

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DECEMBER 7, 2021**

December 7, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Members present: Chairman Skorheim, Commissioners Barta, Brintnell and Burianek. Commissioner Anderson attended via telephone.

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

At 9:00 a.m. the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Commissioner Brintnell moved to approve the November 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills, JR's Liquor License and additions of Homme Dam Storm Shelter, vacation time, retirement party, American Crystal Bridge, JDA, Red River Regional Council and Executive Session for Opioid Litigation Update.** Second by Barta. Motion carried.

Employee time: Katrina Hodny introduced David Vaughn the new Veterans Officer.

Twila Novak, from the Northern Valley Human Services Zone, requested permission to purchase 8 new chairs for their conference room. They are considered an indirect expense and would be paid for out of the county budget. Currently there is approximately \$25,000 still in the budget. The old chairs are stained and they have tried to clean them. **Motion by Anderson to approve the purchase of 8 chairs for the conference room from Business Essentials for \$2,228.80 delivered and put together.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Twila also informed the commissioners that the zone is over budget and she has a bill for \$30.58 which is a direct expense that they would like paid by the county indirect budget. **Commissioner Anderson moved to pay the bill for \$30.58 out of the county indirect budget. Commissioners Anderson, Brintnell and Burianek voted yes. Commissioners Barta and Skorheim voted no. Motion carried.**

Allen Anderson, Administrator for the Health District, appeared for the following:

- Introduced Heidi Jensen, Co-owner of Agassiz Associates who proposed a 5 year plan for mental health and substance use treatment for individuals who are incarcerated in the Walsh County Jail. She has worked in the field for 20 years and has been in the business since 2004. Rural areas lack the resources to deal with mental health issues. We want to set up individuals for success not failure and to be better citizens and improve the community. It currently takes 9 weeks for a prisoner to be seen by Human Services. Currently ARPA funds have to be spent by 2024. The Health District received a grant for \$62,000. Discussed SUD Voucher Applications for individual telehealth. Currently 4 inmates have completed the program. There is a waiting list to get into the program. Group sessions would be covered. Would like to see a 3 year proposal and have the state's attorney office review it.
- Gave a Covid update. There are 29 active positive cases and 2 hospitalizations. The health department has held 36 off site clinics and vaccinations at the schools have

been completed. The area hospitals have daily meetings and the collaboration between them is excellent.

- Discussed the Wellness Program, participation and benefits of the program. The program has been in place for many years. In 2014 the commissioners approved employees a paid 8 hours wellness/personal day off if they participated in the 10-12 monthly wellness activities. **Motion by Burianek to continue with the Wellness Program and paid 8 hours for completion of the Wellness Program.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Brad Brummond, Katie Thompson and Leslie Lubenow from the extension office appeared for the following:

- Discussed mills to support the extension office. Century Code allows for 2 mills for extension services. An additional 2 mills can be approved by a vote of the people. In 2015 a bill passed that requires a vote of the people every 10 years for additional mills. The extension office would like to continue with the 3 mills that were previously approved. Just because we vote to increase by 2 mills we can still set the mills at 3. **Motion by Barta to move forward with a ballot measure on the June 2022 ballot for 2 additional mills for extension services.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Informed the commissioners that Todd Knutson has been inducted into the ND 4-H Hall of Fame.
- Looking at adding more cameras to the arena. Will discuss at meeting tonight.
- Gave an update on the remodeling of the restrooms in the extension building.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, appeared for the following:

- Discussed contract policing with area towns. The contract is based on the census which was recently updated. Most of the towns in Walsh County are already struggling financially. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of Sheriff Jurgens and stay with the current rate of \$1.50 per person.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Discussed premium pay for qualifying employees. Provided documents from Grand Forks County who recently approved premium pay. Commissioners had previously decided the county wouldn't payout premium pay. It can be added to the wish list for now.
- A jailer resigned. Would like to advertise for 3 jailers so that he can start the hiring process for the additional 2 jailers he budgeted for in 2022. **Motion by Anderson to allow advertising for the 3 jailer positions and begin the hiring process.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The county nurse is a good fit for the jail. She is CPR trained and brings a lot to the jail.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director, appeared for the following:

- Discussed pay scale for Ed Sevigny, Tax Director. He has been handling GIS tasks in-house saving the county money. Proposing a change in the pay scale from current scale of step 20 to proposed scale of step 16 leaving room for movement. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of the HR Director and adjust the pay scale**

**and move Ed to a step 16.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. This adjustment will not affect 2022 budget.

- Discussed performance evaluations. All evaluation should be filed in employee files but not all employees have seen their evaluation. Evaluations need to be mandatory, done annually and reviewed with employees. Evaluations will need to be done by January 31<sup>st</sup> and discussed with employees by end of February. Will discuss at department head meeting.
- Asked about the county administrator position and treasurer position. Do we combine them or not? We need to make some decisions and move forward with the treasurer position with retirement approaching. Was asked if we need 5 commissioners if we hire an administrator? Do we drop to 3? Is there enough work for an administrator? Are there tasks that other employees could pick up? Tanya found some documents back to 2007-2008 in regards to restructuring some offices.

Jason Johnston, newly hired Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Commissioners introduced themselves.
- Discussed a letter from Polar Communications in which they informed us that 4 changes were made to the utility permits in the last year.
- Discussed the roadside mowing policy and the century code for cutting weeds and grasses on highway. Can only charge for actual costs and deadlines are set in century code. The highway crew has concerns on time frames. **Motion by Burianek to rescind his motion from the last meeting to increase the fee for mowing weeds from \$100 to \$500 and to move the deadline to October 15<sup>th</sup>.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. **Motion by Barta to continue to charge for the cost of mowing with September 15<sup>th</sup> for a deadline.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- One of the snowplows hit a guardrail. Repairs will need to be done to the guardrail.
- American Crystal is interested in cost sharing the bridge south of the beet dump. It is a safety issue. Will get phone numbers to Jason so he can connect with American Crystal.
- Mentioned a \$46,000 truck repair.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following

- Discussed Homme Dam Shelter and asbestos removal. **Motion by Anderson to remove asbestos at a cost of \$6,275.00 and get rid of old school house.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Requested carrying over vacation. **Motion by Barta to allow carryover of vacation time to follow policy and be used within 90 days.** Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Red River Regional Council could possibly be moving out of the Chase Building.

There were 4 applicants for the JDA position. They interviewed 2 candidates.

There is a retirement party for Julie Campbell on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:00 in the Farmer's Room at the courthouse.

Kelley Cole, State's Attorney, appeared to give an opioid litigation settlement update. The board went into executive session as provided by NDCC 44-04-19.1 subsection 9.

**Motion by Anderson to close the executive session and return to the regular meeting.**

Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

**Motion by Barta to cast a unanimous ballot for Lawrence Burianek as Chairman.**

Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

**Motion by Brintnell to cast a unanimous ballot for Ernie Barta as Vice Chair.** Second

by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Report of county offices for fees collected during November: County Recorder \$5,998.70 and Sheriff fees \$3,112.80.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

---

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

---

Kris Molde, Auditor