

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2009-08 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole April 28, 2009, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 8:45 a.m. CDT. Lyle Tjosaas, Vice Chair opened the meeting at 8:45 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Vice Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	Klaus Alberts	District #1
	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #3
	Don Gray	District #4
Members absent:	David Hanson	District #5
Also present:	David McKnight	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy County Clerk

Claire Johnson who is a property owner in Dodge County met with the Board to discuss his concerns with several of the county offices.

Concerned Citizen
Addresses Board

Mr. Johnson expressed his displeasure with the fact that it took four county Highway Department employees two hours to sweep the sand off a bridge near his home.

Mr. Johnson also expressed concern with how money is spent in the county.

Mr. Johnson stated that roads near his home were switched from five ton roads to seven ton roads. It was Mr. Johnson's opinion that the roads were not designed as seven ton roads and reported that the roads are damaged and breaking up due to the extra weight and traffic on these roads. Mr. Johnson wanted to know who will be responsible for paying to fix these roads.

The next subject Mr. Johnson wanted to discuss with the Board was the Dodge County deputies. Mr. Johnson reported that his residence was robbed years ago and that it took ten hours to get a deputy out to his place. Mr. Johnson expressed his dissatisfaction with the length of time it took to respond to his burglary call when he knows that other less serious issues were being responded to in a more timely fashion.

Concerned Citizen
Addresses Board -
Continued

Mr. Johnson expressed his unhappiness with the County Assessor. Mr. Johnson's property was one of those properties that the Board approved an abatement for at their last meeting, changing the classification from residential to agricultural. The property had been agricultural for years and was changed to residential by mistake. Mr. Johnson reported that he did not receive a call back from the Assessor although the Assessor claims that he did try to call him back on several occasions. It was Mr. Johnson's belief that the correction of reclassification to the property back to agricultural property could have been handled over the phone but was not. Mr. Johnson feels that the taxes on the property should be in line with what he can rent the farm land for. Mr. Johnson discussed the appraised value of his home and the value of his property in comparison to his neighbors. Mr. Johnson also wanted to know why his property was valued the same as his neighbors.

The next subject Mr. Johnson wanted to discuss was county employees. It was his opinion that if there is no work for the county employees that they should be laid off.

Mr. Johnson reiterated that he is most irritated by the seven ton road posting near his home, he feels that the roads in that area do not have enough bituminous on them to be posted at seven tons.

Commissioner Alberts wanted to know if there are any big hog or dairy farms in Mr. Johnson's area.

Mr. Johnson noted that there are no big hog or dairy farms in his area but trucks do use these roads to deliver products to hog and dairy farms in the county.

Mr. Johnson commented on other roads in the county that are taking a beating and noted that there are county roads that are breaking up into small pieces because they are not designed for the traffic they sustain. Mr. Johnson suggested that decreasing the speed limit for trucks on these deteriorating roads would help solve some of the road issues.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for the information.

County Administrator David McKnight provided the Board with the County Administrator update.

County Administrator
Update

Environmental Quality Director Mark Gamm met with the Board to further discuss his plans for the Environmental Quality/Planning Department reorganization.

Environmental
Quality/Planning
Department
Reorganization
Discussion

The Environmental Quality/Zoning Department currently consists of 12.65 FTE's. They are proposing a reorganization that will result in 12.5 FTE's. They do not expect this reorganization to increase the cost of service. The existing and proposed organizational charts were presented for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Gamm noted that the current Planning Director duties will be split up. The Environmental Director will assume land use planning duties such as wind towers, township coordination and comp plan revisions. The Zoning Administrator will be responsible for enforcing the zoning ordinance including variances and amendments, they expect that this position will be filled internally by existing staff. Additionally a contractor will handle a majority of economic development and EDA/HRA duties of which the scope of duties are yet to be determined.

