The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on October 9, 2001, 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, 234 W. Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on September 25, 2001 be approved with the following noted corrections: Page 2, Mike Ulvila has been married for “two weeks” not two years and Lowell Lawrence should be Lowell Larson, 1405 Waldo Street.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Amy Clickner, Lake Superior Community Partnership noted that Marquette County is one of 18 communities in the United States that have been selected for a 3-year program. Ours is entitled “Livable Community Partners for Marquette County.” She introduced Dr. Craig Stien to provide the County Board with an update.

Dr. Stien thanked the County Board for the initial $25,000 investment. He noted “Livable Community Partners for Marquette County” is a joint effort of the Marquette Community Foundation and the Lake Superior Community Partnership. It is comprised of representation from all over Marquette County. Three of its members attended a national meeting at their own expense in Washington, D.C. A public relations survey was forwarded to a variety of Marquette County organizations requesting information on what residents say about Marquette County. Some of the responses included Marquette County is rural, isolated, and cold, however by turning these into positives Marquette County has bountiful natural resources, is a beautiful place to live and is a winter wonderland. The data will provide a unified perception for marketing Marquette County. Livable Community Partners has an active Finance Committee which is raising additional funding. The next step is to take the data from the survey and build it into a plan to market Marquette County’s assets. A representative from Washington, D.C. had to reschedule their site visit to Marquette County because of the recent events in New York City. The visit will occur in the near future.

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

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following changes: Item 7) Sale of Property to O’Dovero Development be deleted and the following additions: Item 10) Request by Superior Extrusion for Interest Reduction to their IRP Loan, and Item 11) Letter to the Michigan Department of Community Health regarding Tobacco Settlement Funds.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period September 28 through October 4, 2001 in the amount of $1,105,070.94 be approved.

The Committee considered the 2001/2002 Snow Plowing Contract. Larry Gould, Facilities Manager, was present and explained that Marquette County solicited bids for the snow plowing/removal contract by direct mailing to three local contractors and advertising in the newspaper. Only one bid was received which was from the same contractor as the last two years, Bob’s Snow Removal, in the same amount of $16,800.

Considering the abnormal amount and frequency of snow last year, Bob’s Snow Removal service was good. The contract is the same as last season and has received Risk Management and Civil Counsel review. The contract ends May 15, 2002.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Moore, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the 2001/2002 Snow Plowing Contract with Bob’s Snow Removal in the amount of $16,800.

The Committee considered an Administrator’s recommendation to authorize a Sawyer Utility Agreement with Matrix Design Group, Inc. for up to $40,656 to complete Phase I tasks. The $40,656 is available in the KI Sawyer Development Fund Budget.
Hal Pawley, SIABC Manager, and Scott Erbisch, Sawyer Utilities Project Manager, were present to discuss the recommendation and answer questions.

Staff recommends contracting with Matrix to assist the County with further pursuit of municipalization of the natural gas and electrical systems at KI Sawyer. Phase I tasks are the due diligence required to investigate and attempt to resolve critical issues. The results will determine whether or not the County should proceed with municipalization.

Mr. Erbisch explained that Phase I will consist of obtaining franchise agreements with a township, researching gas line capacity, determining the potential capital reimbursement through SEMCO and UPPCO, and negotiating terms with gas and electric providers to determine feasibility of outsourcing Operations. These tasks are required for the County Board to make an informed decision regarding municipalization.

The continued assistance from the Matrix Design Group and recommended because Matrix is knowledgeable of the KI Sawyer utility systems and has assisted other communities with conversion of military systems. Matrix also has experience in negotiating with utility companies. Completing Phase I is important because the Air Force intends to transfer the electrical system to Marquette County on January 1, 2002.

The County Board and Staff engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the Sawyer utilities and agreement with Matrix. Committee consensus was also to invite the Supervisors of Forsyth, Sands, and West Branch Townships along with Dave Svanda, the Michigan Public Service Commission, to a future meeting to discuss Sawyer Utilities.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and carried by voice vote 6 Ayes (Comm. Moore, Arsenaull, Girard, Seppanen, Wallace and Corkin) to 4 Nays (Comm. Bergdahl, Joseph, Nordeen, and Tuominen), that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve an Agreement with Matrix Design Group, Inc. for up to $40,656 to complete the Phase I tasks regarding the KI Sawyer utilities disposition.

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The Committee considered a memo from the Michigan Association of Counties, Jerry Griffin, MAC Director of Legislative Affairs, announcing the State House and State Senate agreed to an amendment to Senate Bill 291 which added $1.8 million in revenue sharing grants to Counties for FY 2002. On Monday, October 8th the Governor signed Senate Bill 291 but vetoed the line item revenue sharing amendment citing continuing budgetary constraints.

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

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The Committee considered a request from Superior Extrusion to reduce the interest rate on their current IRP Loan. A memo from Anne Giroux, SIABC, noted the loan was closed in January, 1999 for $250,000 at 7.75%. Currently the balance is $120,000 and Superior Extrusion would like to lower their rate to 5.5% (current Wall Street Prime). They could save approximately $3,000 with this rate reduction. The IRP Loan Committee has reviewed this request along with current financial information and recommends approval of the rate reduction. A $250 fee is suggested to cover the costs involved.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Arsenaull, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the request from Superior Extrusion for a reduction in the interest rate on their current IRP Loan.

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The Committee considered a letter to James Haveman, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health, regarding tobacco settlement funds owed to Marquette County.

Comm. Wallace, County Board Member of the Marquette County Board of Health, noted a $10 million pool has been set aside for Counties that have agreed to assume responsibility for administering the State Medical Program (SMP), which provides access to medical care for indigent citizens of our County. Marquette County’s prorated portion of the settlement funds would be $124,600. These funds, along with associated Medicaid matching dollars, would total $275,000 and would allow Marquette County to expand access to approximately 750 additional low income non-SMP patients. Without these funds Marquette County would be forced to cut 550 low income, non-SMP patients from the budget, a 70% reduction, leaving only 200 patients served. Marquette County has invested greatly in time and effort to improve the SMP Program which historically has been the State’s responsibility.
Official notification has been given for the distribution of $7 million in tobacco settlement funds to counties with SMP start dates on or before October 1, 2001, however no announcement has been made regarding the remaining $3 million funds going to 33 counties which includes Marquette County with January 2, 2002 start dates.

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 authorize the Chairperson to sign and forward the letter to James Haveman, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health, urging them to formalize its promise of $124,600 in to Tobacco Settlement Funds for Marquette County as soon as possible.

Comm. Arsenault, Chairperson of the Sawyer IRP Loan Committee noted that Barry Bahrman, LLC Processing, is applying for a $150,000 loan which had previously been turned down. In the best interest of the Committee and Mr. Bahrman Comm. Arsenault felt the loan should be reviewed by outside financial professionals and made the following motion:

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Girard, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee direct the County Administrator to pick several (2 or 3) financial professionals along with Anne Giroux of the Sawyer Business Center to review the IRP Loan request from Mr. Bahrman.

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

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote 10 Ayes (Comm. Tuominen, Arsenault, Bergdahl, Girard, Joseph, Moore, Nordeen, Seppanen, Wallace and Corkin) to 0 Nays that the Committee go into closed session to consider the purchase of real property.

Chairperson Corkin declared a brief recess at 6:48 P.M. to clear Commission Chambers.

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The Committee of the Whole came back into open session at 7:10 P.M.
No action was forthcoming as a result of the Closed Session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]
David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, October 9, 2001, 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.
7. Sale of Property to O'Dovero Development.
9. Revenue Sharing Update.
10. Request by SE for Interest Reduction to IRP loan
11. Memo Dept. of Comm. Health
to
12. For indoor air action to define financial priorities

13. CLOSED SESSION: To Consider the Purchase of Real Property.
14. PUBLIC COMMENT.
15. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
16. ADJOURNMENT.