The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Courthouse Annex, Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Nordeen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the February 26, 2002 Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved with the following note: Deputy Oslund’s name was misspelled on the bottom of Page 1 and has been corrected.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Barry Sullivan, Juvenile Court Director, announced Marquette County will receive a Robert Woods Foundation Grant. Three hundred applications were narrowed down to 33 official applications of which Marquette County was one of 11 being awarded a grant for the next five years at $250,000 per year. The grant will assist in the planning of programs for juvenile offenders with substance abuse problems. The first year will be planning only with three staff to be hired. This should mean a reduction in the costs to Marquette County’s Child Care Fund.

Commissioners congratulated Mr. Sullivan noting this grant will also save lives.

Christine Myers-Staffeld, CEO, Teaching Family Homes, was present to give an update on the Campus Project to be located at the Honor Camp property. Ms. Meyers-Staffeld distributed a legal description of an 80 acre parcel and a draft copy of an easement agreement.

Clarence Rivers, TFH volunteer, was present and using a large map explained the property description. The 80 acres would provide six building sites, four of them to be constructed immediately. The legal description after approval by the County Board will be part of special legislation sponsored by Sen. Koivisto to allow the County to transfer the property to Teaching Family Homes.

Commissioners expressed several concerns including: The legislation should allow the County to have clear title to all of the property, not just the 80 acres. Commissioners thought the original TFH proposal was for approximately 50-55 acres.

Administrator Powers cautioned the County Board not to place too much criteria on the proposal at this time. The legal description and information must be in Lansing in April so the legislative process can be completed this term.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Nordeen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the legal description and draft easement be submitted to Staff for their review and recommendation for the March 26, 2002 Committee of the Whole meeting.

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

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved as presented.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period March 1st through March 7th, 2002 in the amount of $694,447.85 be approved.

The Committee considered a resolution supporting an Upper Great Lakes Educational Technologies Inc. (UGLETI) Grant Application. Dennis J. West, President, Northern Initiatives, was present and explained that access to high speed broadband telecommunications will mean the difference between attracting new businesses or losing business to other areas who have such access. The broadband access will open up opportunities for education, health, and human services to rural and isolated areas in the Upper Peninsula. The UGLETI consortium and the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Authority are working to develop a multi-county LinkMichigan planning grant application for the purpose of helping Upper Peninsula Counties and local communities develop telecommunications.

Mr. West noted he would like Marquette County to eventually become the lead County in the Upper Peninsula for this LinkMichigan Program. However, the first step is to get the State of Michigan to accept the Notice of Intent. The grant will provide a three to one match, three state dollars to one local match dollars which
can come from the various counties or other agencies to support the development of telecommunications. This is a very important issue for the future of the Upper Peninsula’s economic development.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board support UGLET's LinkMichigan Program Application with the appropriate resolution.

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The Committee considered the FY 2002 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Agreement with the Emergency Management Division of the Michigan State Police. Mike Zorza, County Emergency Manager, was present to discuss the grant agreement and answer questions.

The Emergency Management Performance Grant reimburses Marquette County for up to 50% of the salary and fringe benefits of the appointed County Emergency Manager to oversee objectives outlined in the County Board’s approved Emergency Management Work Plan. The grant allocation for FY 2002 amounts to $40,517 which represents a $6,793 increase over FY 2001.

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 Emergency Management Performance Grant Agreement.

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The Committee considered a Contract for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighter Training with the Michigan Department of Transportation. Hal Pawley, SIABC Director, was present and noted that the Grant Agreement is the standard $4,000 grant which pays for a mockup plane that is used for firefighter training for airport and township personnel.

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Moore, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Contract for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighter training with the Michigan Department of Transportation.

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The Committee considered the Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team (UPSET) Subcontract with the Michigan State Police. The Subcontract provides reimbursement for one-half of the actual cost of a Sheriff’s Deputy assigned to UPSET. The subcontract amounts to $64,999 with one-half required from the County with $31,688 provided by State reimbursement. The additional $1,500 will be provided through other state drug enforcement revenues.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the UPSET Subcontract with the Michigan State Police.

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The Committee considered a Recreation Grant Application with the Michigan DNR for a Recreation Grant to facilitate Phase III of the Perkins Park Development Project. Al Feldhauser, Staff Planner, was present and noted the funding is available from the Natural Resources Trust Fund (NRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). A single application makes Marquette County eligible under both programs.

Phase III improvements include construction of seven pull through camp sites for larger RV’s and 5th wheel trailers, enlargement of several other sites, utility extension, rerouting the south campground road, relocation of the picnic area, and plantings to provide screening between campsites. A walking trail and nature observation area is also being proposed.

Total project costs are estimated at $263,250. The cost allocation will be 74%/26% resulting in a local match of about $68,445.

Commissioners noted that approximately 10 years of planning by the Planning Commission and the Forestry Commission have gone into the improvement projects at Perkins Park. In the last three years work has been moving forward at a rapid pace and the results are being met with positive feedback. Perkins Park is a very nice facility.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board authorize Staff to submit a Notice of Intent, adopt a Resolution supporting the Grant Application and committing Marquette County to matching funds from the Forest/Recreation Fund and designate Steve Powers, County Administrator, as the County Representative authorized to sign the Grant Application and further authorize the Board Chair to sign documents related to the project if Marquette County is awarded the Recreation Grant.

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The Committee considered a Resolution supporting the Cooperative Resource Management Initiative (CRMI) funding. Laurie Dhondt, Administrator, Marquette County Conservation District, was present and noted
the CRMI program has been in place for over 20 years and provides extremely valuable service to private landowners in Marquette County and throughout the State. The program provides private landowners free, unbiased forest management advice in all 83 Michigan Counties which results in increased protection of Michigan’s wildlife, restoration of habitats including forest grasslands, wetlands, and increased landowner awareness of the value of their natural resources. During FY 2002 CMRI resource professionals statewide worked with 14,000 citizens and visited 2,258 private landowners on their property.

Ms. Dhoodt noted as of January 1 zero funding was received because the Governor cut the program budget. Ms. Dhoodt has had the opportunity to speak with our Upper Peninsula Legislators, State Senator Kowisto, and Representatives Adamini and Brown who are in favor of restoring the program. Rep. Brown has reintroduced funding for the CRMI in the Appropriations Committee of which he is a member. The Soil Conservation District requests the adoption of the resolution in support of the CRMI Program so it can be distributed to our State Legislators.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Tuominen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the Resolution supporting the Cooperative Resource Management Initiative funding.

The Committee considered a communication from Laurie Dhoodt, Soil Conservation District Administrator, regarding adjustments in their budget from the County Forestry Fund. Ms. Dhoodt noted due to State budget cuts implemented in November, 2001 the Forest and Wildlife Management Assistance Program in Marquette County has been cut. In order to support landowner services, the Forestry/Wildlife Newsletter will not be published. Rather, funding that supported the newsletter, $3,000 per year, will be added to an additional $2,000 to support an abbreviated Forestry/Wildlife program. Ms. Dhoodt presented an amended budget for the $10,000 received from the County Forestry Budget as follows:

- Forestry/Wildlife Program - $5,000
- Workshop/Educational Meeting - $1,000
- Educational Materials - $1,000
- Informational Materials - $1,000
- District Assistance Countywide - $2,000

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee accept and place on file the amended budget information from the Soil Conservation District.

The Committee considered a Friend of the Court concern that State incentive funds may be eliminated and that the State of Michigan will retain a larger portion of federal incentives. Carolyn Hansen, Friend of the Court, was present to discuss the matter and answer questions.

The Van Buren County Friend of the Court sent a letter to the State’s Attorney General noting that State law requires the legislature to annually appropriate an amount of money equal to 3% of all monies collected by the Friend of the Court that are owed to the State of Michigan. In recent weeks the Friends of the Courts were informed that the 3% incentive payment was being eliminated. The 3% revenue for Marquette County amounts to about $15,000 annually. The State maintains that the loss of the 3% revenue will be offset by increased federal incentives, however a larger portion of the federal incentives will be retained by the State Office of Child Support.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to our State Representatives requesting their assistance in stopping the reduction in the 3% incentive payments to Friend of the Courts.

The Committee considered Marquette County’s request for 2% Gaming Distributions in a draft letter to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. A similar letter will be sent to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the near future.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, noted the FY 2002 adopted General Fund Budget includes no 2% gaming revenues. As per current County policy if gaming revenue donations are not received for the DARE Program it would be eliminated. The operating budget for the Health Department’s Dental Service includes $60,000 in donations/gifts and in previous years 2% revenues has been a substantial portion of donations to the dental clinic.

The recent KBIC donations to Marquette County were $156,000 in 1999, $205,000 in 2000, and $249,000 in 2001. For planning purposes Marquette County should expect in future years, including 2002, no more than $120,000 to $150,000 annually.

Administrator Powers provided further background information and copies of requests from various County departments for 2% gaming revenues, which total $468,300. The last distribution of the funds by the KBIC was
undesignated and this will most likely be the case in the future. Commissioners felt they should prioritize gaming revenues during the budget process.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Moore, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board forward the requests to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community for 2% gaming distributions authorizing Chairperson Corkin to sign the letter.

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The Committee received an update from Civil Counsel Cheryl Hill on the Medical Care Facility Board Policies. Ms. Hill noted that the County Board has very little authority over the FIA Board. The law specifically allows to remove a member only for attendance if they miss three consecutive meetings, which has not been a problem in Marquette County. There also is a procedure where a Board Member could be removed for official misconduct or neglect of duty.

Ms. Hill is still working to contact the State Ombudsman. She notes that federal Medicare regulations require patients be given the opportunity of choice for Hospice. She hopes to receive this information in the next week or so.

Commissioners noted although the County has little authority over the FIA Board they still are liable. Perhaps the State of Michigan is also liable in that one of the three members of the FIA Board is appointed by the Governor.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board direct Civil Counsel Cheryl Hill to send a letter to the Marquette County FIA Board expressing County Board concerns about their hospice policy.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Nordeen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the FIA Board and the Medical Care Facility Administrator be requested to attend the March 26, 2002 Committee of the Whole Meeting along with Civil Counsel Hill to further discuss the Hospice choice policy matter.

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The Committee considered a presentation from the Matrix Design Group, Inc. regarding the disposition of Sawyer Utilities. Daniel J. Schneipf, Principal, Matrix Design Group, Inc., along with John Blanchard, Matrix, and Peter Ellsworth, Consulting Attorney, Dickinson & Wright, were present to discuss their Phase I Work Program focused on the following areas:

- Franchise Agreements or Right to Serve Agreements for operating utilities
- Determination of the appropriate capital reimbursement for infrastructure installed by the utilities under previous agreements with the U.S. Air Force
- Identify feasible gas delivery mechanisms to provide competitive alternatives
- Assess the level of interest and potential terms for service by gas and electric providers

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote 9 Ayes (Comm. Seppanen, Arsenault, Bergdahl, Girard, Joseph, Moore, Nordeen, Tuominen, and Corkin) to 0 Nays, that the Committee of the Whole go into closed session for the purpose of discussing a confidential attorney/client communication. Chairperson Corkin declared a five minute recess to clear commission chambers at 7:24 P.M.

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CLOSED SESSION

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The Committee came back into open session at 8:53 P.M.

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 follow the recommendations made by its Consultant during the Closed Session and further direct Staff to negotiate a contract with the Matrix Design Group to implement these recommendations.

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

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comm. Tuominen, Liaison to the Road Commission, noted that they are moving forward with improvements to the Road Commission Big Bay building. Total project will be approximately $172,000 of which $34,430 will come from the County CIP fund.

Chairperson Corkin noted a letter from our three Federal Legislators, Congressman Bart Stupak, U.S. Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, regarding the extension of Marquette County’s participation in the
Military Airport Program (MAP) funding. This is very good news and a positive letter for Marquette County.

Comm. Seppanen requested that Greg Sicotte, Building Code Official, at some future Committee of the Whole provide an update regarding the Building Code programs.

Comm. Nordeen noted that the fee increases for mechanical permits has risen significantly over the past two years and thought the County Board had more input into Building Code fee structure.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained the County Board established a policy of “cost of services” a guide for the fee structure.

Chairperson Corkin further noted over the years several discussions have occurred with local building contractors. They certainly do not want the State of Michigan to provide the building code inspections and generally agree that the program should pay for itself.

Comm. Arsenault noted that in a recent e-mail received by Commissioners he has been perceived as being in a position of “conflict of interest” as a member of the negotiating committee for the Sawyer housing proposals. Comm. Arsenault has always disclosed any possible conflicts of interest he may have between County issues and his private business. He has done consulting work in the past for Red Fox Properties and has publicly disclosed the matter before the County Board. He feels insulted over any suggestion that he would compromise his ethics or integrity and not do what is best on behalf of the County of Marquette. If the County Board wants him off the negotiating committee he will comply with its wishes.

Comm. Seppanen has no problem with Comm. Arsenault serving on the negotiating committee however he discussed the possible expansion of the negotiation committee by one member with Chairperson Corkin.

Chairperson Corkin has no problem with the County Board expanding the negotiating committee to include three Commissioners. Also, any Commissioner interested in attending the meetings would be allowed as long as a quorum is not present at the negotiating sessions.

It was moved by Comm. Moore, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board reaffirm Comm. Arsenault as a member of the Sawyer Housing Proposal Negotiating Committee and also add Comm. Girard as an additional member.

Comm. Bergdahl reported that Comm. Tuominen and himself attended a Michigan Economic Development Corporation meeting with Doug Rothwell, MEDC Director. This was a U.P.-wide meeting. Marquette County was well represented with five from the Marquette County EDC, two representing Sawyer, four representing the City of Marquette, and four representing the City of Ishpeming. This was one of the best Michigan EDC meetings he has ever attended. Comm. Bergdahl noted the Upper Peninsula gets a high percentage of economic development funding and Marquette County gets the majority of this funding for good reason. We often have matching funds available for EDC grants, we get good results through various programs, and Marquette County has been making economic progress.

Chairperson Corkin noted he attended the Marquette Economic Club Dinner last evening and Doug Rothwell was the main speaker. He had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Rothwell for about ten minutes regarding Marquette County issues. Mr. Rothwell, noted he has a very good working relationship with Marquette County and Marquette City during his remarks mainly because the local officials are committed to making economic progress.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
1. ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
8. Agreement with Michigan Department of Transportation for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Training.
9. Agreement with Michigan State Police for UPSET Funding.
10. Recreation Grant Application – Perkins Park Phase III.
12. Conservation District Amended Budget for Funds from County Forestry Fund because of State Budget Cuts.
13. State Elimination of Friend of the Court 3% Incentive.
14. KBIC and Sault Tribe 2% Gaming Distributions.
15. Update from Civil Counsel on Medical Care Facility Board Policies.
17.
18.
19.
20. PUBLIC COMMENT.
21. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
22. ADJOURNMENT.