

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2012

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2012-21 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole November 13, 2012, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. Chair Don Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #3
	Don Gray	District #4
	David Hanson	District #5
Members absent:	Jane Olive	District #1
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy Clerk
	Mark Gamm	Environmental Services Director
	Melissa DeVetter	Zoning Administrator
	Steven Gray	Dodge County Resident

Environmental Services Director Mark Gamm met with the Board to discuss a Renewable Energy Proposal for the Recycling Center.

Renewable Energy
Proposal for
Recycling Center
Discussed

Mr. Gamm shared the following background information on the request:

Costs for solar electric systems have come down significantly over the last several years. In addition, Xcel Energy provides rebates to cover part of the cost to install solar electric generators. As a result, solar electricity for the Recycling Center is now economically beneficial.

Proposed Project:

Install a 25-kilowatt (kW) solar electric array on county property near Recycling Center.

Mr. Gamm discussed with the Board the following attachments which were included in the Board packet:

- Attachment 1: Location options for solar electric system.
- Attachment 2: Illustration of typical pole mounted solar array.
- Attachment 3: Preliminary design and cost estimate.

Cost/Benefit:

The system will likely generate 33,000-kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity per year; enough to supply half of the electricity needed for Recycling Center and Transfer Station. The return on their \$47,500 investment will take about 11 years. The calculated net savings over the 30-year life of the system is \$146,800. The following attachment was reviewed:

- Attachment 4: Return on Investment Calculation.

Renewable Energy
Proposal for
Recycling Center
Discussed -
Continued

Financing:

Environmental Services proposes to borrow \$45,000 from their existing Dodge County Environmental Grants and Loan Fund. The purpose of the fund is to help implement the County's Water Management Plan. The solar project is eligible because it reduces impacts caused by coal-fired electricity generation such as mercury, sulfur, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide emission. The Technical Water Planning Committee voted to approve the loan; paid back at a rate of \$5,000 per year for 10 years. The following attachment was reviewed:

- Attachment 5: Shows balance of the Fund, typical grant use, and loan payback schedule.

Process for final approval and construction:

1. November – December 2012: select preferred contractor to install a 25 kW solar electric array (based on quotes from at least two Solar Electric companies).
2. January 1, 2013: Apply to Xcel Energy for rebate.
3. Summer 2013: If Xcel Rebate is awarded, enter into contract with preferred contractor to install system at Recycling Center.

Commissioner Gray questioned why Environmental Services wasn't recommending adding solar panels at both site 1 and site 2 in order to provide enough energy to run the entire Transfer Station.

Mr. Gamm stated that the reasons they weren't recommending both sites is that they didn't have enough money to do both sites, he didn't feel it was a good idea to produce more energy than they needed for the facility, the first site wasn't a secure location, and with site 1 they would have to bore under the road which would cost more money.

Commissioner Hanson and Steven Gray both commented that they liked the idea of people being able to drive by the Transfer Station and see the county using solar technology.

Steven Gray pointed out that with site 2 they may have dust issues since there are gravel roads in close proximity to the proposed solar panel location.

Mr. Gamm reported that the panels are angled in such a way that there isn't a lot of build-up on the panels and noted that precipitation usually helps keep the panels clean.

It was noted that site 2 is not visible from the road.

The Environmental Services Director informed the Board that his office has been looking at this technology for a while and that he was bringing the request to the Board now because it makes economical sense.

Renewable Energy
Proposal for
Recycling Center
Discussed -
Continued

Commissioner Erickson suggested that Mr. Gamm figure up the cost difference between the two sites and present that information to the Board at a later date.

Mr. Gamm reported that the process for installing solar panels at the Transfer Station would be as follows:

- Go out for quote
- Select contractor
- Contractor submits rebate
- Excel tells the county whether or not their grant request has been approved which usually takes six months
- Sign contract

Commissioner Gray questioned whether or not it would be feasible to consider doubling the solar panel size request at this time rather than installing one as recommended and possibly another later.

County Administrator Jim Elmquist stated that he would have to find out from the Finance Director if the county would have money in the General Fund balance to cover the cost of installing additional solar panels.

The Environmental Services Director suggested having contractors bid the project with the possibility of adding more solar panels in the future.

The general consensus of the Board was that they supported the Environmental Services Director's recommendation to move forward with obtaining proposals to install a solar electricity system at the Recycling Center.

The Environmental Services Director discussed with the Board the Feedlot Officer vacancy and proposed staffing changes in his department.

Environmental
Services Staff
Changes
Discussion

Environmental Technician (Chad Knudson) resigned November 2, 2012. In addition, Septic System Coordinator (Sandra Schaefer) has requested to reduce her hours from 40 hours per week to 36 hours per week.

After discussions with staff, Environmental Services is recommending the following actions:

1. As soon as possible, advertise to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Knudson's departure. Attachment 6, which was included in the Board packet, is a job description for a "Feedlot Officer/WQ Technician". This job description reflects a 20% shift in duties; away from septic inspections in favor of Feedlot Officer duties.
2. Shift Zoning Administrator's (Melissa DeVetter) duties to reflect 10% less time on feedlot duties and more time for septic inspections.

- 3. Shift Assistant Zoning Administrator’s (Mary Greening) duties to reflect 10% less time on feedlots and more time on general septic administration duties (record keeping, permit tracking, etc.).
- 4. Shift duties of their Waste Management Specialist (Rita Cole) to reflect 10% less time on general septic administration duties and more time on waste management and book keeping duties.
- 5. Effective January 1, 2013, reduce Sandra Schaefer’s work hours from 40 hours per week to 36 hours per week.

Environmental Services Staff Changes Discussion - Continued

The above personnel changes will not increase the Environmental Services net operating costs. Therefore, they are not requesting changes to their 2013 Environmental Service Budget.

Melissa DeVetter was available to comment on the proposed staffing changes.

Commissioners questioned whether or not any contracts would be affected by the proposed changes.

The Zoning Administrator stated that the shift won’t affect any contracts with SWCD or Ken Folie.

It was the consensus of the Board that they supported the proposed staffing changes in the Environmental Services Department as recommended.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DON GRAY
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: