

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, June 28, 1993 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.

Chairperson Corkin called the Meeting to order. Present: Comm. Angeli, Comm. Arsenault, Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Braamse, Comm. Joseph, Comm. Minelli, Comm. Potvin, Comm. Seppanen, and Comm. Trudell, Comm. Corkin. Absent: None.

There were no minutes to approve.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. None was forthcoming.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried that the agenda be approved as presented.

The Committee of the Whole considered the freeze of equipment and assets at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. County Administrator Dennis Aloia distributed copies of an article from the Wall Street Journal, dated June 22, 1993 regarding England Air Force Base in Alexandria, Louisiana. One of the keys in the article was the fact that the England Air Force Base Conversion Authority was able to keep \$20 million of moveable equipment and assets on base for future reuse. Comm. Minelli further explained that there are many items at K.I. Sawyer AFB that are non-military and would be very helpful in marketing the base, but we must prevent the Air Force from moving these items until an inventory is taken.

Comm. Angeli questioned what this means for the County? Must we pay to maintain these assets? Is there any liability involved?

County Administrator Dennis Aloia explained that the United States Air Force would still own these assets, but our federal legislators can have them to keep all non-military assets on base until an inventory is complete and a reuse plan has been developed. Some snow removal equipment has already been removed from the base, but it was older equipment.

Comm. Potvin suggested the County go further. Not only must all non-military equipment be left on base for possible reuse, but the equipment and buildings must be maintained. Such assets are no good if they are left to fall apart.

It was moved by Comm. Minelli, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board send a letter to our Federal Legislators requesting that the assets at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base be frozen and that an inventory be taken; and also that the Air Force not remove equipment and assets until a reuse plan is developed.

The County Board considered the level of County involvement in the conversion of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. Chairperson Corkin began a round table discussion by indicating he believes Marquette County should make a strong commitment to cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies to make maximum future use of K.I. Sawyer AFB. He asked each Commissioner to make comment.

Comm. Angeli felt the County Board should do whatever it can to assist in the conversion of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, but expressed a concern about liability to the County. He questioned if we have the time and resources necessary for the effort required. He thought a group should be formed, made up of township, county, businesspeople, economic development people, etc., to handle the matter.

Comm. Bergdahl agrees with Comm. Angeli about the formation of a group, but felt that the smaller the group, the better it will work. The townships, of course, must be represented.

Comm. Braamse feels the County should make a strong commitment to provide leadership and promote cooperation so that all the units work together for K.I. Sawyer's future use.

Comm. Joseph believes this to be a great opportunity for private sector development, but along with the opportunity comes great responsibilities. It may be easy to say we will take the conversion money available from the federal government and run with it, but the reuse and conversion will not happen overnight. This will probably be a five-term commitment for some Commissioners, and for the County, up to a ten-year effort.

Comm. Minelli agreed that the County should make a strong commitment to provide leadership and cooperate with the townships, etc. He also feels this could be a great opportunity, as it has been in other base closings in the United States, but it will require a tremendous effort.

Comm. Potvin agreed that the County should commit to leadership and cooperation to do what's best, but there needs to be some ground rules. He thought this to be more of a challenge to the County rather than an opportunity.

Comm. Seppanen believed the key to our commitment is strong cooperation. The townships will play a major part in working with the State and Federal Government. The article in the Wall Street Journal indicates a success story as a result of teamwork and cooperation. The County must set up the proper structure for cooperation to create opportunities for the private sector.

Comm. Trudell agreed that the County should commit to do what it can to assist in the conversion of K.I. Sawyer AFB. It will be a challenge and he hopes for cooperation. There have been difficulties in the past getting local units to cooperate, but someone must take the lead. He hopes guidelines will be out as soon as possible.

Comm. Arsenault felt that time is very important. We must not only make a commitment to the reuse of the Air Force Base, but a commitment to time. Financial resources will be available from the federal government and consultants will be flocking to Marquette County, looking to assist us in the reuse of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, all for a price, of course. We need to take a strong leadership role and commitment to take that lead now! Other military base closures have resulted in lost resources, wasted time, which resulted in lawsuits. We don't need this in Marquette County. This is a major undertaking.

