

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, August 23, 2006, at 6:30 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. Bergdahl, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Joseph, Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace and Chairperson Corkin. Absent and excused: Comm. Arsenault.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on August 9, 2006 be approved.

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

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Agenda be approved with addition of Item 10) Resolution of the Marquette County Commission on Aging, and Item 11) Michigan State Police Presence at KI Sawyer.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice that Claims and Accounts for the period August 12, 2006 through August 18, 2006, in the amount of \$57,487.15, and bi-weekly payroll for the period ending August 12, 2006 in the amount of \$296,591.25 be approved.

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The Committee was given an update on the Road Commission by Lynn Swadley, Chairperson, Marquette County Road Commission Task Force. Mr. Swadley explained that over the last year the Task Force has been working very hard. Progress has been made in several areas and many Task Force suggestions have been implemented. The Task Force has been meeting once per month with an ongoing dialogue.

The 72 hour inspection turnaround has been met by the Building Codes Department. The hiring of the two part-time inspectors has helped tremendously during the critical times.

Mr. Swadley stated that the Task Force has been working on ways to educate the public on how to help the Department provide better service. The Contractors are encouraged to call between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to talk directly to inspectors, to modify their inspection, save time when not ready or to better pinpoint actual inspection times to help everyone be more efficient. Homeowners have to currently take a half day off to be at home or at their job site to meet an inspector and having the capabilities of being able to call in once the inspectors have their schedule for travel is very helpful. Calling and pinpointing an actual inspection time is important especially on time sensitive projects and especially where safety is concerned.

One of the main projects the Task Force has been working on is expediting the Department's finding, purchasing, and implementing the Comprehensive Management Software. The software has been purchased, Information Systems has been loading fourteen years of data into the database. Building Codes and the Task Force are essentially waiting for the building season to slow down so inspectors can have some focused training on the software. The training is scheduled for November and December. The goal is to have the software operational at the beginning of 2007. The software will allow on-line ability for Contractors and

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Homeowners to check the status of their inspection results within a 24 hour period. Field Reports will be entered one time at the job site onto a laptop computer and downloaded to the main system at night.

Mr. Swadley thanked the Board for their support and encouragement.

Comm. Pellow suggested the Task Force use the County Website to give the public general information and stated that many of the Townships produce a newsletter which would be another avenue to get information out to the public.

Comm. Wallace thanked Mr. Swadley for his service to the County. He inquired as to the need for appointment of the Task Force and questioned whether Mr. Swadley believes the Task Force should be continued. Mr. Swadley stated much has been accomplished but believes it should be considered annually as to where the Task Force is in achieving their goals.

Chairperson Corkin stated he serves on the Task Force and sees value in the Committee. He feels they are solving problems. The Task Force has been worthwhile and the Building Codes Department is working well with the Task Force and looking at the Task Force year by year makes good sense.

Comm. Pellow suggested a checklist be put together to give to the Homeowner when they go for zoning. Mr. Swadley stated any type of education we can give the public would be appreciated.

Chairperson Corkin thanked Mr. Swadley for his report and outstanding work as Chairperson of the Building Codes Task Force.

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The Committee considered a request from Humboldt Township regarding the former US Navy ELF Facility located on 6.69 acres of land in Humboldt Township. Jim Kippola, Manager of Planning, was present to answer questions. Mr. Kippola stated for the last year and a half there has been an Ad Hoc Committee monitoring plans for the ELF Facility. There are still some State issues involved that need further clarification. The State has gone on record opposing the Navy's position in terms of its entire ownership of the site.

The Humboldt Township Board voted unanimously on August 14, 2006 to pursue the acquisition of the ELF facility. It is Humboldt Township's hope that the facility would be deeded to Humboldt Township without restriction, and for the Township to use as best benefits the local community.

The Navy has completed its Environmental Assessment which indicates the Navy wishes to secure and leave intact buildings and other appurtenant features including three megawatts of generating capacity at the site for ultimate disposal by the Navy.

Humboldt Township believes the facilities left by the Navy presents an opportunity to serve the local community by:

- Providing a significant fire protection facility in a high risk fire hazard area of Marquette County.
- Providing backup capacity for the electrical supply in the local community.
- Provide for new economic development potential in western Marquette County whereas as many as 35 jobs have been lost as a result of closure of the facility.

Humboldt Township believes the alternative to tear down, remove and restore the site to natural conditions is a less desirable alternative in that it would be extremely expensive for the Federal taxpayer, and

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would thwart the positive impacts of retention. The Navy would be responsible for all environmental contamination it may have caused at the site and the cleanup.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Struck, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board draft a resolution of support supporting Humboldt Township in its acquisition of the U.S. Navy ELF Facility.

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The Committee considered the County Road Meeting. Comm. Struck stated next month there will be an opportunity to impact Marquette County Roads. The Michigan Transportation Committee will be holding a meeting in Marquette on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Comm. Struck suggests that the County take a leadership role in convening a meeting to gather information prior to September 22<sup>nd</sup> so that when the Michigan Transportation Committee is here the County can give a presentation on the Marquette County Roads and issues. There will be other counties coming before the Committee asking for money and the County has the opportunity to present a fair and unified case on Marquette County Roads. The State Commission is in the process of developing their State Long-Range Transportation Plan which will be in effect for the next 25 years. This is a chance for the County to impact and speak up.

Chairperson Corkin stated this should be ongoing between the Road Commission, the Townships, and the Cities as far as compiling priorities and information.

Comm. Pellow explained that there is a Road Commission Township Relationship Committee that does what Comm. Struck is suggesting. She believes the proper avenue would be to go to that Committee and ask them to incorporate the Planning Department and the City people instead of having a new Committee. It would be faster to use a Committee that is already in existence.

Comm. Bergdahl explained the Road Commission is appointed to do the job and does not believe we should step and micromanage what the Road Commission is trying to do. They are liable for the whole County. We can give them suggestions but doesn't believe the Board should form another Committee which we do not need.

Comm. Wallace agreed with Comm. Bergdahl on all points. He believes the first step would be to contact the Michigan Transportation Commission for the Agenda and to find out if there is a place on the agenda to meet with individual counties.

Chairperson Corkin has no problem with the initiative of getting information to the Transportation Committee but would like to go with Comm. Pellow's suggestion and work with the Road Commission Township Relationship Committee that is already in place and accomplish the same goal.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Wallace to request Staff to contact Andy Sikima to get the Michigan Transportation Committee format for their agenda and contact the Road Commission so that Comm. Struck can attend the next Township Relationship Road Commission Committee Meeting. On a roll call vote 4 Ayes (Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace, and Comm. Corkin) to 4 Nays (Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, and Comm. Joseph) the Motion was defeated.

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The Committee considered Sugarloaf Change Order #1. James Kippola, Manager of Planning, was present and explained he is proposing three new components for the Sugarloaf Mountain Project Authorized by the Board on August 1, 2006.

1. Change order Number 1 was prepared by ECI to accomplish the following:

- Adjust the bid schedule to conform to the detailed description of the work in the specifications for railing, ballustration, and treat modifications. Net change is \$10,674.18. Additional cost is within budgeted funds for the project.
  
  - A proposal to fund modifications commensurate with those being conducted on the main trail stairways for the South Spur Trail stairway. Net change is \$2,523.55. This would bring all staircases up to the same standard except for the Little Presque Isle Trail stairway connector located in a very remote location on the North face of the Mountain. This work would be within the original project budget, and is not likely that a better price for the work could be obtained.
2. Request the Contractor’s time for completion to be extended until October 6, 2006. This is necessary to properly accomplish the work described in item number one.
3. While confirmation has not been received from the State Grants Management Section, we have been discussing the merits of a change order to stain the entire stair system upon completion of construction. Staff and State officials are in agreement that with the significant investment made over the years, that it is prudent to re-stain the facilities to increase material longevity. The aesthetic aspect speaks for itself. Until a cost estimate is obtain, it can’t be determined if such work is within original project budget parameters.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and carried by voice vote 7 Ayes to 1 Nay (Comm. Joseph) that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve Change Order #1 for Stairway Modifications at Sugarloaf Mountain in the amount of \$2,523.55.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Struck and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board instruct Staff to request the Contractor develop a cost estimate on the Sugarloaf Stairway Staining.

