The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, April 12, 1994, at 4:30 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenaught, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on March 22, 1994 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Earl Yelle, Sand Township Supervisor was present. Mr. Yelle explained he was not happy with this year's equalization process. Last year Sands Township got raised 10% and now this year it appeared to be another 18% however he negotiated it down to 10%. He has brought the property values up as much as he could but is still 4% short. Sands Township had a busy Board of Review and a number of parcels were rolled back.

Mr. Yelle contended that sale studies can show just about any values depending on which sales are used in the study. He requested that the County Board consider using Sands Township equalized values as assessed, and not apply the 1.0369 factor on residential property on top of his assessment. Mr. Yelle thanked the County Board for allowing him to speak regarding equalization at the Committee of the Whole meeting. We could not wait until the equalization meeting at 6:00 p.m. because he has another commitment. Mr. Yelle then left the meeting.

Arnold Sirtola, Ewing Township Supervisor, requested to speak to item 13 regarding the Delta County 911 Plan when it comes up on the agenda.

Peter O'Dovero, 175 Bayou Road, asked what County plans are with the piles of contaminated soil covered with blue tarps. He has approximately 3,000 tons of contaminated soil at 717 Washington Street and would like to dispose of it.

Chairperson Corkin on behalf of the County Board said a solution is forthcoming within the next several weeks. There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

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

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Braamsse, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period March 18 through April 8, 1994, of $1,116,019.80 be approved.

The Committee considered bids for the purchase of two pickup trucks to be used for the Resource Management Department’s code enforcement and facility activities. The two trucks were approved as 1994 Capital projects funded at $22,000.00. Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, recommends that the bid be awarded to Frei Chevrolet of Marquette for the amount of $16,169.97. Frei Chevrolet has met all bid specifications and is the low bidder.

Mr. Koshorek was present to review the bids and answer questions. He pointed out that on several previous occasions they have compared the cost of purchasing vehicles as opposed to leasing vehicles. It is still in the County’s best financial interest to purchase these vehicles outright. Of the two vehicles being traded in, the one with the lowest mileage has 95,000 miles. The costs to maintain the vehicles are increasing but most important is the reliability of the vehicles during the building inspection season.
It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the, purchase of two small pickup trucks for the Resource Management Department, low bidder being Frei Chevrolet of Marquette in the amount of $16,169.97 with trade in.

The Committee considered bids for the large format copier to replace the 1976 Model PB 80 Blueprinter. Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director was present and explained that this equipment is used to duplicate maps, plans, and other large format graphic media. The primary users will be Equalization, Register of Deeds, and the Resource Management Development offices. He recommends the bid be awarded to the low bidder, Northern Stationers, for $5,895.00. This project is funded in the FY 1994 CIP budget at $6,500.00.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the low bid of $5,895.00 by Northern Stationers of Marquette for a large format copier (OCE-Bruning).

The Committee considered a recommendation from Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, that the County Board begin the process of closing the sewage lagoons at the Acocks site by terminating the Act 245 permit and advise the DNR of our intentions.

Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, was present to discuss the recommendation and answer questions. Mr. Koshorek explained that there is no cost to renew the permit, however, continuing maintenance and testing is required if we are to maintain the lagoons. The sewage lagoon has a clay liner which must be continually monitored for leaks. If the Acocks facility was still running and generating 15,000 gallons of sewage a day, we would have a full-time sanitary engineer employed, and testing and monitoring of the lagoons would be an ongoing expense.

Mr. Koshorek could not give definitive costs for stabilizing and closing the lagoons. It may be that very little has to be done, on the other hand, the DNR may require that the lagoon materials be excavated and hauled to a treatment facility.

Commissioner Joseph asked why terminate the permit first before we find out how much it costs to close the lagoon? Commissioner Potvin questioned what is the problem with letting the lagoon just sit unused?

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Minelli, that the County Board begin the process of closing the sewage lagoon by terminating the Act 245 permit and advise the DNR of our intentions. Motion carried four (4) ayes (Comm. Braamse, Minelli, Seppanen and Corkin) to six (6) nays (Comm. Angeli, Arsenault, Bergdahl, Joseph, Potvin and Trudell).

Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, suggested that the County let out bids for testing to determine a definite cost for closing the lagoon. It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Angeli, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board ask the DNR why Marquette County should terminate the Act 245 permit at the Acocks site sewage lagoon?

The Committee considered several proposals from Garret L. Jones, Vice President of Pellestar, Ltd. Mr. Jones was present and also introduced Ken Matteson, Local Plant Manager associated with Pellestar. Mr. Jones made a lengthy presentation regarding Pellestar’s pursuit of a solution to the soil remediation problem in Marquette County. As of last week they have received a temporary permit to conduct an initial project of 3,000 tons of contaminated soil, however, a $500,000.00 thermal oxidizer is required by the DNR to receive a permanent air quality permit.
Lending institutions clearly see the value of Pellestar's project, but these same lenders require either one or both of the following criteria: one; permanent license, and two; signed agreements with those whose soils need remediation. Item one occurs after a test period, and item two will be forthcoming only after the DNR orders soils remediated. The DNR will not issue such an order unless there exists an available remedy. Hence, Pellestar is locked in a "chicken or the egg" financial loop.

Mr. Jones seeks help from the County to solve Pellestar's financial problem and the County's soil remediation problem. They have been encouraged by the County Board's intent to conceptually approve a loan to the Solid Waste Authority. Mr. Jones reviewed three proposals from Pellestar, all of which require either the County Board borrow Pellestar approximately $250,000.00, or guarantee a loan up to $300,000.00.

The County Board of Commissioners raised a number of concerns and engaged in a lengthy discussion with Mr. Jones. The predecessor to Pellestar, known as Pelletec, defaulted on loans for approximately $700,000.00. An agreement has been reached for the payback of these loans. At present Pellestar is approximately $45,000.00 delinquent in repayments. The County Board began working with Pellestar about one year ago and was promised that Pellestar's soil remediation project would be operating in approximately 120 days. This has not occurred. These raise some credibility issues about Pellestar.

Mr. Jones explained that he just recently became involved with Pellestar as of December. He apologized for what occurred in the past, however, he is the type of individual that when he says he is going to get something done, he gets it done! Mr. Jones contended that they have an initial project to remediate soils amounting to 3,000 tons, and should the County loan them the $250,000.00, the County will receive full repayment after 8,000 such are processed, in approximately 31 weeks. If Pellestar fails financially then the County will have $500,000.00 worth of equipment for which they paid $250,000.00. Pellestar's proposal would not only solve the County's contaminated soil remediation problem but also create four full-time jobs in Marquette County.

Commissioners also pointed out that the $250,000.00 they intend on loaning to the Solid Waste Authority for the construction of a storage facility is an interest free loan from one public body to another public body. Contaminated soils can be moved within approximately 30 days to the Solid Waste Authority. It would be a loan over which the County has financial control. Also, a public body making a loan to a private corporation is questionable.

It was moved by Comm. Arsensault and second by Comm. Seppenen and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the Pellestar proposal on file.

The Committee considered a memo from Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, regarding proposals to purchase land for the road right-of-way into the Honor Camp property. Administrator Aloia was present and explained that staff has been unsuccessful in arriving at an agreeable price for the purchase of the properties. Benson Forest is willing to give us an easement on the property but only willing to do so if we can agree to build a road in a short time frame. It is unlikely that any road construction would take place in the next ten years or even longer. This is unacceptable to Benson Forest.

Benson Forest also wanted right-of-way to use the land that we might purchase from Dave Kallio for entry into their property. Mr. Kallio is asking for a price that considerably exceeds the amount available for the purchase of this property according to the appraisals that we have received. For these reasons, Administrator Aloia recommends that the County no longer pursue the purchase of this property at this time and discontinue negotiations with the owners.
Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, was present and further explained that the State grant is good until December 31, 1994 and staff can continue to pursue other options however, it is highly unlikely that anything could be worked out to secure this grant for 1994. Future grants may be a possibility.

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 break off negotiations with the property owners and turn down the State grant for the Honor Camp Access Road Property Project with staff continuing to pursue other options for future consideration.

The County Board considered a proposal from Sheriff Joseph I. Maino regarding a letter of understanding to allow the Sheriff's Department to schedule ten and twelve hour per day shifts without payment of overtime. Sheriff Joseph I. Maino was present and explained that the twenty additional cells which generate $35.00 per day (in the near future $42.00 per day) have increased the average jail count last year from 59 to 68. This has created additional work for all of the Sheriff Department staff. Sheriff Maino is not coming to the County Board asking for additional money or staff, but believes that the best way to address scheduling problems is to spread their manpower. Sheriff Maino asked that the County Board provide the Sheriff's Department the option to use ten and twelve hour shifts when appropriate.

County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, distributed a memo to Commissioners raising concerns related to the Sheriff's Department proposal. Administrator Aloia explained that he has not had a chance to review the proposal. He would like to discuss his concerns with Sheriff Maino before making recommendation to Commissioners.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote that the issue be tabled to allow staff to meet with the Sheriff to identify any concerns and benefits regarding the proposal to allow the Sheriff's Department to schedule ten and twelve hour per day shifts without payment of overtime.

The Committee considered a memo from Civil Counsel, David Payant, regarding amending the agreement between Marquette and Alger County that established the Alger Marquette County Community Mental Health Agency in June of 1982. Changing the Agreement between the two Counties would require meeting with the Alger County Board of Commissioners or their representatives to redraft the Agreement. Once the Agreement is redrafted, three public hearings need to be held to receive public input. Civil Counsel Payant suggests one hearing to be held in Alger County and two to be held in Marquette County.

Considering all of things that need to be completed before the Agreement is changed Civil Counsel Payant estimates it will take about two months to finalize changes in the Agreement between the two counties. Once the new Agreement is established a new Community Mental Health Board could be appointed with up to four County Commissioners on that Board.

Commissioner Seppanen distributed a resolution that was adopted by the Alger County Board of Commissioners which calls for discussions to review and revise the Agreement between the two counties. Should Marquette County adopt a similar resolution, the process to amend the Agreement establishing the Community Mental Health Agency could begin.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board pass a similar resolution to begin discussions regarding revising the Community Mental Health Agreement between Marquette and Alger Counties and further that Marquette County add one more member to its liaison committee.
The Committee considered a letter from Chief Wayne E. Heikkila, Coordinator, Delta County 911 Project. Mr. Heikkila pointed out in his letter that Ewing Township, Turin Township, and Wells Township telephone exchanges overlap the two counties and must be provided for in the Delta County Plan. Those calls originating in these exchange areas falling within Delta County must be received at the Delta County Central Dispatch House. Those calls falling within Marquette County must be addressed in the Delta County 911 Plan.

It is Delta County’s understanding that the three Townships which fall in Marquette County will be selectively routed to the Marquette County Central Dispatch where they will serve as the public safety answering point (PSAP) for Marquette County. Fire and ambulance calls from these effected areas will be sped dialed to Delta County’s Central Dispatch for dispatching Tri-Township Fire and Rock Community EMT’s. Mr. Heikkila requested the County Board acknowledge receipt of the letter, by signing and returning it to Delta County.

Arnold Sirtola, Ewing Township Supervisor, was present and repeated concerns of Ewing Township regarding their residents’ payments for 911 services. Ewing Township must pay millage to Marquette County and Mr. Sirtola is concerned that they will also have to pay two telephone surcharges, one to the Marquette County exchange and another to the Delta County exchange.

Commissioner Arsenault, Past Chair of the 911 Implementation Committee reassured Mr. Sirtola that even though the phone exchanges overlap in Delta and Marquette Counties in these three Townships, the residents in these Townships will only be charged by one 911 phone system. As far as the millage goes, that is a matter that follows the law.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the signing of the letter and returning it to Delta County after all Townships have responded.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for Public Comment. Richard Aho, Director of the Solid Waste Authority was present and explained that the Authority is proceeding as if they have an agreement with the County. He pointed out that it is easy to get a temporary permit to remediate 3,000 tons of soil as a pilot project, but getting a permanent air quality permit from the DNR is another matter. The unit cost demonstrated by Kalcann, for a system that is proven to work, along with the proposal to build a storage facility to cover the materials, is the best possible method at this time for a solution. When there is a large amount of soil to be remediated Kalcann will go right to the site and work 24 hours a day. The storage building is for many small piles of contaminated soil to be stockpiled until there is a large enough volume for Kalcann to remediate it. It is very unlikely that anyone can remediate contaminated soils cheaper.

Garret Jones from Pellestar, Ltd. contended that the DNR speaks for themselves. Neither Pellestar nor the Solid Waste Authority speaks for the DNR. As to who can do it cheaper, that remains to be seen.

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
April 12, 1994 at 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.
7. Large Format Copier Bids.
8. Acocks Sewage Lagoons.
10. Grant and Purchase of Honor Camp Road Access Property.
11. Communication from Sheriff Joseph I. Maino regarding "Letter of Understanding Regarding Ten (10) and Twelve (12) Hour Shifts" with Local #2756 Deputized Employees.
12. County Board's Options for Organizing Community Mental Health.

14.
15.
16. PUBLIC COMMENT.
17. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
18. ADJOURNMENT.