

Martin County Board of Commissioners
Work Session
December 13, 2017

The work session was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Schmidtke. Those present were Commissioners Mahoney, Smith, Forshee, Schmidtke, Belgard, and Flohrs. Also present were James Forshee, Auditor/Treasurer, Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, Ben Madsen, County Surveyor, Doug Borchardt, Building Maintenance Supervisor, Stephanie Johnson, Martin County Substance Abuse Prevention (MCSAP) Project Coordinator, Rod Halvorsen, KSUM-KFMC Radio, Julie Walters, Administrative Assistant, Dustin Benes, District Technician Martin SWCD, Kevin Peyman, County Engineer, Natalie Howell, Sentinel Newspaper, Ashley Brenke, District Manager Martin SWCD, Steve McDonald, MIS Director.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

By consensus, approve the agenda for the December 13, 2017, Board Work Session with one addition: 4.6 Discuss Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Plan – Martin Soil and Water Conservation District.

Stephanie Johnson, Martin County Substance Abuse Prevention (MCSAP) Project Coordinator, was present to share information that Joe Schmit (Channel 5 Newscaster from the Twin Cities) will be at the Fairmont High School Performing Arts Center on Wednesday – January 3, 2018, to present Silent Impact Influence through Purpose, Persistence and Passion. Johnson noted that through our grant through the MCSAP Coalition and partnering with the Library (SCHF Grant through the Traverse de Sioux Library) and several other people in the community we are excited to announce this presentation. Johnson also noted that Schmit will first speak with all of the kids in Martin County and will speak to the community in the evening.

Dustin Benes, District Technician Martin SWCD, and Ashley Brenke, District Manager Martin SWCD, presented a review of the County's 2017 Aquatic Invasive Species program including:

- Worked with the Martin County Sheriff's Office with increasing the water patrol efforts.
- Used local newspapers to advertise articles and ads throughout the season. Made use of local radio station to broadcast announcements (Fishing Opener, July 4th, Waterfowl Opener, 10 weekly broadcast throughout the season).
- Billboard spot was purchased on the north end of Fairmont on Hwy 15, rated at 39,825 impressions per week. Billboard is currently still up, 19 weeks, equates to 756,675 impressions. Contract is currently up, will renew in the spring.
- Trainings and meetings – collaborated with MN DNR, Watershed Districts, University of MN, Counties, and other Districts involved with IS prevention in St. Peter; completed an online training course for AIS Detector Program. Was certified and passed an AIS Early Detector Program through the University of Minnesota; two staff and one intern attended and completed the DNR Ambassador training.
- Set up and periodically monitored 6 (six) lake launches.
- SWCD staff attended 6 events and displayed, distributed handouts, and discussed the prevention of AIS – total attendance for the 6 events included 215 students and 195 adults.

- Martin County Fair Booth, set up displays, distributed brochures, products, and discussed the prevention of AIS for 7 days. Fair attendance for 2017 was estimated at 20,000 people.
- Made use of local business to help design and purchased new banners for displays at lake launches.
- Continue to contact neighboring counties on their efforts and discuss any joint projects.
- Contacted the area MN DNR Invasive Species Specialist and assisted with inspections of area docks at the end of the season with MN DNR Invasive Species specialist. Contacted the nearest Iowa DNR biologist, in Spirit Lake, discussing pathways and invasive management in the Iowa Great Lakes. Purchased and distributed products advertising AIS prevention.
- Coordinated with the Prairie Ecology Bus, AIS Education Program Sponsorship Opportunity. They are working with MCW School, having a three day class December 13-15, 2017. 58 – 7th grade students and 17 – 10th grade (total students 75).

Brenke and Benes noted goals for 2018 include:

- ✓ Continue assistance with Martin County law enforcement.
- ✓ Advertising with billboards, local newspapers and radio.
- ✓ Coordinate with Prairie Ecology Bus for another sponsorship with area schools.
- ✓ Assist and continue communication with MN and Iowa DNR, neighboring Counties, Watershed Districts, Lake Associations, Conservation Clubs, County Departments, and State Departments.
- ✓ Early monitoring and detection efforts will continue at launch sites.

Brenke also noted the 2018 Martin County Aquatic Invasive Species Plan will be presented to the Board for approval at the December 19, 2017, regular Board of Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Flohrs inquired the nearest lake that has reported AIS.

Benes noted Lake Okaboji has Zebra, Asian carp; Lura Lake in Blue Earth County has Eurasian watermilfoil.

Higgins noted there has been some recent discussion and consideration by the Board with regard to changing the election of the county surveyor to an appointed position. Higgins went on to note Ben Madsen, Martin County Surveyor, is present to answer any questions the Board may have. Higgins also noted per MN Statute the county board may by resolution adopted at least six months prior to the end of term of office of the county surveyor declare its intention to fill the office by appointment.

Madsen noted most of the other counties, apart from the metro area and some of the more populous counties, have a different situation than what we have. We're quite unique amongst the outstate counties in that we have three (3) surveyors within our county and that's not the case for most of the state. Surveying as a profession is in a decline and has been for probably the last ten to fifteen years. There are more people retiring than there are coming into the profession. It is not a new problem; but it has been on a slow decline for years and in the outstate areas it's

harder to make a living doing it as there is more development going on in the more populous counties.

Madsen went on to note there's a couple of reasons why counties that have larger cities and a larger tax base prefer to have an appointed surveyor and that has to do with the amount of competition there would be potentially on the ballot. Some counties up in the metro you might have ten to fifteen people vying for that seat. The other thing is on the outside areas you've got counties that don't have a surveyor and never have really to speak of anybody that lives within the border or nearby or that wants the job. I was talking to the president of the Minnesota Association of County Surveyors today getting his input on it and his feedback was basically there was a movement in the 1960's changing some of the elected positions and prior to that the position was elected and it was a county position in every county. In an effort to make it more of an optional thing, for counties that didn't have a lot going on and didn't really have a need, they decided to give that choice to the county by way of statute to allow them to either abolish or appoint if needed and kind of do away with it if there were wasn't anyone to do it.

Madsen also noted I wasn't sure what the Boards' thoughts were and suspect that the County is contemplating the change out of budgetary concerns or if I had done something to warrant the Board wanting someone else in the position.

Commissioner Schmidtke noted this has come up several times since I've served as a county commissioner so it is nothing new.

Higgins noted the county is always looking at operations every year and some of the concern too is you're a little bit different than elected officials who are on the county's payroll and what you're required to do on behalf of the County.

Madsen noted the state requires county surveyors to maintain all survey records and survey related documents that end up in the Recorder's Office. There are other duties and if there was more of a need for it we would be viewing all surveys. For instance the county surveyor in some counties do nothing but look at surveys that come to the courthouse and view them and send them back if they are substandard and make sure everything is meeting the requirements. What we have in this county is basically the zoning official does that and makes sure that it meets the zoning requirements. But, we're required to keep all surveys that are done by our office, keep a copy of it at the Recorder's Office and here, available for public viewing and we're required to provide copies to anybody who might want any of that information. We have our own indexing system and because we work in 15-17 other counties in Martin County we have to keep separate records. Some of that work, more and more as time goes on, gets to be a little bit involved because there is a flow of a couple hundred surveys and other documents that come in through the year that need to be added to those records so we're constantly adding to the books and those books are all being digitized as well. The other side of this...in the field what we do is we would do surveys as required and requested by any court or if something came before the Board or it was a county project or issue something more than Highway personnel could do, we're the person that would do that as well.

Commissioner Schmidtke noted the Highway Department does their own surveying unless there is something that is really critical?

Kevin Peyman, County Engineer, was present and noted we don't have a registered land surveyor – we have Brian Winter that has Fairmont surveyor experience and with our equipment we'll do surveying for construction work and things like that, finding section corners, things that don't require a registered land surveyor.

Commissioner Smith inquired if Madsen is compensated for services performed for Martin County.

Madsen noted generally we do not invoice for services we do for the County. I imagine if it were something above and beyond-if there was a complicated survey or ongoing surveying needs...right now the compensation that we get is I think it is a partial payment for the health plan that I have.

Commissioner Belgard inquired by statute is the county surveyor required to live in the county. And, are you the county surveyor for any other counties.

