

WATONWAN COUNTY BOARD
JULY 20, 2021
9:00 A.M.

The Watonwan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on July 20, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the Courthouse, City of St. James. The following Board members were present: Jim Branstad, Dillon Melheim, Bill Miller, Jim Pettersen and Bob Rinne. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pettersen moved, Branstad seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the minutes of the July 6 regular meeting.

Pettersen moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the Agenda as amended.

Veterans Service Officer Deb Grote was present with four local veterans regarding appropriations for Memorial Day celebrations. M.S. § 375.34 and 375.35 allow the Board to appropriate up to \$3,500 annually, and up to \$300 per post for Memorial Day commemorations. Each of the posts in the County do a program, so they were requesting consideration of an appropriation. The Board was of the consensus that they would discuss it at budget meetings.

Pettersen moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve payment of bills as audited and filed in the County Auditor/Treasurer's Office as follows by fund: General Fund—\$100,179.72; Solid Waste Fund—\$7,951.50; Ditch Fund—\$200.00; and the Road and Bridge Fund—\$77,777.01; and to approve the June Disbursements listing as presented.

County Sheriff Jared Bergeman and Deputy Sheriff Nick Kielas were present to review a proposal to have a drug interdiction canine for the County. Dick Downs would donate \$20,000 for the project. The quote for a dog was \$8,500.00, \$300.00 for an insert for a Tahoe, \$2,500 for first year food and vet and \$5,216 for home crates. Everything would be 100% covered for the first year.

Pettersen moved, Rinne seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve proceeding with the canine program as proposed.

Sheriff Bergeman reported on the need for a part-time Dispatcher because they have lost one part-timer and the other one is not often available.

Branstad moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve hiring a part-time Dispatcher.

The Annual TIF Disclosure Report for the City of St. James was reviewed.

It was noted that Governor Walz designated July 27 at County Staff Appreciation Day.

Branstad moved, Miller seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to adopt the following:

PROCLAMATION OF COUNTY STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, county staff serve as the cornerstone of this community, dedicating their time, skills, and expertise for the benefit of their neighbors; and

WHEREAS, county staff went beyond expectations, taking on personal risks, to continue delivering essential services to the citizens of our county during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in addition to their regular duties, many county staff were called upon and accepted new and challenging responsibilities during the pandemic such as expediting the distribution of thousands of dollars in economic recovery appropriations, empowering the survival of our local business community; successfully managing a deluge of mail-in ballots in an unprecedented federal election; and, retooling local public health education outreach to flatten the curve; and

WHEREAS, although the state has turned the corner on the COVID-19 pandemic, county staff continue their exemplary work, assisting with recovery through vaccination roll outs and preparing for the American Rescue Plan's multi-year recovery effort; and

WHEREAS, the work of county staff over the past year and a half have kept the doors of the county open and our community safer, healthier, and productive throughout months of unprecedented global transition; and

WHEREAS, President Sve and the Board of the Association of Minnesota Counties requested the Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan to proclaim July 27, 2021 as County Staff Appreciation Day and their request was granted.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Watonwan County Board of Commissioners, proclaim July 27, 2021 as County Staff Appreciation Day and extend our thanks to the staff of our county and express deep gratitude for their commitment to excellence in public service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Budget work session were scheduled for August 23 and 24 at 8:30.

Melheim moved, Pettersen seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve annual pay step increases for Jarred Urban, Juan DeLaCruz, Matthew Durheim and Andrea Wellnitz.

Branstad moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the reclassification of Andrea Wellnitz to Property Appraiser II C41 for achieving her Certified Minnesota Appraiser License.

Pettersen moved, Miller seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the appointment of Terri Helland to the position of part-time Branch Library Assistant for the Madelia Branch.

Branstad moved, Rinne seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the appointment of Marisa Wilmes to the position of 911 Dispatcher, pending satisfactory background check.

Branstad moved, Pettersen seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the reclassification of Charles Beckius' position of Shop/Equipment Maintenance Supervisor to the C41(2) level as recommended by Bjorklund Compensation Consulting, LLC.

Branstad moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve ending the employment of Angela Lenz and ratify advertising for the position of Branch Library Assistant for Butterfield.

Public Works Director Teal Spellman was present with Bailey Griffin of ISG, the company that did the design and contract administration of the CSAH 24 Ravine Stabilization project. Final payment was requested for the 5% retainage in the amount of \$4,545.93. Also recommended was a damage payment to some crop land in the amount of \$500 each to two property owners.

Pettersen moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve final payment of \$4545.93 to Noomen Excavating, LLC, plus \$1,000 in damage payments.

Spellman reviewed an Agreement with the MnDOT Rail Office and the Union Pacific Railroad for crossing signals at the intersection with CSAH 14. The County's cost is 10% at \$24,548.40.

Pettersen moved, Rinne seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve Agreement 1030868 with MnDOT Rail Office and Union Pacific Railroad for the CSAH 14 Railroad crossing, and to adopt the following:

LOCAL AGENCY RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, Watonwan County enter into an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad and the Commissioner of Transportation for Installation and maintenance of railroad crossing signals at the intersection of CSAH 14 (710th Ave) with the tracks of Union Pacific Railroad, and appointing the Commissioner of Transportation agent for Watonwan County to supervise said project and administer available Federal Funds in accordance with Minnesota Statute, Section 161.36. Watonwan County's share of the cost shall be 10% of the total signal cost.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board Chair and Auditor/Treasurer be and they are hereby authorized to execute said agreement and any amendments thereto for and on behalf of Watonwan County.

Pettersen moved, Melheim seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve a request from Allison Karau for a leave of absence under the Leave Without Pay Program.

Spellman reported on the CSAH 16 project. A reclaimed bituminous stockpile at the Highway Department was earmarked for the project, but several tons were removed and utilized for maintenance at the fairgrounds, so additional material will be needed. It was recommended that the Highway Department gates should all be locked when employees are not present.

County Auditor/Treasurer Kelly Pauling reported on the Department Head meeting.

Commissioner Melheim reported on the County Fair. The carnival did not pass inspection so there were no rides. The tractor pull, demo derby and bingo stand were successful.

Melheim moved, Pettersen seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to adjourn at 10:40.

Bill Miller, Chairman
Watonwan County Board

Lisa Schumann, Deputy Clerk
Watonwan County Board

ATTEST: Kelly Pauling
Watonwan County Auditor/Treasurer