The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, February 23, 1999 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on February 9, 1999 be approved.

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

It was moved by Comm. Roberts, seconded by Comm. Arsenault and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following late addition: 12a) Letter of Support for the Michigan Iron Industry Museum Expansion, 12b) Amendment No. 1 Medical Support Enforcement Agreement FIA/Friend of the Court, and 12c) Lease/Purchase Proposal KI Processing, LLC, for Buildings 417, and 419 at KI Sawyer.

It was moved by Comm. Roberts, seconded by Comm. Curto and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period February 5, 1999, through February 18, 1999 in the amount of $549,940.01 be approved.

The Committee considered comments by Gene Elzinga, Marquette Township Resident, representing North Country Trails. Mr. Elzinga reported almost 300 miles of the National North Country Trail has been completed through the Upper Peninsula. The trail from Marquette to St. Ignace is complete except for a part in Chocolay Township. North Country Trails has been interested in the development of abandoned railroads as nonmotorized hiking, biking, and cross country ski trails for many years. Currently there are four acquisitions being considered by the Michigan DNR but there may not be enough funding for all. Three are in Lower Michigan and one is in the Upper Peninsula. The recent controversy regarding snowmobiles plus the high priority that the DNR places upon snowmobiling may make funding for nonmotorized trails a lower priority.

Mr. Elzinga is not opposed to snowmobiles using the railroad grade except in residential areas. He has been running a campaign for support from groups and government units and requests that Marquette County write a letter in support of the DNR acquisition of the Wisconsin Central abandoned railroad grade. It is Mr. Elzinga’s understanding that a decision will be made very soon so the letter should go out as soon as possible.

Whether the trail should be a nonmotorized trail and closed to snowmobiles or not could be solved later. Commissioners agreed that for now the key issue is the purchase of the abandoned trail by the DNR.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter as requested North Country Trails, to the Michigan DNR asking that it acquire the abandoned Wisconsin Central railroad grade to be used for a recreational trail.

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The Committee considered a letter from John Korhonen, Chairperson, Marquette County Commission on Aging. Mr. Korhonen has been directed by the Commission on Aging to write to the County Board regarding the process of appointing members to the Commission on Aging. According to the COA Bylaws its members should represent a diversity of background and geographical balance in Marquette County. The bylaws also require the appointment of a nominating/membership committee which does a thorough evaluation of all candidates who apply to the Commission on Aging then present its recommendations to the County Board. When the County Board accepts late nominations without the COA’s nominating/membership committee review, it is possible that the geographical balance and diversity of backgrounds required in the bylaws will not be maintained. Mr. Korhonen requested in the future the nominating/membership committee be provided with the names and applications of all nominees, with any letters for or against any candidates, applying with sufficient time to review the applications for compliance with the required membership criteria.

Comm. Tuominen, County Board designee to the Commission on Aging, noted that if all the applications aren’t available for the COA Nominating Committee why should they bother evaluating them?
County Clerk Dave Roberts noted that all applications received up to the time the COA Nominating Committee meets are provided to Jacki Boxer Silta, COA Director, however the COA Nominating Committee meets several weeks prior to the County Board making appointments. In that time several late applications may be received. It has been the County Board’s policy to accept applications right up until the evening of appointment. The bottom line is: appointments are made by the County Board and it has the right to appoint who they want.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board will try to accommodate the COA Nominating Committee by providing as many applications as possible prior to appointment; and further the County Board requests that a member of the COA Staff or Nominating Committee be present the night the Board makes the appointments.

The Committee considered the Ramrod, Inc. Lease for Building 610 at KI Sawyer. Harley Andrews, Civil Counsel, reported on the Staff recommendation. Attorney Cal Tillisch was present last week and after the County Board meeting discussed the Sublease on behalf of Ramrod with Tom Rumora, Steve Powers, Commissioners Corkin and Arsenault, and himself. Some of the negotiating problems to be solved were Ramrod was presently paying 50 cents per square foot and the County’s economic plan requires that leases be $2 per foot. Ramrod was also only prepared to lease for 18 months whereas the County wanted a five year or more lease.

Mr. Andrews further explained that Ramrod desires to purchase a building but the building they are presently located in cannot be sold to Ramrod, it is within the Airport boundary area. The negotiations resulted in the following proposal which Ramrod will accept: Ramrod will accept an 18 month lease with an option to extend the lease for another additional 42 months, but must exercise that option within the first three months of the lease. In other words, the first 18 months of the lease will extend from March 1, 1999 to August 31, 2000 unless by June 1, 1999 Ramrod decides to exercise the 42 month extension. During this initial three months Ramrod will be evaluating other buildings at Sawyer for potential lease or purchase.

The rent will start at $1 per sq. ft. for the first six months, $1.75 per sq. ft. for the second six months, and $2 per sq. ft. for months 13 through 24. Should the lease be extended the last three years will include a 3% lease rate increase. Also, a new inventory of the personal property located in Building 610 will be conducted and property that is not being utilized by Ramrod will be removed.

Chairperson Corkin noted this is a win win situation which met the County’s goals yet has been fair to Ramrod.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Roberts, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board proceed with the sublease as per Civil Counsel’s recommendation.

The Committee considered a request from the League of Women Voters for funding support for a booklet entitled Know Your County Government. Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted that the Marquette County Sesquicentennial Committee included an update on the booklet in its celebration recognition activities. This booklet was first published in 1975. Supporting the LWV’s project with funding the booklet printing is a cost effective way to inform Marquette County residents and to provide an educational resource. Informing County residents of the functions of County government is one of the goals in the Marquette County Strategic Plan.

The LWV has received funding from the Greater Ishpeming Community Fund and the Zonta Club Fund. The booklets will be distributed through high schools and libraries and the County will receive 100 copies.

The 1998 Sesquicentennial Committee Celebration line item has $1,800 remaining. It is the Administrator’s recommendation to approve a $1,200 expenditure carry forward to 1999.

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 a $1,200 carry forward expenditure for the Sesquicentennial Committee Fund to assist the League of Women Voters in funding the Know Your County Government booklet.
The Committee considered a budget resolution amending the 1999 Rescue Safety Fund Budget. Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted that the amendment maintains a balanced Rescue Safety Budget. A portion of a position is recommended to be moved from Rescue Safety to the Road Patrol Program in the General Fund. A $12,605 increase in the Road Patrol Program will be recommended in the mid-year budget amendment. The increase will be funded through under expenditures in the Sheriff’s Department Budget.

Undersheriff Jim Bjorne was present and explained that over the last two years the Rescue Safety Program has experienced policy changes made by Sheriff Lovelace and the County Board, which include the move to KI Sawyer. Gary Yoder, Finance and Human Resources Manager, Jim Bjorne, Undersheriff, and Tom Mallett, Rescue Safety Lieutenant, have implemented the changes and maintained a balanced budget. Expenditures have stayed within the Search and Rescue Millage and grant funds with the exception of the loan from the Public Improvement Fund for the boat and trailer purchase. Since this recommendation and budget amendment resolution have been drafted an additional snowmobile trailer is needed because one just experienced a broken axle. The trailer suffered damage when the axle broke and is not worth fixing.

The recommended budget amendment allows replacement of malfunctioning radios, replacement of two snowmobile trailers, and begins the repayment of the loan which will include interest at 5%. It will also move a deputy position to the general fund which is consistent with the program budget.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve a resolution amending the 1999 Rescue Safety Fund Budget.

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The Committee considered a Timber Sale Settlement. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that a timber sale was conducted however some timber was cut from land that the County did not own. A settlement has been reached with the land owner in the amount of $11,285. Mr. Powers recommends that $6,373 come from the County Forestry Fund with the remaining funds coming from the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority Loss Fund. The matter is under investigation by Staff and a followup report will be provided for Commissioners, however, the landowner’s settlement should not be held up because of the County’s investigation.

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 provide a compensation of $11,285 for the timber cut from land that the County didn’t own.

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The Committee considered a problem of unsentenced felons in the County Jail as mentioned in a "draft" 1998 Community Corrections Annual Report. Comm. Rapport noted that on Page 3 of the report, in the paragraph entitled "Offender Profile" that unsentenced felons incarcerated in the Marquette County Jail are not eligible for programming nor the County Jail Reimbursement Program. This program provides funding to counties for housing otherwise prison bound offenders. A conservative estimate of $30,000 is unable to be recuperated because of unsentenced felons occurring costs while waiting in the County Jail.

Lyn Nelson, Marquette County Community Corrections Coordinator, was present to discuss the matter of unsentenced felons and answer questions. Ms. Nelson noted that the whole judicial process and not any one individual or item is responsible for delays in sentencing. Such delays could come through the defendant’s attorneys, the prosecutor’s office, or scheduling conflicts.

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 send a letter to the Marquette County Judicial Council requesting that they review the matter and make efforts to reduce delays in sentencing in order to maximize the jail reimbursement program.

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The Committee considered a request from Chairperson Corkin that the County Board provide a letter of support for the Michigan Iron Industry Museum for a $1,228,500 grant application for expansion of the Iron Industry Museum located in Negaunee Township. Chairperson Corkin serves on the Michigan Iron Industry Museum Board of Directors and noted that some 120,000 people have visited the museum since it opened in 1987. The museum’s full-time curator of education leads school tours, make presentations in schools, and conducts a year round future historian program with 60 school age members. Additional space at the Iron Industry Museum will improve its ability to serve the public. Indoor space will be available to do hands on
special programs for school groups and expand exhibit spaces for one of the major artifacts at the museum, an industrial locomotive called the "Yankee." The Yankee and its twin the "John Bull" signal the first major technological change in iron mining - the coming of steam in 1869. The Yankee is displayed presently as an outdoor exhibit, but needs to be restored, brought indoors, and cared for. An expanded changing exhibit space will increase the museum's potential by giving visitors a reason to return to the museum. It will also provide space for museum staff who are currently housed in space originally intended to be a lobby.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter of support to our State Legislators requesting their assistance in procuring an art, culture, and quality of life grant for the Michigan Iron Industry Museum expansion.

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The Committee considered Amendment No. 1 for the 1999 funding year for the Family Independence Agency/Friend of the Court Medical Support Enforcement Contract. The Amendment will provide an additional $4,079 and is a 100% State funded program. The original budget was based on a two year old level of funding.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the Michigan FIA/Marquette County FOC Medical Support Enforcement Contract Amendment No. 1 in the amount of $4,079.

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The Committee considered the Lease/Purchase Terms for KI Processing, LLC, for Buildings 417 and 419 at Sawyer. Comm. Arsenault, Chairperson of the KISEDIC, noted that KI Processing, LLC, included buildings 417 and 419 and the surrounding property in its original project proposal. The Red Fox Woods has now officially released their interest in these buildings and the KISEDIC approved the proposed concept for this property at its October 26, 1998 meeting. Building 417 is approximately 6,560 sq. ft. and Building 419 is approximately 4,000 sq. ft. The acreage requested is approximately 4.45 acres adjacent to the Processing Plan property. KI Processing, LLC, plans to use the property for maintenance, on site repair of equipment, and storage of equipment parts used in the overall processing plan project. The additional property would also provide storage space for packing material. Regulations in the food industry prohibit the use of floor space in the Processing Plant for repair and maintenance. Four to five full-time jobs will be added to the overall processing plant which will increase the total number of jobs for this project from 65 to 70.

Comm. Arsenault also noted that KI Processing, LLC is also doing their own heat conversion, building repairs, and survey and legal description work. The true cash value assessed by County Equalization Director Gerry Markey of the buildings and the land totals $43,760. The total cost improvements and lease/purchase price proposed by KI Processing LLC amounts to $54,475.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of this proposal based on KI Processing, LLC's original request.

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

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin reported that John Carr, Air Force Base Conversion Agency, was here and a written report of his visit will be forthcoming for Commissioners. Comm. Corkin along with Commissioners Roberts and Rapport attended the meetings. The Economic Development Conveyance and the Public Benefit Transfer are both still moving forward as is also an extended five year Caretaker Agreement. Administrator Powers and Tom Rumora did an excellent job at the meeting and Mr. Carr was impressed with the developments at Sawyer. There has been a marked improvement in his working relationship with the County.

Comm. Wallace reported he attended a meeting at Northern Michigan University which was also attended by Prosecutor Gary Walker and Sheriff Lovelace. In an effort to reduce alcohol abuse on campus NMU wishes to get the community involved in a discussion with the goal to reduce "binge" drinking. Comm. Wallace requested permission to be allowed to represent the County Board of Commissioners on a new NMU task force. (Chairperson Corkin noted that Comm. Wallace can consider himself appointed.)
Comm. Rapport reported that on February 20th a meeting was held on general aviation. Approximately 30 people attended and were updated on the County plan including T Hangars and other issues. The meeting served as a good start and Larry Coehoorn did an excellent job.

Comm. Tuominen noted that a draft of the Updated Solid Waste Plan should be available in one month.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted several items:
In the Commissioner mail room there is more written information on the general aviation meeting.
The visit by Lt. Governor Posthumus was very positive. Mr. Powers had the opportunity to discuss the importance of State funding and the State’s assistance in developing Sawyer.
The Economic Development Conveyance at Sawyer will be of no cost to Marquette County.
The West Branch Fitness Center efforts will continue. Administrator Powers will recommend that the Board extend the agreement for an additional 30 days which would help the Fitness Center bring closure to their long term plan.

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It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Rapport and unanimously carried on a roll call vote 9 Ayes (Comm. Tuominen, Arsenault, Bergdahl, Curto, Rapport, Roberts, Seppanen, Wallace and Corkin) to 0 Nays that the Committee of the Whole go into closed session to discuss a collective bargaining agreement.

Chairperson Corkin declared a brief recess to clear Commission Chambers at 7:09 P.M.

CLOSED SESSION

The Committee of the Whole came back into open session at 7:22 P.M.

The Committee considered the labor contract with the courthouse union.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Tuominen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board approve of the Contract with the Courthouse Employee’s Union Local 2914 as recommended by the Negotiating Team during closed session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, February 23, 1999, 6:00 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 FEBRUARY 9, 1999.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Comments by North Country Trails/Wisconsin Central RE: Railroad Grade -
Munising to Marquette.
7. Commission on Aging Nominating/Membership.
8. Ramrod Lease (No Packet Materials).
9. League of Women Voters Request for Support for Booklet "Know Your County
Government."
10. Rescue Safety Fund Budget Amendment.
12. Discussion of Unsentenced Felons in County Jail.
13. PUBLIC COMMENT.
14. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
15. CLOSED SESSION RE: Collective Bargaining.
16. ADJOURNMENT.