

Joint Counties Natural Resources Board
March 23, 2015
Beltrami County Conference Room
10:00 AM

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioners:
Gary Kiesow – Marshall Todd Miller - Roseau
Daniel Stenseng - Clearwater Wayne Skoe – Koochiching
Brian Napstad – Aitkin Ken Moorman – Lake of the Woods
Joe Vene – Beltrami

Absent: Scott McCollum - Mahnomen

DNR: Greg Nelson – Regional Representative

Guest Speakers: Polymet Representatives: LaTisha Gietzen and Dave Hughes, Jr.
Marshall County Auditor/Treasurer regarding County Aid Cuts: Scott Peters

Call to Order: Chairman Commissioner Kiesow called the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board to order at 10:00 AM on Monday, March 23, 2015 in the Beltrami County Conference Room.

Agenda: Motion by Vene, second by Miller to approve the agenda with the addition of an update on the Wetland Conservation Act, Oil Pipeline and County Aid issues. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Motion by Napstad, second by Stenseng to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2015 meeting with changes to Wetland Legislation. Motion carried unanimously.

Guests: LaTisha lead the discussion by telling the Board a little bit about the project and the fact that Polymet has been in the permitting process for a very long time. The Minnesota based company is a single project, open pit mine in Hoyt Lakes. They are asking the state for a 20 year permit to process to produce: copper, nickel, platinum, palladium, cobalt and gold in an established mining pit. The rich deposits and precious metals are essential to everyday lives and would create approximately 1,000 direct and in-direct good paying jobs. In fact, they expect to pay \$36 million in wages and benefits each year along with \$15 million of local and state tax revenue and \$45 million in federal tax revenue. Their total investment as of 2006 was \$206 million. They look forward to focusing and completing the environmental review process and permitting and then the construction finance and preconstruction engineering. They want folks to be informed and we will be posting their power point presentation on our website. They closed by telling the Board there are County Boards who have signed proclamations in favor of the project and will probably look for additional support from counties as they move forward.

Wetland Conservation Act: Napstad said there are still details to work out but the big components of the proposed Bill will focus on allowing increased public value, defining priority areas (give incentives), and allow the stakeholders to figure out the replacement values; public to private. The Bill was received very well in the House and Senate and will now be going to the finance committee.

County Program Aid Formula: Scott Peters told the Board the county aid program for counties with declining population will lose their aid if the formula does not change. As it is, the State has allocated an additional \$40 million of aid dollars to the program since 2014 but in 2015 forty-nine counties either lost or had a significant reduction in program dollars. The dollars that are left over from the counties who do not receive or have reduced aid is then divided amongst the counties already receiving dollars. AMC is working with a work group to discuss what a fair and proper change to the formula might be. Scott gave each Board member information on the resolution Marshal County passed supporting a change to the formula and supporting a Bill that has been introduced to change the formula. He asked that each board member take the information back to their respective counties so everyone is aware of what is happening and if they would consider a resolution as well.

DNR Update: Greg gave the following update:

- The proposed buffer zone the Governor introduced to protect the pheasant population will be different from when he introduced it. There will still be some scheduled hearings and changes to the Governor's request.
- The DNR is soliciting input on clubs and OTH process and want people to comment on how to proceed fixing and creating trails.
- At the time of the meeting, Greg had not heard any additional information on extending the beaver season. Note: The day after the Board meeting Greg sent out an email saying the season was extended to May 1.

Interagency Report on Oil Pipeline: Stenseng told the Board there is an interagency report being processed on oil transportation in Minnesota. The 1st half will have informational facts on where oil is coming from and how it is moved. The 2nd half will talk about issues. Enbridge is taking comments until the end of May.

Financial Discussions:

- Administration/Office Expenses: **Motion by Steneng, second by Moorman to approve the February/March administration/office expenses.** Motion carried unanimously.
- Miscellaneous Expenses: **Motion by Skoe, second by Napstad to approve the miscellaneous expenses.** Motion carried. Vene Abstained.
- The Treasurer's report submitted by Josh Stromlund and distributed by Coordinator Briggs was approved. **Motion by Moorman, second by Napstad to approve the March Treasurer's Report.** Motion carried unanimously. Discussion: Joy Lindquist, who works with Treasurer Josh Stromlund to compile our reports, write necessary checks, does the deposits and oversees a CD, will be retiring. Moorman asked if Kooch or another county would take over her duties. Kallie will check with Kooch and/or other counties.
- Proposed Budget 2015: Kallie told the Board the proposed 2015 budget is based on membership dues and expenses. She does not have access to the books and therefore cannot budget interest income or expenses. It is meant as a guideline of expenditures. **Motion by Skoe, second by Stenseng to approve the 2015 budget as presented.** Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Date: There will not be a meeting in April. Our next meeting will be May 18 which is the third Monday because the fourth Monday is Memorial Day.

Adjourn: Chairman Kiesow declared the meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Kallie Briggs-Administrative Coordinator