

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
APRIL 7, 2020**

April 7, 2020 - 9:00 a.m.

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

Madam Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Motion by Skorheim to approve the March 17, 2020 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and agenda additions of recognition of local volunteers and ITV system.** Second by Burianek. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barta recognized two Grafton men, Len Wysocki for 20 years of service and Jim Dusek for 15 years of service, as volunteer instructors for the ND Game & Fish Department.

Brad Brummond, County Agent and Kim Ruliffson, Eastern District Director appeared by phone to discuss filling the 4-H/Family & Community Wellness agent in Walsh County. They have a qualified candidate with 13 years of experience. The proposed salary is \$51,000. **Motion by Skorheim to approve the hiring of the 4-H/FCW agent for the Walsh County Extension Office.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Second by Barta.

Kim Ruliffson is resigning effective May 15, 2020.

Kris Molde, Auditor, discussed the following:

- Discussed the Executive Order for the June 9<sup>th</sup> Primary Election. Walsh County is already a vote by mail county but she would like the commissioners to approve a resolution to close the polling location in Walsh County. The Farmers Room in the courthouse is the only polling location in Walsh County. If the poll is to remain open the courthouse would have to be open to the public. With COVID-19, finding election workers has also become more difficult. **Motion by Barta to approve the resolution to close the only polling location in Walsh County.** Second by Wild. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

**Walsh County Resolution Regarding June 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 Primary Election Process**

The Walsh County Commission operating under their authority provided by NDCC § 16.1-04-02 & 16.1-11.1-01 and in consideration of the Governor's declared emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic hereby declares by resolution that the Walsh County polling location shall be closed for the June 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 primary election.

The County Commission further declares under their authority provided by NDCC § 16.1-11.1-01 to the greatest extent possible for the county to conduct the June 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 primary election by way of mail in ballot. The Commission encourages all qualified citizens to take every opportunity to vote by mail ballot prior to the June 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 Election.

- The executive order also strongly encourages establishing a secure mail ballot drop box. The veteran's officer is willing to allow the metal flag box to be used for this election. Discussed chaining it to the hand rail by the south door or putting bricks in it to weight it down instead of drilling into the cement. Commissioners decided that it needs to be the most secure and that would be mounting it on the cement.
- The Secretary of State is sending out voter applications this year due to the Coronavirus. They hope to go out the week of April 20<sup>th</sup> and will include active as well as inactive

voters, which means some applications may go out to deceased individuals depending on the database.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following:

- Presented a bid from Century Link for \$204,163.17 for a 911 equipment upgrade. \$129,278.02 would be due after install with the remaining \$74,885.15 paid over 5 years for maintenance costs. With the COVID-19 it would probably be August or September before the work would be done. **Motion by Barta to approve the 911 Equipment Upgrade with Century Link.** Second by Wild. Upon roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Radio consoles are also in need of updating which would cost approximately \$380,000. Brent will explore loans while rates are low.
- Gave a spring flood update. The Red River poured out of its banks on Sunday. The ground is very saturated and there is a lot of ice in the river.
- The health department is handling the bulk of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Department heads should be tracking expenses relating from the pandemic.

Wanda Kratochvil, Health District Administrator, appeared for the following:

- Discussed an email from Judge Whelan about getting an IVN System for the LEC courtroom and how to pay for it. The cost for the IVN was \$29,464.59 with the additional cost of \$300 to \$2,000 for Dell Comm to come out and check on the network jack. There is the potential for reimbursement through FEMA. The IVN system is long overdue and besides being used for video conferencing, it could be used for tele-medicine and drug and alcohol counseling for inmates. **Motion by Wild to move forward with checking for a dedicated jack and installing the IVN system in the LEC courtroom using the correction center budget.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- For every case of COVID-19 there is an investigation and contacts are made with those who may have been in contact with infected party.
- The use of cloth face masks is recommended out in public where social distancing is hard to do, such as grocery stores. You are wearing the mask for your neighbor, as there are people with COVID-19 who do not have symptoms.
- Gathering for Easter is not a good idea and not recommended.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director, appeared by phone to discuss the Families First Coronavirus Response Act which allows for employers to exempt certain essential personnel from receiving leave in order to ensure continuity of essential services. (FFCRA). A meeting was held with several department heads to discuss paid leave for emergency responder and qualifying reasons. The FFCRA went into effect on April 1 and is effective until December 31, 2020. **Motion by Barta to update Walsh County policy to reflect the leave provisions in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act; Emergency Management (including 911) and Law enforcement (including the correctional officers) are exempt from obtaining leave for qualifying reasons 1,5 and 6 of the Act. Highway department personnel are exempt from receiving leave for qualifying reasons 1 and 6.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Kris Molde, Auditor, informed the commissioners on March 25<sup>th</sup> John Guzman from Farmers Union notified them that he was unable to provide any comparable options for health insurance. After reaching out to the HR Director and Commissioners Anderson and Barta the only option of a high deductible policy from BC/BS was shared with employees. Based on a survey sent to employees the majority would prefer to keep the current policy and continue to research options.

NDRIF has been working on an association health plan for political subdivisions that will be available to entities next year. The health insurance budget has carryover from the last few years and will cover the higher premiums. **Motion by Wild to stay with current policy and re-evaluate next year.** Second by Skorhiem. Upon roll call vote all vote yes. Motion carried. Brent will schedule a department head meeting and a committee will be set up to further research health insurance.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared to give an update on local equalization. The state has directed them to continue to meet. He will be holding his meetings via conference calls. Notices are being printed in the paper and dial in phone numbers provided.

Jill Trenda, Treasurer, appeared for the following:

- Presented the 4th quarter treasurer’s report. **Motion by Barta to approve the 4th quarter treasurer’s report as presented.** Second by Skorheim. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Quarterly Treasurer’s Report  
4th Quarter 2019

Balance on hand as of October 1, 2019	\$ 7,798,409.70
Total Receipts	<u>\$ 6,337,058.60</u>
	\$14,135,468.30
Total Disbursements	<u>\$ (3,853,231.46)</u>
Balance on hand as of March 31, 2019	\$ 10,282,236.84

- **Motion Burianek to approve the 4th quarter treasurer’s checks as presented.** Second by Skorhiem. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Has moved forward with road restrictions.
- Tabled County Road 15.
- Grafton Township would like to explore the replacement of the Meadow Bridge located on the north end of Section 4, south and east of Nash. They are willing to cost share the project with the county. It would require US Army Corps of Engineers permit. There may be some **engineering** costs. **Motion by Wild to provide some cost options for the replacement of the Meadow Bridge.** Second by Skorheim. Upon roll call vote Barta, Skorheim, Wild and Anderson all voted yes. Commissioner Burianek abstained from the vote as he is on the Grafton Township Board. Motion carried.
- Put out bids for a trench packer. It would cut down on time putting in culverts and is a safety concern. **Motion by Barta to move forward with purchase of the trench packer from United Rentals for approximately \$30,000.** Second by Skorheim. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried
- Budgeted \$15,000 for motor grader disks. Would like to order one for now to try it out. **Motion by Skorhiem to purchase motor grader disk.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote Barta, Skorhiem and Anderson voted yes. Burianek and Wild voted no. Motion carried.
- Discussed future road projects. Category 1 projects should be ready to go this summer or this fall. Category 2 projects could be built this fall or more than likely in 2021. No funding is available at this point. Priorities are to pave County Road 19 from Forest River to I-29 and paving County Road 9 from Highway 18 to Edinburg. The bridge by Fordville would be a category 2 project. Would be nice to do now while prices are down. Could

look into infrastructure loans from the Bank of North Dakota or bonding depending on what happens with federal funding.

- Spencer Bina's attorney provided a title opinion and deed for right of way still titled to Walsh County. **Motion by Wild to sign the deed.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The Homme Dam website has been totally redone.
- Reviewed the annual report page by page. Commissioners may have questions at the next meeting after they have more time to review.
- A group of landowners has hired an attorney in regard to the right of way process. There are many old documents that have never been recorded. State's Attorney Kelley Cole is in aware of the situation.

Commissioner Burianek mentioned that the President and Governor are suggesting cutting back on spending while the County continues to keep spending.

Report of county offices for fees collected during March: County Recorder \$5,921.60 and Sheriff fees \$2,591.89.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

---

Karen A Anderson, Madam Chairman

Attest:

---

Kris Molde, Auditor