

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
April 10, 2023

April 10, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Barta, Brintnell and Suda. Commissioners Anderson participated via zoom at 5:30 p.m.

At 5:30 p.m. the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the March 21, 2023, regular meeting minutes, monthly bills, Knights of Columbus Gaming Permit and additions of interim auditor, legislative bill and rehiring at extension office. Second by Suda. Motion carried.

Allen Anderson, Administrator for the Walsh County Health District, appeared to provide information about the legislative bills relating to NDPERS Retirement System. Several counties have passed resolutions supporting the maintenance of the existing NDPERS Defined Benefit Main Plan and a draft was provided to the commissioners. Discussed the retirement program as a recruiting tool, future funding for the program and possible amendments to the current legislative bills. **Motion by Barta to sign the Resolution in support of legislation to maintain the existing NDPERS Defined Contribution Plan.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Allen also read a thank you from the administrative building staff expressing their appreciation for the advanced notice for closing of the County offices during the recent blizzard and the commissioners concern for the employee's safety.

Ron Jurgens, sheriff, appeared for the following:

- Had a deputy quit. He went to work for the railroad which provided a better work schedule of Monday through Friday. **Motion by Anderson to allow to advertise and fill the position.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Has offered a conditional job offer to a candidate that is at the academy.
- A water pump needs to be replaced in one of the vehicles. Mike's Repair estimated the cost to be \$3,400 to \$4,000. **Motion by Barta to go ahead with the repair.** Second by Suda. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Introduced Jon Paul from Johnson Controls. He was present to discuss the HVAC Plan document that was sent out to the commissioners. Discussed original piping from the 1940's which are in the walls and brittle, boiler is at end of life, ventilation, upgrading to hot water system and the current system doesn't meet today's standards. Also discussed the new system would be more efficient, last 30 to 40 years, timeframe of project, disruption to work day and prioritizing project. At this

time they feel that the cooling system is more important than the boiler. The cost of the project is 4.8 to 5.5 million dollars. With that cost do we build new and add to the jail?

- The projector in the farmers room is still not functioning. We can get an 82" TV from Wayne's Heating & Cooling for \$2,458 which includes installation. **Motion by Suda to purchase the TV from Wayne's for \$2458 to be paid with Covid funds.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes motion carried.
- Discussed a permit for Jeremy Fricke on County Road 6. Commissioners would like the water board to approve before the commission approve it.
- Presented the 2022 Annual Report. To be reviewed at a later date.
- Preparing for flooding, starting to haul sand and opening culverts.

Katie Thompson, Arena Commission President; Ashely Seim, President Park River Park Board; Misty Praska, Park River Parks & Rec Director; Dale Pesek, past Fair Board President; Luke Lillehaugen, Fair Board President; Jen Kadlec and Alexis Ramsrud, Park River Figure Skating Board and Scott Kraft, North Star Hockey President from the Arena Commission were in attendance to provide an arena update. They are a functional group that works well together. They realize that the deterioration of the building has come from the ice arena which is used for hockey and skating. They plan to continue with the current plan with the plans to separate in 3 to 5 years. The fair board and 4-H are ok with the current plan. The commission will continue to work with Brad when issues arise.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following:

- It is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week.
- There is a grant for snow removal through the state. Townships need to go through the county. Brent will handle the snow grant for Walsh County.
- Gave a flood update. Could start flooding later this week. Discussed water content, forecast for rain and dam storage capacity. Had an emergency declaration prepared and ask the commissioners if they want to implement it. **Motion by Barta to sign the Emergency Declaration for Walsh County.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Will post flood information on the old county website.
- During flooding Brent will be allowed to take the county pickup back and forth to work so that he can check water sheds when traveling back and forth to work.

WALSH COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA
EMERGENCY DECLARATION

WHEREAS, Walsh County has the potential for damage to roads, bridges, culverts, farmlands, homes, businesses and other public facilities from overland flooding and flooding of its rivers as they reach or exceed flood stage; and

WHEREAS, the National Weather Service (NWS) flood outlooks indicate the potential for significant river, tributary and overland spring flooding within the county, and

WHEREAS, the county currently is looking at moderate flooding on the Park River and Forest River with major flooding forecasted on the Red River; and

WHEREAS, the potential for a rapid melt of an excess amount of snow on the ground and any additional precipitation during the melt will significantly increase the threat within the watersheds and will increase the risk throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, the impact of these damages threaten the health, well-being and public safety of the citizens of Walsh County; and

WHEREAS, the cost of preparedness, clean-up, repair, and replacement of such damaged facilities is far in excess of County resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Walsh County Board of Commissioners declares an emergency and orders the activation and utilization of the Emergency Operations Plan, its procedures, attachments and appendices to monitor the situation, develop a detailed damage assessment, alleviate hardship and initiate appropriate relief actions and mitigation measures by departments and agencies of local government to limit the hardships and impact of the emergency upon the citizens of Walsh County.

DATED at Grafton, North Dakota, this 10th day of April 2023.

Discussed letter from ND Insurance Reserve Fund in regard to annual meeting and voting. No one plans to attend meeting and we will continue to allow the NDIRF Board of Directors to act as our proxy.

Commissioner Barta discussed the legislative bill in regard to public money being used for private schools. He compared it to using county money to pay for private roads. Commissioner Anderson stated that no district will receive less money than they are currently receiving.

Walsh County will continue to support NDSU in the hiring of a new extension agent.

Commissioner Brintnell mentioned having a plan in place for the approaching retirement of the auditor. The deputy auditor can step up and assist with duties or the county could look at the possibility of hiring a retired auditor. Brintnell has reached out to Aaron Birst from NDACo and will continue to check into an interim auditor. The deadline for the position is April 14th and they have received several applications. Still won't have anyone in place before Auditor Molde is done.

Received a note from the City of Fairdale expressing their appreciation for the ½ Mill Self Help Program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

Kris Molde, Auditor