

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
September 19, 2023

September 19, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Barta, Brintnell, Anderson, 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 September 5, 2023 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Suda. All voted in favor; motion approved.

Sheriff Ron Jurgens came before the commissioners to give an update on the jail project. Chairman Skorheim, Commissioner Barta, Adam Trahan, and Ron met with the Samuels Group. Ron reported that going forward there would be weekly meetings to ensure that the project continues to move forward. The jail board will meet once a month to stay up to date on the project. Ron reported that the Barnes County jail will fit in the existing location and once a drawing is created, he will share it with the commissioners. A discussion was had on the benefits of keeping the jail on-site. Commissioner Brintnell stated that at the Region 4 Caucus that was attended, Walsh County Commissioners did request that jail funding be added to the resolutions since there are other counties also struggling with jail funding.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Herb Windsor, Curt Rogalla, Mike Janda and RJ Sanders joined the meeting to discuss their concerns with the conditions of a property in Vesleyville. Jason stated that after the May 23, 2023 conversation with the property owner he flagged the right of way and sent him a follow-up letter. Jason had not seen any improvement after the conversation so on September 18th he sent a second letter giving the property owner 7 days to clear the property from the right of way due. Sheriff Jurgens stated that Detective Leadens is investigating the case due to the complaints that his office has been getting. He stated that the Grand Forks Public Health Department will be doing an inspection also. The concerned citizens had a lengthy discussion with the commissioners on the issues that they are having. Chairman Skorheim informed the citizens that the Planning and Zoning Committee is looking into updating the Walsh County Planning and Zoning Plan to address the issues.
- Jason informed the commissioners that the deadline for the township assistance program was extended to October 6, 2023. He received one additional application and is expecting at least one more.
- Jason reported that the majority of the 2022 FEMA money has been received but he is still waiting on the 2023 FEMA money.
- Jason presented the commissioners with four utility permits from Nodak Electric Cooperative, with one of the permits replacing the previously presented permit due to incorrect data due on the original permit. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the four utility permits for Nodak Electric Cooperative; seconded by Commissioner Suda. All voted in favor; motion approved.**
- Jason then presented the commissioners with a drainage permit from Tarek Schanilec on County Rd 8, Section 3, in Ops Township. Tarek would also like to add a culvert or

build up the dike but after talking with the water board, it was decided that they would not be approving either at this time. The water board will be looking into adding a culvert at the intersection and will be working with KLJ on that. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the application for ditch cleaning for Tarek Schanilec; seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

- Commissioner Barta informed the group that when they attended the Caucus, they asked that a resolution be written for more road and bridge funding for the eastern part of the state. Commissioner Brintnell stated that they also requested a resolution for how the state dictates the engineering firms that are able to do the bridge inspections for the county.
- Commissioner Brintnell asked for an update from Jason on Homme Dam. Jason stated that he requested that the staff itemize their time sheets going further. Commissioner Brintnell asked if there were any conversations regarding the number of hours that are being worked by the staff. Jason stated that the lack of proper equipment is adding additional hours to the projects that they are completing. A discussion was had on the abundance of hours that are being worked and that the hours need to be limited going forward.
- Jason reported that the bridge on #6 was done and they are making good progress on the bridge on #8.

Commissioner Brintnell then gave an update on the caucus the commissioners attended. It was noted in the meeting that it was announced that the NDPERS retirement will end in 2025, not in 2024 like originally anticipated. NDACo is interested in handling the 911 siren funds on behalf of the counties and then will distribute the funds in an attempt to streamline it. It was also reported that the Association of Counties has hired two grant companies that are reviewing available grants and would be in contact with the counties that are eligible for them. It was also reported that the counties voiced that they are unhappy with the way the Social Services Zone is being handled.

Tanya Weiler appeared for the following:

- Tanya presented the commissioners with the upcoming health insurance premium increase for 2024. NDPHIT presented several options to the county but if no changes were made to the policy there would be an increase of 13.77%. Tanya explained that the county was also given three other options, where the out-of-pocket max was increased. NDHPIT offers a 1% decrease in the premium with implementing a Wellness Program. A lengthy discussion was had on the options that were presented. **Commissioner Brintnell motion a motion to approve option 3, with the 5.8% increase and an out-of-pocket max increase, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am

Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

Kristi Quibell
Auditor