

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
November 21, 2023**

November 21, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

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

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 November 7, 2023 and monthly bills, seconded by Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.

Allen Zidon, Director of Walsh County Rural Water, came before the commissioners to discuss the Fordville Aquifer. Allen has been working with the ND Rural Water Systems on possible ways of being proactive to protect the water users from pollution. Allen would like to see the gravel pits rezoned so it is required to reclaim the pits, with returning them to native land being the best option. A lengthy discussion was had and it was determined that a Planning and Zoning Committee meeting will need to be scheduled. Commissioner Barta stated that he would look at getting a meeting scheduled and will be in contact with Allen.

Jill Denault from The Zone then came before the commissioners to discuss concerns Walsh County has now that social services is being handled at the State level. Kelley Cole and Ron Jurgens were also present to give their perspective on what they have seen. A lengthy discussion was had and it was determined that lack of communication was a large part of the issue. The cases for Walsh County have slowed down dramatically since The Zone was created and Kelley Cole voiced her concerns. Jill informed them that the State did change the requirements and, even with the safety framework that is in place, it is hard to get an active case. Jill would like to see locals reach out to the Grafton office, instead of the call center, but the State does not want it handled that way. Commissioner Brintnell requested that a meeting be set up with the Sheriff Department, States Attorney, schools, and other local authorities by February 1 to strengthen the network to ensure the needs of the children of the county are being met.

Pursuant to public advertisement, the sale of real estate forfeited to Walsh County for delinquent taxes was held at 10:00 a.m.

The following parcels were sold:

19-4811 070	In the S1/2NW1/4 1.81A 21-157-55	David Land	\$216.31
31-7380 010	In the SW1/4NE1/4 1A 11-157-58	David Land	\$101.47
43-13720	In the SW1/4NE1/4 1A 23-155-55	David Land	\$ 73.95
45-13720	In the NE1/4SE1/4 .30A 21-158-56	David Land	\$11,000

The remaining parcels will be offered to the respective cities for sale.

Sheriff Ron Jurgens appeared for the following:

- Ron presented the commissioners with a bid for two new Ford Explorers that will be purchased during the 2024 budget season. The bid was from Nelsons Auto in the amount of \$103,579.90. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the purchase of the two new Ford Explorers, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Ron discussed the funds from Back the Blue HB 1307, which was passed by the 2023 Legislature for purpose of hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement and correctional officers, and provide tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement trainees. Ron asked the County Commission to authorize him to expend the Back the Blue Grant Funds approved in HB1307 as he sees fit. **Commission Anderson made a motion to give Ron permission to expend the funds as he sees fit; seconded by Commissioner Suda. Ron stated that at this time his intention is to give the retention bonuses over a 12-month period of time with the first being paid in January 2024. All voted in favor; motion carried.** Ron stated that he would not be accepting any of the funds. The Sheriff Department is fully staffed but the Correctional Center has one vacancy.

Herb Winzer presented the commissioners with a letter from concerned citizens of Veseleyville with an update on the condition of the property in Veseleyville. The letter requested that a timeline be set for completion of the removal and cleanup of the property. States Attorney, Kelley Cole, was present and informed the commissioners that there was a criminal complaint filed with the court and it is going through the process with the next court date scheduled in January. Jason Johnston stated that the highway department has been out to the property but is concerned with the right of way through the whole town. A discussion was had on enforcing the right of way for the whole town. A Planning and Zoning meeting will be scheduled to start the process of updating the Planning and Zoning Plan.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Jason informed the commissioners on an issue at the junction of County Rd 1 and County Rd 32. The gate valve that was recently added was to remain open unless there was flooding, but it has been closed. The highway department chained it open to ensure that it does not get closed again. A discussion was had and it was decided that Jason would talk with the landowner and if it closes again, then Jason could remove the gate valve.
- Jason updated the commissioners on a complaint that was filed with the water board on a dike near the bridge by County Rd 6, directly north of Forest River. Jason informed the commissioners that they have been notified that due to the investigation, the ditch will have to be removed within 15 days. Due to a lack of permits, the county is financially responsible for the removal.
- Jason presented the commissioners with a drainage permit for Grant Skibicki to add an approach to a bin site. A discussion was had and **Commissioner Barta made a motion to approve the drainage permit for Grant Skibicki, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion carried.**
- Jason informed the commissioners that they have had two applications for the open position in the highway department.
- Jason reported that they are still looking into the condition of County Rd 12B.

- Jason informed the commissioners that all bridges passed their inspections and are now open.
- Jason presented the commissioners with the Maintenance Certification for all Federal Funding. It is an annual form that is required to ensure that the county is spending their federal funds appropriately. **Commissioner Suda made a motion to have Chairman Skorheim sign the form, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Kristi Quibell presented the commissioners with the 2024 liquor license application for JR's Bar. **Commissioner Brintnell made a motion to approve the liquor license for JR's Bar for 2024, seconded by Commissioner Barta. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Commissioner Anderson informed the commissioners that Jill Sanderson reached out to her informing her that there was a vacancy on the Carnegie Regional Library board. Jill informed Karen that Gaye Riske from Minto, ND would be interested in the position. **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to appoint Gaye Riske for the 3-year term on the Carnegie Regional Library board; seconded by Commissioner Barta. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Kristi Quibell presented the commissioners with pricing for end of year preparation provided by Tyler Technologies. She explained the difference between the sessions that are being offered and the costs associated with it. Kristi asked for approval from the commissioners to participate in the one-on-one training with a total cost of \$1,430.00 and \$390.00 for the one-on-one training for W-2/1099. **Commissioner Suda made a motion to allow Kristi to enroll in both of the one-on-one training sessions; seconded by Commissioner Anderson. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Kristi Quibell informed the commissioners that a decision has not been made for the Deputy Auditor I position. The interviews were held last week.

Commissioner Suda gave an update on JDA and the Main Street Initiative. Commissioner Suda stated that the incubator bid was \$1.3 million over budget so they had to make adjustment to the original plan. The lack of contractors has slowed down the process and they are continuing to explore their options. Commissioner Suda updated the commissioners on the daycare center project for JDA. The funding is available and has a provider that is interested, but they are waiting on contractors and are hopeful that it will be opened by next year.

Commissioner Brintnell informed the commissioners that Tanya Wieler informed her that Section 3.4 of the county's Personnel Manual allows, under certain circumstances, exempt employees to receive overtime compensation when the overtime is funded by funds received from an outside agency. Commissioner Brintnell went into detail with the commissioners what the policy states and voiced that she felt that Kristi Quibell would qualify due to the number of hours that she is putting in. Commissioner Brintnell stated that they would like to check to see if ARPA funds could be use, not mill dollars. She would like to investigate this further and report back to the commissioners with the findings.

Commissioner Brintnell stated that Tanya Wieler has reached out to Kim Droog from Legacy CPA to assist the county with year end payroll. Kim is willing to work with the Auditor's Office at a rate of \$100/hour. After a discussion was had, **Commissioner Anderson made a motion to hire Kim Droog from Legacy CPA at \$100/hour for payroll assistance, seconded by Commissioner Brintnell. All voted in favor; motion approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am

Dennis Skorheim, Chair

Attest:

Kristi Quibell
Auditor