

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
July 18, 2023

July 18, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Anderson, Barta, Brintnell, and Suda

At 9:00 am the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

Commissioner Brintnell moved to approve the July 5, 2023 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved

Sig Samuels and Scott Fettig from Samuels Group were present to give an update on the new jail project. Tom Weber joined the meeting by video and will be working with the jail staff to collect additional data. Tom feels that he is about 6 weeks out from having projections and the report ready to be reviewed. While on site they toured the Sheriff's Department building, Administrative Office, Courthouse, and Chase building, two potential sites within the County, and an existing off-site building. After collecting the necessary data they feel, at this time, the most cost effective option would be to build the jail on the current property and connect it to the Courthouse. Scott will start looking at ways to connect the jail by taking the square footage needed and moving it around to get some ideas on what will be the best fit. Once that is completed Samuels Group will then take those plans and put some tentative numbers together in regards to what the cost of development will be. There was a discussion on the transportation costs and risks associated with transporting inmates to the courthouse if it was off-site. Scott had a lengthy discussion on all of the areas that will be analyzed during this initial phase. Commissioner Barta removed himself from the meeting. There was a discussion on the safety involved if the Courthouse was attached to the jail, including the benefits of screening the public as they enter the courthouse as well.

Sheriff Ron Jurgens appeared for the following:

- Sheriff Jurgens reported that he has two vacant positions and asked for a motion to hire a Deputy and a Corrections Officer. **Commissioner Suda made a motion to allow Sheriff Jurgens to hire a Deputy and a Corrections Officer, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved**

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Jason informed the board that he will not be reviewing the permits that are on the agenda due to the water board's agenda being full.
- Jason presented the board with documentation to move forward with the hiring of KLJ for doing the preliminary designs and working with DOT on the upcoming bridge project. They will be going through the process with DOT regarding bridge project BRJ-0050(059). Jason asked for a motion and a signature to submit the document to LTAP. Jason also informed the board that the County's liaison with the DOT, Bryon Fuchs, will no longer be with DOT at the end of the month as he is going to LTAP. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to accept this proposal, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All present voted in favor; motion approved**

- Jason gave an update on #9 between Edinburg and Hoople. He informed the Commissioners that they are moving right along with the project and the project should be completed by next week.
- Jason requested that three miles on County 12, straight north of Park River, is paved while there is paving equipment in the area. He informed the Commissioners that there is money in the budget to cover the \$500,000 expense for the three miles. With the crew being in the area it would save the County a substantial amount of money to complete the project while the equipment was there, instead of at a later time. Commissioner Barta returned to the meeting. There was a discussion on the poor condition of County 12, along with prioritizing County 12B. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the County 12 project, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved** Commissioner Anderson stated that the Commissioners have hard decisions to make on what money is spent but with supply issues, or not having a plan in place, decisions like this have to be made.
- Chairman Skorheim made a recommendation that a publication is written for the newspaper explaining the bridge conditions in Walsh County and the costs associated with them. There was a discussion on how important it is to educate the taxpayers on the long-term plan. Commissioner Barta will work with Jason to get that drafted.
- Jason informed the Commissioners that he has two candidates for his Level 2 gravel transportation open position and will be setting up a time for interviews.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following:

- Brent informed the Commissioners that money has been received for the early snow program that they participated in. Brent gave a list of the 18 townships that participated and the payment amount for each. There was a discussion on how the program worked and the possible reasons why some townships chose not to participate in the program.
- Brent then discussed that townships are receiving letters from FEMA telling them that they do not know if they are eligible for flood insurance because they are looking for documentation that says that they either have their own floodplain manager and policies, are contracted, or they are under the County. Brent informed the Commissioners that they are trying to get that straightened out but have not had any luck getting a response from his FEMA contact. Brent is waiting to hear if the townships will be covered under the County if they have signed their Planning and Zoning over to the County or if they need a separate agreement for floodplain management. A discussion was had on the agreements that are on file with the County currently and he foresees that there will be a need for a signed document at some point. Commissioner Brintnell suggested that if an agreement is needed that Kelley Cole is involved.
- Brent stated that they did a spring flood declaration again and the County will need to request to be a part of it again. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to participate in the Spring Flood Declaration, seconded by Commissioner Suda. All voted in favor; motion approved**
- Brent was contacted by the City of Grafton regarding their sandbag machine that they would give to the County. A discussion was had and it was decided that the County would pass on the sandbag machine at this time.
- Commissioner Brintnell asked Brent for an update on signage for Brent's pickup. Brent informed the Commissioners that he has not finalized a design so nothing has been ordered. After a discussion it was decided that a magnetic sign that has both Emergency Management and Weed Control on it would be the best option at this time.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Ed gave the Commissioners an update on the status of the software conversion. The project will be done in two phases and the first phase did go live on July 1st, which is the accounts payable and payroll software. The other system is Tax Wise, which is the program where the parcel maintenance and tax billing will take place, will go live in September.
- Ed then discussed the financial side of the project. A discussion was had on the original contract and the source of funding that was determined to pay for the software. Previously it was determined that CARES funds would be used for the initial project and the annual maintenance fee would be funded by the technology account. A discussion was then had on the remaining balance due and the balance in the CARES account. It was noted that the 2023 annual maintenance was paid out of the CARES account because it was not included in the 2023 Technology budget. A discussion was had on the CARES account balance and the annual maintenance bill. Auditor Quibell informed the board that at this time it appears there would be room in the Technology budget to reimburse the CARES account. After reviewing the lack of funds in the CARES account it was determined that a more thorough review should take place on both the CARES account and ARPA funds. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to reimburse the CARES account for the \$28,122.00 2023 annual maintenance fee for Tyler Technologies out of the Technology fund and once the CARES funds are exhausted the remaining funds will come out of the ARPA fund, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved**

The Commissioners then discussed the store in Adams. With the property belonging to the County, it was decided that they would pursue demolishing it in the most economical way. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that they would check with their county crew to see if they are able to do the demolition. If Jason doesn't feel that his crew will be able to take care of it, they will look to an outside source.

A discussion was then had on the upcoming NDACo annual conference. Commissioner Anderson asked if there was interest in changing the delegate for the upcoming year. It was determined that Commissioner Suda would replace Commissioner Brintnell this year and act as Walsh County's delegate.

The Commissioners reviewed the 3 Year Delinquent Tax Listing that must be published in the Walsh County Record by August 1st. The listing will be submitted to the paper on Thursday, July 20th for the Wednesday, July 26th publication.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

Kristi Quibell
Auditor