

Minutes are Subject to Correction and Approval

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 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. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace and Chairperson Corkin. Absent and Excused: Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Joseph, and Comm. Fellow.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and unanimously carried by a voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on March 24, 2009 be approved.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Agenda be approved with the following addition: Item 11) A Resolution to Support the Proposed Relocation of the Michigan State Police Upper Peninsula Crime Lab to the former ELF Site Located in Humboldt Township, Marquette County.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Paul Hannuksela, asked to speak to Item 8) Blueberry Ridge User Fee. There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the Period April 3, 2009 through April 9, 2009 in the amount of \$6,858,303.51, and Bi-Weekly Payroll for the Period ending April 4, 2009 in the amount of \$660,196.07 be approved.

The Committee considered a Resolution regarding Michigan's Public Health Funding Crisis. Fred Benzie, Marquette County Health Officer, was present and explained that the Michigan Legislature is beginning another round of difficult decision making as they attempt to craft a new state budget for the upcoming 09-10 Fiscal Year. He stated that once again, with the continued downturn in the Michigan economy and increasing demands for services that are a critical part of our social safety net, legislators will be faced with painful choices.

Local public health departments had the opportunity to testify before a Michigan House of Representatives subcommittee about the dire state of Michigan's local public health system.

Mr. Benzie stated that their message was clear: the burden of providing even the most basic of services in this economic climate with so many more of our citizens in need is becoming impossible for local health departments to meet. Revenue reductions to local public health departments will spell the death for many departments that are barely keeping their heads above water now.

Mr. Benzie explained that further budget cuts would force local health departments like Marquette County to make difficult choices. In these difficult economic times, services to our most vulnerable residence are in demand as never before. Local public health department's ability to provide these services is in jeopardy. He requested the County Board contact our State Legislators and let them know that local public health services are important and urge them not to cut funds for local public health departments.

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Mr. Benzie presented a Resolution which was adopted by the Board of Health, and all Michigan County Health Departments. He requested the County Board and all Michigan County Boards take action to also support the Resolution.

Discussion followed.

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 adopt the Resolution Declaring Michigan's Public Health Funding Crisis and a copy of the Resolution be sent to our Legislators.

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The Committee discussed a communication from Nicole Dewald, Race Co-Director of the Superiorland Cross Country Ski Club, and Race Director of the Big Bay Relay, informed the Board of plans for the annual run from Marquette to Big Bay. The race will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 16, 2009 from Hawley Street in Marquette. It will end in Perkins Park in Big Bay at approximately 12:30 p.m. The schedule allows runners and their support vehicles to travel the narrow portions of County Road 550 early in the day. By 10:30 a.m., all teams are expected to be at the halfway mark, entering the wider portion of the road. Guidelines will be issued to each team. Failure of any team to comply with those guidelines will result in that team's disqualification. Several agencies have been contacted in an effort to make the race safe for all involved. These include the Michigan State Police, the EMS Unit from Marquette General Hospital, the Marquette County Sheriff's Department, the County Search and Rescue Unit, the Powell Township Supervisor, and Powell Township EMS.

Ms. Dewald is not requesting any portion of County Road 550 be closed on the day of the race. It is the goal to provide a safe, enjoyable race for the runners without interfering with normal traffic flow. Information has been sent to local news agencies for broadcast to remind all traffic on May 19th to be aware of the race and the need for extra caution. Ms. Dewald encourages runners and their families to support businesses in Big Bay on that day. She expressed her appreciation for the time and consideration given to this event.

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

The Committee considered a Blueberry Ridge User Fee. Paul Hannuksela, Marge Forslin and Lorana Jinkerson, the Friends of Blueberry Ridge Executive Committee, explained that the Friends of Blueberry Ridge is a group committed to keeping the Blueberry Ridge Ski Pathway open with quality grooming for cross-country skiing. They have been lobbying with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Commission, and several Upper Peninsula State Legislators for a mandatory, annual, statewide State Forest cross-country ski trail user fee.

Mr. Hannuksela explained that the user fee would be handled much like hunting and fishing licenses, and would provide an earmarked stable funding source for the maintenance, grooming and improvement of State Forest ski trails. Presently, funds for grooming State Forest ski trails come from a Federal Recreation Grant, administered by the State. These funds cover snow grooming and parking lot plowing, but there are no Federal or State funds available for trail maintenance or facility improvement. Given the current economy, the Friends of Blueberry Ridge feel that this is not adequate or reliable funding.

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Mr. Hannuksela further explained that legislation is required to enact a statewide ski trail user fee. Representative Steve Lindberg has indicated interest in submitting a Bill to the House of Representatives. It is their hope this will be co-sponsored by all U.P. Legislators.

The economic impact of cross-country skiing is significant, especially in the Marquette area. A study done at Blueberry Ridge Pathway by a Northern Michigan University professor, in conjunction with a car counting survey by the DNR, found that for the ski seasons of Fall 1993 to Spring 1999 there were an average of 22,500 skier visits per year. Unfortunately, most skiers did not provide a requested voluntary donation which resulted in only an average \$5,569.00 being collected annually in the pay pipes. The Friends of Blueberry Ridge believe that a mandatory annual user fee will be supported by skiers as long as the funds are earmarked for ski trail maintenance, grooming, and improvements.

Mr. Hannuksela requested a Statement of Support and a Resolution from the County Board to support their efforts.

Discussion followed. Commissioners commended the Friends of Blueberry Ridge. A user fee was discussed. Commissioners felt that a \$4/\$5 daily fee and a \$20 yearly fee would be very affordable.

It was moved by Comm. Cihak, seconded by Comm. Heikkila, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board support the efforts of the Friends of Blueberry Ridge in support of a Cross Country Ski Trail User Fee.

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The Committee considered a Leachate Agreement with the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority. Scott Erbisch, Sawyer Operations Manager, was present and explained that over the past several months, he has been working with Rick Aho, Director of the County Waste Management Authority (MCSWMA), regarding an Agreement for the disposal of leachate at the Sawyer Wastewater Treatment Plant.

He explained that the benefit(s) of having this agreement is that it establishes the parameters for the disposal of the leachate, requirement to provide laboratory analysis, and rules for the cleanup of any spills.

Mr. Erbisch stated that the Marquette County Civil Counsel has reviewed the Agreement, and the suggested changes have been added to the document. He explained the Highlights of the Agreement as follows:

- 3-year agreement beginning June 1, 2009;
- Rates established at \$0.02 for 2009, \$0.022 for 2010, and \$0.024 for 2011;
- The authority to furnish copies of quarterly and annual laboratory analysis of the leachate as required by the MDEQ;
- Controls on cleanup procedures should a spill occur.

Mr. Erbisch recommends approval of the agreement and authorize the County Chairman to sign the agreement. Rick Aho, Director of the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, will be making a recommendation to the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority Board for approval at an upcoming meeting in April.

Discussion followed. Rick Aho, Director of the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority was present to answer questions. Commissioners discussed the consequences of a spill and who would be responsible.

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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 approve the Leachate Agreement with the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority and authorize the County Board Chair to sign the agreement.

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The Committee considered an Energy Analysis Update. Larry Gould, Facilities Manager, was present and explained that a Technical Energy Analysis (TEA) was conducted in 2001. Funding for the TEA was provided through a loan from the Rebuild Michigan Program. The TEA yielded 14 main recommendations or Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs). The estimated annual costs savings, if these ECMs were implemented, was placed at \$56,035, with a cost of \$258,105 for project execution, which would be recouped in roughly 4.6 years.

Of these fourteen recommendations, the County's maintenance staff took action on ten of those projects and eliminated two. In addition to those recommendations, the maintenance staff was able to reduce the overall number of light fixtures and also install new thermostats that provide a better efficiency rating for the HVAC system. It should be noted that many of these projects were conducted in house by County staff, saving the County over 50% of what it would have cost to contract out for the work.

Since the original TEA was conducted, several other projects have been completed that have significantly increased energy savings. Mr. Gould explained the projects and a free energy efficiency benchmarking survey that is being worked on. He also explained another factor which has to be investigated more thoroughly is what kind of stimulus money will be available for "green" projects. Mr. Gould explained that from 2001, and since the onset of "green" energy practices, Marquette County has been ahead of the curve with regard to energy efficiency and, as such, was the subject of the case study for the Rebuild Michigan Program in 2005. He summarized by saying the goal of trying to maintain budget neutrality in energy costs has been significantly challenged by the ever-increasing costs of utilities. This, coupled with the rise in inflation and the increased electrical usage of technological devices, only increases the costs of energy. How do we offset these costs? Marquette County is currently reviewing a need to conduct a new TEA to reveal more energy efficient and innovative ways to combat this issue. Many of the energy measures that were considered in 2009 need reevaluation due to changes in cost and technology.

Commissioners congratulated and commended Mr. Gould and his staff for their accomplishments.

It was moved by Comm. Heikkila, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the communication from Mr. Gould regarding the Energy Analysis Update be accepted and placed on file.

The Committee considered a Resolution from Humboldt Township to Support the Proposed Relocation of the Michigan State Police Upper Peninsula Crime Lab to the Former ELF Site located in Humboldt Township, Marquette County. Joe Derocha, Humboldt Township Supervisor was present and introduced the Humboldt Township Board: Jill Rankinen, Clerk, Barbara J. Mackey, Treasurer, Jacqueline Koski, Trustee, and Marline Worth, Trustee. Mr. Derocha explained that the Board is here for a show of unity. They are asking the County Board to support Humboldt Township in the acquisition of the ELF Site, in conjunction with trying to save the Crime Lab, and relocate it to the former Naval Facility (ELF Site) in Humboldt Township.

Mr. Derocha gave an overview of the plans of Humboldt Township. He also distributed the site assessment from the Michigan State Police, and their Engineering Firm, who is contracted with the State of Michigan, explaining the pros and cons of the ELF site. He explained that Humboldt Township is asking for support for several reasons. They believe it is a wonderful reuse plan of an existing facility currently held in

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GSA's hands. GSA is the government unit looking to dispose of military Navy property. Humboldt Township is in the process of trying to obtain the site through GSA. He also explained that Congressman Stupak has introduced Legislation to accelerate the process.

Discussion followed. Commissioners thanked and commended Mr. Derocha and the Humboldt Township Board for their initiative.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Cihak, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt a Resolution to Support the Proposed Relocation of the Michigan State Police Upper Peninsula Crime Lab to the Former ELF Site Located in Humboldt Township, Marquette County.

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

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comm. Struck reported on a recent meeting at Sawyer regarding community development and projects. He thanked Comm. Heikkila and Scott Erbicsh, Sawyer Operations Manager, for attending. He explained that it was a very good discussion looking at the issues to address and ways to address them.

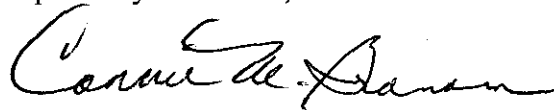
Comm. Cihak reported on a program regarding the "Top 50 Companies to Watch." He explained that Argonics is one of those companies.

Comm. Arsenault explained the "Top 50 Companies to Watch" program and what benefit it has to companies.

Comm. Corkin recognized Comm. Arsenault for being recognized as a Small Business Development Expert in the U.P. and State of Michigan. The recognition was the Lead Story on TV6.

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Connie M. Branam
Marquette County Clerk