

Carroll County Commissioners

Minutes

Wednesday, December 31, 2008

Commissioners Present: David Sorensen, Marge Webster, Peter Olkkola

Others Present: Dorothy Solomon, Chip Albee, David Babson, Henry Spencer, Jon Hebert, Nate Giarnese, Ashley Riggazzo

Meeting called to order at 8:20am by Commissioner Sorensen

Public Input

- Commissioner Sorensen wanted to correct the previous question of the cooperative extension in Strafford County. The county commissioners, not the delegation, eliminated it. Most likely it was done to gain support of the residents in the county.
- Henry Spencer wanted verification of the figure of \$555k that it is going to cost the taxpayers due to SB 2.
- Commissioner Sorensen verified that the amount is now increased by another \$88k due to an error in calculation by the state. Total is now \$644k
- David Babson also had questions on the calculation of the budget figures. Commissioner Sorensen explained how to come up with the new figures.
- Commissioner Olkkola stated that as a result of House Bill 2, the legislature in their wisdom said that they would hold the counties harmless. Who can give us the answer to that \$644k and who is responsible?
- Commissioner Webster stated that the delegation should. It was all done for political propaganda by saying that we would be held harmless. It benefits the larger counties but hurts the smaller counties. That is why there is a lawsuit at this time and the counties are so far ahead on this lawsuit.
- Commissioner Sorensen stated that Rep Stephens also held money back from the county nursing homes. It was done quickly so that the counties could not plan on it.
- Commissioner Olkkola said that the Medicare money that should have come to the counties went to help balance the budget that year.
- Commissioner Webster also stated that the tobacco settlement money was never received either. 12% to 14% of this money was supposed to go to the counties to take care of the residents that were affected by tobacco.

Move to regular session at 8:25am by Commissioner Sorensen

- Commissioner Webster moved that minutes should be accepted, Seconded by Commissioner Olkkola, all in favor. Minutes are accepted
- Commissioner Sorensen wants the new commissioners to take a close look at the situation of Agency people at MVNH. Some shifts are at critical level.
- Commissioner Webster stated that MVNH should give it at least 90 days to work out. They must have patience with it and give it a try.
- Commissioner Sorensen stated that we don't have the professionals yet the other counties do not need to use agency people and they do just fine.

Jon Hebert, Sheriffs Department

- Has there been any follow up on the letter regarding authorization from the delegation?
- Commissioner Sorensen stated that on the 12th there would be a continuing resolution that we would continue to use last years budget with no new items put in or approved.
- Sheriff Hebert received a letter from Bartlett Fire Department commending and thanking them for the services of two county dispatchers who manned the base radio for them through the night when the radio system stopped working.

Allen Seguin, Farm

- Commissioner Sorensen asked Allen to make sure the Project Coordinators have the maps of the sewer and water systems by the 6th of January.
- Commissioner Sorensen asked if there had been a firm bid on the dump body yet. Allen stated that there had not been one yet due to weather issues. It will take about a week to get it on once we get a figure. Commissioner Sorensen stated that this figure/contract is needed by the first week of February.
- The nursing home needs to be plowed out first and the walkways need to be done. If there are not enough inmates to get the walkways shoveled look into purchasing a snow blower. Get a price on snow blowers but not a cheap one that is going to break down.
- Allen stated that the new fuel tank is here
- Commissioner Sorensen wanted to know if parking was an issue over at MVNH when they are trying to plow. Allen said that it is something they have learned to deal with.
- Commissioner Sorensen wanted to know if we could contract with farm employees who have personal plow trucks to plow with their vehicles in an emergency situation.
- Commissioner Olkkola asked about the problem with PSNH on Christmas.

