

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2012**

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2012-24 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole December 26, 2012, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CST. Chair Don Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CST.

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
	Lisa Hager	Employee Relations Director
	Lisa Kramer	Finance Director/Interim Recorder
	Rodney Peterson	County Resident

County Administrator Jim Elmquist provided the Board with an update on Land Records consolidation.

Land Records  
Consolidation  
Discussion

Mr. Elmquist reported that at a recent meeting, the County Board discussed a consolidation plan involving the Recorder, Assessor, and the tax side of Finance as an opportunity to potentially adjoin departments for efficiency/streamlining purposes. Advancing the initiative further:

- The County appointed Finance Director Lisa Kramer as Interim Recorder upon the previous Recorder's retirement.
- With the County Assessor retiring this month, the county advertised for an Assessor which resulted in two applications.
- The county has explored variations of consolidation which included three options and reviewed a potential organizational chart involving those departments.
- The Administrator explored a consultant services proposal for a study in how services could be streamlined however, found it to be somewhat costly.
- The Administrator reviewed another county's consolidation study which results in outcomes Dodge has previously expressed interest in.

Mr. Elmquist reported that recently, interviews of County Assessor candidates were performed by staff and a second interview conducted by Commissioners Erickson and Tjosaas (the Administrator and Employee Relations Director were also in attendance) involving one candidate. It was the recommendation of the two Commissioners that due to the limited number of candidates for the position, the Administrator should talk to other counties about the possibility of an agreement for the provision of Assessor services whether Interim or longer term. Dodge has reached out to both Steele and Olmsted counties but at this point, have reached no resolution.

The County Administrator noted that he wanted to update the Board as to the current situation:

An option that was laid out previously to the Board was the possibility of a merger of the Assessor and Recorder Departments with hiring one Director. It could be a strong consideration at this point as it would allow the county to re-advertise the Assessor position and integrate it within this Director concept. The position would require certifications of an Assessor while also requesting an understanding and knowledge base of County Recorder duties. Benefits to this are that it would allow for the position to be reclassified and lend for further marketability to potential candidates. This option would still allow for the desired engagement around process alignment/workflow efficiencies in a functional consolidation.

Lastly, with Wendell Engelstad's retirement as County Assessor, the county will need to appoint an Interim. Mr. Elmquist pointed out that under statute, the Auditor/Treasurer can serve in that capacity for a short period but looking for an Interim with a more working knowledge would be advisable. The County Administrator noted that this would not be a County Board decision through statute but rather, the County Auditor/Treasurer (Finance Director) would make the appointment. However, it would be preferred if the Board would give their advice on the issue.

The County Administrator stated that he has talked to two counties and is waiting to hear back from one.

County Assessor credentials were discussed.

Commissioner Gray questioned whether or not it's a good fit to blend the Recorder and Assessor position, and if it's doable.

Finance Director/Interim Recorder Lisa Kramer stated that these two offices would be a natural fit, so blending these two positions is doable.

Commissioner Erickson commented that even with an Interim solution, the county still needs to appoint a Deputy Assessor.

Ms. Kramer suggested that the Board consider an Interim Assessor from another entity and noted that they may need to continue this relationship in the future.

Discussion took place regarding the need to have a "go to" person in the Assessor's Office.

It was the general consensus of the Board that an Interim Assessor from another county was needed.

Land Records  
Consolidation  
Discussion -  
Continued

The Employee Relations Director was asked to post an opening for a combined Assessor/Recorder position.

Commissioner Hanson commented that he likes the combination of an Assessor/Recorder position and was in favor of posting for an Assessor/Recorder job opening.

Commissioner Gray stated that he thinks searching for an Assessor/Recorder is worth the effort and investment.

Incoming Commissioner Rodney Peterson reported that he is ok with the combination if you have someone in the position with the expertise to do the job.

Ms. Kramer informed the Board that she was looking for some direction from the Board on appointing a deputy in the Assessor's Office.

The Board indicated that they trusted the Administration staff's judgment in appointing a Deputy Assessor.

The County Administrator stated that Administration will post an Assessor/Recorder position. Mr. Elmquist cautioned that although we are posting a new position, we still may not get any qualified applicants.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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DON GRAY  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY CLERK

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DATED: