

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2013

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2013-16 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole August 27, 2013, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. Vice Chair David Erickson opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Vice Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	John Allen	District #1
	Rodney Peterson	District #3
	David Erickson	District #4
	Steven Gray	District #5
Members absent:	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy Clerk
	Marilyn Lermon	Fair Board President
	Linda Connelly	Relay for Life Representative
	Kelly Wilkins	4-H Program Coordinator
	Greg Nelson	Dodge County Historical Society Board Member

Commissioner Peterson reported that after seven months of contemplation and interaction with a host of agencies and person, he has come to the conclusion that a number of actions must be taken in order to prepare the Dodge County fairgrounds for success in the long term.

Importance of
Fairgrounds to
Community
Discussed

Included in the Board packet was a memo from Commissioner Peterson listing his observations along with his recommendations.

Commissioner Peterson reported that the fairgrounds provides a plethora of activities to the community other than just having the annual fair. The following is a list of activities, but is not all inclusive: annual fair, Ice Arena, school bus parking, winter storage, Big Iron Classic, Relay for Life, 4-H activities, Historical Society use, horse events, and other one day events.

It was Commissioner Peterson's opinion that it's important to provide a quality, year round fairgrounds that emphasizes agriculture and promotes Dodge County.

Commissioner Gray asked that those present introduce themselves, everyone in attendance took turns introducing themselves.

4-H Program Coordinator Kelly Wilkins shared the following overview of the Dodge County 4-H Program for the summer of 2013.

Importance of
Fairgrounds to
Community
Discussed -
Continued

Enrollment and Youth Served	
Enrolled 4-H Members	312
Enrolled Adult Volunteer	58
Youth Served Through Short Term 4-H Adventures and Activities	950+
Total Youth in Dodge County – Dodge County 4-H Served	1,262

Ms. Wilkins informed the Board that Dodge County 4-H uses the fairgrounds year round as they have meetings and events throughout the year.

The 4-H Program Coordinator believes the Dodge County fairgrounds is a great place to showcase youth's accomplishments that have happened year round.

During the fair they had:	
4-H Youth Participate	222
Livestock Exhibits Shown	792
General Projects and Cloverbuds Shown	683
Adventures in 4-H Projects Shown	23
Total Projects/Exhibits Shown	1,498

Ms. Wilkins reported that many youth earn trips to the Minnesota State Fair because of their participation at the Dodge County Fair. Dodge County has the following number of youth attending the following State Fair events:

Youth Showing Livestock	46
Youth Showing General Exhibits	45
State Shooting Sports	4
State Horse Show	9
State Dog Show	16
General Livestock Judging Team	1 Team of 4 Youth

The 4-H Program Coordinator informed the Board that recent findings from Tufts University's 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development indicate that young people in 4-H:

- Are three times more likely to contribute to their communities than youth not participating in 4-H.
- Are 47% less likely to have risky or problem behaviors.
- Have better grades and are more emotionally engaged with school.
- Are more likely to have features of positive youth development: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring.

Ms. Wilkins stated that 4-H wouldn't function without the use of the facilities at the fairgrounds.

Ms. Connelly shared with the Board a letter from Aleta Abbot that thanked Dodge County and the Fair Board for the use of the fairgrounds during the Relay for Life event. It was noted that this year's Relay for Life was well attended and that there is always a lot of support from the communities. The Relay for Life organizers feel the fairgrounds is the perfect location for this event.

Importance of
Fairgrounds to
Community
Discussed -
Continued

Marilyn Lerman spoke on behalf of the Big Iron Classic since their representative wasn't able to attend the meeting. Ms. Lerman informed the Board that the Big Iron Classic is a big event that supports the City of Kasson and generates revenue for them. It was pointed out that this year will be the 14th year for the Big Iron Classic. Ms. Lerman reported that the Saturday night pull is well attended. It was Ms. Lerman's opinion that this is an event that is good for the community. Also noted was that trucks come from all over the United States for this event.

Greg Nelson, a Board Member for the Dodge County Historical Society informed the Board that the Historical Society has exhibits in the log cabin at the fairgrounds. Mr. Nelson reported that the Historical Society would like to have more ag exhibits at the fairgrounds. Greg Nelson informed the Board that a building is being donated to the Dodge County Historical Society and that they are considering putting the building on either the museum site in Mantorville or on the fairgrounds property in Kasson.

Commissioner Peterson stated that every entity that uses the fairgrounds makes the facility viable and the continued operation of the fairgrounds is beneficial to the community.

Mr. Peterson reminded the Board that in years past the Ag Society was able to operate without much funds from the county because of a viable race track revenue stream. That funding source has dried up and is no longer viable. However, even when that revenue stream was positive there were maintenance actions needed for the fairgrounds not covered by the revenue. Additionally, this race track provided a revenue stream during the fair as one of the nightly events during the fair. However, society has changed and the dirt track stock car fan base has diminished.

Commissioner Peterson stated that the fair is the only promotional event from the county to the citizens of the county. Commissioner Peterson recommended that the Board fully recognize the need to fund the fair/fairgrounds at a level which will provide a quality event commensurate with a celebration warranted for the citizens of Dodge County.

It was noted that the fairgrounds has had minor improvements over the years. However, yearly and regular maintenance and upkeep is necessary.

It was Commissioner Peterson's opinion that the county needs to support the Fair Board.

The Board thanked those present for their input.

Ms. Lerman reiterated the importance of providing activities for kids to participate in and opportunities for the youth of Dodge County to learn important life skills. It was Ms. Lerman's opinion that the activities that take place at the fairgrounds provide these necessary life skills.

The Board ran out of time to discuss the 2014 Fair budget.

Fair Budget Review
Delayed

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

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DAVID ERICKSON
VICE CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: