The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, January 23, 1996 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Braamse, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 9, 1996 be approved.

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

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

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Trudell and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 6, 1996, through January 12, 1996 in the amount of $968,004.69 be approved.

The Committee considered a memo from Gerard Markey, Equalization Director, requesting clarification of the County policy on allowing employees in the Equalization Department the option of taking a half hour lunch and leaving at 4:30 p.m. and restructuring office hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Randell Girard, Human Services Director, was present and distributed copies of parts of the Board of Commissioners Policy Manual, Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual, and Article 33 of the Labor Contract regarding "Hours of Work." Mr. Girard also distributed a copy of a telephone survey done by Administrative Staff regarding hours open to the public, if closed during the lunch hour, and the hours that employees are in the office.

Commissioner Policy states that the official business hours for the Marquette County Courthouse and Service Center will be from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Personnel Policies Manual indicates that County employees normally work Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. with one hour of unpaid lunch, however, paragraph 104.3 indicates that departments may remain open through the meal period at the discretion of the Department Head. The matter is further complicated by Article 33 of the Labor Agreement which indicates a normal work day will consist of 8 consecutive hours of work, exclusive of any lunch break, but does not specify the length of the lunch break.

County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, pointed out that there are a number of offices that are presently closing during lunch hour. He was also surprised to find out that the Friend of the Court does not answer phones in the morning but only from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Administrator Aloia pointed out two issues that the County Board must address. First, is personal or phone access to offices and second, how long the employees are in the office.

Gerard Markey, Equalization Director, was present and explained that his office works mostly with the Register of Deeds, but also regularly works with the County Treasurer and the County Clerk’s Office. He contended that by closing his office at 4:30 p.m. he would not be severely impacting the public. He is allowing the option to his employees whether or not they would like to take a half hour lunch or leave at 4:30, or an hour lunch, and leave at 5:00.

Comm. Seppanen said the issue of office hours was addressed by departments such as the County Clerk during the budget process. He is supportive of them adjusting their office hours because of the staffing cuts. He believes that each department head know best on how to manage their office and would trust that decision to them.
Comm. Joseph contended that the County Board should set hours of operation and that the contract should specify the lunch hour, whether it be one hour or one-half hour, as long as it is uniform. He suggested that Staff survey various departments to see which office hours they prefer.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole direct Staff to survey the various departments and prepare a report and recommendation on office hours for the Committee of the Whole.

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The Committee considered a memo from James Sodergren, County Treasurer, regarding several Michigan Township Association resolutions which he believes the County Board should consider supporting. The resolutions are summarized as follows:

Swamp Tax Resolution which provides for an inflation factor to be added to payment in lieu of taxes for state owned recreation and forest lands,

Public Service Business Property Tax Resolution which provides that telecommunication providers would return tax revenues to local units of government to be distributed on the same basis as property taxes,

Unfunded Mandates Resolution which provides that the State Legislature take responsibility for funding State mandates and that a cost/benefit analysis be conducted on new legislation prior to adoption, and

Collection of Property Tax Resolution which promotes legislation establishing one uniform date for collecting all real and personal property taxes.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board direct the Chairperson to set up a committee for the purpose of reviewing the resolutions regarding State Legislation.

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The Committee considered a memo from Cynthia Beaudry, Risk Management Specialist, regarding the renewal of the MMRMA Property/Liability Insurance Coverage. Ms. Beaudry was present and explained that in the past the County has paid for the Regional Risk Management Services of John Katona through its premium contributions. Mr. Katona serves as an intermediary between the County and MMRMA whenever contractual questions arise, as well the assisting and coordinating of the attendance at U.P. Law Enforcement Sub-Committee meetings. Because of the County’s continuing financial difficulties this year Ms. Beaudry requested two bids: One bid is for the policy renewal with Regional Risk Management Representation at $147,275, and the second bid is for policy renewal without the Regional Risk Manager’s representation at $143,987. The difference between the two options amounts to $3,288.

Ms. Beaudry distributed an updated memo advising the County Board that as a result of her continued negotiations Mr. Katona has agreed to remain the Regional Risk Manager for Marquette County’s policy with MMRMA, but at the lower bid rate of $143,987. Ms. Beaudry recommends the County Board approve the renewal of the policy based on this quotation.

Comm. Joseph expressed concern that the County could have paid an extra commission just for John Katona to represent us. He thought the $3,288 additional fee to be offensive.

Administrator Aloia further explained that because of Ms. Beaudry’s negotiations we now have the best of both worlds, we still have Mr. Katona’s representation but at the lower premium rate. Mr. Aloia could not answer as to why the Regional Risk Management Specialist Services are included with additional fees in the premiums, however, Mr. Katona’s services have proved to be very valuable to Marquette County in the past and he has provided excellent services.
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 of the MMRMA insurance renewal with the Regional Risk Manager representation at the amount of $143,987.

The Committee considered a request from the Alger County Board of Commissioners for an additional member to be added to the Alger-Marquette Community Mental Health Board. Comm. Seppanen pointed out that a census update has been done. What must now be determined is if the ratio in population is greater than 1.5 to 12, then Alger County may deserve a second member on the Board. If the ratio is lower than 1.5 to 12 then they must continue with only one member on the Board. He suggested that the matter be referred to the CMH Liaison Group for further review.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia added that the Liaison Group should also review the financial support for CMH, because if Alger County population warrants an additional member on the Community Mental Health Board then it could also warrant additional financial support for Community Mental Health operations.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole refer the matter to the CMH Liaison Board for review.

The Committee considered the new Mental Health Code requirements for CMH Board Member appointments required by Public Act 290 of 1995. The composition of CMH Boards must now include consumer and family members of consumers of mental health services. There is an April 1 deadline for compliance, however, Dr. Birch indicated by letter that the Alger-Marquette Community Mental Health Board is in compliance with the new statute. Further, it is his understanding that the identification of the individuals that are consumers or family members can remain confidential. CMH needs only to document the specifics should they be audited by the State of Michigan for compliance.

Comm. Rapport expressed appreciation that CMH Board Members who are consumers or family members of consumers of CMH services are allowed to remain confidential.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole accept and place on file the FY 1996 First Quarter Financial Report for the Alger-Marquette Community Mental Health.

The Committee considered the 1996 Title IV-D Cooperative Reimbursement Contract for the Marquette County Friend of the Court with the Michigan Department of Social Services, contract amount $393,334.

Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, explained that this contract has received both administrative and legal review and recommends its approval.

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 of the 1996 Title IV-D Cooperative Reimbursement Agreement with the Michigan Department of Social Services beginning January 1, 1996 and ending December 31, 1996, Contract Number CS/FOC-96-52001 in the amount of $393,334.
The Committee considered the 1996 Title IV-D Medical Support Enforcement Contract for the Marquette County Friend of the Court’s Office with the Michigan Department of Social Services. The contract amount is for $21,367.

County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, explained that this is the contract for the part-time Medical Insurance Case Specialist that the County Board recently approved. The contract has been given both administrative and legal review and he recommends its approval.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the 1996 Title IV-D Medical Support Enforcement Contract for the Marquette County Friend of the Court with the Michigan Department of Social Services, Contract Number CS/MED-96-52001 in the amount of $21,367.

The Committee considered a letter from Range Telecommunications requesting that the County Board help in securing payment for services which they provided to the Marquette County EDC for mobile telephone services. A balance of $561.85 is due to Range Telecommunications for telephone service, air time in excess of 120 minutes per month, and long distance calls. Range Telecommunications has made several attempts to collect these monies from the EDC but it has not received payment.

Comm. Joseph, member of the EDC, explained that this is a personal bill of Jay Scherbenske and it has been taken care of. Apparently there was a misunderstanding between Mr. Scherbenske and Range Telecommunications when he contracted for the mobile telephone. The EDC Board has not approved of any contract for mobile telephone services.

Chairperson Corkin expressed concern that Range Telecommunications would send a bill, whether a personal one or for the EDC, to the County Board for collection. He requested that Staff check with Range Telecommunications to make sure that the bill is paid and any misunderstanding is corrected.

It was moved by Comm. Braamse, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board place the communication on file.

Comm. Joseph further reported that the EDC recently approved a low interest loan to the City of Ishpeming in the amount of $75,000, which would be interest deferred for two years, interest rate to be 4% under the prime rate or approximately 4.5%. Comm. Joseph spoke with the Ishpeming City Manager, John Korhonen, who was displeased with the fact that it was a loan rather than an outright grant. The EDC does not provide grants to assist businesses but only low interest loans through its Revolving Loan Fund.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia further contended that the Michigan Jobs Commission has been informing agencies in Marquette County that the EDC has up to $600,000 that it can provide for grants. This is disturbing because the Michigan Jobs Commission should know the CDBG funds provide only for revolving loans. Administrator Aloia is also unsure of the $600,000 figure, but cannot get accurate information from the EDC until an audit is completed. The reporting requirements in the past were not very strict, but recently the Federal Government has been tightening its restrictions on the State. In turn, the State is tightening its restrictions on local units of government. EDC Director, Jay Scherbenske, is having difficulty assembling information as to what former EDC Directors Chuck Manto and Dan Hannigan did before him. Mr. Aloia emphasized that a three year audit of the EDC must be completed as soon as possible.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board direct the Marquette County EDC to provide a three year audit by July, 1996. If the audit is not provided by that time the County Board will withhold further funding to the EDC.
The Committee considered a memo from Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, regarding a Public Defender study. Administrator Aloia explained that he had information prepared for Commissioners during the budget process but never followed through because the County Board got involved in other important issues. Mr. Aloia pointed out that there are actually only two Counties in Michigan with true Public Defender Offices. Others do have Public Defender Offices but also contract out a part of such services. He believes it wise to resurvey the other Counties in Michigan and also review the hours and amounts charged for the various Courts in Marquette County during the past year.

There was a study done in conjunction with the 21st Century Pilot Project and several recommendations came out of the Indigent Counsel Committee. One option was to create a Public Defenders Office where 3-1/2 to 4 attorneys would be needed, however, some Judges say that is not enough. Another option was to contract Indigent Counsel Services out. Administrator Aloia has bid specifications ready, however, thought it would be important that Commissioners meet with the Judges before taking any specific course of action. Also, court reform legislation is currently being discussed in Lansing and part of that reform may involve the State covering the cost for indigent counsel.

Comm. Seppanen pointed out that during a meeting held last year on Indigent Counsel a chart had been developed showing the attorney costs for a six-year period. He was surprised to learn by calculating that in real dollars there was only a 3% growth in cost, even though costs between years may have fluctuated greatley. He thought it wise to wait and see what happens at the State level on court reform.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole table action on the Public Defender Study until after the Court Reorganization Legislation is adopted.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote that a communication from Ron Kivi, Acting Administrator, State Office of Community Corrections, regarding Minimum Security Facilities FY 1996 Application Workshops be accepted and placed on file.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that a letter from Congressman Bart Stupak in response to Marquette County Commissioners’ concerns on the Medicare Reform Act be accepted and placed on file.

The Committee considered a communication from the State of Michigan Collaborating Departments on Human Services requesting that all Michigan Counties become actively involved in the formation and implementation of collaborative bodies in their local communities. County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, pointed out that as State funding gets tighter, government agencies that do similar work will be forced to collaborate with each other on providing services. This may also mean that local units of government will have to provide more services. He suggested that Commissioners get more involved and that the County Board send a letter to the Marquette County Community Coordinating Council requesting that a member of the County Board of Commissioners be allowed to sit on that body. Chairperson Corkin indicated his willingness to serve on behalf of the County Board.

It was moved by Comm. Arenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to the Marquette County Community Coordinating Council requesting that a member of the County Board of Commissioners be allowed to sit on that committee.
The Committee considered a notice from Michael J. Anderegg, Probate Judge, regarding a meeting of the Youth Home Evaluation Work Group scheduled for January 30, 1996 at the Youth Home at 12:00 noon. Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, pointed out that he is a member of this Committee and he will be attending the meeting. He is preparing a packet of questions for the Youth Home and requested that any Commissioners who have questions for the Youth Home to get them to him. Commissioners are welcome to attend this meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Trudell and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the communication on file and request that Administrator Aloia report back to the Committee of the Whole on the meeting.

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It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Braamse and unanimously carried by voice vote that the 1996 Board of Commissioners Committee Appointments be accepted and placed on file.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Administrator Aloia distributed a notice from Jay Scherbenske, EDC Director, that Wednesday, January 24th at 11:00 A.M. the EDC will be hosting Mr. Don Gerrie and Mr. Peter Nixon, representatives of the Northern Michigan Foreign Trade Zone of Sault Ste. Marie for a presentation at the Lake Room in the Holiday Inn.

Chairperson Corkin reported that he and Comm. Minelli recently attended a breakfast meeting with U.S. Senator Carl Levin. The main topic of discussion was restoration negotiations between the Federal Government and the State of Michigan. These negotiations have been continuing for over a year and could affect potential leases at K.I. Sawyer. Both Senator Levin and Congressman Stupak claimed that they can get a meeting scheduled with Defense Secretary Coleman within a week and hopefully resolve the restoration negotiations soon.

Chairperson Corkin requested a written opinion from Civil Counsel David Payant as to whether or not the County Board could place a local referendum on the ballot about moving the Airport to K.I. Sawyer.

Comm. Corkin noticed in the recent Planning Commission Minutes that there is a $.75 per ton increase in tipping fees at the County Landfill and requested Administrative Staff to look into the matter.

Comm. Trudell pointed out that legislation has been introduced that will make the County’s Maintenance of Effort at the Valente Medical Care Facility mean absolutely nothing. Comm. Trudell suggested that we look into this legislation and ask for support from other Counties that have passed millages for Maintenance of Effort for Medical Care Facilities. Administrator Aloia will get copies of the legislation and check the language.

Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, pointed out that he will make a video of the presentation entitled “Dealing with Devolution” which is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 24th in the Cooperative Extension Office. The video will be made available for Commissioners who cannot attend tomorrow’s presentation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1996, 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. Hours of Office Operation.  
8. MMRMA Property/Liability Renewal.  
9. Request from Alger County for an Additional Board Member on Community Mental Health.  
12. 1996 Title IV-D Cooperative Reimbursement Contract with Michigan Department of Social Services for the Friend of the Court.  
13. 1996 Title IV-D Medical Support Enforcement Contract with Michigan Department of Social Services for the Friend of the Court.  
14. Request from Range Telecommunications for County Board Help in Securing Payment for Services Provided to the County EDC.  
15. Public Defender Study.  
17. Letter from Congressman Bart Stupak regarding Proposed Reforms to the Medicare System.  
20. Board of Commissioners Committee Appointments for 1996.  
21. EDC Audit.

22.  
23. PUBLIC COMMENT.  
24. ANNOUNCEMENTS.  
25. ADJOURNMENT.  

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