

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2007/9:07 A.M.

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners Special Meeting was held on Tuesday, January 30, 2007, at the Wadena County Courthouse in the Courthouse Auditorium at 415 Jefferson St. S., Wadena Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Chairman Bill Stearns and the pledge of allegiance to the flag was said.

Present were: Commissioners Mary Harrison, Lane Waldahl, Dave Schermerhorn. Commissioner Meyer arrived at 9:50 a.m. Also present was Joel Uring, Highway Engineer.

The Board Agenda to stand as scheduled.

Chairman Stearns requested Board consideration of including a copy of the MCIT Bulletin article entitled "Personal Vehicles Used for Business Purposes" with all employees pay checks.

Board consensus was to have the Auditor/Treasurer include a copy of the article with all County employees' pay checks.

Char West, Auditor/Treasurer, presented the Board with a copy of the Wadena County Pay Equity Implementation Report dated December 31, 2006. She stated that the Report reflected Wadena County's compliance of the Pay Equity law.

Motion by Waldahl, seconded by Harrison, to accept the Pay Equity Implementation Report and authorize the Auditor/Treasurer to submit the report to the State, motion carried.

Chairman Stearns distributed handouts to the Board regarding the Wensman Building space. He pointed out that County roads to the north and east of the building, as well as the parking lot, would be resurfaced this spring and he recommended installing water and sewer into the building prior to the resurfacing. Chairman Stearns also pointed out the location of existing water mains and the need to connect to these in order to provide water for sprinklers, etc, into the building,

Chairman Stearns also discussed the Wensman Building record storage area. He stated that Architect Tony Stoll recommended the window be changed to a door and the floor be raised with a ramp to make the area handicap accessible.

Commissioner Harrison questioned whether the area needed to be handicap accessible as it was just serving as record storage?

Commissioner Stearns stated that Mr. Stoll recommended such in case it would be needed in the future.

Chairman Stearns referred to the study done by KKE, Architects, which pointed out the Courthouse offices that could possibly go into the Wensman Building that were not related to crime. He suggested the possibility of moving the Commissioner's Room, Veteran Services and

Extension to the Wensman Building, using the Building more in phases over a period of a year or two, with Sentenced to Serve providing the labor. Commissioner Stearns reviewed possible offices that could be moved to the Wensman Building over a period of the next four to five years, using the STS crew, without incurring any debt. He stated that the outside of the Building could eventually be finished off with insulation and stucco and suggested that the architect help with the design.

Chairman Stearns then informed the Board that he had questioned the Architect as to what the cost would be to add on to the Highway Department building for the purpose of storing the Friendly Rider buses. He stated that Mr. Stoll had informed him that the cost would be approximately \$25 to \$30 per square foot, for a dry area, which would be between \$80,000 to \$120,000, which could be done over the next four to five years, without incurring any debt.

Commissioner Waldahl informed the Board that Extension and the Recorder would like to install an open counter, at this time. He also questioned whether there was enough land to add on to the Highway Department?

Joel Ulring, Highway Engineer, informed the Board that the Highway Department lot was fairly good sized, but there would need to be enough room to move around. He stated that he was looking at the efficiency of his entire Department and would like to see the Highway Department at one location. Mr. Ulring reminded the Board that he had talked about eliminating the Verndale Shop after this winter and pulling both employees into Wadena. He also informed the Board that he was working with the City of Staples on locating one of the County plows in their shop and renting a stall for 6 months of the year.

Mr. Ulring stated that he had also researched the possibility of installing a fueling system at the Highway Department, which would cost about \$80,000 - \$100,000, but would save dollars when purchasing fuel in bulk. He recommended the Highway Department be centrally located, which would be at the County gravel pit by Bluegrass. Mr. Ulring commented that Zoning/ Planning and GIS have a link with the Highway Department and they could possibly be moved to that location.

Ms. West commented that the Auditor/Treasurer Office, as well as other Courthouse offices worked with the Zoning/Planning and GIS office on a daily basis.

Commissioner Waldahl questioned whether it would be feasible, due to gas prices, to drive to Bluegrass and back?

Mr. Ulring stated that he felt the difference would be small from a staff stand point, but it would be much more efficient at start time.

Commissioner Waldahl questioned where he thought Transit would be located?

Mr. Ulring stated that the Friendly Rider could take over the Highway Building, if the Highway Department moved to Bluegrass.

The Board questioned Mr. Ullring as to what he estimated a new Highway Department facility would cost?

Mr. Ullring stated that he estimated approximately \$3,000,000. He stated that State Aid dollars could be borrowed to construction the building, which would have to be paid back. Mr. Ullring also pointed out that the Bluegrass location could be a public facility for the Townships to use for meeting space, etc.

Commissioner Meyer arrived at the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Chairman Stearns commented that an \$80,000 to \$100,000 additional would be a modest expense. He stated that he felt the taxpayers would accept a project for \$80,000 to \$100,000, but that a \$3,000,000 Highway Department building project would be hard to fly.

Chairman Stearns reviewed the discussion with Commissioner Meyer.

The Board agreed that the first step should be the installation of water and sewer lines into the Wensman Building prior to the street and parking lot project.

Mr. Ullring pointed out that the Board needed to make a decision rather quickly as the street and parking lot project was scheduled to begin in the spring.

Motion by Waldahl, seconded by Harrison, to invite Tony Stoll, Baker, Hogan & Houx Architecture to the February 6, 2007 Board of Commissioners Meeting to discuss the firm's cost estimate for the development of a plan for the Wensman Building and further brief Commissioner Meyer of the Board's previous discussion, as well as plans to install water and sewer lines into the Building,

Commissioner Meyer questioned whether it could be justified to turn the present Courthouse into a Justice Center when it would do nothing to address the County's jail problem?

Commissioner Waldahl pointed out that the County was currently participating in the 11 County Jail Facility study, which should be considered in the whole equation.

Motion carried.

Board consensus was for the Maintenance Department to have the new water and sewer lines installed into the Wensman Building, using the same process when water and sewer lines were installed into the Maintenance area the previous spring, and to direct them to contact the Architect for guidance in doing such.

The Board recessed the Special Board Meeting for a short break at 10:10 a.m.

The Board reconvened the Special Board Meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Tom Fitzpatrick, County Labor Attorney, was in attendance.

Motion by Harrison, seconded by Schermerhorn, to authorize the closing of the Special Board Meeting at 10:20 a.m., January 30, 2007, for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategy with legal counsel, motion carried.

Chairman Stearns opened the Special Board Meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Motion by Meyer, seconded by Schermerhorn, to adjourn the Special Board Meeting at 11:33 a.m., motion carried.

Charleen West, Auditor/Treasurer

William Stearns, Chairman