Comm. Arsenault added that he had a recent discussion with U.S. Senator Carl Levin who indicated that our County Administrator, Dennis Aloia, is already ahead compared to other base closures. Mr. Aloia has been working behind the scenes and of the 80% of the ground work is already done. On behalf of the County Board, Comm. Arsenault commended Administrator Aloia for his efforts.

Comm. Corkin thanked Commissioners for all their comments. From what he has heard, the County Board wants to be committed and take the lead. A transition team known as the Base Conversion Authority, will be established by State statute and appointed by the Governor. This Authority will be comprised of local individuals who will work within local agencies. Much has been learned from the closure of Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda and hopefully, some mistakes can be avoided.

Earl Yelle, Sands Township Supervisor, was present and contended that many things must be considered. There have been packets of material sent to prospective manufacturers. A common question raised, could the City of Marquette be a port of entry for industry? Also, there were only two politicians on the Wurtsmith Air Force Base Conversion Authority. In discussions with Dave Svanda, the Governor's U.P. Representative, there is thought of expanding the Base Conversion Authority. Mr. Yelle felt it more important that the Committee have a good director. Marquette County needs some solid industry, not just tourism jobs paying minimum wages. Also, Frank Opolka, Regional Director for the Michigan DNR, has guaranteed that any pollution problems will be taken care of.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia further explained that Public Act 134 of 1991, which establishes a Base Conversion Authority and its functions, was drafted because of the closure of Wurtsmith Air Force Base near Oscoda. Although much of what is in Public Act 134 will probably remain intact, a new law specifically designed for K.I. Sawyer will have to be passed by the legislature. Chairperson Corkin asked the Committee if they were ready to

make a commitment.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Angeli, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the Committee of the Whole recommend Marquette County make a commitment to provide leadership and direction, and to cooperate fully with all local, state, and federal agencies in the reuse of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.

At this time, Chairperson Corkin declared a brief recess so that Commissioners could hold a conference call discussion with U.S. Congressman, Bart Stupak.

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15 MINUTE RECESS  
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The Committee of the Whole came back into session.

It was moved by Comm. Potvin, seconded by Comm. Braamse, and unanimously carried on a roll call vote that the County Board send a letter to our State Legislators and our Governor urging that if the present legislation (PA 134 of 1991) establishing a Base Conversion Authority must be amended, that our legislature do so immediately so that the Base Conversion Authority can be appointed and a reuse plan developed as soon as possible.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Earl Yelle, Sands Township Supervisor, was present and contended that at the June 22, 1993 Committee of the Whole meeting, the County Commission gave Richard Aho, Director of the Solid Waste Authority, a very difficult time. Mr. Aho, is a young engineer who is trying to keep the landfill financially solvent. During the pilot project test period for soil remediation, Kalcan's equipment sat idle for three weeks because no one would bring in their contaminated soils. If we couldn't get people to bring in only 2,000 tons for a test, how can we expect enough contaminated soil brought in to generate the revenues to construct a \$260,000 building. Mr. Yelle suggested that the County Board ask their appointed representatives of the Solid Waste Authority to answer their questions and not harass Mr. Aho.

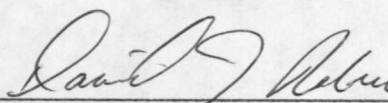
Chairperson Corkin explained that the Committee of the Whole was not attempting to harass Mr. Aho, but did want some answers to some difficult questions. The County Board has been waiting for two years for a solution to the disposal of fuel contaminated soils. The Air Quality Permit has been granted by the DNR to the Authority, but now we are still asked to wait. The County Board's intent is not to harass anyone, but to get to the solution for the disposal of contaminated soils as soon as possible.

There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

Chairperson Corkin thanked staff and Commissioners for coming to the special meeting on such short notice.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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David J. Roberts  
Marquette County Clerk

MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Monday, June 28, 1993 at 5:00 p.m.  
Room 231, Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, MI

1. ROLL CALL.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT.
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
4. Freeze of Assets at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.
5. Commissioner Comments on County Involvement on K.I. Sawyer Closure.
6. OTHER BUSINESS.
7. PUBLIC COMMENT.