The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, February 13, 1996 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 23, 1996 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. James Sodergren, Ishpeming Township, was present and pointed out a recent article in the newspaper indicated that the Renaissance Zone Legislation is currently being debated in the State Legislature. The Democrats and Republicans are at odds with each other. Mr. Sodergren suggested that Commissioners send a letter to their State Representative opposing the concept of Renaissance Zones. This is just one more scheme that will lead to further erosion of the tax roll and financial hardship on local government. At present 50% of all properties are currently off the tax roll of Marquette County.

There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following late addition: Item 26 become an EDA Meeting Report.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 13, 1996, through February 8, 1996 in the amount of $3,154,025.04 be approved.

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The Committee considered a request from Gerard T. Markey, Equalization Director, for a budget amendment of $2,000 for Tax Administration Staff overtime. Overtime has been necessary because of changes regarding Proposal A and also because of the time it took Staff to bring the City of Negaunee on line with the County tax system.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia pointed out that Gerard Markey and the Tax Administration Staff did an excellent job in getting Negaunee on line by deadline but it did require overtime. He recommends approval of the request and that the $2,000 be taken from contingency.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of a budget amendment for tax administration line item salary overtime of $2,000.

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The Committee considered the 1996 Borrowing Resolution for the 1996 delinquent taxes. Jim Sodergren, County Treasurer, was present and explained that the resolutions are basically the same as previous years. They have received administrative and legal review. Mr. Sodergren expects approximately $3 million in property taxes to be delinquent by March 1st. Delinquent taxes must be distributed by June 1st, however, he will not have to borrow the full amount, because assets on hand amount to approximately $1.5 million.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the 1996 Borrowing Resolutions for the 1995 delinquent taxes.

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The Committee considered a request from David Thayer, Director, Commission on Aging, that the County Board adopt a Resolution for Waiver of Interest and Penalties on Property Taxes for Seniors registered as per MCL 211.59.

Jim Sodergren, County Treasurer, was present and explained that the Board has taken such action in the past, however, did not adopt the resolution in 1995. In 1994 there were five seniors who took advantage of the program, however, this year’s resolution is too late. Seniors must register for the waiver by February 15th and the County Board will not officially approve the resolution until their February 20th regular board meeting. This should not cause a burden on seniors because Proposal A greatly diminished their tax liability. Mr. Sodergren recommended that in the future this resolution should be adopted at the County Board’s first meeting in January.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia explained that because Marquette County had a new Commission on Aging Director in the beginning of 1995 the resolution was overlooked. Once again have a new Commission on Aging Director and that is why the resolution is late.

Comm. Seppanen suggested that the County Board should adopt the resolution anyway and he will speak with Mr. Thayer to be sure the resolution on time next year.

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 adopt the Resolution for Waivers under MCL 211.59.

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The Committee considered a request for on-call compensation from the Juvenile Staff. Barry Sullivan, Director of Juvenile Court Services, along with Don Kauppila and Dennis Yelle, were present to discuss the request.

There are four Union Juvenile Probation Officers who are on-call on a rotating basis every fifth week. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Kauppila take turns for weekend on-call duty so they each must be available every tenth week. Union employees get paid time and a half if they are actually needed, however, get paid nothing for being on-call. Mr. Kauppila and Mr. Sullivan receive comp time rather than overtime should they be called in on weekends or after hours.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole refer this request to Staff for further cost analysis on the actual number of hours that are worked, with the information to be provided at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

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The Committee considered a request for County Board review of the FY 1995/1996 Joint Performance Agreement between the Michigan Department of Social Services, Marquette County Social Services, and the Juvenile Division of the Marquette County Probate Court. Julia Hadas, Director, Marquette County Department of Social Services, was present and explained that the purpose of the agreement is to establish a mutual role and resource responsibilities among the parties. It allows for deployment of State Foster Care Funds to in-home services on the condition that there will be at least a corresponding out-of-home savings. These are not new funds. This is the fourth year for the Marquette County Performance Agreement. The past several years the Agreement was reviewed by the Probate Judge the Prosecutor and Ms. Hadas, however, new procedures require that the County Board must also review the Performance Grant.

Ms. Hadas further pointed out that this is funding through various programs to assist in keeping families together. The total amount of funding dollars available is $273,158, with no County dollars required.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the FY 1995/1996 Joint Performance Agreement between the Michigan Department of Social Services, the Marquette County Department of Social Services, and the Juvenile Division of the Marquette County Probate Court.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from the Marquette County Planning Commission that the County Board adopt the Housing and Transportation Plans as independent documents replacing the respective chapters in the 1982 County Comprehensive Plan.

