

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2009-01 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole January 13, 2009, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. David Hanson opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present: Klaus Alberts District #1
Lyle Tjosaas District #2
David Erickson District #3
Don Gray District #4
David Hanson District #5

Members absent: None

Also present: David McKnight County Administrator
Becky Lubahn Deputy County Clerk

County Administrator David McKnight informed the Board that he has decided to use the Committee of the Whole meeting as the base for their 2009 budget/state budget shortfall discussions for the time being. The County Administrator plans to bring issues and updates to the Board at each meeting if they are available and use it as an opportunity to share ideas with the County Board on a variety of issues related to the budget.

2009 Budget/State
Budget Shortfall
Discussion

In addition, Mr. McKnight will use this as the area where department heads will come before the Board to discuss specific items and ask for exemptions from the hiring freeze, capital outlay freeze and/or overtime freeze. These department heads will submit information to the Board in the packet if they will be appearing at this meeting asking for something.

The Board discussed correspondence received from Dodge County 4-H Program Coordinator Diane Whalen.

Extension Office
Summer Assistant
Discussion

In the past the Extension Office has worked with the county to hire a summer assistant. Extension has been approved for a grant from Dodge County Family Services Collaborative for \$1,500 and 4-H has agreed to put \$1,500 towards the position. Ms. Whalen has two other possible funding sources and may be able to have all the money needed to pay for the position available and in place by March 1, 2009. The 4-H Program Coordinator indicated that the money could be sent to the county in advance to avoid any confusion. With the new hiring freeze in place, Ms. Whalen wanted to know if it would still be possible to hire through the county as long as they provide the funds. If the Extension Office is not able to hire through the county they would like the authority to hire through the University of Minnesota because although they have a hiring pause the university is allowing the hiring of summer assistants.

Ms. Whalen's e-mail to the County Administrator noted that she needs to have an answer by Thursday if she is going to hire a Summer Assistant through the university.

It was noted that the 4-H Program Coordinator's preference is to work with the county so she and the Employee Relations Director can be a part of the hiring process. If the Extension Office goes through the university to hire a Summer Assistant, the Extension Office will be given someone to complete the hiring process and the university then charges a \$1.25/hour administrative fee and requires that they pay the Summer Assistant \$11/hour therefore limiting the number of hours and weeks the Extension Office would have a Summer Assistant.

If the Extension Office is authorized to hire through the county, Ms. Whalen would like to post the position in mid March so interviews could be done earlier. It was the 4-H Program Coordinator's opinion that many college students determine summer employment during the spring breaks. Also, by knowing this far in advance, Ms. Whalen believes she can better plan for summer programming, increase the participation and bring in more revenue.

It was the consensus of the Board to allow the Extension Office to work with the Employee Relations Director to hire a Summer Assistant since it would not cost the county anything.

Human Services Director Jane Hardwick met with the Board to discuss a request to fill an Office Support Specialist position that is being vacated in her office due to the promotion of an employee in the financial area. Ms. Hardwick reported that this promotion opportunity came about due to the retirement of Collections and Accounting Supervisor Gary Trelstad.

Human Services
Succession Plan
Discussion

The Human Services Director informed the Board that her office has finalized a succession plan with Mr. Trelstad's retirement and elaborated on the need for two Office Support Specialists in her office.

Commissioner Tjosaas clarified that they would be saving money and spending less money by authorizing the Human Services office to fill the Office Support Specialist position being vacated.

The Board discussed potential budget cuts for 2008 and 2009.

Potential 2008/2009
Budget Cuts
Discussed

Commissioner Alberts commented that he would like to see the department heads take the lead in determining where cuts can be made in their offices.

The Board further discussed Human Services request to fill a vacated position.

Human Services
Staffing Issues
Discussion

Commissioner Hanson commended the work of the Human Services department and their reorganization within the department to deal with the Collections and Accounting Supervisor's retirement.

Commissioner Erickson reported that there is a need for two people at the front desk in Human Services. One person needs to be available at all times to cover phones, deal with customers at the window and assist others in the office with a variety of work.

Ms. Hardwick stated that she knows they need to make cuts in the Human Services budget but believes that this is not the place to cut the budget in their office.

Human Services Staffing Issues Discussion - Continued

The Board discussed Public Health’s request to fill a vacated Health Educator position. It was noted that this position has been budgeted for and that the Board was being asked to replace someone that resigned. This is an example of another position that was discussed and in the works before the hiring freeze went into place.

Public Health Staffing Issues Discussion

Commissioner Hanson proposed that the Board intentionally delaying action on all requests to fill vacant positions for a few months in order to allow the department time to determine if the positions really need to be filled and save money.

Commissioner Alberts commented that he preferred not to do any hiring right now because they may need to lay those same people off in six months.

It was the consensus of the Board to send this request back to the Public Health Director to determine if the position really needs to be filled and with the understanding that tax levy money must be cut and that the position if filled could be cut in six months due to the state budget deficit.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DAVID HANSON
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: