

Committee of the Whole summary minutes, April 14, 2009

Chairman Montbriand called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members present: County Coordinator Mark LeBrun, County Attorney John Carlson, Sheriff Mark Mansavage, Chief Deputy Steve Ovick, Commissioners Carlson, Chaffee, Hallan, and Rossow.

ATV Group discussion- riding on County Roads. The Pine Riders ATV Club presented with possible routes stating what was needed most were connector routes, short periods or road usage to connect riders to designated trails. Lengthy discussion was held regarding the matter with input from the County Sheriff and the County Engineer. Chairman Montbriand suggested the group research the matter further and bring additional information to the County Sheriff, County Engineer and County Attorney for continued discussion.

Ambulance Service lease agreement terms. Commissioner Hallan stated that questions are arising after discussing with persons who have used the service. Commissioner Hallan stated in one instance a non life threatening situation in need of ambulance transport arose with the patient requesting to be transported to their primary medical facility, Fairview Wyoming, and that the patient was denied the right to choose and was transported to Pine Medical Center in Sandstone. Commissioner Hallan stated he has been hearing numerous complaints of arrival time. Discussion with County Attorney Carlson was held regarding the agreement language. County Attorney Carlson recommended asking for the past years statistics from the service and having the Medical Director report to the Board with an update. Terms of the agreement stipulate an annual report, which the Board has not ever received.

Legislative Update. Coordinator LeBrun updated the Committee on recent legislative actions. Discussion was held on the following: HHS regional collaborations, Green Acres, Local Government Aid requirements. Coordinator LeBrun stated that the Legislative Committee members have sent a letter to each district legislator regarding payment-in-lieu of taxes.

Courthouse Evacuation Plan. Coordinator LeBrun stated the Safety Committee is finalizing a plan for Board approval and will be coordinating drills for fire, tornado and intruder. Commissioner Carlson suggested looking into having a staffed metal detector at the front entrance of the courthouse. Coordinator LeBrun stated metal detecting wands could be implemented at any time.

Transportation Concerns. Coordinator LeBrun stated that the 2009 summer schedule for the Highway maintenance crews will involve: graveling, crack sealing and shouldering. Coordinator LeBrun brought up discussion on the matter of continuing to pay dues to belong to the Rushline Corridor Task Force Commissioner Carlson suggested remaining in the group. Commissioner Hallan stated the possibility of providing county-wide transportation for residents, stating different options are being discussed.

County Junk Day Event. Land/Zoning Administrator Kurt Schneider informed the Committee that the Planning and Zoning Committee met and discussed different options for holding an event. Commissioner Hallan stated the long-term goal would be to have continued service available to residents for a nominal fee. Commissioner Carlson questioned receiving funds to help support the event. Commissioner Hallan stated he would like to see Land/Zoning Administrator Schneider working with the East Central Solid Waste Commission. Coordinator LeBrun stated a subsidized program was discussed at the recent Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. Chairman Montbriand asked Land/Zoning Administrator Schneider to have a tentative draft for review at the next P/Z Committee meeting so that a recommendation to the full board could be made. Environmental Technician Robbie Fisher stated that a household hazardous waste is being planned for some time later this fall. Land/Zoning Administrator Schneider stated the 2008 HHW event serviced nearly 300 residents at a cost of approximately \$44,000. The 2009 budgeted amount is approximately \$20,000 therefore nearly 180 residents could be serviced in 2009.

Library Funding. Commissioner Carlson led discussion regarding the library system, questioning if the county is looking ahead. Commissioner Hallan stated for the appropriation the county gives the system it could not run its own system. Discussion was held on the formulation of the system. Commissioner Rossow questioned why the service couldn't be offered through the local schools. Discussion was held on the buildings used for the libraries.

Personnel Committee recommendations/update. Coordinator LeBrun informed the Board that one item discussed by the Committee was holding a special election to decide whether the position of Auditor/Treasurer would be appointed or remain elected. Chairman Montbriand stated the cost would be a minimum of \$10,000. County Auditor Cathy Clemmer stated that while cost is an issue the voter turn-out would be comparable as an odd year school election. Commissioner Rossow stated he would like to see the decision made by the people. Consensus of the Committee was to not hold a special election in 2009 and to revisit the issue in early 2010.

Coordinator LeBrun stated that the Personnel Committee held a lengthy discussion regarding the position of Emergency Management Coordinator. Coordinator LeBrun stated the Committee is making a recommendation to eliminate current staff and to have the Sheriff be named HSEM Director and Chief Deputy to be named Deputy Director with the Sheriff's office absorbing the duties. Commissioner Carlson questioned the duties of the Emergency 911 Coordinator position. Coordinator LeBrun stated that position was no net loss to the County. Commissioner Carlson stated he feels there are positions within the County that need to be reviewed further. Consensus was to bring the Emergency Management Coordinator position to the full board for action.

Coordinator LeBrun presented an amendment to the Appearance and Dress Policy to allow for "casual Friday's". Consensus was to amend.

Coordinator LeBrun stated mandated direct deposit was discussed. Consensus was to not mandate direct deposit for payroll at this time.

Coordinator LeBrun presented a revised PTO policy with amendments to three portions of the policy.

- Existing sick leave balances. Would allow those with balances to use said balance without having to exhaust the employee's PTO balance prior.
- Personal Days. PTO would be converted so that five of said PTO days would be named personal days allowing the employee's the option of rolling those days into the employee's HCSA. The five days would be the equivalent of 2% of the employee's salary.
- Payment for unused PTO at time of termination of county employment. The proposed would allow the employee to have 50% of PTO to be taken as cash and 50% to be transferred into the employee's HCSA.

Consensus was to approve the recommended changes.

Coordinator LeBrun stated the Coordinator position was discussed with the Committee. The Personnel Committee also discussed the option of continuing with a County Coordinator versus County Administrator and also the option of a combined County Coordinator/Engineer with hiring an Assistant Engineer. Commissioner Rossow explained his perception of an Administrator and the need for it. Chairman Montbriand stated the Board needs to act on the interim status of the position currently. Consensus to present the matter to the full Board for action.

Askov Tower Lease. County Attorney John Carlson led discussion on the matter of the Askov Tower. Chief Deputy Ovick stated that he was contacted by AT&T desiring to place another twelve antennas, which the current tower could not handle. Chief Deputy Ovick stated that AT&T has offered to provide a new tower at their cost but would remain the property of the County. Commissioner Carlson asked to be provided with a list of all towers within the County. Further discussion will be held.

Upcoming meetings announced:

Arrowhead Counties Association meeting, Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 6:00 p.m.
Hampton Inn, Duluth, MN

Planning and Zoning Committee, Monday April 21, 2009. 10:00 a.m. Public Works
Building, Sandstone, MN

Chairman Montbriand adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.