

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2013**

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2013-17 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole September 10, 2013, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 8:30 a.m. CDT. Vice Chair David Erickson opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. CDT. Meeting Convened

The Vice Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	Rodney Peterson	District #3
	David Erickson	District #4
	Steven Gray	District #5
Members absent:	John Allen	District #1
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy Clerk

County Administrator Jim Elmquist met with the Board to discuss the fairgrounds.

Fairgrounds  
Discussion

Mr. Elmquist noted that this item is meant for discussion purposes only but there has been some question between the City of Kasson and Dodge County pertaining to the Fair Board's use of the Dodge County Ice Arena during the fair. The Dodge County Agricultural Society has requested access to the arena during the fair believing it provides an overall benefit to fair-goers and vendors wishing to use the facility during the week of the fair. This use was allowed in the past but ceased in 2011 through an agreement between the City of Kasson and the county to determine if ice-related sports create an overall benefit during the summer. The County Administrator noted that this has been an item of contention for a few years and the question is where the County Board as a whole stands on this issue.

Included in the Board packet was a copy of the arena agreement that was signed between the City of Kasson and Dodge County in 2010. In this agreement, the county cedes management rights of the arena to the city.

When raising the issue of the Agriculture Society's use of the arena during the fair, the city has conveyed concerns to Commissioner Peterson and the County Administrator about the cost of taking out the ice and reinstallation, weight issues with trucks on the pavement within the rink, what the Agricultural Society's overall plan entails for the arena, and the loss of revenue for the city and county if no events are going on at the time. Mr. Elmquist has talked to city representatives and they seem open to conversations about discussing the issues going forward but feel their previously mentioned concerns are items that need to be addressed.

Mr. Elmquist reported that an option that may be of benefit to all parties is if a standing arena committee of two commissioners from the county and two city council members meet on a periodic basis to discuss the arena budget and issues of mutual interest like this. When the arena was a joint powers operation prior to 2010, a standing board of this type was in existence. The County Administrator wants to offer that option to the Board and the City of Kasson at this point as a way to provide for a formal meet and confer option and assist with discussing future issues. Mr. Elmquist noted that at this point, the intent of this discussion was to open the conversation in regards to the Board's feeling on the Fair Board's use of the arena and to determine a path going forward.

Fairgrounds  
Discussion -  
Continued

The County Administrator informed the Board that the school district, a county fair representative, and the county will meet to discuss the student redevelopment project mentioned by Commissioner Peterson involving the fairgrounds first aid station and bathrooms. This will occur in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Peterson shared with the Board his opinions regarding the Fair Board's use of the ice arena during the fair and supported their request for use of this space during the fair. Mr. Peterson voiced concerns regarding the contract the county has with the City of Kasson to manage the ice arena.

County Attorney Paul Kiltinen arrived to the meeting.

County Attorney  
Arrives

Commissioner Erickson reported that he disagrees with Commissioner Peterson's recommendation that the Fair Board should be allowed to use the ice arena during the fair. The previous County Board addressed this issue and came to the conclusion that the benefit of the Fair Board using the ice arena during the fair didn't warrant the cost associated with taking the ice out for two weeks and reinstalling it. Mr. Erickson also noted that when the ice arena was first built there was a Joint Powers Agreement in effect and a Joint Powers Board was created.

Fairgrounds  
Discussion -  
Continued

County Attorney Paul Kiltinen reported that state statute does say that the fair does have use of buildings on the fairgrounds, however, the agreement that the county has with the city says that the city is in charge of managing the ice arena.

Commissioner Allen arrived to the meeting at 8:34 a.m. CDT.

Commissioner  
Allen Arrived

The County Administrator reported that when the ice arena Joint Powers Agreement was terminated that a Cooperative Agreement was created between the City of Kasson and Dodge County to operate the ice arena.

Fairgrounds  
Discussion -  
Continued

Mr. Elmquist informed the Board that it has been reported that the Fair Board's attempts to funnel people through the ice arena haven't worked and the vendors have been unhappy with the lack of traffic through the building. Also noted was that concerns were raised regarding the weight of the McNeilus cement and garbage trucks on the cement floor in the ice arena and the possibility of the truck damaging the coils in the floor.

Fairgrounds  
Discussion -  
Continued

Commissioner Peterson informed the Board that he had an opportunity to talk to someone that has built other ice arenas and that individual didn't think the truck's weight was an issue since they weren't loaded. Mr. Peterson also noted that he has not talked to the contractor that built the Dodge County ice arena.

Commissioner Peterson reported that he has talked to vendors at the Dodge County expo and the vendors at the fair and only a few of them preferred to be closer to the food vendors and front gate, most preferred to be in the ice area.

The cost of taking the ice out of the ice arena was discussed.

The County Administrator informed the Board that he was told at a COG meeting that the cost of displacement at the ice arena for two weeks is approximately \$9,000.

Commissioner Erickson stated that he feels the ice arena usage issue is different than the issue of what support the county offers to the Fair Board.

Discussion took place on the viability of the race track.

Commissioners agreed that stock car racing probably won't come back to the Kasson area since there is a race track in Racine that holds races on Saturdays and one in Lansing that holds races on Fridays.

Commissioner Allen questioned what the Board should do with the race track area.

Brief discussion took place regarding whether or not the grandstands should be tore down and the race track leveled. No decision was made on the fate of the race track.

Commissioner Peterson reported that the Fair Board has discussed distributing the vendors and food vendors throughout the fairgrounds in an effort to get people in all areas of the fairgrounds including the areas between the carnival and the grandstands. The Fair Board has also discussed placing fencing around the entire fairgrounds that would funnel people through one of three entrances – the ice arena, next to the cattle barns or the front gate.

Commissioner Peterson reiterated that he has an issue with the contract the county currently has in place with the City of Kasson to operate the ice arena. Mr. Peterson recommended cancelling the contract with the city in order to find a contract that works for everyone.

Commissioner Erickson stated that he was not in favor of cancelling the contract with the City of Kasson. It was Mr. Erickson's opinion that they need to sit down with the city and work out an agreement regarding the use of the ice arena. Mr. Erickson commented that the loss of revenue due to taking the ice out during the fair is a city/county loss, not a Fair Board loss.

Commissioner Peterson stated that he wants the ice arena to be available for all citizens of Dodge County, not just a select few.

It was the consensus of the Board that the county needs to sit down with the City of Kasson and one Fair Board member and further discuss the issue of the Fair Board having access to the ice arena during the fair.

Fairgrounds Discussion - Continued

Commissioner Peterson was selected as the individual to represent Dodge County during this discussion.

The County Administrator was asked to set up a meeting with the City of Kasson, Commissioner Peterson and one Fair Board member. It was noted that the Fair Board member will be an ad hoc member of the meeting only and that each side will have to agree to what is proposed. The Board also asked that they be informed of the cost factors.

Commissioner Gray volunteered to attend the meetings as well.

The County Attorney left the meeting at 9:02 a.m. CDT.

County Attorney Left Meeting

Human Services Director Jane Hardwick shared with the Board a presentation on Serving Long-Term Homeless in Dodge County.

Serving Long-Term Homeless Presentation

Financial Assistance Supervisor Cathy Skogen, Executive Director of South Central Human Relations Center (SCHRC) Carolyn Wheeler and Project Home Director Sheila Alba were available to comment on homeless issues in Dodge County.

Ms. Hardwick reported that although they don't know exactly how many, Dodge County does have people who live without a permanent home. In most cases, these are people who move frequently, staying on couches or other temporary situations with friends or family members who are willing to temporarily shelter them. In many of these situations, people don't qualify for homeless-related assistance because they have non-public shelter.

The Human Services Director informed the Board that sometimes people don't have financial resources to afford housing and may not qualify for cash assistance from their agency. In some other cases people may have a mental illness or chemical dependency with accompanying behavior that makes it hard for them to rent or stay with family or friends.

Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Alba provided the Board with background information on a program for people who have been homeless for an extended period of time. They operate this program on behalf of Dodge County and several area counties in collaboration with other providers in southeast and south central Minnesota.

Ms. Alba informed the Board that their program serves five counties – Dodge, Freeborn, Rice, Steele and Waseca.

It was reported that the number of households being serviced in Dodge County is three.

Commissioner Allen expressed his concerns with the county subsidizing homeless people that aren't willing to work or find ways to improve their situation.

Ms. Skogen shared with the Board the success story of a client that has received services through SCHRC, has found housing, has found and maintained steady employment, and is consistently gaining more stability in her life due to the services offered by the SCHRC.

Serving Long-Term Homeless Presentation - Continued

The Board was informed that most of their participants are individuals that have some form of mental illness, chemical dependency, disability or have experienced some type of trauma in their life. SCHRC has found that once these individuals housing needs have been met, they can start addressing the other issues and get their clients working towards financial stability, finding and maintaining employment, building trust and teaching them how to budget.

Commissioners wanted to know if there was a specific age range that was affected by homelessness. Ms. Hardwick reported that there is a broad range age wise when it comes to homelessness.

Commissioner Gray discussed the expenses associated with individuals being homeless vs. those individuals accessing programs available through SCHRC. It was Mr. Gray’s opinion that through the programs that SCHRC offers, the county may be saving money because these clients are receiving the help they need through the various programs offered rather than becoming frequent users of the systems (jail, detox, treatment, ER, etc.) which tend to be more expensive than the programs offered by SCHRC.

The Board thanked the group for the update.

The Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:28 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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DAVID ERICKSON  
VICE CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY CLERK

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DATED: