

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2009/1:30 P.M.

A Special Meeting of the Wadena County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, June 23, 2009, at the Otter Tail County Government Services Center, 500 Fir Avenue W., Fergus Falls, Minnesota. The Wadena County Board of Commissioners came before the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Dave Schermerhorn, Commissioners William Stearns, Rodney Bounds, Ralph Miller, Consultant Mike Gibson and Auditor/Treasurer Char West. Absent: Commissioner Lane Waldahl. Also present: Otter Tail County Commissioners Everett Erickson, Roger Froemming, John Lindquist, Douglas Huebsch, and Lee Rogness, Solid Waste Director Mike Hanen, County Coordinator Larry Krohn and County Attorney David Hauser.

Mr. Hanen provided background relating to his work with the Wadena County Solid Waste Department over the previous three months. He stated that he felt the intent of the meeting of the two Boards was for the purpose of starting a dialogue on how the two Counties could work together as it related to Solid Waste.

Commissioner Stearns introduced the Wadena County representatives in attendance. He pointed out that Wadena County was currently without a Solid Waste Director and that the Board had hired Mr. Gibson to temporarily oversee the Solid Waste operation during this time. Commissioner Stearns stated that the idea of collaboration with Otter Tail County had been considered with the possibility of not having to hire a Solid Waste Director and contract for Mr. Hanen's time; which would eliminate the duplication of effort and staff. He turned the presentation over to Mr. Gibson

Mr. Gibson stated that the Part-time Recycling Processor had been employed at the Wadena County Transfer Station for five weeks when the two Transfer Station employees had been placed on leave. He added that the Part-time Recycling Processor had since been appointed the Temporary Transfer Station Supervisor. Mr. Gibson stated that due to the unexpected loss in personnel Mr. Hanen had been contacted and his assistance requested, which Otter Tail County had graciously offered. He thanked the Otter Tail Commissioners and Mr. Hanen for the additional staff time and assistance. Mr. Gibson stated that after visiting with Mr. Hanen, it was felt that Wadena County was behind in the recycling process. He provided a brief background of the recycling process that Wadena County currently had which involved paying to get rid of the recycling. Mr. Gibson concluded that currently Otter Tail County worked with other counties as it related to recycling and Wadena County would like to explore the possibility of also participating as Otter Tail County was a big customer that sold their recycling instead of paying someone to haul it away.

Mr. Gibson stated that he felt there were two ideas to consider; one being that the Wadena County Transfer Station was only miles from the Otter Tail County border, Wadena County's Transfer station needed repair as well as repair of the haulers process, which was very expensive.

He added that Wadena County would like to hire Mr. Hanen to also serve as Wadena County's Solid Waste Director and then brainstorm on how Wadena County's small Transfer Station to be used by both Counties.

Mr. Gibson stated that he felt the second idea to consider was the Perham Resource Recovery Center and the possible receipt of the 2.8 million grant dollars to be used towards the expansion of the facility. He pointed out that during the Resource Recovery Center Meeting, the current participating counties of Otter Tail, Todd and Wadena, as well as the newly interested counties of Becker and Cass expressed frustration with Waste Management and the question was whether the counties needed Waste Management. Mr. Gibson added that Hubbard County currently owned three trailers; all of the counties may have something to share.

Commissioner Froemming pointed out that the recent discussions being held by the Resource Recovery Center group had received the attention of the Governor's Steering Committee.

Commissioner Huebsch stated that a larger group would result in a reduction of cost as well as a lower risk. He also added that he was in favor of the idea of hauling Otter Tail County waste 10 miles to the Wadena Transfer Station instead of possibly 50 miles.

Mr. Krohn questioned whether Wadena County was looking for Otter Tail County to cover all or a portion of the duties of a Solid Waste Director.

Commissioner Stearns responded that he felt the position would cover the paper work such as filing of permits and reporting; possibly 20% time to do Wadena County's work.

Mr. Hanen also questioned what the expectations were as they could not expect the same services when he currently held a full-time position, but he could provide permitting oversight.

Mr. Hauser stated that there were several options the two Boards could consider; a Joint Powers Agreement or a Solid Waste Service Agreement where Wadena County could contract with Otter Tail County to purchase some of the services.

Commissioner Huebsch stated that an 80% - 20% split could get things started immediately.

Further Board discussion was held regarding possible ways to collaborate between counties.

Commissioner Stearns stated that he had been informed that Clay County was considering the construction of a big landfill which could then eliminate the need for all counties to haul their by-pass waste to Gwinner, ND.

Commissioner Rogness recommended that Mr. Gibson and Mr. Hanen meet to look over the Wadena County Transfer Station operation and then provide the two Boards with a percentage of Mr. Hanen's time that would be necessary at the Wadena County operation, which they would then consider. He added that collaboration would cut operational costs and that he would rather do things on a contractual basis as he felt it would provide the best service for residents.

Mr. Hanen stated that the current Wadena County staff had a lot of talents and that what was needed was some additional education.

Further Board discussion was held regarding the possible sharing of staff; that it did not matter whose assets they were but how economical the services could be delivered.

Mr. Hanen provided a tour to the Wadena County Commissioners, Mr. Gibson and Ms. West of the Otter Tail County Recycling Center and new Transfer Station located in Fergus Falls.

The Special Board Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Charleen West, Auditor/Treasurer

David Schermerhorn, Chairman