

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, January 25, 2005, at 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, 234 W. Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.

Chairperson Corkin called the meeting to order. Present Comm. Arsenault, Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Joseph, Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace and Chairperson Corkin. Absent: None.

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 11, 2005 be approved.

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

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

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 14, 2005 through January 20, 2005 in the amount of \$539,312.81 and bi-weekly payroll for the period ending January 15, 2005 in the amount of \$564,947.20 be approved.

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The Committee considered Star Industries concerns regarding medical waste disposal. Jon Wennerberg, Dukes Road, Skandia, and owner of Star Industries, was present to address his concerns regarding the Marquette County Landfill. He explained the process Star Industries used for the collection of medical waste in the past and the new process with the steam autoclave system. He is concerned with the rates the Marquette County Landfill is charging to Star Industries. Mr. Wennerberg stated that Star has explored the concept of having the waste interred at other landfills, both in Michigan and out-of-state. He further explained that the Marquette County Solid Waste Plan does not allow garbage generated in Marquette County to be exported out of county, although the garbage may be exported out of state. He explained that Star has found interest from other landfills in Michigan, however these landfills, and the haulers, request permission from the Marquette County Board of Commissioners to do so.

Mr. Wennerberg introduced John Burcham, Attorney for Star Industries. Mr. Burcham explained his involvement with Star Industries. He pointed out a Public Health Code specifically addressing the hauling of medical waste of the the county and cited the section of Michigan Compiled Laws. He explained that haulers do not want to get involved in the issue between Star Industries and the Marquette County Landfill.

Rick Aho, Solid Waste Authority Director, gave a slide presentation to describe what kind of medical waste they are addressing. He explained he is not familiar with the Public Health Code addressed by Mr. Burcham. He explained what the DEQ requires and why the process used at the Landfill is in place. He further explained that the Marquette County Landfill has not had fee increases in 12 years. Part of the rates charged are to assure the safety of employees.

A lengthy discussion followed. Commissioners discussed and questioned the procedures presented by Mr. Wennerberg and Mr. Aho. They explained that the County Board appoints three members to the

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Solid Waste Management Authority. The remaining members are made up of representatives from the 3 cities and 19 townships in Marquette County. The County Board does not have the authority to give the Solid Waste Management Authority direction.

Comm. Pellow explained that the Solid Waste Management Authority is aware of the laws and suggested Mr. Wennerberg meet to discuss the issue with the Authority, or pursue it through the judicial system.

Comm. Corkin announced that he is confident with the work of Mr. Aho and his employees at the Landfill. Medical waste disposal is a tough issue. He explained that if the public health code addresses hauling medical waste out of the County the problem may be solved.

Earle Yelle, Supervisor of Sands Township and Chair of the Marquette County Solid Waste Authority, was present and explained that Star Industries has not appeared before the Solid Waste Management Authority to discuss this issue. The Solid Waste Management Authority has spent more time on how to deal with medical waste disposal than any other material. He stated that Star Industries needs to go through the proper channels to work together to solve the problem.

Jorma Lankinen, Contractor, and City of Marquette Representative on the Solid Waste Management Authority, was present and also stated that Star Industries and the Solid Waste Authority need to work together. He explained that the decision is with the Solid Waste Management Authority.

Jim Warren, West Branch/Skandia Sanitation, was present to address concerns regarding the dumping of Type II trash at the landfill.

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

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The Committee considered a request for a letter of support from Sandy Spoelstra, Board Member of the Noquemanon Trail Network. Ms. Spoelstra was present and explained that a grant application has been submitted to the USDA on behalf of the Lake Superior Community Partnership for a Rural Community Development Initiative – Noquemanon Trail Network Plan. She explained that the Noquemanon Trail Network is a non-profit organization. Citizens donate dollars to the organization to groom trails which is an important function in Marquette County. The LSCP is requesting the grant award in the amount of \$150,000 over three years to assist the Noquemanon Trail Network (a new non-profit organization) to develop its operational functions.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board endorse the Lake Superior Community Partnership’s Proposal for the Rural Community Development Initiative – Noquemanon Trail Network Plan.

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The Committee considered the Revised Purchasing Policy. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that he has revised the Purchasing Policy in two areas.

Sec. II – Purpose – Now reads *intent of policy is to, and equipment at the lowest possible cost commensurate with quality needed, to exercise positive financial control over purchases, to clearly define*

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authority for the purchasing function, and to assure the quality of purchases. Amending this section makes it absolutely clear that the County’s purchasing procedures and policies are open and transparent.

Sec. V(D) – Formal Bid Procedures for Purchases. – revised to read: *Rejection of Bids or No Bids Received. In his or her discretion, the County Administrator may reject any and all bids presented and readvertise for bids. If no bids are received, the Board of Commissioner may award the project or contract through negotiations with a vendor or vendors.* The words “or may negotiate with bidders” was removed from the first sentence.

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, to approve the Revised Purchasing Policy.

Comm. Pellow stated that she is not comfortable with the words “in his or her discretion.” She feels the County Administrator needs protection and the word “discretion” is too open.

Administrator Powers explained that the intent of the clause is to satisfy every possible scenario or circumstance where there may be a need to reject a bid or all bids.

Comm. Arsenault explained it is a team effort between the Administrator and Department Heads when decisions are made whether a bid qualifies or does not qualify. Giving the Administrator latitude is necessary.

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 remove the words “*in his or her discretion*” from Sec. V(D).

It was moved by Comm. Joseph, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Revised Purchasing Policy.

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The Committee discussed the Building Codes Department. Steve Powers, County Administrator, updated Commissioners on the status of the Building Codes Department. He explained that the inspection turn around time for the period 12/27/04 to 1/19/05 was 2 days and 4 hours. The turn around time is being tracked by discipline and weekly increments. All disciplines were within the 72-hour goal for the first reporting period. The only inspections that exceeded the 72-hour goal were at the request of the customer. Mr. Powers explained the 2005 Work Plan from the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and other sources.

Commissioners and Staff discussed Sec. C of the Work Plan to create a Building Codes Task Force. Mr. Powers stated that the first Task Force Committee raised awareness of issues. The Task Force which is now being created will help Marquette County with continuous improvement through on going discussion and exploration of new innovative and cost effective ways of providing service. It was suggested that the Task Force consist of two County Commissioners, a Building Official, a Lead Plumbing Inspector, a Lead Electrical Inspector, an Electrical Contractor, a Plumbing/Mechanical Contractor, a Residential Builder, a Commercial Builder, and an undesignated member.

Comm. Bergdahl suggested that a Building Official, a Lead Plumbing Inspector, and a Lead Electrical Inspector be present at Task Force Committee meetings but not be part of the Task Force Committee.

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Commissioners also discussed recruitment of seasonal employees, communication between contractors and staff, and future reports and evaluation.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board create a Building Codes Task Force consisting of two County Commissioners, an Electrical Contractor, a Plumbing/Mechanical Contractor, a Residential Builder, a Commercial Builder and an undesignated member.

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

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

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Comm. Arsenault explained he hopes Mr. Wennerberg and the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority can resolve this issue. He urged everyone to be cognizant of the fact that small businesses are the backbone of our economy.

The Committee discussed the resignation of Mike Gokey, Economic Development Corporation Director. Comm. Bergdahl explained that Mr. Gokey has resigned effective February 7, 2005. He explained that Mr. Gokey has been an excellent Director. He announced that anyone interested in this position send an application and resume to the Lake Superior Community Partnership.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a Certificate of Appreciation to Mike Gokey for his excellent service as Director of the Economic Development Corporation.

Chairperson Corkin announced a CUPPAD meeting Friday morning in Iron Mountain.

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie M. Branam  
Marquette County Clerk