Madsen noted I am not the surveyor for any other county. I can think of a couple of instances where I think somebody in Mankato might be Blue Earth and Nicollet.

Commissioner Mahoney inquired how long have you and your dad been county surveyor.

Madsen noted my father (John Madsen) was elected in 1983. As far as quality our records are one of the best that there is period even when you compare to metro counties. If you ever took the time to go through or had to research anything land record related it would be more evident why it is so important to have that history that goes way back. It just adds accuracy and reliability and certainty to the landowners. We are required to be open at any reasonable hour and either provide copies of any of the records we have or allow them to be viewed.

Higgins noted coming from AMC in July of this year between 2006 and 2016 they found 3 counties that elected a county surveyor: LeSueur, Martin, and Steele. At that time Becker and Kandiyohi Counties were the most recent counties that transferred from elected to appointed in 2014.

Commissioner Schmidtke thanked Madsen for the discussion.

Higgins presented and reviewed ISG's latest design concept and site plan for the proposed garage facility. At this point it is a good opportunity to review and discuss with the full Board as we near finalization of the CY2018 budget. Higgins noted nothing has been approved yet – this is a concept design only with placeholders included on the site map. Cost is estimated at \$114 per square foot and allows for space to grow. You have to decide as a Board the quality of building you want and need. Higgins expects estimated options and costs for the storage facility.

Forshee noted the number in the budget if we would go out and bond is \$102,000 for 15 years. We took the wind turbine money out of the revenue stream and have that set aside too and can use a little bit of that.

Commissioner Smith inquired when we will know about the remodeling of the Transit Facility and when county storage and STS office/work shop will have to vacate the facility.

Commissioners Belgard and Mahoney noted it is up to the Minnesota Department of Transportation – Office of Transit as it is in their hands at the moment.

Peyman noted beavers are getting to be a real issue in the county and I don't know if you've heard from townships at all; but, we've had a couple of county culverts where beaver have blocked them and we clean them out and the beaver come right back unless you trap them. There used to be two trappers that would go in and trap the beavers; but, we're told that beaver pelts are worth nothing now and they're telling us they don't think that is going to change.

Forshee noted we do have a beaver bounty and there are one or two people that trap beavers and I talked to one of them that lives south of town and he said for what the county is paying you can't pay for your gas and stuff so they would like to continue with trapping beaver but want to see the bounty go up. Currently the beaver bounty is \$20 and recommend increasing the bounty to \$40 or \$50 per beaver.

After further discussion,

Consensus of Board is to include Martin County Beaver Bounty discussion on the December 19, 2017, regular Board of Commissioners agenda.

Forshee and Higgins presented and reviewed the CY2018 Preliminary Budget previously set at 5.84 percent and with adjustments is now at 5.69 percent.

Higgins noted this comes up from time to time...as you know we're not required to videotape the Board meetings and it is all over the board with other counties if they record or not, whether they record live or put it on their website for future, the quality, purpose and cost. It will take equipment and cost to do it; but, it could be as simple as a cell phone on a stand.

Commissioner Smith noted I hear from my constituents in Fairmont because they get to watch the city council meetings and are used to watching the city council meetings and they want to see the commissioner meetings. I think this is something that we need to explore.

McDonald noted we've gone down this road a while back. Back then what I was told was there was only one "feed" and "feed" is at city hall (to get on cable). And then someone has to handle all the equipment. I don't know if we can put one up here or not. At that time they said no because they'd have to disconnect from there (city offices) and hook up here and vice versa.

Commissioner Smith requests doing some research on this topic to find out costs even if just to film it (commissioner meetings) and put it on our website.

McDonald noted to do that we would buy a camera, record it, we'd have to put some mics or something in somewhere for decent audio and then once that is done we'd put links on our website. The video's would not be stored on our website we'd have to store them on Utube or Vimeo or something like that.

Higgins noted we do publish our Board minutes and have them right here on our website and the media is here, and they are open meetings.

Commissioner Schmidtke noted for McDonald to do some investigation, see what the costs are and bring that information back to us (the Board).

With no further business to wit, Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, MN

Dan Schmidtke, Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
Scott Higgins, Board Chair