



Administrator's Update 3/30/09

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✚ **Boardman and Sabin Dams** The County continues to work on the issue of the dams. At the Board meeting this past Wednesday night, the County Board approved a recommendation asking Charles Peterson to remove his equipment from the Boardman and Sabin Dams. Several years ago, the Board of Light & Power - prior to turning over the dams to Grand Traverse County - sold some of the equipment in the dams to a private individual - Mr. Charles Peterson. This included the hydraulic equipment, generators, trash racks, and turbines that generate electricity. We've been working with Mr. Peterson for the last several years in a relationship that has been somewhat awkward to meet his needs and his requests to access his private equipment within a public facility. The action of the County Board initiates a 30-day notice to Mr. Peterson asking him to develop a plan for removal of his equipment. This action will allow water to run freely through the penstocks and increase the volume of water that can pass through the dams.

✚ **DEQ Meeting** Bruce Hooper, County Commissioner, and I will be meeting with the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) this week to discuss progress that we're making on disposition of the dams. We will discuss several issues including a request for the Department of Environmental Quality to do our annual dam inspections. In addition, we will be asking for clarification on which federal or state agency has jurisdiction over regulation of the dams. Recently, we were given a preliminary permit application for FERC to investigate hydropower generation. Some have claimed that as a result of that we are under FERC jurisdiction. We believe that we are under DEQ regulation and want to confirm that at this meeting. In addition, we will spend some time talking about consultant recommendations for how we can meet the maximum flood requirements provided by the Department of Environmental Quality guidelines. Finally, we will discuss the Consent Agreement that the County entered into in 2005, which sets timelines for the County to complete work towards meeting state regulations for dam capacity and flood control.

✚ **Joint Meeting with City Commission** In a related matter, the County Board and the City Commission will hold a joint meeting on April 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers in the Governmental Center to further discuss the feasibility of hydropower generation at the three dams - Boardman, Sabin, and Brown Bridge. At that meeting, the consultants will provide their analysis of the financial feasibility of operating those dams for hydropower generation. The summary of the recommendation can be found on the Grand Traverse County web page - www.grandtraverse.org. The analysis was sent to power companies in the area, some of which operate hydropower dams, to ask for their review of the analysis put together by the consultants. At the meeting, those power-generating companies will be offered an opportunity to discuss the analysis provided by the consultants and Mr. Peterson will be given an opportunity to discuss his proposal on how he can generate hydropower at a profit at the facilities. The consultants believe it is not economically feasible to generate hydropower at the dams.

✚ **Pool Consultant** Representatives of Lutra Aquatics are in town this week to evaluate the operation of the County pool at the Civic Center. There has been considerable discussion concerning the efficiency of the operation over the last several years. The Parks Board and the County Board decided to hire a consultant to come in and evaluate the operation including staffing, scheduling, hours of operation, fee structure, and users of the pool. As a result of the 4 days spent here in

Grand Traverse County and the review of numerous financial and operational documents, we expect a report from Lutra Aquatics that will detail several recommendations to improve the efficiency of the operation, hopefully reduce costs, and bring the facility closer to a break-even point.

✚ **Board of Public Works** The County Board of Public Works met this past week to discuss several issues including legal and engineering services. The board directed me to prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for both legal and engineering services for the Board of Public Works. It is anticipated that, as a result of the RFQ process, a new attorney and engineering firm will be selected to provide services to the Board of Public Works and the Water and Sewer Committee on a retainer basis. I anticipate that this will take several months to complete. Michael Houlihan, the current attorney for the Board of Public Works, has indicated his desire to transition out of his current responsibilities. Mr. Houlihan has been the DPW attorney for more than 30 years and has a wealth of information that will not easily be replaced. I anticipate negotiating with Mr. Houlihan to identify projects that are currently underway or require his expertise in order to bring them to completion. Once we've determined and identified those issues, we will go out for the Request for Qualifications for other services and bring an additional attorney on to work together with Mr. Houlihan during the transition.

✚ **Strategic Planning** The County Board has completed the majority of its strategic planning process for 2010. A draft strategic plan is being developed at this time. It is anticipated that the County Board will consider its strategic plan in the month of April and hopefully approve that plan. The County departments will then utilize the information in that plan to develop their own strategic plans for 2010 and develop budgets requesting resource allocations to meet the goals that they have established in conjunction with the County Board's goals. The process will continue through the rest of this year in preparation of the 2010 budget activities.

✚ **Governmental Center Third Floor Remodeling** Work on the Governmental Center third floor remodeling continues. Upon completion of the renovation of the historic courthouse, Friend of the Court, who was temporarily occupied on the third floor, has moved back to the historic courthouse. The County Board has authorized staff to do RFP's and bid out the remodeling of the third floor to house the following offices: Planning, Economic Development and Brownfield, Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance, Central Dispatch, and County Administration. The bids are being developed at this time and will be out in the next 3 to 4 weeks. Once the bids have been received and we know the budget amount, we will be back to the County Board to discuss the financial feasibility of completing the project.

✚ **National County Government Week** May 3-9 is National County Government Week. I'd like to take this opportunity to specifically recognize and thank Grand Traverse County employees for their hard work and dedication in making Grand Traverse County one of the best counties in the State of Michigan. Your dedication and hard work is very much appreciated.

✚ **Stay in touch!** If you would like to receive periodic news and event information from Grand Traverse County, subscribe for the County's email announcements by visiting www.grandtraverse.org and following the directions provided on our website. Receive up to date information such as press releases, updates from your County Administrator, and changes to the televised meeting schedule.

✚ **Web Streaming/Live Meeting Broadcasts** The County Board of Commissioners broadcasts its committee and board meetings held in the Commission Chambers at the Governmental Center live via web streaming on the County's web site - www.grandtraverse.org. Click on the "Meeting Videos" link from the County's home page and select "Web Streamed Meeting Videos".

In addition, meetings are broadcast live on government channel 99. The meetings are rebroadcast the Sunday following the meetings beginning at 1:00 p.m. Meetings not held in the Commission Chambers are also included in the broadcast schedule the following Sunday.



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