Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission

August 24, 2010

At 7:00 a.m., Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Dennis Ova, Dale Marks, Craig Neys and Mark T. Klose were present. Doug Kaiser was absent.

The special meeting was called to review the petition to amend Article 8 of the Stutsman County Home Rule Charter and to continue review of the 2011 budget.

Johnson reported that the necessary number of signatures had been submitted and met compliance. A motion was made by Neys and seconded by Marks to acknowledge receipt of the petition to amend Article 8 of the Stutsman County Home Rule Charter and place the question on the November ballot. Roll call vote – Ova, Marks, Neys and Klose voted aye.

Jim Fettig, Courthouse and Memorial Building Maintenance Supervisor, reviewed and prioritized the 2011 purchase of fixed assets for the courthouse building and for the Memorial Building. He reported on the break-in at the Courthouse/LEC garage. His other line items remain about the same as 2010.

Howard Peuser, LEC Maintenance Supervisor, reviewed and prioritized the 2011 purchase of fixed assets for the Law Enforcement Center Building. Roof replacement was a necessity for 2011. Peuser reported on the cost savings that was realized with the fresh air conversion system. He had trimmed his budget as much as possible considering the increase in inmate population. The elevator cylinder replacement project was complete for 2010.

Del Horn, Community Service Program, explained the increase in funding request. In the last two years the program income was down 44%, down about 19% in the last year. The legislature had decreased the community service fee from $50 to $25 in 2009 and put in a general fund line item of $175,000. Funds were available to agencies by grant. Majority of the program involved misdemeanor A's and B's. Community Service was a deterrent (rehab) versus punishment (jail time).

Dennis Lorenz, County Park Superintendent, reviewed the County Park's 2011 budget request. There had been many projects during the 2010 year, some were still not completed – the ending balance was still unknown. He stated that he definitely needed to buy a new mower. Utilities line item was increased with rural water now being available at the Lakeside Marina and Campground and the County Shop. Digging in rural water to Pelican Point Landing was included in the improvements line item for 2011. Rural water would help make Pelican Point an excellent campground. A high boat ramp and building improvements at the Boat Club was being considered. Revenue for County Park was reviewed.

Fritz Fremgen, State's Attorney, reviewed the impact to his office if budget cuts were required if the measure passed in November. Budget amounts were fairly constant. Salaries was the large portion of his budget, 25% cut was basically two employees. The Victim Witness position had been by and large grant funded. Attorney's could do support work but support personnel could not do attorney's work. Attorneys would need to do their own paperwork. Manning the front desk would be difficult. It was hard to identify or quantify where to cut service. His department would have to identify the most serious of crimes to prosecute, pick the cases and drop the ones that were the least serious. State Hospital cases were our County's responsibilities. Zoning administration could possibly become a duty in the State's Attorney office.

Johnson passed out a letter from the Senior Citizen's Center concerning their funding. The need to redirect funds could possibly end outside agencies receiving funding.

Johnson reviewed the actual expenditure for roads. Some counties levy more for roads than Stutsman County does – why – the voters allowed their county to levy more. The law states that you allowed to do only what the voters say you can do. The Commission had tried repeatedly to raise the mill levy for roads in Stutsman County – voters turned down the increase levy. Approximately $4 million or 25% of the total budget was for roads, only .8% was being levied.

The farm to market levy had always been saved to match federal funds – saved for projects, the law does allow that fund to be used for maintenance. In 2009, $722,000 (labor, equipment and material) had been used to maintain our federal aid system. The labor, equipment and material amounts were forced accounting based on the rates that FEMA allowed. Part of the $1.4 - $1.7 million ($800,000) that was directed into the Road Department (Fund 15) could be directed into Federal aid (Fund 33) and spend out of Fund 33 on County road maintenance.

The proposed measure states that you would allocate - appropriate 2% annually of the net taxable value of all real estate in Stutsman County for the exclusive use of the County's Farm to Market and Federal Aid Road Program to this fund. The measure does not say where the funds were coming from. The only fund that was not restricted was the General Fund.

Klose stated that he would still like the General Fund Department Heads to prepare a budget with $800,000 taken out of their operating budget to show the ramifications of this measure. Voters needed to know the facts so that they can make an informed decision when they vote.

Johnson stated that everything that was done by these departments was mandated by state law. Klose wanted discretionary work identified. Necessary items in the General Fund were noted under each line item – things that the County had to provide. Staff had been cut - each department had made cuts in personnel in the past years. Johnson wanted to know how they would conduct business. Department Heads would hold meetings to identify discretionary work within their departments.

Klose requested Johnson to show a chart on wage adjustments and health insurance adjustments for the next meeting.

Johnson stated that reserves could be touched but what would happen during emergencies, where would the funds come from if the reserves were depleted.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ova and seconded by Marks. Motion carried. At 9:47 a.m. the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission was adjourned.

ATTEST:

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