

**SPECIAL WORK SESSION**  
**Bemidji City Council**  
**Beltrami County Board of Commissioners**  
**September 27, 2006**

Pursuant to due call and notice, a special work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji and the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on September 27, 2006, at 5:15 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Commissioner Joe Vene presiding.

Bemidji Council present: Nancy Erickson, Barbara Meuers, Richard Lehmann, Onen Markeson, Roger Hellquist, Jerry Downs and Ron Johnson  
Commissioners present: Joe Vene, Jim Heltzer, Ron Otterstad and Jack Frost

Staff present: Tony Murphy, Alan Felix, Ron Eischens and Kay Murphy-Schuetz  
Others present: Harold VanLeeuwen, Larry Young

Commissioner Vene stated that the purpose of the meeting was to give the City and Council an opportunity to discuss common interests and issues.

Bemidji Regional Airport Operations

VanLeeuwen provided an update on airport operations stating that the airport is in a 5 year construction plan to resolve issues at the airport. The second runway is completed which will allow the main runway to be reconstructed.

Otterstad stated that the airport is in good shape and the fourth busiest airport in the state. He stated that the airport recently purchased two parcels of land located in the "A" zone which cleans up service issues on both ends of the runway. A small work group is working with the Airport Commission to development the airport as an economic driver for Bemidji, including development of a marketing program. Felix commented that implementation of a marketing effort may require financial contribution from the City and County.

Discussion continued on zoning requirements. VanLeeuwen commented that the "A" zones are now all on airport property which is a "no build" zone.

Otterstad commented that the 17 acre "Old Fairground" property owned by the County should be looked at as a potential revenue maker to be used for the airport. He suggested the creation of a joint city/county committee to manage the property, for example, perhaps leasing the property with the lease proceeds to be used as agreed. Otterstad also related that he and Commissioner Vene already had been appointed by the County to serve as their reps on the proposed committee.

Erickson stated that the airport has entered into a partnership with SWCD regarding the sale of timber on the airport property which generates income for the airport. Also the Airport Commission is exploring the potential of growing Christmas trees.

Update on Regional Events Center Initiative

Lehmann provided an update regarding development of a regional event center. There will be a public town meeting at City Hall to discuss the event center on September 27 and more forums will be held prior to the general election on November 7.

Status of Kitchigami Regional Library Issues

Murphy provided an update on KRL membership issues. He felt that over the past several months a lot of headway has been made with the KRL Board, however, there are more issues to be addressed. He believed that the budget issues are okay for 2007 which is a 5% increase in budget from 2006. One budget issue worked out with the KRL Board is how donated books are handled. An adjustment to that policy procedure will result in a savings of approximately \$20,000. The Bemidji branch librarian will be retiring in November and the City and County's representatives will be invited to participate in the interview process to enable their input on the hiring of the librarian. Murphy concluded that much of the master agreement and by-laws are out of date and need to be revised.

Erickson stated that at a recent Council meeting a volunteer at the library stated she was no longer allowed to route books. She commented that volunteers are a valuable asset and wondered if this was being looked into. Felix commented that KRL apparently felt there was a data privacy issue involved with volunteers handling reading material requests and checkouts. Murphy stated that KRL is in the process of adopting a new policy on volunteers and he will provide a copy of it to the City for their review.

#### Shared Computer Services

Murphy stated that the individual computer system elections for the LEC at the time of construction were not done optimally, - the City and County chose separate systems. The challenge is that all LEC personnel use the same software programs but because of the two systems and are struggling with cross-communications between systems especially with respect to the CODY software system. The County has a strong MIS department and he recommended that the County and City work together to resolve the problems at the LEC and perhaps extend that shared system and service to other City facilities.

VanLeeuwen asked if the airport could be included. Murphy stated that this was a possibility.

Eischens stated that City staff had no idea that the separate systems were such a problem at the LEC until recently. The City has not had a MIS employee for the past 12 months and would like to continue to discuss shared staffing with the County, however, Eischens advised it is important for the City to get an independent consultant to assess the City's system as staff does not feel technically competent to comfortably discuss the relevant issues.

Murphy recommended that the City consider using Paul Bunyan Telephone for help with their computer system. The County has been able to use Paul Bunyan at no cost.

#### Common Priorities for 2007 Legislative Session

Vene stated that the affect of a Federal reduction bill regarding targeted case management would impact the mentally ill and children. It will result in a shortfall in 2007 for County services of approximately \$2 million. There is a need for the County and City to partner on this issue and lobby State legislators. Murphy will be putting information together that he will share with the City.

Otterstad stated that the County will continue to lobby that state to not use property tax for detox services and alcohol treatment but use the tax collected by the sale of liquor.

Mayor Lehmann stated that the Council has not set any legislative priorities at this time. However, the City will continue to lobby at the state for LGA to be restored to Greater Minnesota cities.

Johnson indicated that the Council will be hosting a candidate forum with the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities on October 3 at 5:30 p.m. The Council will be sharing their issues with the candidates.

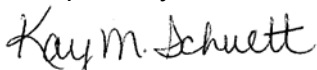
Otterstad stated that the County Administrator and City Manager should continue to work together and share legislative issues.

VanLeeuwen stated that the airport is considering a regional airport authority and will lobby at the State this coming year. An airport authority would take the burden to operate the system off the community where it resides in.

#### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay Murphy-Schuett  
City Clerk