Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission – April 17, 2017

At 4:00 p.m., Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Dennis Ova, Dale Marks, David Schwartz, Craig Neys, and Mark T. Klose answered the roll call.

Chad Kaiser, Stutsman County Sheriff, introduced Sheriff Danzeisen of Mercer County.

Sheriff Danzeisen spoke about his background. Danzeisen has been the Sheriff of Mercer County for 15 years.

Sheriff Danzeisen came to Stutsman County to investigate a hostile work environment complaint from a former employee. Danzeisen was given a sealed box that had documentation from a partially completed investigation done by the Village Business Institute. The information dated back to 2015.

Sheriff Danzeisen interviewed State's Attorney Fritz Fremgen who started the initial complaint process. Danzeisen asked what the scope of the investigation was and State's Attorney Fremgen didn't have a specific complaint to tell him that would establish the scope of the investigation. Danzeisen was told by Fremgen to contact the Chair of the County Commission for the scope. According to Sheriff Danzeisen, the sealed box from The Village did not have information that rose to the level of a formal complaint.

Sheriff Danzeisen stated he never did find an official complaint. According to what Sheriff Danzeisen was told, State's Attorney Fremgen did have an official complaint, but a complaint was never found. There was a resignation that did not amount to a complaint.

Sheriff Danzeisen looked into the Villages' paperwork and the interviews they conducted and there was nothing there to be found, which Danzeisen stated in his report.

An official statement on the report reads as, "To me there is no information that says there was a hostile working environment or any harassment. The resignation letter states that is the reason for the employee resigning, but gives no details or specific information. Mr. Fremgen states in an e-mail that Mrs. McPherson gave an oral statement to him. However, he told me he has no information other than a resignation letter."

Sheriff Danzeisen was questioned by Chairman Klose as to whether he felt Stutsman County followed the personnel policy correctly.

The Stutsman County Personnel Policy states that the Stutsman County Sheriff shall investigate all complaints. The complaint was turned over to a private organization and then brought back after the fact. By terminating the contract with The Village, and turning the investigation over to the Sheriff, the commission brought the investigation into compliance with the personnel policy.

There was a list of several names dating back to 2015 and a whole bunch of records regarding a Jet Ski incident. There was documentation regarding past employees who quit or were terminated, which had already been dealt with. The investigation was finally brought into accordance with the personnel policy.

Chairman Klose was contacted and told that they weren't following County policy when Stutsman County started with the Village investigation. The policy clearly states the process needed to go through the Sheriff.

Commissioner Schwartz was surprised because he never received a letter of resignation. Schwartz was notified by the State's Attorney that there was a potential complaint and Fremgen suggested Stutsman County contract with the Village because he felt conflicted. Schwartz questioned the validity of the complaint from the beginning. He never received an answer back from State's Attorney Fremgen. Schwartz made the motion to cancel the contract with the Village and turn it over to the Sheriff.

Sheriff Danzeisen thought his report was more in depth than it actually needed to be because he never saw an actual complaint.

Schwartz made a motion to accept the Sheriff's investigation, seconded by Ova. Motion carried.

At 4:16 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Marks, seconded by Schwartz. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Nicole Meland	Mark T. Klose
Deputy Auditor/Recorder	Commission Chairman