

NEON Minutes  
November 12, 2015, Biotechnology Advancement Center

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and County Administrator Tom Johnson presided over the meeting.

Legislative Priorities:

- a. Lewis & Clark completion to Worthington
- b. Infrastructure funding – including roads, bridges, broadband, transportation
- c. Housing related
- d. Education- incentives for minority teachers, school bond

Legislative priorities sub-committee has met one time and finalizing the draft utilizing the same for priorities for the next meeting. The legislative conference will be in March. The feasibility study is moving forward. The next determination will be how to get a true random survey across the county.

Buffer Initiative: This topic will be on the agenda for a few years. The DNR will release the map in the summer of 2016. The new legislation is scheduled to be implemented in 2018 or 2019. There have been 2 public meetings in the County and another meeting will be held next year after the map is released.

Federal Issues:

Waters of the U.S.: A lot of activities on the water of the US including an injunction to stop the law from being enacted. The Corp of Army Engineers is the governing entity and they are short staffed.

Ozone: EPA proposing to drop the allowable limits from 75ppm to 65ppm. It is important to give input now as this is the 1-2 year comment period. AMC is getting information on this. Iowa counties have signed resolutions. It is still undetermined if MN border counties will be affected.

Around the Table/NEON priorities:

- Tom Johnson/Noble County Administrator-NEON priorities-Asked the group what the NEON priorities should be going forward. Broadband has a good start. Try and get the small cities involved.
- Kurt Lintelman/Round Lake-Continue to pursue broadband funding. SW broadband wants to suggest legislation set up a revolving loan fund.
- Jeff McCabe/Frontier Communications-Talked about Connect America II funding for underserved clients. Frontier and Century Link have both accepted the money to upgrade service. This is a 5 year program.
- Don Linssen/Nobles County-Priorities should focus on getting Lewis & Clark water the rest of the way. Support moving forward with the mall plans and supporting the City of Worthington.
- Ethel Rogers/JoAnn Burkard/Summit Lake township-290 acres of land has been turned over to the DNR for the return of Summit Lake that once existed. More wind towers will be going up and there will be a meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Cheryl Janssen/Seward township-There is a lack of sources for obtaining gravel. Keeping the ditches cleaned up is an issue.
- Bob Demuth/Nobles County-Focus on the 4 legislative priorities already identified.
- Brad Schaffer/John Landgaard/Worthington School District-with future new businesses this adds stress on housing and the school district in regards to space. There is a need for an additional school, soccer fields, Trojan field is getting old. There will be public meetings. Enrollment study projected district enrollment to continue to increase.
- Brad Meester/City of Bigelow-Bigelow is a dead zone, Frontier is the only provider. Live Life Ministries(safe house for sex trafficking victims, drug rehab, and newly release inmates from jail incorporation into society) will be a new occupant of the school. Tax forfeited property-Habitat for Humanity is planning on building 2 houses on the

property and are currently looking for families to occupy the houses. The Elevator is looking into an expansion.

- Keith Stubbe/Round Lake-Federal government is working on cell service for the State border cities in the County. Could be a 1 year process.
- Rodney Sankey/City of Worthington-The electric and storm water rates will be going up. The retention pond behind Shopko will assist with flooding in the downtown area. The half percent sales tax that was approved for renovation of Memorial Auditorium and the Event Center will be paid off 21 months early. In 2016 will make some upgrades to Olson Campground to include an hotspot.
- Gary Hoffman/Worthington Public Utilities-Wells are going down they never recharged. Conducting a study on the Wastewater Treatment facility. Items of concern; soccer fields, Lewis & Clark keep lobbying, healthcare costs, education gaps, immigration policy, mall-don't jump in and make any bad decisions.
- Larry Janssen/City of Worthington-continue with the 4 priorities. Mall direction is in the hands of the owner. Soccer fields-Buss field are in tough shape.
- Gene Metz/Nobles County-Labor shortage work with community colleges.
- Tom Johnson/Nobles County Administrator-Labor shortage projections. Blandin has a project to keep youth local. DEED-MN Workforce states that the workforce will peak next year and not catch up again until 2040 through immigration. EMS is also having trouble retaining volunteers in the small communities. Blandin grants will be updated by December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Jorge Lopez/SW MN Housing Partnership- Building a 48 unit apartment complex in the City of Worthington. Rent will not be market rated.

The meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting:

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 7:00 pm  
BioTechnology Advancement Center  
1527 Prairie Drive, Worthington, MN 56187