

Trempealeau County Executive/Finance Meeting

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Wisconsin Room at the Trempealeau County Government Center, Whitehall, Wisconsin on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 by Chairman Ernie Vold.

Board Members Present: Ernie Vold, Mark Smick, Doug Winters, Wally Geske, Dave Suchla

Others Present: Paul Syverson, Jami Kabus, Laverne Michalek, Rose Ottum, Laurie Halama, Nick Gamroth, Kendall Kulig, Mark Bartow, Jim Johnson

Notice was posted according to open meeting law requirements.

Adoption of Amended Agenda – Motion/Second: Winters/Geske to adopt the presented agenda; Motion carried.

5. Sale of County owned Real Estate - Bids

Laverne handed out the results of the tax delinquent real estate bids. Received \$142,677.00 in bids. One property is still pending to do an eviction action, has to early June, 2010 to move out. Would need approval of the sale of these properties to the successful high bidders. There is one question regarding property 09-44. Specs called for bid bond in form of a money order or cash. One out of 106 bidders sent a personal check which is not in compliance with the bidding procedures. This can be waived, but it is a committee judgment call. Lavern showed copies of the bid process documents that showed specific guidelines of the bidding process that said no personal checks. Laverne said we will be selling more properties like this in the future and is concerned that the County may be viewed as not serious about it's terms and is a risk if you don't hold the line on it. Ernie stated that policy is policy and should not deviate from that.

M/2nd Geske/Vold to reject 1st bid on Property #0944 due to non-compliance of bid procedure requirements and award to 2nd bidder. Motion carried.

The DNR is interested in some of the properties that the County was bidding out. The state has procedures they have to go through to line up an appraiser to appraise the land and approval for purchase. The DNR projected later in June, 2010 before they could act on these properties. This process is timely and did not coincide with the County's bidding timeframe. The committee previously decided not to wait, but to continue with the bidding process and see what was received for bids on these properties and address the issue once the bids are opened. The properties of interest were Property 0918, 0906 and 0941. The state appraisals could vary, no way to predict what the offer would be and could be mid to late June, which is after the 30 days.

Motion/Second: Winters/Geske to accept remaining high bids as submitted. Motion carried.

6. Issues regarding Town of Hale Real Estate acquired in 1954

In 1954, the county acquired 1.3 acres of land and did not have a tax parcel # assigned to it in the past. The assessor continued to assess this person who sold the property based on 32 acres of land. Now that it has been discovered, the current owner gets a bill showing he only owns 30 acres and has been paying taxes on 32 acres for 34 years. Owner is asking if the County deed this property to him.

Motion/Second: Suchla/Geske to send to the County Board to give him the land. Motion carried.

7. Register of Deeds

Rose Ottum gave an update to the committee of what the office functions are. 4 FTE employees, which one is a 0.5 FTE floater throughout the courthouse. She does backup of the department records. Prior ROD relied on the Whitehall Abstract Company to be the backup. But the County Board decided it was important to have our own. Rose invited everyone to come in to the office and see what they do and how they do it. Redaction Law- Act 314 went into effect, which was signed by the Governor, effective June 25, 2010. Also effects the Land Records Dept. Social Security redaction pertains to online records. Have to be able to produce a certified copy without the redaction. Anything that goes out online does not have a SS# on it. \$5 fee per document to accomplish this. Doing manually, and complete within 5 yrs. Anticipated revenue would be \$27,060 per year. Rose requested a fund be set up that is non-lapsing. Funds can only be used for redacting. Rose handed out a copy of resolution to establish a non-lapsing fund for redaction of SSN on the internet. Acct would be used for software, possibly salaries, anything relating to the redacting. Rose and Martin Goettl will bring back an updated resolution to the June 7, 2010 E/F committee meeting.

8. Treasurer-Checking Account

TABLED until Jon Zander can attend

9. Comparables of Other County Budgets

Suchla handed out comparables to other County ROD offices. Monroe and Dunn County are the two of interest. Would like additional research with these Counties to see how they are operating their ROD departments. Rose pointed out that salary is an issue, but they have a back-up and Trempealeau County does not and hired a person to do backup and data entry. It is up to the committee if a backup is important to the County. Further discussion regarding duties performed and types of documents handled within the ROD office and other County ROD office. Rose said she would check with the other counties and report back her finding to the committees. Vold asked Suchla to check more into Monroe County. There may be more involved in that County. Look at # of employees compared to the # of deeds. Treasurer Office is under the average of the other 8 counties. Coroner is 2nd highest based on cost per death. Things can get skewed based on age of population. TC Clerk's office is practically impossible to compare to other counties. Suchla would like a comparison Clerk of Court. Syverson said the whole court system is in that budget, probate, judge, etc. Smick liked the comparable discussion but is still concerned about apples to apples. Smick handed out comparables he felt were more similar to Trempealeau County, using hwy miles, populations and equalized valuation. Wants to use these as comparables for references in the future. Smick also requested a report of all county employees, by name, per dept. Suchla suggested

inviting the local representatives to meet with the County Board to discuss concerns. Geske will make the contacts.

10. ATV Trails

The County Board was approached in 2007 on the idea of ATV routes. Question on how trails use highways, bridges, etc. The Board adopted a resolution in April, 2007 that allowed ATVs to use short segments of the road and Hwy Dept was left to manage that. In later years, requests were received to expand the use of county highways for ATV use. SS prohibits ATVs to be on roads with limited exceptions. Countys and townships may expand that. This has not been approved in the past by the committees. Since this is a change of policy, it comes back to this committee. Mark handed out packets of info regarding the ATV club and request to use County Hwys for ATV use. The club is requesting approval for the club members to use certain portions of county highways in order to access land and connect trails. This would include approximately one mile on Cty Rd E from Elk Creek traveling east until the trail picks up along Witt Hill Road. And also approximately one mile of Cty Rd E/Cty Rd O just south of Pleasantville, where the trail resumes along Schroeder Road. Suchla asked if Mark was looking for a resolution and asked if snowmobilers also had to ask for this. LaVerne outlined legality concerns, pointing out that the trails are not open to the public. Mark said they are open to the public if you become a member. Laverne said that is the issue. State Snowmobile trails are not that way, snowmobile trails are open to everyone, managed by DNR, funding from the state, etc. Snowmobile trails are maintained by several private clubs, but the trails are public. This request is for a private trail. ATV trails are different. Referenced the Public Purpose doctrine - using county facilities or designate them as trails for the benefit of a private club, not for the public. Clearly private use sponsored by a county entity. This created liabilities involved and using public facilities for private purposes. Smick asked if this was allowed, would the public be allowed to use the trails? Mark said the trails can not be public in order to be on private property. Control purpose to manage trails. Anyone can become a member. Smick asked about liability on county roads. SS protects land owners from liability for recreational use, but does not protect Counties. We have liability insurance, but if this is not a proper use for the County to be doing, insurance could deny claims. Suchla asked if other Counties that have private clubs. Mark said every County has private clubs and they are the ones that take care of the State trails and use county highways. Laverne pointed out that there are several private snowmobile clubs in the County and an association and they are all involved in maintaining the trails, but they are public trails. Suchla said that is the point of whether it is a public or private trail. Mark pointed out other counties that allow ATV use on County roads. It is the intention of the Club to hook into public trails near Osseo in the future. Cost for signage on the trails will be done by the club. Signage on the County roads would have to be put up. Mark would have to ask club if it can reimburse the County for signage. Club has approval from Town of Hale & Lincoln, City of Whitehall, with an updated ordinance. Jim Johnson pointed out ATV ordinances of other counties that outline specifics, but not sure if it was for public or private trails. LaVerne cautioned using other counties as an example. Mark asked if the existing resolution would allow usage. Laverne said no as it is intended to cross roads to get around bridges, rivers, etc.

Motion/Second: Geske/ Winters not to allow ATV use on County Roads, with the exception of the existing resolution from April, 2007. Roll call vote, Yes votes - Geske, Winters, Vold, No votes – Smick, Suchla. Motion Carried

11. County Official Newspaper and posting/publishing of agendas & minutes

Smick would like to do the minimum legal requirements regarding posting in order to save money on official publications and newspapers. Anything above and beyond the minimum requirements is a waste. Also post agendas on the County website and on the County TV station. Suggested requested talking to the state-wide elected officials to change publication requirements. Syverson says we have to notify the official newspaper of agendas, it is the paper's choice to publish, which is not an expense to us. Syverson also said it is also posted on the Web page. Smick feels the whole process needs to be revisited. No Action Taken

12. County Board Rules

Smick pointed out Rule 22, which says that no preliminary or draft minutes should be published prior to committee approval. Smick feels public should have access and transparency is important. Laverne says that anyone from the public can request a draft copy. No Action Taken

13. Set next meeting date – June 7, 2010 at 9:00 am

14. Adjourn - **Suchla/Vold adjourned meeting at 11:35 am**