

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**April 2, 2024**

April 2, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Chair 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.

**Skorheim moved to approve the March 19, 2024 minutes and monthly bills, seconded by Suda. All voted in favor.**

Auditor Quibell introduced the new Deputy Auditor II, Whitney Weisenberger, to the commissioners. Whitney joined the Auditors Office on March 20, 2024.

David Vaughn joined the meeting to give an update on Veterans Services. He reported that Veterans received a 3.2% COLA increase in January. David reported that the expansion of the PACT Act will provide health care and benefits for additional Veterans. He estimates that he worked with over 275 Walsh County Veterans in 2023.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Ed presented an abatement application for Josh and Nancy Koehn for their property at 7176 Cty Rd 8, Grafton, ND for the tax years 2022 and 2023. The Koehn's are requesting the Farm Residence Exemption. Ed went over the details of the abatement application with the commissioners and stated that Grafton Township approved this abatement application. It was Ed's recommendation to approve the abatement application and reduce the value of the parcel to a True & Full land value of \$4,280. **Suda made a motion to approve the abatement application for Josh and Nancy Koehn, seconded by Brintnell.** All voted in favor; motion approved.
- Ed presented the second abatement application for Timothy Stabo for his property at 104 Eugene Ave, Park River, ND for the tax year 2023. Ed reported that Mr. Stabo is requesting his value be reduced to \$100,000. He reported that the city assessor mistakenly increased the value to \$112,770 and the City of Park River has approved this abatement. It was Ed's recommendation to approve the abatement application and reduce the value of the parcel to a True & Full land value of \$100,000. **Skorheim made a motion to approve the abatement application for Timothy Stabo, seconded by Barta.** All voted in favor; motion approved.
- Ed reported that the local tax equalization meetings are currently being held. He intends to have Deputy Tax Director, April Vaughn join him with some of the meetings.

Commissioner Suda gave an update on the Marvin Town Hall regarding their recruiting efforts. Suda reported that due to the workforce shortage Marvin were doing a pilot program at their Warroad, MN plant where they are recruiting from Puerto Rico. Suda reported that Marvin will be recruiting 35 Puerto Ricans for their Grafton plant.

Commissioner Brintnell reported that she received Sherry O'Toole's resignation from the Treasurer position with her last day being April, 30, 2024.

Commissioner Brintnell gave an update on the Summit Conference held in Bismarck. One of the topics discussed at the conference was the property tax elimination initiative that is circulating. With no known plan to come up with the lost revenue, it is anticipated that there will be additional taxes assessed elsewhere. The closing of NDPERS was also discussed and the funding will come from the State. Brintnell stated that there was a conversation about bridge inspections. Counties do have the option to request an RFP to work with local engineering firms for bridge inspections and possibly receive reimbursement from the State. A discussion was had on reimbursement of bridge inspections.

Tanya Wieler joined the meeting to discuss options after receiving the resignation of the Treasurer. Tanya reported that after doing some research she found that 17 counties in North Dakota have a combined Auditor/Treasurer office. Commissioner Brintnell stated that while she was at the Summit she received positive feedback regarding it. After discussing with Kelley Cole, a resolution would have to be approved to combine the positions. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that Tanya, Commissioner Brintnell, and Kristi Quibell will work to get a resolution to be presented at the next meeting. It was decided to advertise for a Chief Deputy position.

Auditor Quibell gave an update on the software conversion clean-up. She reported that the auditor from Stutsman County was able to assist last week and they made a lot of progress. There is still some work to be done but she feels they are in a pretty good place to close out 2023.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Jason presented the commissioners with the financing options for the two new motor graders that were delivered last week. First United Bank offered a 5- year loan with \$133,055 or a 7-year loan with \$104,960 with an interest rate of 5%. **Barta made a motion to go with the 5-year option with \$133,055, seconded by Suda.** All vote in favor; motion carried.
- Jason gave an update on the highway department equipment. The payloader in Adams will cost \$30,000 to fix. The T1 truck needs new rails underneath the box due to rusting, with a cost of \$13,000. The skid steer is repaired and operational now.
- Jason reported that he received approval to remove the bridge from the 2023 flood. Gowan Construction received the bid for it and they had it removed in one day.

- Jason reported that the lowest bid for the chip seal project near Lankin was \$305,710.19 from Morris Sealcoat & Trucking Inc from Morris, MN. **Brintnell made a motion to accept the bid from Morris Sealcoat & Trucking Inc, seconded by Barta.** All voted in favor; motion carried.
- Jason presented the commissioners with the bridge inspection bill for the 23 inspections performed in August, October, and November. The county's share of the bill was \$13,178.43. **Suda made a motion to approve the bill, seconded by Skorheim.** All voted in favor; motion approved.
- Jason asked for approval to extend the snow removal contract from last year to cover the next year. The contractor is willing to extend the contract for next year at the same rate. **Barta made a motion to extend the snow removal contract for one year, seconded by Brintnell.** All voted in favor; motion carried.

Barta reported that the water board met with BTAG regarding the JPA. There were some changes made to the agreement and once that has been updated it will be reviewed again before any decisions were made.

Barta addressed the county's website and the need for improvement. After a discussion, it was decided that Allen Anderson would bring 3 proposals to the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am

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Karen Anderson, Chair

Attest:

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Kristi Quibell  
Auditor