The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, September 28, 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. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 14, 1993 and the Committee of the Whole Budget Sessions held on August 23rd through 25th 1993 be approved with a couple of minor typographical corrections pointed out by Comm. Braamse.

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

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the agenda be approved as presented.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that Claims and Accounts for the period September 10, through September 23, 1993 in the amount of $1,427,044.25 be approved.

The Committee considered the resignation of Lynn Emerick, Director, Marquette County Commission on Aging. Ms. Emerick was present and read her letter explaining that she will be resigning effective February 1994. Ms. Emerick has been the Commission on Aging Director for 13 1/2 years. She expressed her appreciation for the unfailing support she has always received from staff, the Commission on Aging, the County Board, and the community in general. It is now time for both her as an individual and the Commission on Aging to move onto new horizons and new challenges. Ms. Emerick feels the current COA staff, its commissioners and advisory members are undoubtedly the strongest that we have ever had and she is confident that the transition will be very successful.

Sybella Barsch, Chairperson of the Marquette County Commission on Aging was also present and explained that the Commission on Aging accepted Ms. Emerick’s resignation with deep regret. She will be sorely missed. The Commission on Aging has also set up a search committee and they will establish a time-table and a process for filling the position.

County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, pointed out that the Human Resources Department, will assist the Commission on Aging in any way they can.

Chairperson Corkin, on behalf of the County Board, expressed regret at Lynn Emerick’s resignation. Her dedication to the Commission on Aging is unequaled and there has not been a finer department head anywhere in the County.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Potvin, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board accept the resignation of Lynn Emerick, Director of the Commission on Aging, with deep regret and direct staff to take the necessary action to recognize Lynn at the appropriate time.

The Committee considered the grant application for a 1994 Airport improvement project for the installation of an access security control system. The security control system will provide improved access control to comply with mandated FAA security requirements. The new system includes card-key access control hardware at entrances into the air operation area; alarms, and a computerized system for access control through the entrances.

The estimated construction cost is $250,000.

Hal Pawley, Airport Manager was present and explained that because of the pending study on the feasibility of relocating the airport to K.I.
Sawyer, a request was made to the FAA for a waiver or an extension of the deadline for this project. FAA/Security denied their request. Therefore, in order to maintain certification as an air carrier airport, we must proceed with the project in the 1994 AIP to complete the work by the deadline.

The proposed funding sources based on the estimated cost of the project are as follows:

- Federal Grant (FAA) $286,200
- State Grant (Bureau of Aeronautics) $15,900
- Marquette County Share $15,900

Total Estimated Cost $318,000

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the resolution to submit the grant application and authorize the Chairperson to sign the appropriate documents.

The Committee considered the Sheriff's Department process of obtaining bids for ammunition. Mike Quayle, Undersheriff was present and explained that one of the department's employees, Cpl. Dave Kent, operates a small business and sells ammunition. Cpl. Kent would like to submit a bid along with the other vendors. He currently sells ammunition to other police agencies.

The Sheriff's Department uses approximately 20,000 rounds of reloaded ammunition for training, and will seek a written bid on approximately 5,000 rounds. Undersheriff Quayle estimates the cost to be from $120 to $150 per thousand rounds. The Sheriff's Department uses factory made ammunition for regular duty. Normally for small bids of this kind, the Sheriff's Department would solicit price quotes by telephone, but in order to insure the credibility of these bids, they will seek written bids.

County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, has reviewed the matter with Civil Counsel. There was potentially a conflict, however, Cpl. Kent will not be involved in establishing the specifications for the bid, the review process of the bids, or the awarding of the bids. All bids will be awarded on an equal basis so there is no problem.

It was moved by Comm. Arsensault, seconded by Comm. Potvin, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board allow Cpl. Dave Kent to bid along with other vendors for supplying the Sheriff's Department ammunition.

The Committee considered several grant applications for projects that are eligible for 50% reimbursement funding through the new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Facilities and Equipment Program. Mike Zorza, Emergency Program Manager was present and explained that he met with Administrator Dennis Aloia to review the projects. In almost all cases, the County dollars are already budgeted for the local share of the grants, or the money would be available through the 911/Central Dispatch millages, or in in-kind services.

Administrator Aloia further explained that of the eight grants being submitted, about 2 1/2 of the projects would require County dollars that have not been budgeted, however, these are only the grant applications and the federal government will most likely not award all of them. Should a grant be awarded that requires dollars not budgeted, the County Board reserves the right to accept or reject the grant at that time. Administrator Aloia recommends the County Board proceed with the grant applications for the projects as presented by Mr. Zorza.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the grant applications for submission to the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division as proposed by the Emergency Program Director.
The Committee considered a memo from Terrence E. Dean, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney regarding legal issues involved in tobacco use prevention among young people. Civil Counsel David Payant pointed out that Mr. Dean's memo suggests that the County Tobacco Ordinance may provide penalties for minors possessing or using tobacco products if the penalties are civil in nature, rather than criminal. Mr. Payant suggested that the Committee refer the legal review by Mr. Dean to the County Board of Health.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the Committee of the Whole direct the legal review of the County Tobacco Ordinance to the County Health Department for them to consider amendments to include civil penalties for minors attempting to purchase, possessing or using tobacco.

The Committee considered a request from Jay Scherbenske, Executive Director, Marquette County EDC, for a drawdown the matching funds for the EDA revolving loan fund as follows:

Project A: Requested amount of $100,000. The 60/40 ratio, the EDA/County would require $40,000 from the County match fund.
Project B: Requested amount of $100,000. The 60/40 ratio, the EDA/County would require $40,000 from the County match fund.

Both projects have been reviewed and approved by the EDC finance committee and the EDC Board.

The total request from the County match fund at this time amounts to $80,000. These funds would then facilitate drawdown of EDA funds from the Department of Treasury and the closings on the projects could then be completed.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the request for the drawdown of matching funds for the EDA revolving loan fund in the amount of $80,000.

The Committee considered a letter from Elaine Winslow, 203 Hotel Place, Marquette, expressing concern about Marquette County's plans to have mine shafts capped by the National Guard because the mine shafts may provide shelter for bats. This letter is in response to a recent article in the local newspaper and a news report on television about the large number of bats living in an abandoned mine shaft near Iron Mountain. The letter has been referred to the County Mine Inspector for review.

It was moved by Comm. Braasch, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote to place the communication on file.

The Committee considered a bid for the award of the Big Bay Harbor tank removal contract. Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director was present and explained that the removal/replacement of the Big Bay Harbor Tank is being offered as two contracts so the bids may be awarded separately. There are some unknowns associated with the tank removal and he recommends holding off on the installation of a new tank for the time being. The bid price on the replacement project is guaranteed for 45 days.

At this time, Mr. Koshorek is presenting the bids for the removal of the existing underground tank, which is unavoidable because the tank is apparently leaking. The area impacted appears to be limited, but the cost of the removal and the disposal of the contaminated soil cannot be accurately determined. The bid contains unit prices for soil removal and backfill. Considering the bid base price and applying unit prices to the estimated quantity of soil to be dealt with, Total Contracting, Inc. (Lansing, Michigan) is the low bidder on the removal of the project.

Mr. Koshorek also explained that the budget for these projects has a current balance of $30,108. If the tank removal involves the soil quantities estimated, demands on the budget will be a total of $33,090, however, about $21,000 of the expense would be eligible for reimbursement from the MUSTFA fund. The current low bid for tank and soil removal and backfilling,
has a base bid of $7,590 plus $3600 for a total of $11,190.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board proceed with contract #1 and award it to the low bidder, Total Contracting, Inc. (Lansing, Michigan) for an estimated amount of $11,190.

The Committee discussed the 1994 Committee of the Whole Budget recommendations with representatives of the Courthouse Chapter of AFSCME #2914. Jackie Lykins, Chapter Chairperson, introduced representatives from the bargaining unit, which made up the negotiating team, as follows: Karla Rushford, Vice-Chairperson, Al Feldhauser, Steve Enright, and Mary Buchman.

Jackie Lykins began the discussion by pointing out that employees would like answers to several questions. The employees don’t understand how the Administrator’s recommended budget was adopted so quickly without much discussion. It seems no questions were asked of Department Heads about the ramifications of losing employees. No budget work sessions were held. Were other options looked at? For example, Perkins Park and the Big Bay Harbor lose money. Was consideration given to selling them or giving them to Powell Township? Also, the tax delinquent revolving fund currently has over $800,000 in cash in it, and by next August, another $3 1/2 million is due to the fund. Can not part of these funds be used to avoid layoffs? If one employee can be funded from the insurance fund, and another from a community development block grant, then only $300,000 would be required out of 4.3 million to save the jobs. Employees also feel that cutting staff in 1994 in anticipation of a 1995 dilemma just doesn’t make sense. Past studies have shown that Marquette County, in all departments, is understaffed and many employees have become jack-of-all-trades. But the County Board will still fund the EDC, which is supposed to create jobs. Only two jobs have ever been created by the EDC, its director and its administrative aide.

Chairperson Corkin explained that the County Board received copies of the Administrator’s recommended budget several days before the budget hearings were held and also discussed the budget as the hearings preceded. Commissioners do not disagree that the employees are necessary, they do not want to lay off anybody, however, the funds are just not there. The message the County Board received two years ago from the bargaining unit was rather than taking reduced hours or freezing wages, the employees would rather have lay-offs.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia related that taxes provide about 50% of the revenues for the County budget. The rest of the budget comes through grants, fees, fines, etc. The 1994 budget proposal already has $1 million written into it from the tax delinquent revolving fund. If we added another $300,000, making it $1.3 million, at that rate the tax delinquent revolving fund would only last 3 years. It also seems certain that state shared revenue will be eliminated because of SB-1. This will cost Marquette County another $934,000. Administrator Aloia believes the future holds more problems than solutions and our financial situation will become worse and it is likely more cuts will be required in 1995.

Comm. Sepponen expressed “no confidence” that revenues will increase next year. He does not believe the State Legislature can come up with a funding mechanism for schools that won’t have a negative affect on County government. By laying off 12 to 14 employees in 1994, smaller cuts would be necessary in 1995. Also, the tax delinquent revolving fund was already tapped to cover the cost of the layoff of employees, otherwise 6 more employees would have to be laid off to cover unemployment costs.

Comm. Potvin expressed a different view two weeks ago. He thought the recommendation to adopt the budget by the Committee of the Whole was rushed. It passed on a 7 to 3 vote and he was one of the no voters. Comm. Potvin thought the County should eliminate non-mandated services first, however, there was no serious discussion held about the mandated vs. non-mandated, such as the Sheriff’s personal use of a vehicle, the EDC, etc. There is talk among our State Legislators that revenue sharing will be gone, but Counties, Townships, and Cities may be able to keep a couple of the allo-
cated mills that formerly went to the schools. This is not certain yet, but we
will know more in the next few weeks.

Comm. Potvin further contended that if it could be demonstrated that
employees weren't needed, even if the County had lots of money, they should
be laid off. Department Heads should demonstrate to the County Board that
they need these employees.

Comm. Trudell, a member of the EDC Committee, pointed out that a
condition of the EDC's receiving an initial $1 million EDA grant was having
a director in place. Lots of dollars would not have come into Marquette
County without the EDC being here.

Comm. Braamse expressed dismay that the County Board did not go into
budget work sessions. She has a philosophical problem with funding the EDC
who's supposed to create jobs, yet we lay off our own people. She believes
that if the funds are available in the delinquent tax funds, then we should
use them.

Jackie Lykins continued with additional questions. Who is responsible
for the accounting of EDC dollars? The administrative aid of the EDC was
making a larger salary than administrative aides working for various
departments in the County. The Courthouse union has spent many hours
negotiating over the past several contracts only to get small raises
compared to other public employees, such as teachers. When they were
successful in achieving raises and better benefits, the benefits and raises
are provided for all non-union employees and elected officials. The unions
are the ones that got the benefits for everybody in the County! For
example: Blue Cross/Blue Shield provided in benefit dollars to 119 union
employees, $485,000 over the past three years, which comes to an average
cost of $4,079 per employee. Compare this to 46 non-union employees
receiving benefits of $354,000 for an average of $7,392 per employee, or
selected officials receiving benefits of $157,000 for an average of $9,268
per employee.

Ms. Lykins also asked, what will be happening to the $200,000 that the
City of Marquette owes and has voted to pay back to Marquette County?
County Administrator Dennis Aloia explained that $65,000 of the $200,000
goes back to the general fund and the remaining $140,000 was borrowed from
the tax delinquent revolving fund.

Administrator Aloia wanted to again emphasize the seriousness of the
situation. He gets the impression that many County employees do not believe
the serious financial difficulties that Marquette County is facing. Not
only is the financial picture bleak for 1994 and 1995, but Marquette County
is facing a $70,000 shortfall in its budget this year, in 1993. Administra-
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ments and the bargaining unit have until December 31, 1993 to come to the
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Announcements

Comm. Potvin recently attended a Criminal Justice Committee meeting and announced several things: Judge Anderegg has been nominated to the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect. The state legislature is working on an amending House Bill 4873, which is supposed to provide for increased fees for Court funding. The use of DNA molecules as evidence in crimes is growing, however, only two people in the State of Michigan have the expertise to work with DNA.

Comm. Potvin suggested that the County Board consider that a millage proposal for the operation of the Valente Medical Care Facility be placed on the ballot next year.

Administrator Aloia reported he has been working on a tour to the Job Corps Training Center in Leona, Wisconsin. The Northern Economic Initiative Center at NMU may provide for such a tour at no cost to the County, date to be announced.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARRIETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, September 28, 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 September 14, 1993 and the Budget Session Hearing held August 23, 24, and 25th.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

5. Review of Claims and Accounts.

6. Communication from the Commission on Aging (materials forthcoming at meeting from Lynn Emerick, Director).

7. Grant application for 1994 Airport Improvement Project from Hal Pawley, Airport Manager.

8. Letter from Joseph I. Maino regarding bids for Sheriff's Department ammunition.


10. Memo from Terrence E. Dean, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, regarding legal issues involved in tobacco use prevention among young people.

11. A request from Jay Scherbenske, Executive Director, EDC, for draw down of matching funds for the EDA revolving loan fund.

12. A letter from Elaine Winslow concerning the capping of mine shafts which provide shelter for bats.

13. Bid Big Bay Harbor Tank Removal/Replacement

14. Representatives from the bargaining unit, Courthouse Chapter, to discuss 1994 budget (no packet materials).

15.

16.

17.

18. PUBLIC COMMENT.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

20. ADJOURNMENT.