

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 4, 2016

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on October 4, 2016 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Commissioners Warren Peschl, Jim McMahon, Jake Bauerly, Ed Popp and Spencer Buerkle present. Call to order by Chair Buerkle was at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Peschl/Bauerly unanimous to approve the agenda as written.

No one was present to speak under Open Forum.

Popp/McMahon unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 20, 2016 as written; 2) approve addition of incentive language in the existing Benton County Health and Wellness Program/approve incentives offered for remainder of 2016; 3) accept and file Veterans Service Officer quarterly report for the period May 1, 2016 to August 31, 2016; 4) accept 2017 Natural Resources Block grant payment; 5) adopt Resolution 2016-#32, accepting donation from members of *Solid Rock Church of St. Cloud* to the Sheriff's Office K-9 Program, and authorize the Chair to sign; and 6) adopt Resolution 2016-#33, accepting donation from *Fraternal Order of Eagles Ladies Auxiliary 622 of St. Cloud* to the Sheriff's Office DARE Program, and authorize the Chair to sign.

Marilyn Novak, Benton County Recorder, announced her retirement effective December 31, 2016 after a combined 30 years of service to Benton County. Board members thanked Novak for her dedicated service to Benton County and wished her well in her retirement.

George Fiedler, Benton County Veterans Service Officer, explained that, during the 2013 legislative session, the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, County Veterans Service Office Operational Enhancement Grant Program, was modified and the state funding increased. He noted that the grant program provides an annual base grant to all 87 counties of \$7,500; in addition, each county gets additional money based on the veteran population in their county (Benton County's veteran population is cited as 3,345, so Benton County will get an additional \$5,000). Fiedler indicated that the money can only be spent for specific items; his recommendation is to use the money for marketing, training conference expenses and associated travel; software maintenance for VIMS, and notebook computer. Bauerly/McMahon unanimous to adopt Resolution 2016-#34, accepting the grant from the State of MN, providing Benton County \$12,500 to spend on veteran services activities as outlined in the list of approved items from the State of MN, and authorize the Chair to sign.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, explained that the Public Works Department has had an established policy with regard to snow/ice removal on Benton County roads and highways; he stated that he has rewritten this policy to make it easier to read. Byrd highlighted a number of sections in the abridged version of the winter maintenance policy, requesting Board approval. McMahon/Popp unanimous to approve the Benton County Winter Maintenance Policy with regard to snow/ice removal on Benton County roads and highways as presented, and authorize the Chair to sign. Byrd will post this approved policy on the county website.

Engineer's Report: 1) "3 Up the Hill" in Sauk Rapids (curb and gutter complete on prepared areas; hope to pave from 3rd Avenue to Summit Avenue later this week; contractor hopes to complete all paving,

including the wear course, this year (deadline date is October 28th); 2) Overlay projects on CSAH 4, CSAH 6 and CSAH 7 are complete, except for the permanent striping; 3) CSAH 8 reclaim project is complete; 4) getting equipment ready for winter; 5) Foley City Council meeting tonight to discuss joint 4th Avenue project (sidewalk concerns relating to ADA compliance); and 6) Watab Township meeting tonight to discuss the possibility of interchanges at TH 10 and some of our county roads (would be a required cost participation from the county).

Karri Thorsten, Auditor-Treasurer, informed the Board that her office received a letter from Lunis and Barb Katterhagen stating they would like to donate parcel 18.00164.00 to the County; the parcel is located in the City of Sartell in an R-3 zone and contains no structures. Upon questioning of other county staff, Thorsten noted no foreseeable use of this property. Board members inquired of the parcel size, market value and taxes. McMahan inquired of accepting the parcel for possible future economic development purposes. Following brief discussion, Bauerly/McMahan unanimous to table this item to allow Board members to view the parcel.

Commissioner Popp questioned the status of the parcel (the “island” property in Langola Township) which was conveyed to Benton County from the State (in previous discussions, the Board had inquired if the County could convey/sell this parcel to another party—directly or indirectly). Thorsten noted that she had previously sought a legal opinion from the County Attorney’s Office; she will reach out to the County Attorney’s Office again in this regard.

The Regular County Board meeting was recessed at 9:35 AM to conduct a Human Services Board meeting.

The Regular County Board meeting was reconvened at 10:05 AM.

Brian Koester, representing the Benefits Advisory Committee, presented the Committee’s recommendation for non-union employee health insurance contributions and plans for 2017 (Benton County received a 7.5% rate increase from Health Partners for 2017 which will remain flat for 2018 should Benton County choose to renew with Health Partners). Koester presented a proposed premium structure for 2017 for non-union employees (county contribution and employee contribution) that reflects a 50/50 split of the stated increase between employer and employees. Koester also stated the Committee’s recommendation that no new enrollees will be allowed into the \$500/\$1,000 deductible plan or the \$1,500/\$3,000 deductible plan with VEBA, from and after January 1, 2017; this recommendation applies to non-union employees only (employees currently enrolled in these two plans may continue their coverage in these plans). He noted that the rationale behind phasing out these two plans is, for the most part, to reduce administrative costs (Benton County pays administrative costs for each individual plan). Noting that there are very few employees enrolled in those two plans, Bauerly inquired of phasing out those plans for existing employees as well over time. Koester noted that, at some point, these plans may become cost-prohibitive for employees. Monty Headley, County Administrator, noted that the county could attempt to negotiate the elimination of these plans with the unions in the short term. McMahan stated his belief that employees were previously assured (through negotiations) that they could stay in these lower deductible plans as long as they desired. Buerkle pointed out that the two plans which are being proposed for phase out (for non-union employees only) are the plans with the lowest county contribution to premium. Lee Katzmarek, Human Resources Director, commented that the issue of “cadillac tax” must be considered in the overall costs for those two plans. Koester noted that the premium structure for all four plans was intentionally designed to move employees to the higher deductible plans to help control plan utilization. Bauerly stated his

agreement that the two high deductible plans “make people more accountable for their own wellness”. McMahon/Peschl unanimous to approve the 2017 health insurance premium structure for non-union employees as presented; further, that no new enrollees will be allowed into the \$500/\$1,000 deductible plan or the \$1,500/\$3,000 deductible plan with VEBA, from and after January 1, 2017--this applies to non-union employees only (employees currently enrolled in these two plans may continue their coverage in these plans).

Board members reported on recent meetings they attended on behalf of the county.

Topics discussed under Commissioner Concerns: 1) Concern with future of the State of MN defined benefit program; 2) Watab Township Board meeting tonight (Commissioner of Transportation will be in attendance); and 3) Additional Highway signage request (CSAH 12).

Peschl/McMahon unanimous to set Committees of the Whole: October 17, AMC District V Meeting; December 1, Benton Economic Partnership Quarterly Membership Meeting; and December 5-6, AMC Annual Conference.

Bauerly/Peschl unanimous to adjourn at 10:40 AM.

Spencer C. Buerkle, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator