Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission – August 3, 2021

At 2:00 p.m., Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Dennis Ova, Ramone Gumke, Joan Morris, Steven Cichos, and Mark Klose answered the roll call.

Representatives from the Stutsman County Soil Conservation District were present to discuss the 2022 preliminary budget. They are requesting an increase from .06 mills to 1 mill. They have been deficit spending for the past 10 years by $143,000. Their tree building, which contains a large, refrigerated room, needs to be replaced and several of their vehicles need repairs. They would also like to buy their own tractor instead of leasing. They get a lot of funding for their watershed coordinators from grants which is never guaranteed. Due to state law, they can levy a maximum of 2.5 mills.

Robin Iszler from Central Valley Health District was present to discuss the 2022 preliminary budget. They have used COVID funding to offset salaries and balance the budget. Health districts can levy up to 5 mills. They are currently at 3.8 and are requesting 4 mills. The City of Jamestown increases their funding by 3% each year. The Jamestown Public School District provides funding for a school nurse. Logan County is at 5 mills for Central Valley.

Commissioner Joan Morris discussed the James River Valley Library System budget. Around 12% of the budget is surplus. In 2008, 66% of voters voted to consolidate the library system. Some staff and the board were combined but the buildings are still separate. She is questioning why the Stutsman County Library is still open and there are two libraries within ten blocks that provide similar services.

Joe Rector from the library system presented information regarding the budget. They have made many improvements to the Stutsman County Library including the catalog system and the building. The new bookmobile was purchased in 2017. The library had 849 patrons per month in 2019 and the bookmobile had 888 patrons per month. Stutsman County Library has several unique services such as space for meetings. The SCL has more square footage than Alfred Dickey. SCL has a book collection that is 75% unique from ADPL. SCL also has a unique Library of Things, Seed Library, and Book Bin program. Consequences of budget cuts would be less purchases of new materials, longer wait times, and reductions in the bookmobile routes. Rector pointed out that when the libraries were joined in 2008, the county was providing 4 mills and the library is now requesting 2.79 mills.

Commissioner Morris questioned why the Stutsman County Library is essential to the operation of the Bookmobile. Rector said that most of the inventory for the Bookmobile comes from the Stutsman County Library. The staff also pull books for shut-ins and teachers.

Erin Musland requested a point of clarification on whether there is a conflict of interest for Commissioner Morris to be a member of both the Library Board and the County Commission. She would like the County Attorney's opinion.

Commissioner Morris clarified that she is questioning the staffing of the Stutsman County Library and that it could still be used for storage of inventory for the bookmobile and other services.

Clarice Liechty read a letter she wrote to the Jamestown Sun in 2008.

Pam Phillips presented a Memorandum of Agreement between the city and the county from 2009. This agreement was to jointly provide library services.

Gail Martin, Library Board member, voiced support to work towards combining the two libraries into one facility that could house materials from both libraries and the bookmobile.

Erin Musland again voiced a point of concern regarding the conflict of interest of Morris being on both the Library Board and the County Commission.

Clarice Liechty asked why the County currently levies 2.79 mills when they used to levy 4 mills. Jessica Alonge, Interim Auditor/COO, clarified that the dollar amount has stayed the same but the mills have decreased because the taxable value has increased.

Commissioner Ramone Gumke would like to work toward a consolidated facility but would like to see both facilities stay open until that point.

At 3:31, the Special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission was adjourned.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge Interim Auditor/COO	Mark T. Klose Commission Chairman