

Minutes are Subject to Correction and Approval

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, January 24, 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. Arsenault, Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace and Chairperson Corkin. Absent and excused: Comm. Joseph.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on January 10, 2006 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Gene Champagne, Big Bay, requested to speak to Item 8) Comments from Concerned Citizen Groups.

The following citizens addressed the Committee of the Whole regarding various Sulfide Mining issues: Cynthia Pryor, Big Bay, Champion Township, Elizabeth Boe, Big Bay, Laurie Tallio, Big Bay, Michelle Hawley, Attorney for the National Wildlife Foundation, Gabriel Caplet, Skandia, Wendy Johnson, Big Bay, Kelly Mathews, Ishpeming Township, Barb Bradley, Skandia, and Jeff Newpine, Negaunee Township.

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

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Agenda be approved with the following additions: Item 8) Comments from Various Concerned Citizens Groups; Item 9) Announcement of New MTA President; Item 10) Land Acquisition by Forestry Commission; and Item 11) Proposal to Hire Third-Party to Review Commission on Aging Issues.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period January 13, 2006 through January 20, 2006 in the amount of \$671,901.39, and bi-weekly payroll for the period ending January 20, 2006 in the amount of \$380,494.39 be approved.

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The Committee considered a Resolution Adopting and Approving Execution of an Agreement for the Purpose of Participating in a Cost-Share Agreement of the Federal Contract Tower Program at Sawyer International Airport. Keith Kaspari, Airport Manager, was present to explain the FAA Contract Tower Agreement Resolution and answer questions. He explained that as a result of a recalculation of Sawyer's Benefit Cost (B/C) Ratio during the late summer of 2004, the FAA notified Marquette County that Sawyer's B/C ratio and resultant decrease in overall air traffic operations had resulted in the loss of 100% FAA funding participation for the operation of Sawyer's Federal Contract Air Traffic Control Tower. Sawyer's B/C recalculation computed to 74%. However, the FAA in September 2004 allowed Marquette County to remain in the program under the Cost-Share Program assigning Sawyer a 90% B/C as an enticement to keep the tower in service and for staff to work towards the goal of elevating the 74% B/C ratio. By entering into the first year of the program, this resulted in the FAA funding it at 90%, with the remaining 10% balance

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required of Marquette County. The first-year agreement provided service from January 31, 2005 to January 31, 2006. The summer of 2005 resulted in overall excellent weather conditions to provide an environment for increased air traffic operations. Due to the increased numbers, Sawyer’s B/C ratio actually increased from 74% to 96% resulting in a decreased monthly cost to the County. Under the new and revised FAA Cost-Share Agreement, the annual cost to operate Sawyer’s tower is now estimated at approximately \$356,700, with the FAA funding 96%, and Marquette County providing the remaining 4%. Staff is still waiting the arrival of an Operating Agreement with Mid-West Air Traffic Control Services, Inc., the FAA’s contract provider of ATC Services at Sawyer.

It was moved by Comm. Struck, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Resolution Adopting and Approving Execution of an Agreement for the Purpose of Participating in a Cost-Share Agreement of the Federal Contract Tower Program at Sawyer International Airport.

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The Committee considered a Purchase Offer for Parcel B3-1 at Sawyer. Scott Erbish, Sawyer Operations Manager, presented a purchase offer submitted by the Economic Development Corporation to purchase Parcel B3-1 for \$180,000. Mr. Erbish explained that Parcel B3-1 has 2.3 acres and three buildings. The largest of the three buildings has 12,941 sq. ft. The last business to occupy this site was the Zak Company. This parcel is in the EDC area and the Renaissance Zone. It is still owned by the County of Marquette. It was retained by the County for the purpose of storage or future lease/sale. It is not part of the Marketing Agreement. The building currently has a small amount of County owned equipment stored in it. Even though the parcel has not been actively marketed, it has drawn attention. County Staff has determined there will not be a need to use it for long term storage.

Mr. Erbish further explained the offer from the EDC is contingent upon the proposed business meeting zoning requirements and the proposed borrower obtaining financing through the Revolving Loan Fund administered by the EDC. According to an EDC representative, financing approval and closing could occur within 30 to 60 days. The property is zoned Industrial 2. Unless part of the negotiations, the site review is the responsibility of the purchaser. Most recently, USA Hunting was required to have a site review for their business at Sawyer. USA Hunting paid those expenses.

Comm. Bergdahl and Comm. Heikkila are members of the EDC Committee therefore they will abstain from voting.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and carried by voice vote 6 Ayes (Comm. Arsenault, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace and Comm. Corkin) to 2 Abstentions (Comm. Bergdahl and Comm. Heikkila) that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board accept the EDC’s Purchase Offer of \$180,000 as presented for Parcel B3-1 and authorize Staff to complete the sale closing; with closing by April 1, 2006 and they pay the site review expense.

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The Committee considered comments and concerns from various citizen groups regarding Sulfide Mining issues. Representatives from Concerned Citizens of Big Bay and Save the Wild U.P. addressed Commissioners. They stressed the importance that the public have direct and equal input and authority on an oversight board. They feel their knowledge and expertise is very important. They felt the public is denied access for public input. They questioned meetings that have been held so far with County, Township and DEQ Representatives. They also discussed the siting requirements and a flora and fauna study.

Comm. Pellow clarified that the group that has met to discuss issues should this mine proceed has nothing to do with the concept of an Oversight Committee. She stated that no Oversight Committee has been established, nor has the makeup of such a committee been decided. The County does not know if they can legally establish such a Committee. She stated there are a lot of misconceptions.

Administrator Powers reinforced Comm. Pellow's comments. He suggested that before the County has anymore discussion regarding a Reclamation/Oversight Board, that the County wait for a Permit Application from Kennecott. He explained the County needs specific information to consider to help put specifics into a Mining Advancement and Reclamation Board. He stated that the Resolution passed was a resolution of intent and concerns.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Cihak, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to our Legislators requesting they introduce legislation which would allow the County to establish an Oversight Committee. Lengthy discussion followed. Comm. Arsenault stated that input is needed from the Townships affected.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Heikkila and carried by voice vote 5 Ayes (Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace, and Comm. Corkin) to 3 Nays (Comm. Arseanult, Comm. Cihak, and Comm. Pellow) to table this issue.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Cihak, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board send a letter to our Legislators, Governor Granholm, the DEQ, and the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules requesting they reconsider the rules specifically addressing the siting requirement that would allow the DEQ to deny mining as well as reconsideration of the 2-year flora and fauna study.

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The Committee discussed the Michigan Townships Association new President. Comm. Pellow announced that Arlene Hill, Clerk of Chocolay Township, will be installed as the Michigan Townships Association President at their Annual Meeting on Friday, January 27, 2006 in Grand Rapids.

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 send a letter congratulating Arlene Hill as Michigan Townships Association President and encourage her to have open discussions between Associations.

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The Committee considered Land Acquisition by the Forestry Commission. Al Feldhauser, Senior Planner, was present to explain the land acquisition and answer questions. He stated that 40 acres of land has come up for sale in the County Forest. The Forest Management Plan adopted in 2004 has a land ownership goal with a specific objective to "acquire private parcels within the forest boundary and adjacent to the boundary as they become available from a willing seller on a case-by-case basis." The parcel under consideration is inside the boundary and prompted Staff to inform the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission indicated an interest in the property and directed Staff to gather more information. The "asking price" for the property was \$49,900. At this point, Mr. Feldhauser has received authorization to secure an appraisal of the property. The value derived was \$45,000.

The Forestry Commission voted unanimously to recommend acquisition. The purchase was not anticipated in the 2006 budget process as there is no predicting when land might become available and at what cost. Upon checking with Sue Vercoe, Finance Manager, there is a sufficient fund balance in the

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Forest/Recreation Fund for the acquisition. The Planning Commission has reviewed the proposal as required and supports the acquisition. The process to date satisfies the Land Acquisition Policy (427). The next step is to receive final approval.

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 approve the Land Acquisition Proposal by the Forestry Commission for the purchase price of \$44,900.

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The Committee considered a Proposal for a Third-Party Review of the Marquette County Commission on Aging from Rochelle Cotey, Director, Alger County Commission on Aging. Steve Powers, County Administrator, briefed Commissioners on the process so far, and recommends approval.

Comm. Heikkila stated that he has met with the four Senior Centers, AMCAB, and the Commission on Aging and they have all agreed on the Third-Party Proposal.

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 approve the Proposal to Hire Rochelle Cotey as the Third-Party to review Commission on Aging issues.

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Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Cynthia Pryor, Big Bay, requested clarification of the intent of a meeting scheduled in Michigamme Township at 2:00 P.M. on February 8, 2006 regarding Sulfide Mining.

Doug Cornett, Marquette, addressed Commissioners regarding meetings scheduled to discuss Sulfide Mining.

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

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie M. Branam
Marquette County Clerk