

## News

### **Cass' social host ordinance takes effect Aug. 27**

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Effective Aug. 27, Cass County will have a social host ordinance to use as another tool to combat underage drinking.

The ordinance was approved on second reading at the July 20 county board meeting, held at Turtle Lake Town Hall.

County Attorney Chris Strandlie said the ordinance fills the gap in the law by making the host of a party responsible for any underage drinking, whether or not the host has supplied the alcohol and even if held at a private residence.

He said his office has received no written comments, for or against the ordinance, but that he has received many positive verbal comments.

In Minnesota five or six counties and about 43 cities have social host ordinances. Cass County's ordinance does not cover cities, which would have to pass their own social host ordinances.

Strandlie noted that the majority of offenders are 21- to 25-year-olds who host gatherings with alcohol, where underage drinkers ages 18 to 21 are present. The U.S. spends \$53 billion a year, due to underage drinking, he added.

The final version of the social host ordinance will be posted under "ordinances" on the Cass County website, [www.co.cass.mn.us](http://www.co.cass.mn.us).

### Road revocation hearing

Commissioners approved on first reading a proposal to revoke Pine Point Drive (also called Big Leech Road) and Pine Point Circle to Turtle Lake Township. Total mileage is 0.8 mile.

Highway Engineer Dave Enblom said his staff and township officials inspected the road last week, which serves several dozen seasonal and year-round lake residences.

Although the road is quite narrow and needs gravel in places, the main issue is that at one area on Pine Point Circle, there is no place for snowplows or maintenance equipment to turn around. When the Highway Department plows snow, it has to back into a seasonal resident's driveway to turn. However that property could be sold, become a year-round residence, and the new owners might object to the turn-around maneuver. People want their roads plowed, but they don't like intrusions onto their property, Enblom observed.

Still, he and Township Chair Reno Wells were confident that a resolution could be reached with landowners to create a better turn-around spot.

The board approved the road revocation on first reading, with Enblom to report back. The actual reversion of the road to Turtle Lake Township will not occur until Jan. 1, 2013.

## Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Randy Fisher received board approval of an agreement with the Lexipol Online Policy Subscription service. Lexipol aims to create continuity among Minnesota's 87 county sheriff's offices on mandated policies, based on federal and state law. In addition, it will provide regular training for sworn officers on various topics. The annual fee is \$3,689.

Fisher was also authorized to accept contributions to establish a color guard-honor guard within the Sheriff's Office.

In other matters the board

Approved Sylvan Township's request to place a bridge project on the county bridge priority list in order to access state town bridge funding.

Approved a resolution needed to access state bonding funds for Highway 2.

Agreed to work with the WHA School, city of Walker and Leech Lake TV Corp. to improve an access road to the new Ah-Gwah-Ching (AGC) water tower and WHA's athletic fields. WHA Superintendent Wally Schoeb said the project should cost about \$20,000. Each entity will contribute about \$5,400, with the rest coming from funds left in the AGC reuse project.

Approved 2009 budget amendments, described by Chief Financial Officer Larry Wolfe as "housekeeping for the state auditor's report." All had received prior board approval.

Approved 2009 fund balance designations (reserved and unreserved).

Moved the Nov. 2 board meeting to the Land Department in Backus, because the courthouse meeting room will be used for election activities.

Set a special board meeting for Aug. 31 at 1 p.m. at the Land Department for an in-depth discussion with the Highway Department of long-term road funding and budget strategies.