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The Committee considered a Resolution transferring all authority as granted to the Commission on Aging by the Marquette County Board of Commissioners to the Board of Commissioners effective September 1, 2006, and accepted by the Marquette County Board of Commissioners.

Chairperson Corkin thanked the Commission on Aging Board for all their work and their willingness to cooperate. Chairperson wanted to citizens to understand that the services to seniors are not going to change.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained this Resolution is transferring the decision making of a 21 member Commission to the County Board of Commissioners. This transfer will free up money for services and not be spent on structure.

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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 implement the process of transferring authority of the Commission on Aging to the County Board of Commissioners.

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The Committee considered Michigan State Police presence at Sawyer. Comm. Heikkila stated that the State Police have helped the community a lot. The State Police have indicated they are going to be ending their presence at Sawyer. Comm. Heikkila would request that a letter be sent to the State Police asking them to continue their presence at Sawyer.

It was moved by Comm. Heikkila, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to the Michigan State Police asking they continue their presence at Sawyer.

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Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Mary Zimmerman, Humboldt Township, addressed the Committee regarding the ELF Property. Ms. Zimmerman stated she owns a camp next to the ELF Property and was concerned about the use of the property. Comm. Pellow stated there were going to be no restrictions on the property and suggested Ms. Zimmerman contact Humboldt Township directly.

Waino Liuha, 416 Croix Street, Negaunee, stated he was having difficulty in hearing the Commissioners during the meeting. Chairperson Corkin stated a new sound system was in the works for the Commission Chambers.

Mr. Liuha was concerned with the fact that Jackie Boxer, Commission on Aging Director, and the RSVP Representative were not at the meeting when the Commission on Aging matter was on the agenda.

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

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairperson Corkin attended the MAC Annual Meeting on Monday and Tuesday. The meeting was very educational. There are some concerns for State and Local Government especially with regard to SOS. Comm. Corkin made a motion at that meeting to send a letter to both candidates for Governor to get in writing their position as to the reinstatement of Revenue Sharing for County government.

Comm. Struck stated he was very disappointed last week to read in the Mining Journal that the Marquette County League of Women Voters is suspending its operation. It is a terrible loss for the County and a bad indication of apathy for people not wanting to get involved in the democratic process. The League of Women Voters has been an advocate of voter's rights for over 40 years. He would like to challenge the citizens of Marquette County to pick up the torch for the League of Women Voters.

Comm. Joseph attended the Pandemic Conference at Northern. It was well attended. There were approximately 80 people there. The result of the conference was that no matter what we plan we are never going

to be ready and that every person should be ready to take care of themselves for the first two or three days for any type of event like this. He felt it was a good forum and well attended.

Comm. Joseph apologized to the Board because he serves on the Advisory Board for the Road Commission and he was not aware that the Road Commission was not going to replace the Mike Morrisette as Director of the County Road Commission.

Comm. Wallace stated he understands there is viral gastroenteritis in the County and if that is an indication of how fast a viral infection can be passed in a community, with the students coming back to Northern, he would anticipate a couple of days of problems with students attending classes. The advice to the public is to make sure you wash your hands for the next two weeks while this virus works its way through the community and works its way back out. This is an example of how a disease can pass so quickly. Pandemic Flu will spread just as fast.

Comm. Wallace attended the Michigan Association of Counties Conference. It was well attended by a lot of Commissioners. Revenue Sharing was discussed. They discussed monies that Counties lose with the implementation of TIF Districts and DDA's. It was suggested that each County keep track of the TIF Districts in their County and when their anticipated completion dates are and getting them back on the tax rolls. He questioned whether there was a library of those districts in the County. Chairperson Corkin stated the County Equalization Department has a listing.

Comm. Heikkila stated he served on the Commission on Aging Board and he believes all the members on that Board have been truly dedicated and have helped to establish a great network that has helped many seniors. Marquette County owes a great deal of gratitude to the past and present members of the Commission on Aging Board.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, announced the Budget Work Sessions at 1:00 on Monday and Tuesday.

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice R. Mason  
Deputy County Clerk