Joe Erickson, Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Commission, was present to discuss the Housing and Transportation Plans and answer questions. The Housing and Transportation plans are working documents which will provide guidance and the foundations for Cities, Townships and the County for grant opportunities. They also provide a broad background of information especially related to K.I. Sawyer.

The Marquette County Planning Commission held a public hearing in regard to the updated chapters of the County Comprehensive Plan on February 7, 1996. The County Planning Act of 1945 requires the Planning Commission to conduct a public hearing prior to adopting the plan.

Chairperson Corkin, on behalf of the County Board of Commissioners, commended the Planning Commission and the Resource Management Staff for their outstanding work in developing these planning documents.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the County Housing Plan and the County Transportation Plan as independent policy documents replacing their respective chapters of the 1982 County Comprehensive Plan.

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The Committee considered a request from Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, for a budget amendment in the FY 1996 Forestry Services Expenditure Budget to permit additional tree planting. Mr. Koshorek explained that the County has budgeted to plant 396,000 seedlings in 1996, however, the Forestry Commission wishes to plant an additional 157,500 trees. The area to be planted includes 50 acres near K.I. Sawyer which burned last spring and 125 adjacent acres which the consulting forester recommends planting because of poor stocking. Estimated total cost for this project will be $40,425.

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 of the planting of an additional 157,500 trees with the appropriate budget amendment.

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The Committee considered the award of the Big Bay Harbor Fuel Tank Construction Bid. Ron Koshorek, Resource Management Director, was present and explained that the County has received bids for the installation of the above ground fuel tank at the Big Bay Harbor of Refuge. This project was authorized as a capital project for 1996 and is funded by a 100% grant from the Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division. The budget for the project is $26,000, however, with the low bidder, U.P. Environmental Services, Inc., bidding $23,495.

Mr. Koshorek further explained that the tank will be fenced, locked, and serviced by a County employee. It will be located approximately 50 feet from the harbor and will have a containment area constructed underneath in case of spillage.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board award the Big Bay Harbor Fuel Tank Construction Bid to U.P. Environmental Services, Inc. in the amount of $23,495.

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The Committee considered a memo from Al Feldhauser, Planner, regarding a potential State fee for solid waste disposal. Mr. Feldhauser was present and explained that solid waste planning was a required mandate by the State of Michigan as a result of the Solid Waste Management Act. Initially the State provided funding to facilitate development of plans, however, in recent years State funding has declined but the mandate to update these plans remains. The Michigan DNR has suggested that the State Legislature impose a $.75 per ton fee to generate the dollars to continue to pay for this solid waste management.

This Solid Waste Management fee proposal would require that 75% of the funding would come back to the local communities and 25% would stay with the State of Michigan. Mr. Feldhauser has learned that the legislation has for the time being been stalled and so this proposal is no longer an immediate concern.

Chairperson Corkin asked Mr. Feldhauser to watch for this legislation and keep track of it for Commissioners.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole send the information to the Legislative Review Committee for monitoring.

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The Committee considered an informational memo from the Marquette County Planning Commission apprising the County Board that the Resource Management/Development Department will be submitting a grant application to the Coastal Zone Management Program. The County Board recently approved a grant for the Big Bay Harbor Bulk Head Extension which requires a $22,000 local match. The Committee of the Whole recommendation also suggested that the local match could be offset or replaced if grant monies become available. A Coastal Zone Grant Application has been prepared by Staff to attempt to secure the local match for the grant.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Minelli and unanimously carried to place the communication on file.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from the Marquette County Planning Commission that the County Board adopt a resolution which states the County's intent to undertake a State/Federal Recreation Grant for Phase II development of Perkins Park. Steve Enright, County Planner, was present and explained that the County Planning Commission at its February 7th meeting discussed application for State/Federal Recreational Grant funding to develop and improve the campground at Perkins Park. An ad appeared in the February 4, 1996 addition of the Mining Journal seeking public comment on the proposed project which is a five-phase development project consistent with the County's Recreation Plan.

Marquette County recently received a Michigan Natural Resource's Trust Fund Grant of $132,000 for Phase I to improve the boat launch facility and day use area. The Park Master Plan now indicates it is a high priority that construction of two new restrooms/shower facilities and upgrading of the bath house will further enhance the quality of facilities offered at Perkins Park for campers and day users. The Park Master Plan estimates the cost of the restroom/bath house project at $267,400 which includes a 10% contingency amount and also the demolition and hauling of rubble. This means a 75% State share of $200,550 and a Marquette County share of $66,850. Should Marquette County be awarded the grant, which could occur as early as September, 1996, the Board could then decide where the $66,850 would come from, or turn down the grant. Normally such grants have a 2-3 year completion requirement and construction probably would not begin until 1997 anyway.

Comm. Joseph contended that if Marquette County is seriously planning to upgrade and develop Perkins Park, rather than wait until the budget process and earmark the funds out of the 1997 contingency, we should set aside these funds now. Gary Yoder, Chief Finance Officer, indicated there is approximately $360,000 in the Land Acquisition Fund.
It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Trudell, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt a resolution indicating the County’s intent to apply for a State/Federal Recreational Grant Program to undertake a redevelopment project of Perkins Park and that the County’s match be earmarked from the Land Acquisition Fund with the appropriate budget amendment.

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The Committee considered a letter from Tal Lapins, Field Supervisor, Probation and Parole Office, which requests additional office space needs for the Circuit Court Probation/Parole Personnel. The Probation and Parole Office has recently added a half-time secretary and has an ongoing need to accommodate criminal justice interns from NMU. Unfortunately, due to a lack of space, they have not been able to accommodate criminal justice interns. Also, clients are forced to wait in the hallway near the Women’s Restroom Facility which can be uncomfortable for visitors and employees.

One of Mr. Lapins’ suggestions would be to moving their "dead files" into a storage area down the hall from their office and making an office for himself out of the smoking room. It is his understanding that the County is considering an expenditure to ventilate the smoke from that room. Mr. Lapins would need ventilation for the room and believes that now is the time to designate the whole County as truly smoke free.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia pointed out that many departments have problems with space and a study is underway by Jim Kippola, Senior Planner, which will make long term recommendations. Mr. Aloia recommended that the Board continue with the smoking room ventilation project (estimated cost $5,400) at this time. Mr. Lapins’ suggestion to take over the designated smoking room would only be a short term solution for one department, but the study intends to address County space needs on the long term for all departments.

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

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The Committee considered the final billing from O. William Rye and Company, Personal Management Consultants, for professional services and expenses related to the review and classification of the salary administration program for the Alger-Marquette Community Health System. The total billing for the study is $9,874 which is approximately one-third of what was budgeted. The County’s portion for this billing amounts to $2,965. County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, said a budget amendment would not be necessary because the funds are available in the Professional Services Line Item.

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 of payment of $2,965 for Marquette County’s one-third reimbursement for the Rye Study.

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The Committee considered a budget amendment request from Randall Girard, Human Resources Director, of $4,125 for the employment testing line item of the Human Resources Budget for 1996. Mr. Girard was present and explained that the original request for this line item was $9,525, which included anticipated employment testing activity for the Sheriff’s Department. The Administrator’s recommended budget reduced this request to $6,525 in response to anticipated staff reductions. However, these staff reductions were not included in the adopted 1996 budget, but funding for the employment testing was not correspondingly corrected.

Comm. Joseph contended it is not appropriate for the County Board to take the additional funding for testing out of the general fund. They adopted a 1996 budget at the end of last year. Since that time the Sheriff’s Department received $90,000 from the Keweenaw Bay Indians to reinstate several employees. Comm. Joseph felt that any costs for testing or training should then be taken from that money, not from the general fund.
It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board not appropriate the additional funds for employment testing from the General Fund budget.

Randell Girard explained that employment testing has historically been a Human Resource line item expense. If new employees in the Sheriff's Department do not have psychological screening, and the Sheriff's Department does not have funds budgeted, then the liability falls on the County Board. The psychological screening protects the County Board.

Comm. Rapport believed this to be appropriately a Human Resource expense and that psychological testing is necessary to protect the County from liability.

Comm. Seppanen withdrew his support for Comm. Joseph's motion. The Motion then died for lack of support.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and carried by voice vote 6 Ayes to 1 Nay (with Comm. Joseph voting Nay) that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board approve of a budget amendment to the line item for employment testing in the Human Resources Department Budget for 1996 in the amount of $4,125.

The Committee considered a communication from Gerald Peterson, Marquette City Manager, which indicated that the Marquette City Commission resolve to decline an appointment to the County Commission on Aging.

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

The Committee considered a letter written by Raoul D. Revord, Attorney at Law, Marquette, Michigan, to U.S. Senator Carl Levin and Congressman Bart Stupak requesting that they examine the U.S. Postal Services planning and facilities needs in the Northern Michigan area. Mr. Revord recently heard that a new regional facility is being considered to be built in the Gaylord area. He encourages considering the prospect of establishing a new Regional Postal Distribution Center at the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base be considered as a substitute for the Gaylord plan.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board support Attorney Revord's letter by sending a follow-up letter to Senator Levin and Congressman Stupak.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board place on file Prosecuting Attorney Opinion 96-1 regarding Referendums on Moving the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Seppanen and unanimously carried by voice vote to place a communication on file from David Payant regarding Legislation to Abolish Maintenance of Effort for the Medical Care Facilities.
The County Board considered a communication from George M. McManus, Jr., State Senator, regarding a Select Senate Committee Report on Public Land Ownership. Chairperson Corkin pointed out that himself along with Jim Sodergren, County Treasurer, and Gerard Markey, Equalization Director, attended a meeting with a number of our Upper Peninsula State Representatives. The amount of land in Marquette County that is off the tax rolls is approximately 50%. The report is a product of public hearings and opinions and concerns of Michigan citizens and provides a foundation for future State land acquisition and management. The report has been referred to the Resource Management Department for review.

It was moved by Comm. Trudell, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried to place the communication on file.

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It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote to place a copy of the 1996 Meeting Schedule for the Marquette County Board of Health on file.

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The Committee considered a recommendation from Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, that the County pay expenses to send Airport Manager, Hal Pawley, to a meeting in Lansing on Thursday, February 15th regarding the EDA Grant Application. Mr. Aloia received a call from Tom Rumora about the meeting and believes it is important that Jim Kippola, Senior Planner, and Airport Manager, Hal Pawley, be in attendance when the Michigan Jobs Commission reviews the EDA Grant Application. This would insure that all items and expenses are given proper consideration in the Grant Application. The Airport Commission Chairperson, J. Pat Farrell, turned down Mr. Pawley’s request for funds to attend this meeting, however, he would not object if the County Board covered the travel expenses.

Mr. Aloia further explained that Mr. Kippola will be in Lansing on a visit with some friends and relatives and so he will not cost the County anything to attend the meeting. Hal Pawley’s expenses could be taken from the Administrator’s or the County Commissioner’s line item for travel. The expenses should be approximately $300.

It was moved by Comm. Angeli, seconded by Comm. Minelli, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board allow Hal Pawley to attend the Michigan Jobs Commission meeting in Lansing on Thursday when it considers its EDA Grant Application.

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Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Bob Beams, Richmond Township, was present and noted that it did not take long for the County Board to override the Airport Commission Chairperson’s recommendation. He also noted that in regards to the Prosecutor’s Opinion that a private party cannot fund an advisory ballot question and he was glad to see that a group cannot buy an election.

Mr. Beams also contended that it is ridiculous that the County should spend $5,400 to ventilate a smoking room to let people continue smoking in a public building.

Joseph Pietro, Forsyth Township, commended the Chair and the Commissioners for their fiscal restraint. Mr. Pietro requested a copy of the letter regarding the potential location of postal facilities at K.I. Sawyer. Mr. Pietro also questioned the spending of $5,400 to ventilate a County smoking room. By doing so, he believes Marquette County is condoning smoking and he vowed to look into the matter.

There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

7
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin reported that he and Administrator Aloia went to a K.I. Sawyer Base Conversion Authority meeting. The two main issues being discussed are first, the restoration negotiations between the State of Michigan and the Air Force. This has not been settled but hopes it is resolved soon because it may have an impact on potential leases.

Second, the operation and cost of utilities is being reviewed at K.I. Sawyer. This has not been thoroughly addressed as yet with prospective tenants and this issue also needs to be resolved.

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
1. ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Tax Administration Staff Overtime Budget Request.
8. Resolution for Waiver of Interest and Penalties on Property Taxes for Seniors as per MCL 211.59.
9. Request from Juvenile Division Staff for On-Call Compensation.
10. Cooperative Grant Agreement Resolution from Social Services Department.
11. Amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan.
   a. Transportation Plan
   b. Housing Plan
13. Award of Big Bay Harbor Fuel Tank Construction Bid.
15. Coast Zone Grant Application for Local Match to the Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead Project.
16. Recreation Grant Application for Perkins Park (next phase).
17. Additional Office Space Request for Circuit Court Probation/Parole Department.
20. Notice from City of Marquette that they will not Accept the Appointment of an Elected Representative on the County Commission on Aging.
22. Prosecuting Attorney Opinion No. 96-1: Referendum on Moving the County Airport to K.I. Sawyer.
23. Legislation to Abolish Maintenance of Effort for the Marquette County Medical Care Facility.
25. Marquette County Board of Health 1996 Meeting Schedule.
26. EDA MTS report
27. 
28. PUBLIC COMMENT.
29. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
30. ADJOURNMENT.