

**ALGER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

November 11, 2013

Minutes are subject to correction and approval

Pursuant to recess, the Alger County Board of Commissioners convened in the conference room of the county building at 4:00 p.m. on the above date.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Doucette with the following Commissioners present: Commissioners Mattson, Rondeau, VanLandschoot, and Doucette. Absent ó Commissioner Pullen.

A moment of silence was taken for Veteranø Day.

The board of commissioners said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment session was open. There was no public comment from the floor; thus, the public comment session was closed.

It was the consensus of the board to look at the minutes and make a motion at Mondayø regular board meeting.

The agenda was presented.

Rod DesJardins was present to discuss U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Louis Cote. He handed the board some correspondence from him to Captain Hill dated September 18, 2013. He said that in the spring of this year a law enforcement officer was assigned to the U.S. Forest Service Munising Ranger District. He said that almost to the day that he arrived, law enforcement officers and local elected officials started to receive complaints about his behavior and his actions. He said that these complaints accumulated and cast doubt as to whether he was behaving appropriately and whether or not he was violating the rights of citizens and also raised questions about his jurisdiction. Rod said that it seemed to everybody who was involved that he spent most of his time rather selectively and creatively enforcing Michiganø universal traffic code on county roads and state highways. He said that in August of this year, his supervisor, Patrol Captain Brandy Hill from the Gladstone office was called to Munising by representatives of the city, county, the state, and the federal police agencies in the area to address complaints that they had about his behavior. Rod said that following that meeting, nothing really happened. One month later with the complaints continuing to accumulate, Rod convened a meeting with local elected leaders. He discussed that meeting. He discussed a meeting with Special Agent Mary King, Chief U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer for the Eastern District; her Regional Control Commander Michael Clemens; Captain Hill; Charlie Marsh, Munising District Ranger; and Jo Reyer, Supervisor of the Hiawatha National Forest to address Rodø concerns along with Chief Nelson. He said that at that meeting him and the Chief presented information and then he requested that Officer Cote be suspended, transferred, or reassigned pending an independent investigation by the U.S. Attorneyø office in Marquette. He said that he made that request four times. Rod said that they concluded based upon their internal investigation that he had done nothing wrong and that there was no reason to discipline him or reassign him. He said that it was evident to him and the Chief that during the course of the meeting the Patrol Commander and the Special Agent in charge had received carefully screened information about his behavior and his actions from the Hiawatha Patrol Captain. He said that he had also communicated his intentions with the county prosecutor and it is on her recommendation and also on the recommendation of the city attorney, Rob Ferguson, that they request the U.S. Attorneyø office to conduct an independent investigation of Officer Coteø behavior, his actions, and some very inflammatory statements that he has made about the citizens and the local law enforcement officers. Rod said that he spoke preliminarily to Martin Vermont, Deputy U.S. Attorney, in Marquette. He said that Mr. Vermont has received many complaints about Officer Coteø behavior. Rod said that he asked him procedurally on how one requests the U.S. Attorneyø Office to conduct an investigation. He said that Mr. Vermont did not know and that Mr. Vermont had never investigated a Federal Law Enforcement Officer. Rod said that Mr. Vermont was equally concerned. Rod said that he would bring this matter before the county board and before the city commission, and then before the six township boards that met that evening back in September. He said that after learning about Officer Cote, it makes him believe that he is operating outside of his jurisdiction, that he is violating the rights of the constituents, and that he poses a threat to public peace and good order. Commissioner Mattson asked if he anyone came forward and brought documentation of events that had been reported. Rod said that they had 12 written complaints that they brought to last Fridayø meeting. He said that according to Special Agent Mary King the reports they received, once they were investigated, were inaccurate and false concerning his behavior. He said that he has given weight to those complaints. This was discussed much more in depth

along with jurisdiction. Rod is asking that the Alger County Board of Commissioners along with the Munising City Commission, request that the U.S. Attorney's Office in Marquette initiate an independent investigation into the action, behavior, and statements of U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Louis Cote. It was discussed that the board will make a decision at next week's regular board meeting.

It was discussed that the apportionment report needed to be amended because of the two millages that were passed in Burt Township. It was the consensus of the board to adopt the 2013 Amended Apportionment Report as presented.

Steve Webber was present to give the board an update on the Stonegarden Grant. He gave the board a handout for the 2014 budget, which is for the FY2011 to operate the boat and patrol the shorelines and for equipment. He would like to go out and get bids for purchasing digital cameras for the road patrol and each certified officer in the approximate amount of \$1,600 to \$1,800, dive equipment in the approximate amount of \$3,500, and a dry suit in the amount of \$2,000. He said that the grant would cover these costs. He would like approval of the board for overtime and to purchase the equipment. It was the consensus of the board to authorize the 2014 expenditure including the equipment.

Steve Webber gave the board an update on the Alger County repeater system. He said that the repeaters are already here and was purchased by Region 8. He would like to get them on St. Martin's Hill, Onota Hill, and Tie Lake. He has to purchase supplemental equipment and have installation of the equipment. The grant is for \$39,200. He said that he would see if Houghton will front the money and then will be reimbursed. He said that he needs approval to go ahead with the project. It was the consensus of the board to authorize Steve Webber to purchase the supplemental equipment and for installation of this repeaters.

There was discussion on the airport. The sheriff said that Tony Williams called him a couple of times this summer and last week. He said that Tony Williams was flying in and that the grass was long. He said that the board put it in the hands of community corrections. He wants to know who is responsible for cutting the grass. Commissioner Rondeau said that he was under the understanding that Murray was responsible but that community corrections did it. Commissioner Rondeau is to find out. The sheriff said to let him know and in the next season it will be ready to go.

It was the consensus of the board to reappoint Robert Haapala to the DHS (Department of Human Services) board for the three-year term expiring October 31, 2016.

It was the consensus of the board to authorize the clerk to reimburse the Estate of Katherine Valenti \$503.72 for prepayment of her health insurance.

There was discussion on the 911 budget committee. The sheriff said that it is a nine member committee consisting of the sheriff, the undersheriff, Chief Dan Malone, Chief James Seppanen, Dave Cromell, the county clerk, the county treasurer, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Alger County Board of Commissioners (which are on the law enforcement committee). Commissioner Rondeau asked about the surcharges of the cell phones. The sheriff said that it is done by sale or by the billing address.

Cost saving ideas / revenue sources were next on the agenda. There were none.

Old business was next. There was none.

There were no appropriations.

Board bills were next. It was the consensus of the board to approve payment of all board bills that have been reviewed by the audit committee. Commissioner Mattson said that there were two things noted. One was for no receipt for credit card usage with the sheriff's department and the other one was for Joe Cilco's tires. The board approved \$482.56. The bill was over \$500 because it included the labor.

It was the consensus of the board to approve the financial reports for all funds. A full 30-page report is available upon request with the Treasurer.

It was the consensus of the board to authorize the treasurer to transfer and amend the following revenues:

REVENUE AMENDMENTS AND TRANSFERS

- A. Authorize the treasurer to amend the revenues in reimbursements in the amount of \$2,800
- B. Authorize the treasurer to amend the transfer from the DTR (101-000-442.000) in the amount of \$35,000
- C. Authorize the treasurer to amend the miscellaneous budget in the amount of \$1,215
- D. Authorize the treasurer to transfer \$7,000 from the ambulance fund (210-000-999.000) into the transfer in ambulance (101-000-442.210)

- E. Authorize the treasurer to transfer \$2,800 from the debt elimination budget into the ORV Fund #211
- F. Authorize the treasurer to transfer \$35,000 from the debt elimination budget into the Trust and Agency Payroll #702

It was the consensus of the board to authorize the clerk to amend the following expenditures:

EXPENDITURE AMENDMENTS

- A. Authorize the clerk to amend the expenditures in the auditø budget in the amount of \$190
- B. Authorize the clerk to amend the expenditures in the attorneys/consultants budget in the amount of \$1,025
- C. Authorize the clerk to amend the expenditures in debt elimination budget in the amount of \$37,800

There were no miscellaneous financial matters.

Resolutions were next. There were none.

Committee reports were next. Commissioner Mattson wanted to bring the board up to date with the budgets. He said that the budget committee met for the first round of budgets and that between revenues and expenditures the budgets are off by approximately \$120,000. He discussed a couple of things to weigh on that amount. He said that one of them is cost allocation. He said that there is a meeting on cost allocation on Wednesday. He said that there are some departments that are having financial issues. He said if we move on those cost allocation figures it makes a bigger gap on the future budget and a decision will have to be made next Monday. He also discussed insurance and that a decision will have to be made. Commissioner Doucette said that there could be a special board meeting to pass the insurance to be able to digest what was presented. A special board meeting will be held next week sometime. Commissioner Rondeau discussed having an insurance committee meeting tomorrow night. He discussed the road commission meeting and explained if an employee of the road commission is a member of a volunteer fire department, how they are paid when there is a fire and are working. Commissioner Doucette asked about the posting for the Emergency Management Department. The undersheriff said that it was posted last week. Commissioner Doucette asked for it to be ready for next weekø meeting. He also discussed an email he received from UP SORVA Trail Development Association. He also asked Commissioner VanLandschoot about DHS and their employees. Commissioner Doucette said that he is concerned about the rent with DHS. He also discussed cost allocation monies. He said that he would like the budgets to be taken care of by the first of December. Commissioner Rondeau discussed that in his lifetime he sees something going on here and hiring a man acting as law enforcement, the government is trying to take control over the local people.

Correspondence was read from the Office of Waste Management and Radiological Protection Department of Environmental Quality, DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality), Metatel Communications, LLC, and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. These will be placed in the board meeting file.

Board comments were next. There were no board comments.

Staff comments were next. The undersheriff said that Detective Blank made two arrests on breaking and entering from camps in Alger County and has two warrants out. He discussed that the ambulance service makes between 900 to 1,300 runs per year. Steve Webber discussed the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) and a meeting scheduled on November 21st and that hopefully they will get those monies. There were no other comments.

Public comment session was open. There was no public comment from the floor; thus, the public comment session was closed.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Jerry Doucette, Chairman
Alger County Board of Commissioners

Mary Ann Froberg
Alger County Clerk