

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**October 17, 2023**

October 17, 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 October 3, 2023 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Sheriff Ron Jurgens and Adam Trahan came before the commissioners to introduce the two new employees for the jail, Bronson Pugh and Gary Helland.

Tanya Wieler, Human Resources, appeared for the following:

- Tanya presented the commissioners with the second reading of the policy updates on the Social Media Policy and the Sick Leave Policy. The Social Media Policy outlined the expectations while posting on Walsh County's behalf. The Sick Leave Policy was updated to allow the ability to request a doctor's note at any time, whereas it previously stated after three days. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the updated policies, seconded by Commissioner Suda. All voted in favor; motion carried.**

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Ed presented an abatement application to the commissioners for Diane Hoverson on her property in Grafton, ND. Ed went over, in detail, the application with the commissioners and reported that the City of Grafton denied the application in September. Due to the supporting information, it was Ed's recommendation that the abatement be denied. Ms. Hoverson explained the reasonings behind why she applied for the abatement. After a discussion was held **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to deny the abatement application for Diane Hoverson, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Commissioner Brintnell gave an update on HB1158, which relates to a property tax credit for property used as a primary residence. Commissioner Brintnell attended a meeting during the annual convention and it was her understanding that the application process will be handled through the county tax director. A discussion was held and Ed will look into how it will affect the county workload.

Sheriff Ron Jurgens appeared for the following:

- Sheriff Jurgens and Officer Richard Sherlock presented the commissioners with bids that were received to update the departments guns. Officer Sherlock received bids from Spartan Firearms, Kiesler Police Supply, and Dakota Firearms Supply and went over each one with the commissioners. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that it would be in the best interest of the county to purchase the guns from the local dealer. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the bid from Dakota**

**Firearms Supply, seconded by Commissioner Suda. All voted in favor; motion carried.**

- Sheriff Jurgens then gave the commissioners an update on the jail project. Sheriff Jurgens reported that the preliminary work is wrapping up and he will be attending the last small group meeting this week before Samuels Group presents the commissioners with the initial plans at the November 7<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. Sheriff Jurgens stated that he was in contact with Paul Laney from Elevatus Architecture and they are interested in bidding out the project as well.
- Sheriff Jurgens stated that he was elected as the Vice-president of the North Dakota Sheriff's and Deputies Association at the annual convention.

Commissioner Suda stated that the Walsh County Fair was going on this week and on Saturday night they are having a Bulls & Broncs Rodeo.

Commissioner Suda reported to the commissioners that the JDA phone number is a new number and Stacie Sevigny intends to advertise it. Calls will no longer go through the courthouse for JDA.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Jason and Wade Thompson, KLJ Engineering, updated the commissioners on the temporary easements on the right of way for a bridge near Edinburg and another near Park River. The valuation for the easement near Edinburg was \$220 and \$480 for the one near Park River. Both bridge projects will be covered 100% by the DOT Bridge Project. **Commissioner Suda made a motion to approve KLJ's market analysis for both locations, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Jason updated the commissioners on the bridge projects. He reported that he is waiting on bridge inspections for the bridges on County #8 and County #6 before they can be opened.
- Jason presented the commissioners with a drainage permit for Lyle Shephard. This permit is to clean out an existing drain on the south side of County Rd 1. The second drainage permit reviewed was for Gary Dauksavage to clean a ditch on County Rd 2. The third was a drainage permit for Steven Schuster to install a drain tile pump adjacent to County Rd 4. The final drainage permit was for Larry Toews Farms LLP to clean a ditch on County Rd 12A. Jason reported that all permits were approved by the water board. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the four drainage permits, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**
- Jason then presented the commissioners with utility permits for Polar Communications near the Warsaw and Oakwood areas. Jason presented a utility permit for Nodak Cooperative in Oakwood crossing County Rd 4. Jason stated that he does not have any issues with either one. The final utility permit that was presented was for Steven Schuster on County Rd 4 for drain tiling. Jason stated that his concern with this permit is that it states they will be trenching through the county road and his recommendation is to allow the permit as long as it is bored underneath it. Jason stated that he would update Steven Schuster's utility permit to state that boring is required. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the utility permits as presented, seconded by Commissioner Suda.** John Kippen from Landmark Companies addressed the commissioners with his concerns regarding the requirement of boring instead of open

trenching. John stated the cost to do so would be substantially more and he has never had any past experience with issues as a result of open trenching. A lengthy discussion was had on the subject and Commissioner Anderson stated that she would like to see Steven Schuster present at a meeting before a decision on allowing open trenching be made. It was decided to continue with the motion to approve the utility permits, including Steven Schuster's to bore instead of open trench. **All voted in favor; motion approved.**

- Jason presented the commissioners with Custom 365 LLP's bid for snow removal. Custom 365 LLP was the only company who submitted a bid for the upcoming winter. A discussion was had on the bid, including that shoveling was not included on the bid. Jason stated that he would clear that up with the contractor because it states the contractor is responsible for it. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the bid for Custom 365 LLP for the snow removal, seconded by Commissioner Barta. All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Jason then presented the commissioners with a bill for the county's portion of the bridge inspections in the amount of \$1,957.77. **Commissioner Suda made a motion to pay the bill for the bridge inspections, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Roll call vote –Commissioner Brintnell – Yes, Commissioner Barta – No, Commissioner Anderson – Yes, Commissioner Suda – Yes, Chairman Skorheim – Yes; motion approved.**
- Jason reported that Homme Dam will be closing November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Auditor Kristi Quibell presented the commissioners a joint power agreement that NDACo provided regarding the collection and distribution of 911 fees from the telephone companies. NDACo would receive all of the fees and they would disperse to the counties. There would be no cost associated with this agreement but it would give NDACo negotiating power with the telephone companies. Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, stated that he was not opposed to the joint power agreement. **Commissioner Suda made a motion for Walsh County to sign the joint powers agreement, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion carried.**

Steven Schuster joined the meeting to discuss the utility permit that requires boring instead of open trenching with the commissioners. Steven voiced his concerns with the decision to not allow open trenching for this project. Due to the substantial increase in the cost associated with boring, Steven stated that the project might have to be canceled because of it. A lengthy discussion was had on the reasoning behind the decision the commissioners made. Steven stated that the gravel road has been cut twice previously for drain tiling and the tiling company has cut additional roads in the county for projects in the past. Commissioner Suda stated that the county should look into getting a policy in writing about boring county roads and any permits presented, once adopted, would have to adhere to it. Commissioner Barta stated that with the cold weather coming his concern was the compaction after the project is completed and what the condition of the road would be in the spring. Steven asked if it would be allowed if he waited until spring to complete the work. Jason stated that his biggest concern was the possibility of moisture changing in the spring which would create issues. Commissioner Barta discussed the possibility of the permit being approved today with the work being done in the spring then he would be ok moving forward with it. He also said he would like to see the county develop a new policy on this over the winter. **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve Steven Schuster's utility permit for open trenching, if completed in the spring,**

**seconded by Commissioner Suda. Roll call vote: Commissioner Anderson – Yes, Commissioner Suda – Yes, Commissioner Brintnell – No, Commissioner Barta – Yes, Chairman Skorheim – No. Motion carried.**

Auditor Quibell informed the commissioners there is a need for a special meeting on October 24, 2023 at 10:00 am to approve the government drains that will be approved at the water board's meeting on that day.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am

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Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

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Kristi Quibell  
Auditor