinnell, Chairperson of the Marquette County Community Corrections Advisory Board, was present and noted Lyn Nelson is attending a Community Corrections Meeting in Lansing where the funding issue will be discussed. There has been an attempt by the State to cut back on local Community Corrections funding. The Marquette County Community Corrections Board requests the County Board forward this letter to Mr. Brzozowski indicating Marquette County’s desire to continue to work with the Office of Community Corrections to develop and refine programs to meet local needs with the necessary funding.

It was moved by Comm. Girard, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter of support for Community Corrections funding for FY 2003 at the FY 2002 level.

The Committee of the Whole met on Wednesday, August 14, 2002, they considered a Lease Agreement with O’Dovero Properties to house the Heavy Rescue Vehicle and Search and Rescue Equipment.
Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted Marquette County has been leasing this building from O’Dovero Properties which is located on US41 near M-35 (old airport) which allows the rescue unit to travel along the main highway corridors to anywhere within the County in a reasonable timeframe. The Lease Agreement is for one year and gives the County the right to terminate the lease upon 90 day written notice. Efforts to house the vehicle at a more cost effective site are continuing, including discussions with the Michigan State Police regarding space at its post. The monthly rate of $1,155 and snow removal costs are budgeted in the 2002 and will be included in the 2003 budget.

It was moved by Comm. Girard, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Lease Agreement with O’Dovero Properties to house the Heavy Rescue Vehicle and Search and Rescue Equipment.

The Committee of the Whole met on Wednesday, August 14, 2002, they considered the sale of Sawyer Buildings 1205 and 3122 to the Alger-Marquette Community Action Board (AMCAB) and the sale of Sawyer Buildings 800 and 812 to Superior Property Management, Inc. (SPMI).

Harley Andrews, Chief Civil Counsel, was present and explained both leases provide a first right of appeal for the leasee to purchase their buildings if the County decides it wants to sell those buildings rather than retain them for rental income. At this point both AMCAB and SPMI would like to purchase their leased properties for the prices specified in their leases. The specified purchase price for AMCAB is $67,000 and the specified purchase price for SPMI is $50,000.

Because of limited income potential the retention of these leased properties by the County is not feasible and their sale would be consistent with the exit strategy previously approved by the Board.

Harley Andrews also noted the sale of these buildings would include all real and personal property which was included in the original lease. (A list of personal property will be provided to the County Board.) Staff recommends the County Board authorize the immediate sale of these properties to AMCAB and SPMI for the agreed upon prices.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the sale of Sawyer Buildings 1205 and 3122 to the Alger-Marquette Community Action Board for $67,000 and the sale of Sawyer Building 800 and 812 to the Superior Property Management, Inc. for the price of $50,000.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment, none was forthcoming.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin reported on the rally held in Lansing yesterday, Tuesday, August 13th to urge our Legislators to override the Governor’s veto of revenue sharing. Hundreds of local officials attended the rally and news conference on the grounds of the State Capitol. Chairperson Corkin along with Administrator Steve Powers, Undersheriff Jack Schneider, Jail Administrator David Lamere, along with representatives from the Cities of Marquette, Ishpeming, and Negaunee, and the Marquette County Townships Association were in attendance.

All the Upper Peninsula Legislators visited the rally and greeted the U.P. delegation showing their strong support for the veto override. The House of Representatives voted 105 to 1 and the State Senate voted 35 to 1 to override the Governor’s veto in an impressive show of bipartisan support. Chairperson Corkin expressed his gratitude to all the work done by County Administrator Staff and local units of government. The veto override saved approximately $550,000 in revenue for the remaining 2002 budget and $1.4 million for the 2003 budget. Revenue sharing county-wide amounts to approximately $4 million when adding the various cities, townships and the County together.

Chairperson Corkin thanked the City of Marquette for arranging the bus for the Lansing trip.

Chairperson Corkin noted he is attending a Michigan Works meeting Friday in Escanaba and will have the opportunity to meet with U.S. Senator Carl Levin regarding several issues at KI Sawyer.

Comm. Moore noted Senator Levin will be attending a breakfast Friday, August 16th at 7:30 A.M. at Wahlstroms.

Comm. Joseph noted the Marquette County Fair was very well attended. There were three or four new livestock bidders and it was gratifying to see the work of the all the volunteers at the Fair.
Comm. Bergdahl also noted the 4-H kids worked very very hard. Their hog and beef auctions raised approximately $33,000. These are young entrepreneurs and the future of Marquette County.

Chairperson Corkin thanked Comm. Bergdahl, his family, the Fair Board, and all the volunteers for their efforts in a successful Marquette County Fair.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2002, 6:00 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. Comments on Road Commission Fact Sheet.
7. Purchase of Marquette County Building Authority Properties by Pathways.
10. Letter Supporting Value-Added Development Grant Application (Bahrman’s Blue Ribbon Dairy).
11. [Handwritten note: Unreadable]
12. [Handwritten note: Unreadable]
13. [Handwritten note: Unreadable]
14. PUBLIC COMMENT.
15. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
16. ADJOURNMENT.