Environmental
Quality/Planning
Department
Reorganization
Discussion -
Continued

To make the shift as described above and continue all department functions, the Environmental Quality/Zoning Department staff plan to take the following additional actions:

- a. Increase hours of current Waste Management Specialist/ Secretary/Clerk from .065 FTE to 1.0 FTE. This position will cover a wide variety of administrative duties for all functions in the department.
- b. Add responsibility to current Water Technician/Educator to manage the Water Plan, coordinate activity with SWCD, write grants and administer programs.
- c. Hire a part-time (0.5 FTE) Water Technician to cover water monitoring, well testing, data management, and technical assistance. It may be possible to combine this position with work now completed by contracted labor or labor shared with SWCD.

The County Administrator wanted to know if the .5 FTE position addressed the issues presented by the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Mr. Gamm informed the Board that the .5 FTE position does not address the Soil and Water Conservation District issue but noted that they are working on finding an additional \$15,000 to make the .5 FTE a full time position which will then address Soil and Water Conservation District concerns.

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know if they felt it would be easier to fill a .75 FTE position than a .5 FTE position?

It was the Environmental Quality Director's opinion that they would have an easier time filling a .75 FTE position than a .5 FTE position.

Mr. McKnight indicated that he may have some money temporarily available to assist the Environmental Quality Department with increasing the hours of the Water Technician position. The County Administrator reported that the Board would further discuss this option at the next budget work session.

Mr. Gamm discussed with the Board the duties of the Secretary/Clerk.

It was Commissioner Alberts' opinion that Ken Folie should be brought back into the courthouse rather than paying rent for him to have an office in the Soil and Water Conservation District office in Dodge Center.

The County Administrator reported that he will have room for Mr. Folie back here in the courthouse once Public Health moves to the Service Center in Dodge Center.

Commissioner Erickson discussed EDA/HRA contracts.

The Environmental Quality Director stated that they need to get a better handle on who can do the EDA/HRA work and then determine what the Board wants done.

Commissioner Gray expressed concern that grant writing duties were not listed as one of the duties the Environmental Quality Director would be responsible for. Mr. Gray stated that he feels Mr. Gamm has been instrumental in obtaining grants for the county and sees that the organization chart now shows that those duties would be handled by the Zoning Administrator and Water Technician/Educator.

Mr. Gamm concurred with the County Administrator's comment from the last meeting that anyone can write a grant. The Environmental Quality Director commented that grant writing is part of program development. The grant writer needs to get to know the organizations that are issuing grants, find out what their purpose for issuing the grants are and write their grant request to best describe how their organization would use the grant funds to accomplish the desired outcome. Mr. Gamm noted that as the department head he would still be involved in the process of grant writing for his office.

Commissioner Gray stated that he thinks Mr. Gamm has the desired skills and ability to write and get grants for the county and that he would like to see those duties also listed under the Environmental Quality Directors list of duties.

The Environmental Quality Director commented that it is ultimately the department heads responsibility to find money for their budget.

Commissioner Erickson reminded the Board that the Soil and Water office wants a manager for their office. Mr. Erickson noted that hiring a manager would be expensive but noted that the office does need someone to make contact with different organizations and find grants that they can utilize.

Mr. Gamm informed the Board that with a Water Technician in place it would allow him and Dean Schrandt more time to find grants/programs to help the Soil and Water office. The Environmental Quality Director noted that it will take time to find grants and build programs.

Commissioner Alberts stated that he would like to see some checks and balances in place to monitor the Zoning Administrator duties.

Commissioner Gray reported that he previously had some concerns regarding Mr. Gamm's ability to manage the two offices due to some issues that arose when he was initially asked to take over the responsibility of supervising the Planning Office. Mr. Gray has since had an opportunity to talk to the Environmental Quality Director and now feels that Mr. Gamm possesses the necessary skills to be an effective department head for this office.

Mr. Gamm informed the Board that he has learned from previous experience how to better manage the department. The Environmental Quality Director stated that he struggled with taking charge of the department because he and the Planning Director were peers. He now realizes that things need to operate differently in his office and is confident that he can be a successful department head and Environmental Quality Director.

Environmental
Quality/Planning
Department
Reorganization
Discussion -
Continued

It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Gamm work with the Employee Relations Director to move forward with developing a Zoning Administrator job description and posting the position.

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

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

LYLE TJOSAAS
VICE CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: