The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, November 13, 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. Arsenaught, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on October 23, 2001 be approved.

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

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following addition: Item 5a) Testimony on House Bill 5357 by Judge Solka.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period November 2, 2001 through November 8, 2001 in the amount of $785,000.34 be approved.

The Committee listened to testimony from Judge Thomas L. Solka regarding House Bill 5357. House Bill 5357 was introduced by Rep. Jim Howell on October 29, 2001 and would amend the Revised Judicature Act to add certain circuit and district judgships, and to eliminate certain judgships, effective January 1, 2003 (except where elimination of a judgship would occur upon a vacancy or retirement). New judgships must be approved by the local governments that fund each court.

Judge Solka, Chair of the Marquette County Judicial Council, addressed the County Board asking for a resolution of support and possible authorization to address a Joint House Senate Committee meeting next Tuesday, November 20, 2001 in Lansing, either in person or by written testimony. The original bill as introduced at the end of October contains no reference whatsoever to Marquette County, but a proposed amendment is expected to be added to the bill next week. The proposed amendment would maintain the added eight judgships, but now proposing to eliminate eight judgships with two additional judgships being eliminated, one circuit judgship in Marquette County and one circuit judgship in Bay County. The Marquette County Judicial Council feels this proposal is wrong, it's based on incorrect data and should be rejected by the Legislature.

Pursuant to Supreme Court policy, no judgships should be eliminated without an "extended analysis" which examines relevant factors in addition to estimated judicial workload. The proposal expected to be introduced next week is contrary to the State Court Administrative Office recommendation. A reduction of a judgship in Marquette County would mean the loss of services to Marquette County residents and families, and also may require an additional Family Division Referee, and possibly a Law Clerk for the remaining judge because of the workload. The positions of court staff are funded by Marquette County, whereas the judgships are funded by the State of Michigan. The Judicial Council believes that when the underlying data and caseload data is studied by the legislature, they are confident this proposal will not pass, however it is necessary, based on the advice and recommendation of Rep. Adamini, that Marquette County Judges be present in Lansing next Tuesday, November 20, 2001 to testify in opposition to this proposed amendment.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Arsenaught, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board authorize Chairperson Corkin and Circuit Court Judge Thomas L. Solka to attend the Joint House Senate Committee Meeting in Lansing, Tuesday, November 20, 2001 in support of opposition to House Bill 5357.

The Committee discussed Federal Utilities Disposition at the former K.I.Sawyer Air Force Base. Present to speak regarding this issue was Earl Yelle, Sands Township Supervisor, and Barry Bahman, West Branch Township Supervisor. Mr. Dan Schneplf and John Blanchard of Matrix Design Group, Inc. came to Marquette. Meetings were held with representatives of UPPCO, SEMCO, and the Marquette Board of Light and Power (BLP) to discuss their interest in working with the County should the County municipalize the natural gas or electric systems. There was productive and open discussion in all meetings. Matrix Design Group Inc., representatives will also be contracting several other electric and natural gas providers.
A meeting was also held with representatives of Sands, Forsyth, and West Branch Townships. Matrix Design Group, Inc., representatives made a presentation on the utility disposition study, discussed franchise agreements and addressed questions and concerns raised by Townships. Mr. Yelle and Mr. Bahrman explained that these townships expect some form of compensation before they will agree to approve any franchise agreements. They are concerned with land use and taxable revenue. They made it clear that if a private entity owned the utilities, the townships would be able to collect taxes on the value of the personal property in their townships. They don’t care who owns the utilities, they are more concerned with the tax base. They also explained that the Cities of Negaunee and Marquette pay a fee in lieu of taxes to the general fund on behalf of their electric utilities. They further explained that if the County Board is looking for an agreement in two weeks, that won’t happen.

Scott Erbisch, Human Resources/Risk Manager, explained that County Staff and Matrix Design Group, Inc. representatives will eventually meet with township supervisors again to further discuss the franchise issue. Prior to that meeting additional information regarding franchise agreements/requirements is being researched. At this time, Matrix Design Group, Inc. is planning to come to the December 11, 2001 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Nordeen, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the communication regarding Federal Utilities Disposition at the former K.I.Sawyer Air Force Base be accepted for file.

The Committee considered a Purchase Agreement with the Bureau of Aeronautics for Purchase and Installation of Weather Equipment for the Control Tower at SIA. In August the Board of Commissioners signed a Letter of Agreement concerning the County’s intention to operate the Control Tower. The next step was to get the FAA to allocate $300,000 appropriated for equipment to open the tower. Finally, on October 19, 2001 the FAA put in writing that they were allocating the $300,000 to Marquette County to equip the tower.

Marquette County has been working with the Bureau of Aeronautics (BOA) to remote the automated weather information to the tower. The BOA installs and maintains this system at most Michigan airports. Since the BOA orders and installs all their own equipment for their own system, there is no bid to be obtained.

The budget put together to open and operate the tower shows the contract approximately $5,000 under the estimate for the line item. However, other line items are slightly over the estimate. The entire project is still anticipated to be within budget.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Nordeen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Purchase Agreement with the Bureau of Aeronautics for Purchase and Installation of Weather Equipment for the Control Tower at SIA.

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The Committee considered a Contract with Midwest ATC, Inc. for Purchase and Installation of Control Tower Equipment. In August the Board of Commissioners signed a Letter of Agreement concerning the County’s intention to operate the Control Tower. The next step was to get the FAA to allocate $300,000 appropriated for equipment to open the tower. Finally, on October 19, 2001 the FAA put in writing that they were allocating the $300,000 to Marquette County to equip the tower.

Marquette County has been negotiating with Midwest ATC, Inc. to purchase and install the equipment required. Midwest ATC, Inc. is the company under contract with the FAA for operating contract towers in this area of the U.S. There are no local or regional companies to bid this work. Midwest has already competed to service this area. They have the expertise to know what equipment is required. Plus all the equipment must be compatible to work properly. Through FAA coordination and cost comparisons with other tower operations, this bid is a good proposal.

The budget put together to open and operate the tower shows the contract is about $5,000 over the estimate for this line item. However, other line items are slightly under our estimate. The entire project is still anticipated to be within 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 the Contract with Midwest ATC, Inc. for the Purchase and Installation of Control Tower Equipment.

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The Committee of the Whole met on Tuesday, November 13, 2001, they considered a Communications Equipment Maintenance Agreement for Central Dispatch. This agreement is a two-year extension of the current agreement with EL-COM Services, Inc. of Marquette. The monthly cost
is $1,375 and is budgeted in the Central Dispatch Fund. The monthly cost is unchanged from the current agreement. The Central Dispatch Policy Board and the Central Dispatch Manager have been very pleased with El-Com’s work. The recommended two-year contract extension will ensure continuity while the dispatch radio system is converted to 800 MHz. The maintenance agreement has been reviewed by Civil Counsel and Risk Management. The exhibits are the maintenance specifications for each tower, insurance language, general conditions, and general maintenance responsibilities. The extension has no significant changes in specifications or provisions from the current contract. El-Com Inc. was selected through a bidding process in 1996.

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 approve the Agreement with El-Com Services, Inc. for Communications Equipment Maintenance for Central Dispatch.

The Committee considered a Rural Health Initiative Grant for Rescue Vehicle Trenching Equipment and Automated External Defibrillator. Mike Zorza, Emergency Services Manager, applied for the grant funds to improve pre-hospital care, including emergency responder equipment. In the State’s 2001 budget, tobacco settlement dollars were allocated across rural Michigan in the form of competitive grants. Trenching equipment and the AED were selected by the Department of Community Health. The proposal was one of fifty-four approved from eighty-six requests. Availability of the State’s funds has been confirmed.

Trenching and collapse stabilization equipment will be used to properly stabilize structures that pose a threat at an emergency site. Failure to have prescribed equipment readily available compromises work safety and delays rescue operations. Emergency workers can not enter or work in unstable or hazardous locations without the equipment. The equipment includes struts, extensions, base plates, shoring, air lines, and control devices. The AED will be similar to the units being purchased through the Save a Life fundraising project.

Estimated total cost for the equipment is $15,000. The State of Michigan Department of Community Health has awarded up to $8,750 to the County of Marquette for the equipment purchase and related expenses, if matched by non-state funds. The County has received $1,200 in donations specifically for the AED unit for the rescue vehicle. The 2001 Public Improvement Fund has an uncommitted fund balance of $20,000. The trenching equipment was a requested 2001 Capital Improvement Budget request. The equipment was not recommended for funding.

It was moved by Comm. Girard, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board accept the Grant for Rescue Vehicle Trenching Equipment and Automated External Defibrillator and authorize an expenditure of up to $7,550 from the Public Improvement Fund.

The Committee considered Central Dispatch Bylaws. The Central Dispatch Policy Board recommends revision of four main issues:

- Missed meetings – amend the language to say that if a member misses more than four meetings his name shall be referred to the County Board for possible appointment of another person.
- Appointment of the County Board of Commissioners representative – the old bylaws has him serving a three-year term and it should be one year.
- Change language to provide for annual appointments in December rather than January.
- Check into liability protection for Policy Board members.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Nordeen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Central Dispatch Bylaws as recommended by the Central Dispatch Policy Board.

The Committee considered a U.P. RC&D Council Resolution to encourage the DEQ to allow Road Commission Work on Local Streambank Stabilization Projects to be credited for Wetland Mitigation Work. The result would be increased assistance to local watershed activities, increased water quality and streambank stabilization and improved fish habitat. The resolutions calls for developing a method to allow this on a case by case basis to insure that it is not just a method to bypass mitigation.
It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the U.P. RC&D Council Resolution encouraging support to the Michigan DEQ to allow Road Commission work on local streambank stabilization projects to be credited for Wetland Mitigation work.

The Committee considered a Resolution on Tax Base Protection for Townships. Shrinking tax base is a great concern everywhere, but especially in our rural settings. Legislative action from our Legislative Branches would surely help to limit such an aggressive acquisition, and is immediately needed.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Girard, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board draft a resolution encouraging our Legislators to increase PILT Payments especially in areas that are hard hit with large amounts of public ownership.

The Committee considered a communication regarding a Grant for Livable Communities. Marquette County is embarking on an exciting community planning project that will be used to strengthen our image, reinforce the attributes of our quality of life, and market ourselves to business prospects and entrepreneurs. Livable Partners for Marquette County is a joint venture of the Lake Superior Community Partnership and the Marquette Community Foundation. Marquette County is joining a network of 15 other communities in a project called Creative Communities sponsored by the Partners for Livable Communities based in Washington, D.C. Robert McNulty is the Executive Director of the Partners organization. In support of our work, Marquette County is asking for a $30,000 grant.

In embarking on this process, Marquette County has created a board, Livable Partners for Marquette County, who have created the following mission: “The greatest gift that a community can offer its people is a quality of life and economic opportunities that will allow them to flourish today and tomorrow in the place they call home. Livable Community Partners for Marquette County seeks to create and publicize a nationally recognized livable community will:

- Develop and diversify the County economy to foster career opportunities;
- Enhance the livability of the community for all area residents;
- Cultivate a “four season” culture that will turn opportunities into assets;
- Market Marquette County as a premier place to live, work, and recreate.”

Marquette County is unique to this process as the only rural community and is, by far, the smallest participating community, which gives some unique advantages and perspectives. Laura Durham, Project Coordinator, visited Marquette County and remarked and marveled at our teamwork and level of participation.

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the communication drafted by Staff to Tricia Tucciaronie, Assistant Vice President, and John Czarnecki, Managing Director, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, requesting consideration of a $30,000 grant to Marquette County.

The Committee considered the FY 2002 Emergency Management Work Plan for Marquette County. The work plan is an administrative tool designed to outline emergency management related objectives that the jurisdiction intends to carry out during the coming year, to enhance our emergency services programs and improve overall community safety.

As in the past, an approved emergency management annual work plan is required of those counties receiving Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to support their local emergency services program. In addition, an approved work plan is necessary for our local jurisdictions to maintain eligibility to receive state disaster assistance funds. The Emergency Management Annual Work Plan represents a statement of intent on the part of Marquette County.

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 approve the FY 2002 Emergency Management Annual Work Plan for Marquette County.
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 approve the FY 2002 Emergency Management Annual Work Plan for Marquette County.

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

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comm. Girard commended Airport Staff on their degree of professionalism at the K.I.Sawyer International Airport since the September 11, 2001 terrorism attack. Their degree of professionalism and quality of screening service far exceeds the quality of similar services at larger airports.

Comm. Wallace concurred with Comm. Girard. The service at the Airport is quick, thorough, and a pleasure to go through.

Comm. Wallace attended the Surgeon General’s National Health Conference in Washington. Dr. James Hayward was present and explained the progress of the Marquette County Childrens Dental Clinic. Dr. Hayward has established himself as a national model for rural dental clinics and has been invited to participate in additional National Conferences.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie M. Brannam
Deputy County Clerk
1. ROLL CALL.


3. PUBLIC COMMENT.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

5. Review of Claims and Accounts.

6. Discussion of Federal Utilities Disposition at the former KI Sawyer Air Force Base.

7. Purchase Agreement with the Bureau of Aeronautics for Purchase and Installation of Weather Equipment for the Control Tower at SIA.

8. Contract with Midwest ATC, Inc. for Purchase and Installation of Control Tower Equipment.

9. Central Dispatch Communication Equipment Maintenance Agreement.


11. Central Dispatch Bylaws.

12. UPRC&D Council Resolution to encourage the DEQ to Allow Road Commission Work on Local Streambank Stabilization Projects to be Credited for Wetland Mitigation Work.

13. Resolution on Tax Base Protection for Townships.

14. Communication regarding a Grant for Livable Communities.


16.

17.

18.

19. PUBLIC COMMENT.

20. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

21. ADJOURNMENT.