Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission

March 25, 2009

At 8:00 a.m., Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Dale Marks, Doug Kaiser, Craig Neys and Mark T. Klose answered roll call. Absent was Commissioner Ova.

The purpose of the special meeting was to address flooding issues in the County.

Jerry Bergquist, 9-1-1 Coordinator/Emergency Manager, stated that the overland flooding issues were not related to the advanced measures assistance program to release water from the Pipestem and the Jamestown Dams.

Bergquist reviewed the history of the situation. The weather warnings from Sunday, March 22, included two flood warnings, a flash flood warning for Southeast Stutsman County and two thunder storm warnings. There had been no reports of anything coming out of the Ypsilanti/Montpelier areas on Sunday. Our neighbors to the south were flooding (Logan and Lamoure Counties) and their Emergency Managers had requested sandbags from the Corps of Engineers. Bob Martin, Corp of Engineers, had received permission from Omaha to release the sandbags that were stored at the Pipestem Dam for emergency purposes – 5000 to Logan and 5000 to LaMoure.

On Monday, City Hall had received a call from the Anne Carlsen Center of a ravine upstream of the center that was totally full of water. The water was going over the road and the culvert had been plugged in some manner. The City and Rural Fire Departments attempted to pump water from the ravine during the day. At the end of the day, the City Fire Chief and the City Engineer recommended that the Anne Carlsen Center be evacuated, that there was no way to get on top of the water. The Center evacuated 56 students to the Jamestown Hospital, Hi-Acres Manor, Ave Maria Village and the Civic Center.

On Tuesday all things broke loose. Water was running everywhere. There was an ice jam on the James River at the State Hospital, an ice jam at the Montpelier Bridge and water was coming from the Beaver Creek drainage area into the James. Warnings were issued to people south of Montpelier with suggestions to evacuate.

The water was not dam related – there was zero water coming from either dam. It was total runoff from the community and hillsides. There are not resources to fight overland flooding issues.

Mike Zimmerman, County Highway Superintendent, reviewed the road reports in Stutsman County. All areas of the County had water problems – bridge issues, plugged culverts, road washouts, and water over the roads. All County signage had been distributed as of March 24 to the Townships. Townships would be reporting damages. The County roads for the most part are still in pretty good shape. There was some water over the roads. Water was over the bridge at Montpelier on Tuesday night. The blowing snow was compounding the problem. Travels conditions were not good.

The Corps of Engineers were present at the meeting to hear the concerns of the County.

Reed Schwartzkopf, Jamestown City Engineer, reported that the City had three industrial size pumps coming in to help with the problem near the Anne Carlsen Center. They were also able to contact Nick Scherbenski to bring in equipment that could break up the ice jam. Schwartzkopf said that not having the equipment available in our region to handle issues like this was a problem. Roads south and west of the Super Walmart were holding back water. Home owners were contacted of the potential problem.

Schwartzkopf wanted to stress that the issues with the reservoirs are not associated with this type of rain and wanted to stress that we were not in a panic situation yet.

Dave Orr, County Sheriff, stated that travel in the County was still restricted to emergency traffic only on County and Township roads. The restriction was put on the whole county because there was not time to do a damage assessment to restrict only certain roads. A decision would need to be made when to lift the restriction.

Bob Martin, Corps of Engineers, reported that the river by the Interstate Bridge had dropped four feet overnight. The bad news is that the level in which the river was running from the ice house dam south was about 1800 csf, which would probably be the minimum that the Corps would be releasing from the dams in the future. This increase would be inched along, not released all at once. There had not been any water released from the Jamestown Dam since last fall. The Pipestem had been releasing about 5cfs all winter long. The Pipestem was shut down on Monday. The water levels at the Pipestem had increased about 10 feet since the weekend and Jamestown had risen three feet.

Orr stated that his department was on standby to assist in emergency calls – fire, ambulance and veterinary calls.

Schwartzkopf said that he had a structural bridge design/inspection background and if the County had a concern with a bridge he would be available to assist with problems.

Bergquist stated the Corps expert on ice jams from Omaha was in Bismarck and if he was available they would request him to come to Jamestown.

Schwartzkopf said that the City had received 200,000 plus sandbags. The bags could be used to protect communities and critical infrastructure. Currently individuals could get bags from Newman Signs. Sand locations around town were identified where sand could be purchased. Previously sandbags were not available to the general public.

Joe Detmer, Mayor of Pingree, apprised the Commission by phone on the situation in Pingree. Pingree had a lot of standing water throughout the City and the area, the roads were still passable and some of the roads were still covered over. Currently they were holding their own.

Noel Johnson, County COO, stated that Buchanan City's sewer system went down so there was sewage in some basements.

He stated that the State of North Dakota was put into a Presidential Disaster Declaration. His department would work with the media to alert the public to contact their office to report damage to their home or property. With the disaster declaration, public assistance funds would be available for Cities and Counties to repair infrastructure and also individual assistance funds which is available to help individuals. To receive federal individual assistance funds at least 100 homes statewide would need to have had major damage. 100% funding had never been available. Pictures of damages and copies of invoices for expenses incurred would be necessary when and if funding becomes available.

Zimmerman hoped that all County roads could be addressed by Thursday afternoon. Auditor's office would contact township officers regarding township road conditions.

County's website had flood information with a link to City information. Media broadcasts would continue. The auditor's office would work on developing a map showing road conditions that could be accessed via the website.

The Jamestown Regional Airport was closed down on Tuesday because of water on the runways. Drains needed to be located.

Bergquist stated that the Corps of Engineers had assisted with everything that had been asked of them. The contracting officer with the Corps would be in Jamestown soon in order to get the contract paperwork generated. Necessary supplies were on the way to Jamestown. Schwartzkopf stated that there had been a lot of cooperation between individuals and entities. Many times there is not time to keep the public fully abreast of all issues that arise. Safety takes precedence

There would be a meeting with the water control officials of the Corps of Engineers on Thursday, March 26, 2009, at City Hall with public officials at 1:00 p.m. There would be a pre-meeting with the City Council at 3:30 p.m. and a public meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. The Corps would be discussing advance measures and latest projections of release times and rates.

Marks reported on water coming from the east into the James near Ypsilanti and Montpelier.

Fritz Fremgen, State's Attorney, brought up the need to initiate the emergency operations center for transfer of information to make informed decisions. Bergquist stated that he had discussed the need with Johnson on Tuesday. Better information could be provided to the public. Johnson stated that meeting a couple times a day to inform each other as to what was going on. The press would be notified of scheduled meeting times.

Klose asked Johnson if the County had human resources available to do some of the mapping now. Johnson said that he would brainstorm with his staff on what they could be done. The auditor's office would start calling townships after the meeting. Zimmerman requested that one person in the township be the contact person for road information.

Road travel restrictions would not be eased up until road conditions are determined.

Johnson stated that County Departments would meet at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. everyday starting at 2 p.m. today, Wednesday.

Klose said that Orr and Zimmerman had the authority to make travel condition advisories.

Kaiser made a motion that was seconded by Marks to adjourn. At 9:16 a.m., the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission was adjourned.

ATTEST:

Noel A. Johnson County COO (Auditor)	Mark Klose Commission Chairman