The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, March 23, 1993 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. Seppanen, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the previous Committee of the Whole meeting held on March 9, 1993 Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

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

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried that the agenda be approved with the following late addition: Item 13) become a letter to the Dickinson County 911 Committee.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Seppanen and unanimously carried that Claims and Accounts for the period March 6, through March 19, 1993 in the amount of $1,120,208.20 be approved.

The Committee of the Whole continued with Departmental introductions. The following Department Heads were present to introduce themselves and give a brief description of the duties and responsibilities of their various departments:

The Honorable James Collins, District Court Judge
The Honorable Patricia Micklow, District Court Judge
Jennifer Bennon, District Court Magistrate/Administrator
Dr. William Birch, CEO, Marquette-Alger Community Mental Health

The Committee considered a recommendation from Cynthia L. Beaudry, Risk Management Specialist to self-insure vehicle physical damage. Ms. Beaudry presented the loss history regarding auto physical damage as compared to the premiums paid for this coverage. For the policy year period 1989 through 1992, the County paid $50,814 for vehicle physical damage coverage while the total damage losses during that period amounted to $15,374. Of the $15,374, $8,860 was paid directly by the County for losses as deductible. In other words, only $6,514 was paid by the insurance company. Clearly, the County has paid far more in premium dollars than the recoverable claims have amounted to.

Ms. Beaudry recommends that the Board consider discontinuing the physical damage coverage on vehicles and begin self-insuring these losses by doing the following:

1. Meet with Department Heads/Elected Officials who use County owned vehicles and discuss the development of appropriate driving policies for the protection of County assets.

2. Establish a vehicle physical damage fund to pay for losses incurred, the fund to be set at $25,000.

Ms. Beaudry also explained that the County has 31 vehicles, of which 17 are Sheriff Department vehicles. These are the most likely to suffer from physical damage. The cancellation of our physical damage coverage would result in either return of premiums paid or credit on un expended premiums in the amount of $9,031. It should be noted that the County has enjoyed several good years of driving experience, however, if the County experiences a sudden increase in losses, it can once again be backed up by the insurance fund.

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It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board self-insure its vehicle physical damage coverage by establishing a $25,000 fund within the current insurance fund which has accumulated from previous refunds, etc., obtained from both worker's compensation and liability insurance carriers.

The Committee considered a memo from Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, regarding the remodeling bids for the new Health Department Dental Clinic. The County has received bids for the remodeling of approximately 900 square feet of the DeFant Building to house the Dental Clinic. The work involves modification/additions to the electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems, cabinetry and countertops for lab, reception and office areas. Six bids were received and the low bid was from John Clark Construction Company, Inc. for $36,125.

Randall M. Johnson, M.D., Health Department Director was present and explained that the Health Department underestimated and earmarked only $25,000 in their budget for this project; however, they recommend the County award the bid to John Clark Construction Company. The Health Department will make up the difference between the estimate and the low bid by adjusting their budget by $13,125.

John Weting, AIA/Architect was present and explained that the plumbing costs are the major expense in the remodeling project. When the Health Department made its budget estimate of $25,000, the bid specifications were not available. Because of the 3 sinks, the Dental Clinic will need a 4 inch drainage line going directly to the main sewer line. Some money could be saved if cabinets were installed later, however, future installation would only cost more at that time and installation would interrupt service. The project as presented, is basic with no-frills. It is very difficult to scale this one back.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of John Clark Construction Company, Inc. as the low bidder for $38,125 for the new Health Department Dental Clinic.

The Committee considered a memo from James Kippola, Senior Planner, regarding the application with the DNR for Recreation Grants. Mr. Kippola was present and explained that now is the time for Marquette County to apply for funds to implement the Perkins Park Shoreline Project. Last year, the design and engineering phase was completed, after which $9,375 remained in the 1992 budget. The Shoreline Erosion Project is estimated to cost $45,750. There are 3 grant programs under which the project would be eligible and the County continues to be eligible for a fourth project through the RC & D program.

Mr. Kippola further explained because of the remaining funds rolled over to 1993, the actual amount of additional funds needed to participate in any of the above programs ranges from $1,703 to $13,140. He recommends that the County Board appropriate $13,140 to insure eligibility with all four programs and approve the attached Perkins Park Shoreline Project Resolution. Dennis Aloia, County Administrator explained that at this time the County Board needs to only adopt the resolution, however, should one of these grant applications be approved, the funds would be available in the County's Land Acquisition Fund.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the Perkins Park Shoreline Project Resolution for the grant applications.

The Committee considered a draft of the agreement between Marquette County and the Marquette County Economic Development Corporation prepared by Dennis Aloia, County Administrator. At this point, Administrator Aloia has received only one written response and several verbal comments from Commissioners. He has incorporated those changes into his proposed agreement. Administrator Aloia further explained that the main problem was
not necessarily the language of the old contract, but of the EDC’s reluctance to adhere to the terms of the contract. The old contract established some reporting mechanisms that would provide information to the County Board, however, it is clear that the EDC has never really followed the terms of the agreement with respect to reporting. This agreement, if negotiated, would only be as good as the promise of the EDC to follow through with the terms of it.

After a lengthy discussion, it was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call that the Draft Agreement between Marquette County and the County EDC be sent to the EDC for their review, and further that the agreement be discussed in a joint session between the EDC and the County Board’s Executive Committees.

