
FOR THE YEAR 2012
BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S MINUTE BOOK
CHEROKEE COUNTY, IOWA
MAY 22, 2012

The Cherokee County Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Tuesday, May 22, 2012 with Larry Prunty, Dean Schmidt, Mark Leeds, Terry Graybill, and Jeff Simonsen present. Dan Whitney, *Chronicle Times*, represented the press. Unless otherwise indicated, all votes were offered as follows: Ayes - Simonsen, Graybill, Prunty, Leeds, Schmidt; Nays - none; Abstentions - none.

Motion by Prunty, seconded by Simonsen to approve the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

Dave Shanahan, County Engineer, discussed possible solutions for dust control on problem areas in the county. Shanahan reviewed current construction projects with expected bid letting and completion dates.

Rick Angell and Hank Hayes, Wellmark Insurance representatives, presented the County's health insurance policy renewal effective July 1, 2012. The county's claims were up by 50% totaling \$947,459 and the total premium increased 7.89%. The county purchases a \$4000 deductible policy with \$25 office calls and partially self funds the employee's deductible down to \$750 and reimburses employees \$15 for each office call. All employees will pay 30% of their health insurance premiums (\$141.89 single policy and \$345.45 family policy per month) beginning July 1, 2012 per the Law Enforcement Center and Secondary Roads Union contract terms.

Motion by Graybill, seconded by Leeds to approve the July 1, 2012 health insurance policy renewal with Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Iowa with no changes to the benefit plan. Motion carried.

Calvin Carver, Work Services Director; Dena Dungan, Cherokee County Case Manager; and Lynda Holmich, Cherokee County Social Worker; joined the meeting.

Lisa Langlitz, Community Services Director, presented possible scenarios for cash flow to provide payment for payroll and local providers of client services.

Carver expressed concerns that if Work Activity Center clients are not provided a consistent level of work hours, the ripple effect could cause the Center to lose contracts that bring in revenue. The clients could go to an Adult Day Care Program, but some are accustomed to going to work every day and it is the best option to maintain their physical and mental health.

Langlitz clarified that working is not a required mental health service since it is not relevant to a client's safety or health. Providing employment at the Work Activity Center is not mandated by the state and there are other federally funded programs that the clients can be moved into such as Adult Day Programs. The county is providing \$120,000 of funding for 20 clients to maintain work activity services.

Graybill stated that \$120,000 is not a big number when you are talking the quality of life for 20 persons with special needs.

Carver questioned the logic of moving clients from work activity services and signing them up for Medicaid programs since state and federal funding has been limited. Carver expressed concern that these clients could be denied Medicaid status and then would have no programs that they qualify for.

Holmich added that if clients are not working, more staff would be needed to supervise them in addition to mental health issues arising from a loss of goals and a sense of accomplishment that a daily routine provides.

Simonsen stated that the whole state mental health reform has been promoted as "doomsday" with the idea that everything was going to come to an end and now Langlitz is showing figures that can cash flow local services provided by the county. He suggested that major decisions be tabled until October to see where the funding falls and asked if Langlitz was comfortable with that plan.

Langlitz emphatically said "No, I am not comfortable with just waiting and seeing. I would rather cut funding to the local providers such as Plains Area Mental Health, Cherokee Regional Public Health, Cherokee County Residential Services, and Cherokee County Work Services by 10 or 20% and be proactive in controlling costs than have to do more drastic cuts later. Those cuts are minor to the local providers but it could make the difference in keeping my department open."

Simonsen asked Langlitz "What do you suggest we do right now?"

Langlitz stated that unless there is a limit on work activity services and clients have to move into federally funded programs, the budget will not last. The law says that the clients' health and safety needs must be met, but spending all the hours in the Work Activity program is not required.

Langlitz expressed frustration with the statewide redesign of the mental health system saying "I'm trying to figure out what the legislators were trying to do to help people. It is not helping the local businesses who

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provide services and there will need to be a reduction of services directly for clients. Counties are being put into a tough position.”

The supervisors were in agreement that county funded services for work activity services are a priority and tabled any decisions to cut services or funding to local providers.

Jeff Bowen and Mark Leeds, Solid Waste Commissioners; and Brent Kach, Landfill Manager; gave an update on landfill operations and the current financial outlook. Leeds reviewed a timeline of events and decisions the Solid Waste Commission has made to try to get the landfill moving in a sustainable direction. The total number of employees at the landfill has been reduced from 25 down to 11 as a direct cost savings measure with the Commission having the full intent to keep checks and balances on daily expenses and revenues.

Kach stated that the public is assuming that they are no longer recycling but that in not the case. They are separating the recyclables to be sold and encourage citizens to recycle as much as they can since it directly reduces the amount going into the landfill. Currently Cherokee County delivers 12 to 13 thousand tons of landfill materials per year and the total for all four counties (Buena Vista, Cherokee, Ida, Plymouth) is 44 thousand tons. The original landfill was estimated to have a 100 year life but with the additional county contracts, the life has been reduced to 40 years.

Leeds reported that contracts with other area counties are not bringing in revenues that will cover the cost to provide the service. The Commission is considering canceling the contracts and operating the landfill for Cherokee County waste only.

The financial projections reflect a \$476,545 shortfall to cash flow the landfill process through June 30, 2012. Rates will need to be increased for all Cherokee County households to cover the actual costs to sustain the landfill.

Bowen summarized the presentation by saying that it is a bad situation that didn't just happen overnight, but it's time to pick up the pieces and do what it takes to cut the losses and get the operation running efficiently.

Leeds and Bowen asked for the County's financial support to pay the bills and keep the landfill open.

No decisions were made regarding additional funding for the landfill. The supervisors will contact their bond counsel to determine what financial support can legally be provided to the Commission.

Motion by Simonsen, seconded by Prunty to approve the claims for payment as presented. Motion carried. A complete listing is available for review in the County Auditor's office and online.

There being no further business, Chairman Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

All board agendas and minutes are available online at www.cherokeecountyiowa.com.

Attest: _____

Dean Schmidt, Chairman

Kris Glienke, County Auditor