The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, February 8, 2005, at 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, 234 W. Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on January 25, 2005 be approved.

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

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

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 28, 2005 through February 3, 2005 in the amount of $390,609.77 and bi-weekly payroll for the period ending January 29, 2005 in the amount of $594,134.47 be approved.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, presented Goals and Accomplishments for 2004, the 2004 Year-End Status Report on the County’s Strategic Plan, and a Project List listing projects or issues either completed in 2004 or started in 2004 but not yet completed. The reports are intended to provide a summary of what has been accomplished, how the County is progressing with the 2001 Strategic Plan, and information on projects and issues that Departments believe are important.

Commissioners and Staff discussed updating the Strategic Plan. Much has been accomplished since 2001. The goals and priorities should be reviewed. Comm. Wallace suggested a facilitator be used as with the 2001 session. Comm. Pellow questioned the KI Sawyer Exit Plan and requested a copy of that plan.

Chairperson Corkin thanked the County Board, Staff, and Employees for a job well done. It is always a challenge working to achieve goals. He also commended Scott Erbisch, Sawyer Operations Manager, on a job well done at Sawyer International Airport.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the communication be placed on file.

Please note – the Marquette County Goals and Accomplishments can be viewed on the Marquette County Website, www.co.marquette.mi.us.

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The Committee considered vehicles purchase for the Building Codes Department. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that the trucks replace two vehicles used by the Codes Department. A
1993 Ford Ranger currently used by Equalization will be traded in. The two vehicles currently used by Codes will be kept for use by Codes, Equalization, Facilities, or Perkins Park. Each dealer bid a regular cab pickup. The bid specifications are a 112 inch wheel base. A regular cab pickup’s wheel base varies from 111.2 to 111.5 inches. This bid variance is recommended to be waived. The regular cab pickup meets the performance needs of the County. The low bid for two regular cab pickups is $3,800 less than the one bid for extended cabs. On January 28, 2005 the sealed bids were opened for the purchase of two 4x4 pickup trucks. The 2005 Capital Improvements Budget has $35,000 budgeted for the vehicles.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board accept the net bid of $27,604.26 from Crown Motors of Negaunee for two Chevrolet Colorado Pickup Trucks.

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The Committee considered the Agreement with the Representative for the Remonumentation Contract. Larry Bussone is the County Representative for the survey and remonumentation of land corners in Marquette County. Remonumentation of land corners is a multi-decade project funded by the State of Michigan. The County Representative coordinates the remonumentation of all original government land corners, prepares reports required by the State, administers the remonumentation program, and provides other services specified in an agreement between Marquette County and Mr. Bussone.

Mr. Bussone is an Independent Contractor. By contract with the County, his annual payment is $7,500. His contract expires October 31, 2006. For the State’s 2004 Fiscal Year, the State agency responsible for the remonumentation program offered a supplemental grant to counties. The grant doubled the number of corners that could be surveyed. The County accepted the Supplemental Grant.

In the Grant Application, Mr. Bussone included additional administration funds, including funds for the County Representative. The application was submitted by the County Grant Administrator (County Administrator) and was approved by the State. Mr. Bussone is requesting his Agreement with the County be amended to allow payment of the additional funds for the increased work.

While not an exact workload indicator for the County Representative, the number of land corners does link to the work required. The Supplemental Grant more than doubled the number of corners to be remonumented. For an Independent Contractor, there should be a connection between the volume of service and the amount paid for the service. Mr. Bussone’s agreement has not increased in over eight years.

2004 was an unusual year because of the Supplemental Grant. For 2005 and future years, the volume and scope of the remonumentation program will be returning to normal levels.

Mr. Powers recommends amendment of the Agreement with the County Representative. The $7,500 is funded by the State of Michigan.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenaault, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board amend the Agreement with Larry
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Bussone, County Remonumentation Representative, to allow a supplemental payment of $7,500 to be paid before September 30, 2005.

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The Committee discussed the Natural Resources Conservation Services Project Agreement. As part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s evaluation of sites along the Dead River, two additional projects were identified. When supplemental federal funding became available, Mike LaPointe and Becky Otto from the Regional NRCS requested and were awarded funding for the two projects. The program is limited to relieving hazards created by the flooding that cause an impairment of the watershed.

The two projects are near Silver Lake and Connors Creek. One project will reshape and stabilize two segments of steeply eroding stream banks ($464,445). The second project will reconstruct and stabilize the stream channel at Connors Creek outlet ($162,222).

The NRCS is requesting the County serve as the local sponsor. The sponsor is responsible for the non-federal share, contractor selection and payment, landowner approval, and record keeping. Administrative expenses are reimbursable or can be used as the local match. Gary Erickson, Chief Operating Officer, UPPCO, has said UPPCO will assist with the local responsibilities. For previous federal projects UPPCO has taken all local sponsor responsibilities. UPPCO is prepared to assist with the two NRCS Projects.

Since the Emergency Watershed Program is a national program, the State NRCS is concerned the funding may be spent by other regions before the County can commit. The recommended action will allow the County Board Chair to sign the agreements after review by County Staff. The projects are consistent with the DNR’s recovery for the river. The Federal NRCS provides 75% of a project’s cost. If the recommendation is followed, there will be no direct impact to the County budget. The projects total $626,667.

Becky Otto, District Conservationist, Marquette-Alger County, was present and explained the deadline for receiving this money is February 15, 2005.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board 1) Authorize County sponsorship of Emergency Watershed Protection Projects and approval of the Agreement with the NRCS subject to agreement with UPPCO for UPPCO to provide non-federal match and services required of local sponsor; and 2) Authorize approval of the Agreement with UPPCO and authorize the Board Chair to immediately sign the Agreement.

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The Committee considered the Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership Grant. The Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership is considering applying for a small grant (approximately $5,000) to conduct stream cleanups throughout Marquette County. This grant is through the Great Lakes Commission and requires a local unit of government to sponsor an application.
The Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership is requesting that Marquette County serve as a sponsor and the Watershed Partnership will provide all local match (25%) and implement all aspects of the project.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Struck, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve a letter agreeing to sponsor the application and support the goals of the Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership Project.

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The Committee considered the DEQ Lease for 2005. The State rents Building 642 at Sawyer International Airport and Business Center for the Department of Environmental Quality. The Building is 12,776 sq. ft. The building is within the Economic Development Conveyance Area. The State pays the County $12,216.22 per month. The County is responsible for building maintenance, janitorial services, and snow removal. The project annual net revenue from the one-year extension is $112,000. Steve Powers, County Administrator, recommends approval.

Comm. Cihak questioned whether the County could negotiate a 2, 3, or 4 year rental agreement. Harley Andrews, Chief Civil Counsel, explained this is a short term rental agreement. The Rental Agreement is assignable to Telkite when the County/Telkite Agreement is completed.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board authorize the one-year Rental Agreement with the State of Michigan for the DEQ Lease for 2005.

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The Committee considered the Commissioner’s Meeting Schedule. Commissioners questioned the history of Committee of the Whole meetings at 6:00 and County Board meetings at 7:00. Chairperson Corkin explained that having meetings later provides better access for the public.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board schedule all County Board meetings and all Committee of the Whole meetings at 6:30 p.m. effective immediately.

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Commissioners discussed the Board of Commissioners and Committee of the Whole Meeting Schedule. They discussed weekly versus bi-weekly meetings. Chairperson Corkin explained that the present system works well. Following a Committee of the Whole meeting Commissioners have one week to consider issues addressed. He feels that eliminating any meetings and having meetings longer than two hours would not be productive.

Staff presented the pros and cons of weekly versus bi-weekly meetings. The conclusion that the financial impact is minimal, as is the impact on staff time needed for meeting preparation. Unless the format
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and nature of meetings is changed, work and time, with a few exceptions, will be the same, but spread over fewer meetings.

Commissioner consensus was to leave the Board of Commissioners meeting schedule as is.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the information be accepted and placed on file.

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The Committee considered authorized staffing levels at Sawyer International Airport. Scott Erbish, Sawyer Operations Manager, explained that over the past several years there have been many layoffs and position eliminations at the Sawyer International Airport and Business Center. The majority of the layoffs were related to the reduction of work in the Air Force Caretaker Program. However, some was due to cost reduction efforts and managements best prediction of being able to meet workload. As the County is continuing to adjust to the elimination of the Caretaker Program and before County Management and Support Staff is consolidated into one location, it has become apparent that a part-time support staff person is needed.

Mr. Erbish is requesting that he be authorized to hire one part-time (15 to 19 hours per week) Airport Secretary. This position would be assigned to the Airport Manager's Office to take on the parking lot fee collection and to assist with customer issues. This position will be scheduled in the afternoon so that the Marketing Assistant can be assigned to the Development Department. Because the position would not provide any benefits, the impact to the Airport budget would be $9,000 to $12,000. No budget adjustment will be needed since the Sawyer Financial Manager position has been budgeted as a full-time position even though half of their time will be spent and reimbursed from the Road Commission.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that Board approval is needed because the 2005 budget does not authorize a temporary position. By County Policy, authorized staffing levels must be approved by the Board of Commissioners. The County Administrator and Department Directors do not have the authority to increase staffing levels, including temporary, part-time, or seasonal employees.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board authorize the addition of a temporary part-time secretary for 2005.

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

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Corkin announced that next week's County Board meeting will be held on February 16, 2005 due to the MAC Conference, also a reminder that all County Board and Committee of the Whole meetings will be scheduled at 6:30 P.M.
Administrator Powers responded to Dale Mercure’s comments at the last meeting with regard to Larry Gould, Facilities Manager. He explained that the disposal of the freezer followed the Surplus County Personal Property Policy. He explained that if Commissioners believe an investigation is needed of Mr. Mercure’s general statements to contact the Sheriff’s Department or the Prosecutor.

Administrator Powers announced that a meeting was held yesterday regarding Telkite and progress is being made.

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie M. Branan
Marquette County Clerk
ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Goals and Accomplishments.
9. NRCS Project Agreement.
11. DEQ Agreement at Sawyer.
12. Commissioners Meeting Schedule.
13. Authorized Staffing Levels at Sawyer International Airport.
14.
15.
16.
17. PUBLIC COMMENT.
18. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
19. ADJOURNMENT.