The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, November 14, 2000 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the October 24, 2000 Committee of the Whole meeting be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment, none was forthcoming.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following additions: item 8a) Resolution to approve Generator Purchase for ACN; 8b) Resolution to approve recommendation of Auctioneer for Personal Property Disposal; item 9) Support Letter regarding Tilden Mine Rock Pile Expansion; and item 10) HR 2414 Bankruptcy Reform Bill.

It was moved by Comm. Roberts, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period November 3, 2000 through November 9, 2000 in the amount of $406,109.17 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin read a letter from Karen Riekki, Ishpeming, Michigan, expressing her highest praise, admiration, and tribute to Deputy Dean Rushford, Marquette County Sheriff's Department, for saving her life. Ms. Riekki explained that Deputy Rushford showed skilled, intelligent, and swift leadership capabilities in dealing with the situation. She stated that Marquette County is fortunate to have this caliber of a person working for the Sheriff's Department and believes he enriches the lives of people in our community. Deputy Rushford was present to publicly accept congratulations for his outstanding performance from the County Board.


It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Report be accepted for file.

The Committee considered a recommendation from KISDD and County Staff regarding a proposal from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for a generator purchase for the American Communications Corporation (ACN). The company has requested assistance with a backup power source for its fast-growing 24-hour-a-day 7-day-a-week operations. UPPCO suggested new modular micro-turbine technology, but the company prefers a specific size and type of conventional diesel-powered generator and related equipment which will be installed, maintained, and serviced by Van Ert Electric Company. The total cost of all equipment and installation work is estimated at $85,000. Delivery and installation time is estimated at 8-12 weeks. The company has stated that time is of the essence.

ACN has asked the County to pay for the entire cost. Staff offered to recommend paying the cost if the company reimbursed the expense over the term of the lease. The company's agent and MEDC staff indicated that the company would not agree to reimburse. Based on discussions over the past two weeks, a 2/3 state 1/3 County solution is being pursued. In order to provide rapid response and clarity regarding the County's role, staff recommends the following:

1. KISDD pay up to $30,000 or 1/3 of the cost (whichever is less) of a generator and related equipment and work, as specifically identified by ACN, to serve the call center at KIS, subject to remaining funds being provided by the State, company, and/or others.
2. KISDD apply to MEDC for $30,000 loan (at approx. 5%) to be repaid over 3 or more years.
3. If MEDC loan rejected, funds to come from KISDD FY 2001 utility account (non-metered electric) and actually paid on or after Jan. 1, 2001.
4. KISDD own the generator, add to lease, become part of the County-owned building.
5. ACN be responsible for all costs of service, maintenance, fuel, and all other costs associated with generator operation.
6. Use the generator as an opportunity with ACN to conclude payment to the County and contractors. Prior to ordering or expending County funds for the generator:
   a. ACN authorize Wells Fargo to issue a check to the County for approx. $198,000.
   b. ACN pay contractor and subcontractors for completed work.
      • A $200,000 Sawyer revolving loan fund application was signed by ACN last week. Wells Fargo Bank (revolving loan fund administrator) is processing the application. These funds will reimburse the County for expenses incurred during the renovation process.
      • ACN’s construction manager (Dowler Ronnisch) and several subcontractors have not been fully paid by ACN. A loan to $250,000 to ACN from the Marquette County EDC is intended by ACN to be the funding source. The loan application has been approved by the EDC.

7. For clarity and efficiency, future negotiations/correspondence/communication regarding ACN’s lease terms, building and infrastructure issues, loans, utility concerns, County Responsibilities, etc. be handled through County Civil Counsel.

8. A letter be sent to MEDC in appreciation for their assistance in this matter, and encouraging continued cooperation and referrals of prospects to Marquette County and K.I. Sawyer.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted that funds are available in the Sawyer Development Department budget regardless of the utility reimbursement payment.

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 approve the recommendation by staff regarding the generator purchase for ACN.

* * * * *

The Committee considered a recommendation from the K.I. Sawyer Economic Development Committee to approve the hiring of an Auctioneer for Personal Property Disposal. The Committee requests the County Board to enlist the services of Col. Dan Samson, Auctioneer to conduct the auctions of surplus personal property in the former Commissary (Bldg.634), and report to the KISEDC and County Board the success of the auction before continuing with any future auctions.

Commissioners requested additional information regarding cost, if any, to the County and time scheduled for the auction. Information will be provided at the next County Board meeting.

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 approve the hiring of Col. Dan Samson, Auctioneer, to conduct the auctions of surplus personal property in the former Commissary Building 634, and report to the KISEDC and the County Board the success of the auction before continuing with any future auctions.

* * * * *

The Committee considered a Letter to the Land and Water Management Division, MDEQ, supporting the Tilden Mining Company’s request to expand the existing rock stockpile at the Tilden Mine. This expansion would unavoidably impact 61.7 acres of wetland. The economic impact of the Tilden Mine, combined with the efforts already undertaken to comply with existing wetland mitigation standards, should be viewed positively by the DEQ.

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole authorize Chairperson Corkin to sign the Letter of Support for the Tilden Mine Rock Pile Expansion and forward it to the Land and Water Management Division of the MDEQ.

The Committee considered HR2414. On October 12, 2000 the U.S. House of Representatives passed (297-114) a Bankruptcy Reform Bill (HR 2414) that would make it more difficult for divorced women to obtain child support and alimony payments from former spouses declaring bankruptcy. It would also make it harder for recently divorced women and others facing economic crises to regain their financial stability by filing for bankruptcy. The Senate is expected to consider the bill after December 4th.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board write to our Legislators, Senator Levin and Senator Abraham, urging them to protect women and families by opposing HR 2414.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment, none was forthcoming.
COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comm. Tuominen questioned whether or not the Soo Tribe has to follow the same policy as the County and reinvest all money back into K.I. Sawyer.

Comm. Joseph questioned if the County as a policy to recognize 90 to 100 year-old citizens in Marquette County.

Comm. Joseph questioned the problems with the leaking roof on the YMCA Building.

Commissioners discussed Red Fox Property leases and agreements at K.I. Sawyer. Comm. Joseph requested an analysis showing how much money was paid to the County from the 4% rent in the last year and the formula for the Red Fox Property lease payments.

Chairperson Corkin wished all Hunters Good Luck this 2000 Season!!!

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie M. Branam
Deputy County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, November 14, 2000, 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 OCTOBER 24, 2000.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Expression of Thanks to Dean Rushford, Marquette County Sheriff's Department,
   from Karen Riekki.
8. Possible Late Additions RE: KI Sawyer Economic Development.
   a. Res to App Gen Purchase Bid
   b. Res to App Rec of Contractor for Res. Prop Disp
   c. d. e. f.
9. PUBLIC COMMENT.
10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
11. ADJOURNMENT.