

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**November 7, 2023**

November 7, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Barta, Brintnell, and Anderson  
Not Present: Commissioner Suda

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

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

**Commissioner Barta moved to approve the October 17, 2023 and October 24, 2023 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared during the employee time to report that he has a second vacancy and now has two dispatcher positions to fill. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the hiring for the two dispatch positions, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.** Brent informed the commissioners that Grand Forks County's dispatch center is not interested in servicing Walsh County.

Commissioner Barta reported that the Walsh County Health Department received a grant that will be used to pay for the additional nurse.

Chairman Skorheim reported that the Samuels Group will not be attending the meeting as previously reported.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Jason updated the commissioners on the utility permit that was previously approved for K-Bros. The original permit stated that there would be power bored through the road but the drain tile was also bored, and was not stated on the permit. Louis Kadlec and John Kadlec were present and a discussion was had on the work that the contractor did for them. After a lengthy discussion it was determined that it was a misunderstanding with the contractor. It was determined that going forward the permits will need to be updated to give a better explanation of the project. Jason will be sending this contractor a follow up letter.
- Jason reported that his Sign Foreman position is vacant at this time and is looking to get approve to fill the position. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the hiring of a new Sign Foreman, seconded by Commissioner Barta. All voted in favor; motion approved.**
- Jason reported that he anticipates bridge inspectors today to review the bridge on Cty 6, 8, and 19.
- Jason informed the commissioners that he is going to put in an application for the Flex Funding to turn bridges into culverts but he is not sure if it will be granted. The county has a lot of 20 and under bridges that are in need of repairs.

Commissioners reviewed the 2023 Tax Appraisal list. One parcel was removed from the list as the 3 years plus estimated taxes were paid. No one appeared for the Delinquent Tax List Objection Hearing.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Ed presented an abatement application to the commissioners for Paul Berntson on his property in Silvesta Township. Ed went over, in detail, the application with the commissioners and reported that the Silvesta Township Board confirmed that Mr. Berntson no longer cleans grain commercially and the township approved the application in October. If Paul Berntson starts to clean grain commercially the valuation will have to change. It is Ed's recommendation that this abatement is approved and the land be valued as farmland. After a discussion was held **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the abatement application for Paul Berntson, seconded by Commissioner Barta, All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Ed researched HB1158 and stated that there is still little guidance from the State Tax Commissioners office. It is his understanding that some of the workload will fall on the counties. Ed plans to update the commissioners as he learns more.

Sherry O'Toole, Treasurer, appeared for the following:

- Sherry presented the commissioners a cost comparison between printing and preparing the tax statements in-house and outsourcing it this year. Sherry stated that the preliminary tax statements are out-sourced but the final tax statements have not been in the past. With all of the additional workload that the Treasurers Office has experienced with the system change she is asking for a motion to approve outsourcing the final tax statements this year. She also stated that the temporary employees that helped in the past are unavailable this year, which would add additional work for her and her deputy. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the outsourcing of the final tax statements, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion carried.**

Auditor Kristi Quibell informed the commissioners that she received notification that the Edmore School District is dissolving. The school board voted in October that the 2023-2024 school year would be the last year it is operational. Auditor Quibell reported that all of the terms for the 5-member Walsh County School Annexation & Reorganization Committee has expired. The previous members were contacted and expressed their interest in renewing their 3-year terms. The term expired on June 30, 2021 for Joe Bata from Adams, ND and Harold Mach from Minto, ND and Terry Novak from Fordville, Russ Carignan from Grafton, and Roger Schuster from Minto had terms expire on June 30, 2022. A discussion was held on appointing the members to fill the remainder of the terms for the positions. Mr. Bata and Mr. Mach would fill positions with their term expiring June 30, 2024 and Mr. Novak, Mr. Carignan, and Mr. Schuster's terms would expire June 30, 2025. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion reappoint the 5 previous members for the remainder of the terms, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion carried.**

Auditor Quibell explained to the commissioners that there was a clerical error while calculating the mills for Weed Control. The maximum levy allowed is 4.0 mills but when the State worksheet was completed the field had an incorrect value of 2.5 mills. Due to that incorrect

value the commissioners were presented a mill levy of 2.5 for Weed Control. After contacting a representative from NDACo, it was determined that since the apportionment value was not affected by this error, the change in the mills to reflect the correct approved budget would be possible. Auditor Quibell stated that the preliminary tax statement reflected a mill levy of 2.88 for Weed Control and the final tax statement will have a mill levy of 2.87. Auditor Quibell apologized for the error.

Auditor Quibell presented the commissioners with an update on the CARES and ARPA fund balances. The CARES fund has been depleted and the Tyler bills are now being paid out of the ARPA fund, as per the motion at the July 18, 2023 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am

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Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

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Kristi Quibell  
Auditor