- Allen said they are replacing pole. The generator would not start at the administration building because it was filled while running and sucked air in. Generator people came and got it running. The generators on the mountain to the pumps were not working because Eastern Propane changed the regulators and did not set them up to keep from freezing. Propane tank is 1000gal. Generator is on a 14-day automatic test system.
- Commissioner Sorensen thought that all generators were all on 7 day test systems
- Commissioner Sorensen questioned: In your opinion do we need a portable generator for critical situations?
- Allen said that a generator would have to be huge to run the building. Rental may be available in emergency.
- Commissioner Sorensen said that it would be discussed in the future.
- Commissioner Olkkola stated that a generator might be available from Government Surplus.
- Commissioner Sorensen wants an update on the price of wood and hay in January. Comparable to local prices.
- Allen: Not cutting wood due to storms. Little green wood left.

Comments from outgoing Commissioners:

- Commissioner Olkkola: The budget system for Carroll County is atrocious It is time consuming and cumbersome. The budget should be available in full for the commissioners before the meeting with the department heads. The delegation should also have it before hand. This would save a lot of time. I cannot see the budget not being finalized until the 4th or 5th month. It should just be level funded and then file a supplementary budget in May. The commissioners should sit down and figure out how to increase revenue. There should be ways to bring more income into the county. Look at the farm, look at utilizing the inmates to do tasks. The budget is going up and up but the revenues are not.
- Commissioner Sorensen said that the delegation does have a copy of the budget this year in advance

Forrest Painter, MVNH

- Census is at 91, down due to deaths
- Friday January 16th retirement party for Forrest. Retiring after 33 years
- Staffing is looking better
- Issues have been addressed that caused problems with scheduling
- Working on fire door wiring-started but not finished

Reschedule walk through of Grafton County for a different day other than the 16th.

- David Babson: Public input on what could make it better? You did not go into non-public sessions formally. No members of the public had paperwork. Public should have access also. Delegation also did not allow for time for public input.

Discussion between commissioners and Mr. Babson on decisions made after public sessions, etc.

- Delegation needs to be involved in Commissioner meetings and come to meetings so they know what is going on.
- Commissioner Webster: Antiquated System/take the legislators out of the picture because they do not have a clue to the county piece. No need to drag out budget approval. 49 other states do it without the delegation. Commissioners are responsible for the outcome of the budget.
- Mr. Babson: Public should be paid more attention to in the process. Checks and balances.
- Commissioner Sorensen: Legally budget is presented to delegation-public needs input time.
- Chip Albee: No reason budget cannot be on table for viewing from beginning
- Commissioner Sorensen: In regard to Incentive funds for Youth in non-public, because of personnel and organization negotiating
- Chip Albee: Fundamentally impossible to follow right to know law to the letter due to the physical setup of the commissioners office. There are three commissioners in one office. We need trust from the public that decisions are not being made in private. Problems are talked about in the office but decisions are not made without public address. We could stagger schedule so no two commissioners are together but this is not feasible.
- Nate Giarnese: Do you want to wipe out the right to know law for the Carroll County Commissioners? So you want to violate the law? Sitting and having meetings at your leisure is against the law.
- Chip Albee: Not at all, but the commissioners here are stuck in a room together and this constitutes a meeting under the letter of the law. Anywhere that two or more commissioners are present is considered a meeting. You cannot prove a negative. Any decisions that are made are going to be presented to the public before they become written in stone. Emergency decisions may need to be made. Every action that the board takes from one public meeting to the next will be discussed. There has to be a level of trust.
- David Babson: Trust is built and has been destroyed in last 2 years. Discussions are ok but not *decisions*. Discussions have to take place when you are going to make decisions on a \$24million budget. Minutes from non-public/points of view
- Commissioner Olkkola: Friday, PSNH, pole fire, down for 4-5 hours. Should I have walked away or let the other commissioners know. Do I take the blame? I communicated this problem to the other two commissioners. Technically that is a meeting.
- Albee: Level of understanding from community
- Commissioner Sorensen: Lack of trust/needs to be improved upon
- Dorothy Solomon: Not making decisions, just discussing things. Need to do this for time and conversation.

Commissioner Webster moved to go into non-public session. Seconded by Sorensen.

Executive Session for personnel issues entered at 9:35am. Minutes from executive session will be sealed at conclusion.