

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

December 19, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

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

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

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

It was noted that at the December 5th meeting a second motion was not received during the nomination of the Chair or Vice-chair. Commissioner Barta informed the commissioners that after reviewing Robert's Rule of Order a second motion is not required when a nomination comes from the floor.

Commissioner Suda moved to approve the December 5, 2023 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Brintnell. All voted in favor.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Ed presented the commissioners with a grant opportunity from HB1225 that would provide assistance to counties that do not have their parcel information online. He explained that the grant would cover the initial set up and the hosting fee for the first year, with the possibility of reimbursement for the second year. Ed explained that the county would have to sign a 5-year contract, with an annual hosting fee of \$2,887.50 per year. Ed gave the commissioner a demo of the software and it was his recommendation that the county take advantage of this grant, totaling \$5,387.50. A discussion was had on the advantages that this would provide the county. **Barta made a motion to approve the grant application and signing a 5-year contract for the service if the grant was accepted, seconded by Suda.** All voted in favor; motion carried.
- Ed informed the commissioners that he received the agricultural value per acre for the 2024 assessment from the Office of State Tax Commissioner and Walsh County's ag value went down 5% from last year. Ed reported that if the 2023 ag value remains the same for 2024, it would be 96% which is within the 90-100% threshold allowed. A discussion was had on the 2024 ag valuation and it was Ed's recommendation to stay the same. **Skorheim made a motion to make the 2024 ag valuation the same as it was for 2023, seconded by Brintnell.** All voted in favor; motion carried.

Jill Denault came before the commissioners as a follow-up from the November 21st meeting. Jill informed the commissioners that after the meeting she investigated the case that was referenced at the previous meeting and felt that some false information was stated. Jill explained to the commissioners that there has been a shift within the State on how Social Services handle cases. Jill stated that they have found it is best to keep the children in the household as long as possible, providing resources around the families, and that might be the reason for the decrease in cases. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to ensure the line of communication stays open between all of the agencies.

Jason Johnston appeared for the following:

- Jason informed the commissioners that Dean Thompson has accepted the Sign Foreman position and Tyrone Denault was hired as Dean's replacement. The Highway Department is fully staffed at this time. Jason reported that they have not been able to fill the part time custodian position.
- Jason reported that Bob Rostvet and George Midboe reached Level 1 in the Road Scholar Program and Clint Sticha and Jason Johnston reached Level 2.
- Jason updated the commissioners on the Sign Warrior Program that he has been participating in through LTAP. The program is geared towards 4th graders and Jason has been happy with the increased participation from the schools in the area. He is able to give hands-on training to the students on the importance of road signs, as well as the value and meaning of the signs.
- Jason informed the commissioners that 139 of the 210 major bridges in Walsh County are up for inspection next year. Jason stated that the bridge truck is getting serviced. A new transmission was needed and he has not received it back because they are waiting for a wiring harness.
- Jason updated the commissioners that the gravel they placed on 12B has held up well. He stated that he intends to include 12B in the Flex Fund project in hopes to pave it. He informed the commissioners that he will be submitting bridge and township projects as well.
- Jason asked for authorization to sign a contract with KLJ for the County 14 chip seal project due to the cost associated with the project. **Brintnell made a motion to use KLJ as the engineering firm for the project, seconded by Suda.** All voted in favor; motion carried.
- Jason stated that Leanna Emmer from LTAP was unable to attend the meeting but will reschedule for a later date.
- Jason informed the commissioners that they received notification from DOT that Pulaski Township was awarded \$110,000 from the Township Assistance Program for the 3 miles of gravel project that they applied for. Jason stated that the projects that did not get awarded through that program will now be eligible for the Flex Fund program.
- Jason reported that Walsh County has been awarded \$372,901.97 for road repairs and the townships received \$345,745.75 with the individual payments being based on the number of miles of gravel roads maintained by each township. The funding came from HB1012 and HB1379 from the Legacy Earnings Fund.
- Jason informed the commissioners that he hired Building Systems of North Dakota to test the Adams General Store building for asbestos. Jason reported that asbestos was found and he received a quote from Building Systems of North Dakota to remove it, totaling \$4,820.00. The asbestos will have to be removed from the building before it can be demolished. Jason stated that his 2024 Capital Outlay line would be used to cover the expense. A discussion was had on the need to look into how other counties expense unexpected projects like this. **Skorheim made a motion to authorize Jason to proceed with Building Systems of North Dakota to removing the asbestos in the Adams General Store, seconded by Barta.** All voted in favor; motion carried.
- Jason informed the commissioners that the Homme school house building is scheduled to be removed this winter.

- A discussion was had on the electricity and water usage at Homme during the winter months. The county does pay for the electricity and water year-round but there was discussion on possibly changing that in the future due to the park being closed.
- Jason requested a motion to approve the latest bill for bridge inspections with the county's share being \$13,000.33. The bill was for the 20 bridges inspected in July and August. **Brintnell made a motion to approve paying \$13,000.33 for the bridge inspections, seconded by Skorheim.** Roll call vote – Brintnell – Yes, Barta – No, Skorheim – Yes, Suda – Yes, Anderson – Yes; motion approved.

Commissioner Skorheim, Ron Jurgens, and Jason gave an update on the most recent jail meeting. The jail committee met with Elevatus Architecture and expect a proposal from them in the next few weeks. Elevatus had a different perspective on the architectural design and felt that there were ways to decrease the costs. It was noted that there have not been any bids for ground work at this time. A discussion was had on the additional cost associated with having to move the telecommunication/alarms if a new jail is built and the importance of finding a permanent place for the equipment. Ron stated that due to the limited room for expansion at the current location, Elevatus does have some reservations with the current site. Elevatus integrates future growth in all of their jail and prison designs to ensure additional staffing will not be required if expansion is needed in the future. Ron stated that Elevatus has a division that specializes in jails and the jail committee felt the meeting was very positive.

Auditor presented the commissioners with a gaming permit from the Knights of Columbus for a raffle drawing to be held on February 29, 2024 at JRs Bar in Oakwood, ND. After a discussion was had **Skorheim made a motion to approve the gaming permit presented by Knights of Columbus, seconded by Suda.** All voted in favor; motion carried.

Auditor presented the precinct maps for the 2024 election. The precinct maps were created by the redistricting committee based on population after the 2020 Census was complete. Auditor requested that the polling location for the 2024 election be Walsh County Courthouse. **Barta made a motion to approve to keep the two precincts and polling location the same as in the past, seconded by Brintnell.** All voted in favor; motion carried.

Commissioner Suda received a letter in regards to the Weed Board and NDCC requires a County Commissioner to sit on it. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Commissioner Skorheim would contact Brent Nelson to ensure there is proper coverage.

Auditor stated that there will be bills that should be paid out of the 2023 budget but time would not allow approval from the commissioners before the end of the year. Auditor asked for a motion to allow her to use her discretion to approve any bills presented that should be paid in the 2023 calendar year. **Suda made a motion to grant Auditor Quibell permission to approve and pay bills prior to yearend, seconded by Skorheim.** All voted in favor; motion carried.

Auditor informed the commissioners that she is making progress with the payroll audit that she is conducting. She has completed the database and has been able to find where the discrepancies are at. She is working to get the payroll system updated before the next payroll run. She also plans to reach out to the payroll related vendors in hopes of getting reimbursed

for policies that the county should not have been billed for. She reported that she has also made progress with the bank reconciliation module within the system.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am

Karen Anderson, Chair

Attest:

Kristi Quibell
Auditor