

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BIG STONE COUNTY BOARD**  
**March 19, 2024**

The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners met in the Commissioners' Room at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Chairman Sandberg called the meeting to order with Commissioners Olson, Zimmel, Klages and Athey present. Also present were Dillon Dwyer of the Ortonville Independent and Coordinator Pam Rud. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Athey and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 5<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Zimmel and carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

Commissioners reported on the following committees:

Zimmel – BSAG, PIC  
Athey – SWCD, HRA, UMRWD  
Klages – PdTRA, RLF  
Olson – PW, CPH

Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried unanimously to authorize payment of claims as prepared by Auditor-Treasurer Michelle Knutson. Vendors, excluding Family Services, receiving payments in excess of \$2,000 are as follows:

Abdo	\$22,500.00
City of St Cloud	10,743.17
CPT	6,698.00
HP	3,853.90
M-R Sign Co	2,712.78
Marco	14,170.00
Ortonville Independent	3,158.60
Pioneerland Library	8,223.71
52 Payments Less Than \$2,000	<u>22,570.49</u>
Total	\$94,630.65

Family Services Director Laura Laub presented an agreement with Ortonville Schools for Collaborative Services with Greater Minnesota Family Services. Motion by Olson, seconded by Zimmel and carried unanimously to approve the agreement as presented.

Laura Laub presented a Corporate Foster Care Fee schedule for consideration. Motion by Athey, seconded by Klages and carried unanimously to approve the fee schedule as presented.

County Engineer Jordan Roggenbuck presented an agreement between Big Stone County and MnDOT which would allow MnDOT to act as Big Stone County's agent in accepting federal aid for the CSAH 7 Bituminous Surfacing project. Motion by Olson, seconded by Klages and carried unanimously to approve the agreement and authorize Roggenbuck to sign on behalf of the County and adopt the following resolution:

## **2024-08**

BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Minnesota Stat. Sec. 161.36, the Commissioner of Transportation be appointed as Agent of the local agency to accept as its agent, federal aid funds which may be made available for eligible transportation related projects.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Chairman and the Engineer are hereby authorized and directed for and on behalf of the local agency to execute and enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Transportation prescribing the terms and conditions of said federal aid participation as set forth and contained in "Minnesota Department of Transportation Agency Agreement No. 1056087, a copy of which said agreement was before the County Board and which is made a part hereof by reference.

Roggenbuck requested permission to advertise for bids for CSAH 7 project. Motion by Athey, seconded by Zimmel and carried unanimously to approve the advertising.

Roggenbuck informed the Board that bids were received for the 2024 gravel crushing and requested that the Board consider awarding the contract to Wm D Scepaniak Inc for \$272,850.00, which was the lowest bid. Motion by Klages, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to award the contract as requested by Roggenbuck.

Discussion was held on the Artichoke First Responders and necessary items needed for their start up. No action was taken.

Rud shared a request from Prairie 5 to have a county representative participate in the Transit Advisory Committee. Commissioner Athey volunteered to be the representative. Motion by Olson, seconded by Klages and carried unanimously to authorize Commissioner Athey to participate in the committee.

Rud presented a resolution for the Board to consider which would encourage Congress to enact legislation to equalize revenue sharing payments and ditch assessment from Federally-owned land to the amount that would be owed in property taxes if the property were privately owned, or fund at the full .75% of market value as per the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act. Knutson provided data on the history of revenue sharing payments and on federal wetland acres. Motion by Athey, seconded by Klages and carried unanimously to adopt the following resolution:

## **2024-09**

WHEREAS, Federal agencies acquiring private land in Minnesota can erode the tax base in the counties in which they are acquired; and

WHEREAS, the tax base from the acreage which is privately owned is very consequential to the County and the County deems the rural tax base should be protected to ensure an equitable distribution of the tax burden across property owners; and

WHEREAS, the 1978 amendment to the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act ("the Act") outlines how revenue generated on Federal lands is to be shared with local governments and provides authorization for Congress to appropriate funds when there is a shortfall in revenue; and

WHEREAS, if the amount appropriated by Congress is insufficient, the US Fish and Wildlife Service pays counties and other units of local government a pro-rata share; and

WHEREAS, the revenue sharing payments authorized under the Act offset losses in local tax revenue experienced by counties and other local governments due to the presence of substantial acreage of Federal land in their jurisdictions; and  
WHEREAS, Big Stone County provides critical services to visitors of Federally owned land, including law enforcement, road and bridge maintenance, search and rescue, as well as others; and

WHEREAS, ongoing analysis has shown that the revenue sharing payments provided by Federal agencies are significantly lower than the promised .75% of market value, which has shifted the burden onto other taxable properties; and

WHEREAS, in addition to revenue sharing payments, US Fish and Wildlife may also make a one-time trust payment, which exceeds the annual revenue sharing payment; however, once those funds are expended no additional trust payments are made and the levy burden is shifted to other properties as the annual revenue sharing payment does not equal the tax paid by other properties; and

WHEREAS, properties that are owned by Federal agencies are not subject to ditch assessments, thereby shifting the burden of costs associated with maintenance of these systems to other properties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners supports legislation that would equalize the revenue sharing payments and ditch assessments from Federally-owned land to the amount that would be owed if the property were privately owned, as assessed and levied by taxing districts within the county.

Rud requested approval for a Seasonal Ground Maintenance position up to 25 hours a week during the summer months. This position will help with lawn care and Toqua Park maintenance. Motion by Olson, seconded by Klages and carried unanimously to approve the position.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Zimmel and carried unanimously to approve the appointment of Larry Billiet to the BSAG Board.

Rud requested approval for the County Attorney to be issued a credit card per County policy. Motion by Athey, seconded by Sandberg and carried unanimously to approve a credit card to the County Attorney with a \$2,500 limit.

Rud informed the Board that Kenzie Medanich has been hired as the Office Manager in the Environmental Office.

Rud informed the Board that the Township Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 PM at the Clinton Memorial Building.

Chairman Sandberg adjourned the meeting at 9:21 AM.

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Roger Sandberg, Chairman

ATTEST:\_\_\_\_\_

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Pam Rud, Coordinator