

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
April 6, 2021

April 6, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Anderson, Barta, Brintnell and Burianek.

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

Chairman Skorheim called the meeting back to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the March 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and additions of meeting date, recognition, performance evaluations, insurance premiums before budget time and generator. Second by Brintnell. Motion carried.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, appeared during employee time to discuss new radios for the patrol cars to be compatible with the new SIRN System. He purchased 6 radios with a Stone Garden Grant and presented a bid for 7 more radios from Motorola Solutions for \$45,456.67. There was some discussion about how to pay for them. They do not need to be ordered right now and could be added to the wish list of items possibly paid for with Covid funds.

The Court Security position has not been filled yet. The 2 applicants are current jailers for the county. Ron would like to hire a new jailer and get that person trained in before one of the jailers would be moved into the court security position. **Motion by Anderson to hire a new jailer and move forward with the plan.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Gave an update on SB 2041 which is in regard to potato warehouses. The Senate originally passed the bill. The House amended the bill to become a study on how the potato warehouse exemption would affect taxing entities. The Senate did not concur with the amended version so it is now heading to a conference committee.
- Presented the Ellingson abatements. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of Grafton City and the tax director to approve the Ellingson Properties abatement for 2019 and 2020.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Discussed the Nice abatement. They did not qualify for the farm residence exemption for 2020 tax year. A physical inspection has been done using the cost approach which indicated a value for \$352,000. **Motion by Burianek to follow the recommendation of Ardoch Township and the tax director to approve the Nice abatement for 2020.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- A physical inspection was done on the Oppegard property with an approximate value of \$286,000 using the cost approach method. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of Kensington Township and the tax director to approve the Oppegard abatement for \$290,000 for 2019 and 2020.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Ellingson Properties LLC	Grafton City	37-10187	2019 RET	\$55,000
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Craig & Julianna Nice	Ardoch Twp	05-12050-020	2020 RET	\$352,000
Matthew & Melissa Oppegard	Kensington Twp	19-4825	2019 RET	\$290,000
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Tanya Wieler, HR Director, appeared for the following:

- Back on January 19, 2020 the commissioners made a motion to extend the Covid leave hours until March 31st. Tanya has had some inquiries about the leave. Discussed extending the leave. **Motion by Anderson to extend the 80 hours of Covid leave from the County from April 1 through June 30, 2020. If an employee has already used 80 hours they do not get any additional hours.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call Anderson, Barta, Brintnell and Skorheim voted yes. Burianek voted no. Motion carried.
- We have 2 new polices and 2 policies with changes/additions due to the work safe initiative. Section 2.8 Drug/Alcohol Free Workplace Policy added drug and alcohol testing if in an accident which is already in our DOT drug policy. Section 6.3, County Vehicle Operation added several paragraphs and requires reflective vest be available in case of an emergency. The county will be providing these vests. Commissioner Barta asked if personal use of county vehicles was covered in the policy. Tanya stated it is covered in the first paragraph that county vehicles cannot be used for personal use except for commuting to work. The policy is protecting the liability of the County. Section 6.4B is a new policy in regard to Personal Protective Equipment for Safety Sensitive Employees which discussed wearing properly fitting outerwear, footwear, eyewear, headwear and any other safety equipment as determined appropriate by a project supervisor and in accordance with the county dress code. Discussed helmets for ATV users. Departments with ATV's will determine how many helmets to buy. Section 6.4C Stop Work Authority allows any employee to stop work when an unsafe condition or act could result in an undesirable event. The last policy relates to Section 4.2 Sick Leave and addresses the Donating Sick Leave. "With over six month's service" was removed from the eligibility requirements. The name of requester may or may not be revealed was also added. **Motion by Anderson to approve the first reading of policies as presented.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Brintnell asked about performance reviews and guidelines, setting dates and having face to face meetings with employee evaluations. Tanya will review the policy.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following:

- March 29th Chairman Dennis Skorheim signed a Burn Ban Declaration which is only good for seven days and expired at midnight. If the county wants to continue

with the burning ban a new resolution must be approved. **Motion by Burianek to sign the Emergency Declaration for a total burn ban in Walsh County.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- Gave an update on the phone system for the social service zone. The County is releasing several phone numbers to the zone but will maintain about 12 for future county use. The zone offices in the Chase Building already have 8 speakers for emergency announcements and Jill feels that that is sufficient.
- Discussed the new generator. The LEC and Adm Building cannot both be ran off the new generator. The Adm Building is a Phase 2 and the LEC is phase 3. Red River Regional Council wrote 2 grants for Brent, one for a new generator for the LEC Building and one for a generator for the Adm Building. FEMA only approved the grant for the Adm Building which houses vaccines for the public health department. There is an old generator that powers the LEC Building but not the jail. Brent has Samson Electric looking into providing additional generator support to the LEC Building.

**WALSH COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA
FIRE EMERGENCY DECLARATION
AND
BURN BAN PROCLAMATION
April 6, 2021**

WHEREAS, Walsh County, North Dakota is currently in Severe Drought and has experienced high winds, low humidity, as well as continued, forecast dry weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, several rural fires have occurred due to the current conditions, and

WHEREAS, all available resources remain committed to the protection of life and property: and

WHEREAS, the existing conditions make fires a continuing threat to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the citizens of Walsh County: and

WHEREAS, the cost of emergency response and inordinate wear on fire-fighting equipment may be far in excess of available County resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Walsh County Commissioners declares a Fire Emergency and Burn Ban effective immediately through November 1, 2021 or until removed by the Board on all open burning to include, but not limited to the burning of leaves, grass clippings, garbage/pits, construction debris, structures, fallen trees, crop residue, hay land, ditches, and campfires/bonfires. The ban excludes controlled devices only when the device (gas, charcoal, or wood-fired grills, patio fireplaces and chimneys, gas camp stoves and smokers) is on hard, non-organic surface and 10' away from vegetation and an extinguisher or water is available on site.

Pursuant to NDCC 37-17.1-10.1, any person who willfully violates the burning ban established by this resolution is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,500.00 and 30 days in Jail.

The status of the Burn Ban is available at the following website: <https://ndresponse.gov>

Dated this 6th day of April, 2021, at Walsh County, North Dakota

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman
Walsh County Commission

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Drainage permits are from the blow dirt event and they need to get the dirt out of the ditches. **Motion by Burianek to approve the drainage permits for K-Bro Farms, Section 4, Rushford Township; Cyril Suda & Sons, Section 32, Grafton Township and Section 23, Acton Township.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- **Motion by Anderson to approve the Utility Permit for Polar Communications to bore under County Road 12B to provide cable to a new home in Section 2, Vernon Township.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Barta to approve the utility permit and flowage easement for Swanson Farms in Section 9, Dundee Township.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Informed the commissioners that there has been a revision to the Covid relief fund eligibility. Sharon has had conversations with Bryon Fuchs and we could possibly swap money with another county and will work with us so that we don't lose funding.
- Provided lawn mowing bids. It is possible that Mickey could do the mowing for the complex. Discussed hiring out versus replacing and maintaining equipment for the cost of hiring out. **Motion by Anderson to accept the bid from TR Farms for \$3,499 per year for 3 years.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The county is the first on Stampede Concrete's list to fix the steps of the Courthouse and Chase Building as soon as the temperatures are right.

Commissioner Barta would like to recognize the Grafton Girls Basketball Class B State Champions, the 3rd place Grafton Boys Basketball team and the North Star Peewee A state champions on their achievements.

Due to a conflict the April 20th meeting will be Monday April 19th.

Report of county offices for fees collected during March: County Recorder \$5,655.51 and Sheriff fees \$1,463.60.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

Kris Molde, Auditor