

**TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2009**

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

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2009-13 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole July 14, 2009, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 8:30 a.m. CDT. David Hanson, Chair opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. CDT. Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

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

Members absent: David Erickson District #3

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

Winona Mayor and Chair of the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Jerry Miller and Cenex Harvest States Representative Larry Laber met with the Board to discuss regional rail issues.

Regional Rail Issues  
Discussion

Mr. Miller discussed with the Board both the proposed Rochester bypass and the Mississippi River route and informed them that their main interest is in potential improvements to the rail system.

The Mayor briefly touched on the proposed state railroad corridor and his belief that any money available from the government for this project will go towards higher need areas.

Mr. Miller indicated that he feels that an update to the corridor will bring more transportation into the area and noted that he is looking to work with people west of Winona to make sure they are aware of the options available to them that they could potentially benefit from. The Mayor discussed the importance of rail freight to the Winona area.

Larry Laber informed the Board that he works for Cenex Harvest States (CHS) and elaborated on the use of the rail system by agricultural businesses. Mr. Laber reported that a large amount of grain is currently moved by truck so they are also concerned with the Highway 14 project since it is a critical part of the equation for them.

Mr. Laber commented that there is a need to have the rail infrastructure in place to continue to service their customers.

Mr. Miller stated that he wants to make sure agricultural businesses are serviced and stressed the importance in the rail system and the Highway 14 corridor.

Commissioner Tjosaas wanted to know if more grain will be moved if the railroad is improved.

Regional Rail Issues  
Discussion -  
Continued

Mr. Laber stated that he was not sure if more grain would be moved due to railroad improvements and noted that he does not want the cost of the grain moving to increase the cost to producers.

Mr. Miller reported that any miles added equals more cost. Mr. Miller commented that he wants to see the state and country invest money in a way that makes sense and again stressed the importance of the Highway 14 corridor.

Other items discussed were the differences between passenger trains and freight trains, rail availability and usage.

Commissioner Hanson clarified that the high speed trains that they were referring to traveled 65-67 miles per hour and that with rail improvements these trains would be able to travel 70-110 miles per hour.

Commissioner Hanson discussed the river route and the fact that those trains travel at 150-200 miles per hour. It was noted that these trains are not what the commissioners are talking about. It was pointed out that trains in Minnesota cannot go fast because of the number of curves in the line.

Commissioner Hanson reported that the plan calls for installing a second track.

Mr. Miller discussed possible uses for the proposed train system and safety concerns.

Also discussed were the Amtrak and Canadian Pacific lines, freight cars and passenger cars.

The Board thanked Mr. Miller and Mr. Laber for the information.

County Engineer Guy Kohlnhofer met with the Board to discuss 2010 capital outlay requests for the Highway Department.

Mr. Kohlnhofer provided the Board with a list of the following budget items that he intended to discuss. The County Engineer noted that any savings in the budget changes should be dedicated to the expected increase in radio costs.

**Pickups** (\$34,000) – This request can be delayed until 2011. There is currently a pickup scheduled for replacement this year. This year's pickup will be for the Maintenance Superintendent with his current pickup going into the maintenance fleet.

**Tandem Plow Truck** (\$200,000) – Although the continued improvement of their plow trucks is one of their priorities this has to be balanced with road maintenance. The next plow truck scheduled for replacement is a 1999 Sterling. The Highway Department's plan is to delay the truck replacement until 2011 allowing for funds to be used elsewhere.

**Snow Blower** (\$79,000) – These funds would afford them a used snow blower. A new one would cost upwards of \$150,000. Because this is emergency equipment with minimal use until needed they recommend cutting this from the budget but reserve dedicating \$150,000 of the monies in the fund for emergency snow blower purchase when needed.

2010 Highway  
Department Capital  
Outlay Discussion

**Telephone System** (\$25,000) – The current phone system was installed in 1993. Several of the computer modules are failing, leaving some lines inoperable. The Highway Department has been switching their phones to unused lines available on the modules but have run out. Additionally, the handsets are no longer made. When one of their phones fails they have been getting refurbished handsets. The County Engineer has been told that this will not be an option for much longer.

**Pole Shed** (\$100,000) – The Highway Department's current storage capabilities are limited to the existing pole shed at the main facility. Although this storage area has served them well until now, they have expanded their equipment to meet the increased demands of road maintenance. Although they have expanded their active facility area with the addition of the West Concord shop, they still require additional storage area for their static equipment.

Much of the equipment that is not used on a daily basis or stored in the winter is either parked outside or packed tight into the existing pole shed. This leads to increased equipment maintenance from weather and damage during tight storage as well as the need to move many pieces of equipment to get at one.

The total cost of this shed is expected to be approximately \$150,000 with the Sheriff's Office getting the east 60 feet for their use.

These budget request changes would lower the funds requested by \$313,000. A new budget request will reflect the following changes:

**CR N** – this county road is located on the south edge of Hayfield and is used by heavy commercial vehicles. The road was last paved in 1976 and is in need of surface work. The recommended work would be to mill two inches off the existing surface and replace it with three inches of new bituminous. Cost for this project is expected to run \$200,000.

**Radio System** – This budget item currently sits at \$57,000 held in the fund until the radio system is selected. The ARMER system is likely to be the system selected. In this case the Highway Department will need between \$110,000 and \$200,000. It is recommended the remaining \$113,000 in budget changes be reserved for the unknown cost of the radio purchase.

Commissioner Hanson shared with the County Engineer his budget concerns and commented that he feels they need to consider what requests are really absolutely necessary. Mr. Hanson stated that he feels the radios are more important than the shed.

Commissioner Alberts suggested leasing space at the fairgrounds to store excess Highway Department equipment.

Mr. Kohlhofer informed the Board that he is concerned with pushing off too many things and not being able to replace things as he needs to or build a shed when they really need to.

2010 Highway  
Department Capital  
Outlay Discussion -  
Continued

County Administrator David McKnight reported that the Highway Department levy came in significantly less this year and noted that if the Board said no to the pole shed request that he would encourage them not to take that money out of the Highway Department budget but consider putting it towards road projects.

Commissioner Gray stated that he agrees with not taking the money out of the Highway Department budget. Mr. Gray commented that roads are his priority. Commissioner Gray discussed improvements to state aid roads and the benefits of spending county funds on state aid roads.

It was Commissioner Tjosaas' opinion that a building would be nice, but he would rather see the money spent on the road system.

The County Engineer was not opposed to spending the money on road improvements.

Discussion took place regarding the telephone system request and County Road N.

The Board thanked the County Engineer for the information.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:24 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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DAVID HANSON  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY CLERK

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DATED: