



John C. Ackerman

Tazewell County Board

Continuing a Family Tradition of Community Service

August 27th, 2009

***** Position Update *****

[Tazewell County Board Bid Process](#)

Normally as you know I do not send out my recap of the Tazewell County Board Meeting as a newsletter. I post a recap of each meeting on the website under the "County Board" tab and under the title "County Board Agenda's". I also post on this page the full packet of background information we as County Board Officials receive each month and after each meeting I post the Official County Board Minutes (these get posted only after they are finalized by the County Clerks Office).

This month was different in that we had three very close votes that all deal with whether or not we should continue to accept the lowest bidder. The issue with two of the items was that one of the other bidders for the custodial contracts was Tazewell County Resources Center (TCRC), a non-profit organization that the County Board helps to fund. The other involved the Justice Center and came down to the fact that the Sheriff wanted to keep the current provider.

I fully support TCRC and appreciate the work they do to assist the citizens of Tazewell County, but I could not support awarding them a bid when they where not the lowest bidder. In one bid they were only \$120 higher than the lowest bidder and in the other they where \$2,601.12 higher than the lowest bidder.

While these dollar amounts may be small differences, my reasoning for voting no was the clarity of the policy we have for awarding bidding work. As a rule, we always accept the lowest qualified bidder. This takes the "grey area" out of the process. It is simply "black and white"; whomever is the lowest qualified bidder gets the work. With that as the rule, no individual can question why an individual or business received a bid award. This process eliminates any questions concerning potential favoritism and/or other possible improprieties.

One look at the manipulation and illegalities that have taken place in this state over the past few years tells you why we need this clarity. In this case, unfortunately TCRC is a non-profit, which made them different than the other bidders. I still thought it was important to have the moral clarity of continuing the process we have in place. If you start to make exceptions to the rule, you start to undermine the process as a whole.

However, this was not the way the votes went. All three items went to someone other than the lowest bidder. For items 5 and 6, Members Hillegonds, Hahn, Vanderheydt, Palmer, Von Boeckman, Sundell and Meisinger joined me in voting for the lowest bidder. On item 7, Member Stanford joined me and the

others listed above in voting for the lowest bidder. As mentioned above, all of this effort failed as the majority voted to give the bids to other individuals rather than the lowest bidder.

While I do not usually send the County Board Meeting Recaps out as a newsletter, I felt this issue was important enough to promptly explain to the citizens and taxpayers of Tazewell County why I took the position I did. In the end, this vote was not against TCRC and the valuable services they provide to the citizens of Tazewell County but a for the moral clarity and objectivity provided by the process we have in place of accepting the lowest qualified bidder. As always, I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve you on the Tazewell County Board and if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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