

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday ~ July 14, 2009

Menominee County Courthouse - Courtroom B
Menominee, MI 49858

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. (CDT) by Chairman Gary Eichhorn

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call was taken with the following in attendance:

Present: Commissioners Eichhorn, Furlong, Anderson & Peterson

Absent: Commissioner Lang, excused

Public Comment: There was no public comment

Department Head Reports/Comments: None.

Approval of the Agenda: Commissioner Eichhorn would like to add the appointment of the U.P. State Fair Authority under Misc. Items. Moved by Comm. Furlong, seconded by Comm. Peterson to approve the “amended” agenda. Motion carried, 5-0

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes: Moved by Comm. Anderson, seconded by Comm. Peterson to approve the previous meeting minutes. Motion carried, 5-0

Presentations: None

Agenda Items:

1. Personnel Items:

- a. **Administrator Position ~ Discussion of Administration Position:** Mr. Erdman gathered information on surrounding counties for the number of employees in their administrator/controller offices. His findings... *Dickenson County* – 1-full time Administrator/controller, 1-full time admin. Asst. and 1 - full time employee who works half time (.05) in the admin. office and half time (.05) in the equalization dept. For a total of 2.5 full time employees in the admin. office. *Delta County* has 1 – full time Administrator/finance, 1 - full time Admin. Asst., 1 – full time bookkeeper/payroll, and 1- full time IT person. For a total of 4 full time employees in the administrative office. *Iron County* has 1-full time Administrator and 1- fulltime Admin. Asst. For a total of 2 full time employees in the admin. office. Mr. Erdman also informed the Commissioners that MI Works sent the information in the packet. They offer a variety of services that you can pick and choose from for assistance on the hiring process. He also added that he spoke with Lynn Harvey about coming to evaluate the Administrator position. Mr. Harvey is now retired but recommended a person in Traverse City. He has tried to contact this person, but has not received a response as of yet. Com. Eichhorn asks, are there any counties that have scaled back? Mr. Erdman answers, “To my knowledge, no. They’re all full time at this point.” Mr. Erdman urges the commissioners to talk about the vacant Administrator position. Mr. Erdman states, “We are responding to, I believe, everything we’re supposed to be responding to. Just so you know the ship hasn’t sunk yet.” Comm. Furlong states “but we’re bailing pretty hard though”. Erdman replies, “I don’t know if we’re bailing, We are Busy”. Com. Furlong asks Mr. Erdman. “Now that you’re

getting to know the job a bit more, if you were to be performing all of the duties that the administrator had performed in the past, would it be a full time job in your estimate?" Erdman replies, "I don't know, I'm not trying to evade the question, I don't know. This is a relatively busy time, we're doing multiple things and a lot of things are happening. I don't know on an annual basis what this is. I noticed in the Courthouse, Friday afternoon is a great time, phones don't ring and it's relatively peaceful and you can get a bunch done on a Friday afternoon. I don't know if we have seasonal peaks and low parts during the year. I think with the added month of experience of helping out, to me it's simpler, yes, we do & Sherry does hustle a lot. I call her a lot, we communicate by phone and email and we now have the ability to access our computers. I don't know yet, I can't answer that real honestly. But we are busy and she's real busy and she still smiles."

Com. Furlong questions Erdman, "Are we still looking at the phone system in the jail building?" Erdman answers, "we're still working on that. I talked to the Sheriff today about that and other issues. It's working." Erdman also says he's working with the Sheriff and North Pointe at looking into video technology conferencing and is also with Public Health on an office space issue.

Com. Furlong states, "Now's the time to discuss it – Dick what do you think?"

Com. Peterson says that we should look at the counties next to us, they all have full time administrators. "I would think we should probably be looking at that. I realize we're not going to undergo a big population explosion immediately, at the same time, our budgets & everything are increasing slightly every year, it sort of leans that way. Ultimately here in another month, you (to Erdman) may have a little better handle on it, likewise."

Com. Eichhorn asks M. Erdman, "Once we get through this budget process and some of the other projects that we've taken on, if at that point we could ask you the same question. In the meantime we should be throwing it around." It's pretty clear, some of the surrounding counties on your list...Is that what we want to do because other counties have it? If we really need it, I guess that's the way we'll have to go." Mr. Erdman refers to the administrator position, "It has a salary but when you add it all up, it's \$121,900 for one position. That money comes from State sources, Federal sources but it comes from primarily the landowners in the county. Justifying \$121,900 for one position is a lot."

Com. Furlong replies, "I realize that, but we're not going to end up with you for free for the rest of our lives. For one thing, we're kind of taking advantage of you. I realize you're doing this out of the goodness of your heart, and we all appreciate it, but at the same token, in order for the County to progress, stay ahead of the game – there's a lot of changes in laws, tax codes, health insurances, contracts – someone with a good deal of expertise can stay ahead of the game, which then decreases the cost on the other end, which in the end will offset the cost of the administrator salary. Instead of looking at the administrative position as a *cost*, we should be looking at that position as something that is going to enhance County Government and enhance the services throughout the County. The possibility of saving money in various areas to offset the cost of the administrative position, I think is well worth it for everybody."

Mr. Erdman says he doesn't feel like he's being taken advantage of. "The extension office works with everyone in the community." Mr. Erdman asks, "So do we re-discuss this next time?" Com. Eichhorn replies, "Yes, I think so."

Discussion of Department Heads and Union Membership: Mr. Erdman informs the commissioners that there has been some discussion about Department Heads, specifically the Veterans Service Officer and the Building Code Inspector, being part of the union. Should they be in the union was the question asked. Fran McCarthy, Union representative sent a letter to address this issue. It basically stated that neither of the positions meet the definition of a supervisor. We should refer to MERC for a more definite answer. Mr. Erdman suggests that this topic go to the personnel committee to look at this in more depth. Com. Furlong concurs.

Emergency Management Reimbursement Performance Grant Agreement: Mr. Erdman explains that this is a grant for reimbursements of wages for the Emergency Management Coordinator. Com. Anderson recommends to move this to the board for approval.

Veterans Service Officer – National Association County Veterans Service Officer

Accreditation: Mr. Erdman explains, due to budget cutbacks many of the veteran service

officers who once came to the county to process paperwork, will no longer be able to be here to help the veterans. In order for our Veteran Service officer to process paperwork from here, he needs to take a class to become accredited. Mr. Erdman said, "He has the money in his budget for the class, so I approved his attendance at the class. It will benefit everyone."

2. Building & Grounds Items: No items to discuss.

3. Miscellaneous Items:

- a. Resolution 09-15 ~ U.P. Area Agency on Aging: Com. Anderson recommends to bring this forward to the board for approval.
- b. Proposal & Application for funds from the West-Central U.P. Regional Community Corrections Program: Com. Furlong states that this is a standard yearly grant that all six counties have to approve. He recommends to bring this to the board for approval.
- c. Discussion of BTI Properties – Annexation to the Village of Carney: Mr. Erdman informed the commissioners that we received a letter from BTI Properties. They wanted to know if they could resubmit annexation paperwork as it was voted down last year, or if they would need to start the whole process again with the Village. The Admin. office contacted the State Boundary Commission, they referred us to the Michigan Municipal League who referred us to our local Prosecuting Attorney. Attorney Dan Hass recommended that BTI Properties begin the process anew. He also suggested having BTI Properties expand the economic development portion of their request. Com. Peterson stated, "Last fall when this came up & the previous board asked numerous times if BTI & the Village of Carney had a plan, they never did come back to the board with their intentions of this. As a result in Dec., it was turned down. They repeatedly asked for a plan on what they intended to do and they never came up with that." Com. Furlong says that he has very limited knowledge of the annexation. He recommends to start the whole process over again.
- d. Distribution of Committee of the Whole and County Board packets: Currently the Admin. Office has a list of people who have requested to receive the packets via mail or email as past practice. The county bi-laws state we should charge people who receive the packet. Com. Furlong asks, "Where does this become an issue? It's been past practice to provide this. As far as the bi-laws and the board packets, I would look at that as someone needing for research, after meetings. Getting info. out to the public, or individuals wanting to be informed prior to meetings, I don't see why we're changing, to limit info. prior to a board meeting. The public should be informed prior to the meetings." Com. Eichhorn states, "I don't disagree with what you're saying. Part of it, the case was going out to media. Put the whole thing on the website and make it assessable to everyone, with a hard copy in public places. Com. Anderson recommends we move this to the board for approval.
- e. Health Department office in annex building: Mr. Erdman stated that Barb Chenier contacted him with economic cutbacks in the health dept. She wanted to know if there was any room in the annex building that could possibly be used as an office. Erdman spoke with Ms. Dennis-Ruleau. She is willing to share an office with Erdman on the one day a week that she sees clients in the annex. He can move anywhere in the building whenever he needs to. Erdman states that there is an advantage to this, the health dept. has a ploycom and we can use the technology. Erdman recommends the board to approve this and utilize the county annex to the fullest. Com. Furlong asks, "How many employees, and what will they do. He would like to know how the health department employees will utilize the annex, what will they be doing there? Then we can forward it to the board."
- f. U.P. State Fair Authority: Mr. Erdman explained that the board needs to appoint someone to the U.P. State Fair Authority governing board to represent Menominee County. He asks the board to allow the admin office to post for the board opening to have candidates available for the board meeting in two weeks. Com. Furlong would like the candidates have some kind of requirements, like knowledge of the U.P. State Fair. Com. Anderson recommends we bring this to the board.

4. Finance Items

- a. Resolution 09-16 ~ Menominee County Investment Policy: Mr. Erdman explained that the Investment policy the board passed in January needed to be updated to meet GASB 40 Guidelines. The updated policy is included along with the resolution for approval of the board.
- b. 9-11 Surcharge Ballot Language: The ballot language was included in the packet for the commissioners to approve for the millage proposal.
- c. Contract Negotiations ~ Menominee County Deputy Sheriff's Association (Road Patrol) & Menominee County and the Sheriff Supervisory Unit: Mr. Erdman explains the negotiations for the two contracts need to move forward. The supervisory unit consists of two members. He points out that the Budget is \$6.8 million; Total salaries are \$4.08 million; Insurances are \$708,000 (10%) Retirements \$565,569 (18.6%) workers comp \$104,000. That means that 59% of the budget are salaries and 79.9% are salaries and benefits. He suggests the county get a professionally trained person to negotiate. Com. Eichhorn said Stoker is a labor attorney. Com. Furlong states that we need someone to negotiate contracts. I don't have the expertise. He said, past administration did a good job. Com. Eichhorn asks, "How long have we been at a stalemate with the contracts?" Com. Furlong adds "it's not so much a stalemate. The Supervisory Unit have gone through mediation and were almost at an agreement, then we lost the administrator who negotiated." Com. Anderson says, "it's tough, the commissioners can't meet to discuss unless in a closed session." Com. Furlong asks of Mr. Erdman, "I would like you to do the research, call Stoker's office and find out who will be able to handle these negotiations. Com. Anderson recommends we move this item to the county board for discussion and approval.
- d. Per Diems/Expenses: Com. Eichhorn would like the total expenses listed on one report like the misc. bills are. Based on discussion, Com. Anderson recommends to place this on the next County Board agenda to approve the commissioner's per diems/expenses as paid.
- e. Miscellaneous Bills: Based on discussion, Administration will recommend to place the Misc. Bills in the amount of \$138,500.87 on the next County Board agenda to approve as paid.

Other Items Members may wish to present: Mr. Erdman discussed a packet the admin. office received about mineral rights theft. He asked Attorney Hass if we need to do anything with it, no was the answer. Erdman also informed the commissioners that if we are to go to BS&A .Net software, our current servers won't handle the load. It will require spending some money. Erdman informs the Commissioners that there was a problem with the server room getting too hot. If the server gets too hot it could fail. We had UES computers come to install a temperature sensor in the server room. It will automatically send a message to specific people to alert them if the room gets too hot.

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: Bob Desjarlais: Townships will be going to the BS&A.Net very soon. The object is to have everyone in the county on the same system; county should get the server now.

Judy Bright: Agenda #2 Buildings and Grounds – what is the intention? Mr. Anderson, mute about the administrator position. When you released the administrator without cause, I wonder if you were aware of negotiations. You paid \$34,000 to release the administrator, so now you're going to spend money to hire someone to negotiate. Penny Mullins: Board Packets, available for review prior to meetings – "Com. Furlong stated that he wanted the packets to go out before the meetings, will it go out prior? Is there a timeline?"

Adjournment: Moved by Com. Peterson, supported by Comm. Furlong to adjourn this meeting at 7:10 pm. Motion carried, 4-0.