The Committee considered a letter to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources explaining Marquette County Board’s position on the proposed DNR reorganization plan. Comm. Mike Angeli attended the public hearing in Escanaba to voice Marquette County concerns. At that hearing, Mr. Angeli discovered that the original reporting of the plan by the media did not clearly explain all of the facts. As a result, the understanding by the Marquette County Board has changed.

The letter to be sent by the Marquette County Board, under the signature of the Chairperson, makes several comments regarding the reorganization.

The letter applauds the idea to place more DNR field personnel in the Upper Peninsula. Marquette County is concerned about the removal of some of the field supervisors which would eliminate much experience in dealing with local problems and decision making. Also, by closing some of the offices, Upper Peninsula residents will be forced to travel farther for permit applications and other DNR business. In addition, the responsibility for snowmobile trails would be turned over to the DNR Forestry Division, which is already understaffed and too busy to take care of its present responsibilities.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the letter to be sent to the DNR regarding its reorganization.

The Committee considered a packet of information distributed by Administrator Dennis Aloia regarding, “A Call to Arms”, a letter writing effort to save K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. The materials explain some of the important reasons why the County believes that K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base should remain open, which include:

* Michigan is currently ranked 47th per capita in Defense Department spending, and with the closing of the base at Wurtsmith, Michigan, we’ll probably rank 50th.

* K.I. Sawyer is a relatively new base with outstanding infrastructure and facilities that will support expansion to several training and defense missions.

* The base is encroachment free, and located in an exceedingly strategic position for training and defense strategy.

* The Wurtsmith Base, already slated for closing, will leave K.I. Sawyer as the only base in Michigan. Closing Sawyer would leave the State with no base, which violates the, "fairness", criteria which must be considered in deciding base closures.

* The 34 year history of community support for K.I. Sawyer sets the standard for other military/civilian communities.
The quality of life in communities in the Upper Peninsula offers excellent surroundings for families with children: low crime rates, less drug uses, Air Force families are readily accepted in community activities, outdoor activities abound year-round, educational opportunities at many, community medical facilities for families are excellent.

Administrator Aloia further explained that Shopko Stores has set up information booths throughout the Upper Peninsula and is concentrating on getting people to send letters to the members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission and Representatives in Congress. Shopko is also distributing yard signs, bumper stickers, and buttons, and have provided Administrator Aloia with buttons and signs for Commissioners and County Staff.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Arsenaught, and carried on a roll call vote, (8 ayes - Commissioners Minelli, Angeli, Arsenaught, Bergdahl, Braamse, Joseph, Seppanen, and Corkin. 1 nay - Comm. Potvin. 1 absent - Comm. Trudell) that the Committee of the Whole direct a letter from the County Board to members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to join the effort to save K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.

The Committee considered a recommendation from Comm. Seppanen that the County Board direct a letter to the Dickinson County 911 Committee. Comm. Seppanen explained that during the process of reviewing and making written comment to Delta County regarding their 911 plan, it was learned that Dickinson County had included Marquette County as a primary back-up for their 911 plan. They did this without formally requesting that Marquette County be a back-up and without considering if Marquette County could provide this service.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenaught, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board direct a letter under the Chairperson’s signature to the Dickinson County 911 Committee explaining that Marquette County did not receive a formal request nor agree to be a back-up for the Dickinson County 911 Plan.

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

Announcements and Commissioner Comment

Comm. Braamse thought, in the event that K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base closes, the County Board should be considering alternative uses for the base. A suggestion from Comm. Braamse is the possibility of a resort and casino complex operated by Native Americans. There may be some provisions in the federal law that she is currently investigating through the Bureau of Indian Affairs that may allow for Indian tribes to take over federal lands.

Chairperson Corkin pointed out that the County Board and many Business Leaders have for years been considering alternatives to expand and improve Marquette County’s economic base.

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that any proposals regarding the use of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base (in the event that it is closed), be placed on file and later referred to the Executive/Intergovernmental Relations Committee for review with a report back to the County Board after July 15, 1993, when the Base Closure List will be finalized.

Comm. Potvin made comment on several things: First of all, upon each Commissioner’s desk was a memo regarding Home Health Care. Comm. Potvin would like Commissioners to especially pay attention to the comment made by Dr. Randall Johnson, Health Department Director, that Marquette General Hospital is referring clients only to their Home Health Care Services in
Marquette and Dickinson Counties. Second, the County Board should consider, in the near future, adopting a resolution supporting the Team 14 Plan of property tax reform to be sent to the Governor, our State Legislators, and the Michigan Association of Counties. And third, the County Board should take action to do away with the Specific Ore Tax and with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts.

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, March 23, 1993 at 4:30 p.m.
Room 231, Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, MI 49855

1. ROLL CALL.
2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
   HELD ON March 9, 1993.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Departmental Introductions
   Recommendation from Cyndi Beaudry, Risk Management
   Specialist, to self-insure vehicle physical damage.
   Recommendation from Ron Koshorek, Resource Management
   Director, on remodeling bids for the Health Department Dental
   Clinic.
7. Memo from James Kippola, Senior Planner, regarding
   application for DNR Recreation Grants for the Perkins Park
   Shoreline Project.
8. Memo from Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, regarding the
   agreement between Marquette County and the EDC.
9. Memo from Comm. Mike Angeli regarding the DNR Reorganization.
   "A CALL TO ARMS", Join the letter campaign to save K.I.
   Sawyer Air Force Base.
10. Dickson Co. 911 letter.
12. PUBLIC COMMENT.
13. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
14. ADJOURNMENT.