

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

8:30 a.m. Called meeting to order to reviewed claim vouchers.

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

Chairman Skorheim called the meeting back to order at 9:00 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the February 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes, bills and additions of insurance premium, legislative forum, M-Bar-D, county administrative position, sound system for fair building, township meeting dates and right of way . Second by Brintnell. Motion carried.

The annual township meeting is at city hall in Park River on March 9th at 1:00 p.m. Individual township meetings should be on March 16th. A list will be published in the paper.

Commissioner Barta has had several complaints about coal trucks causing chipped or broken windshields due to falling coal. A phone call was made to Dan Gowan at American Crystal and the coal trucks should have a tarp on them now.

Estimates for speaker upgrades and the updates for the control booth for the fair building area where discussed. The hockey program will pay for half the cost. **Motion by Anderson to accept the HB Sound & Lights estimate of \$8,751.61 for the arena and move forward with the project.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Farm Bureau will be holding a District 19 Legislative forum on February 27th at 10:00 a.m. at Shenanigans in Grafton.

Stacie Sevigny, Red River Regional Council, presented the guidelines and requests for the 2020 Self Help Program funds. Ten applications were submitted. The program is to promote community betterment projects within the Walsh County communities. Requests cannot exceed one-half of the total project cost, nor can the request exceed \$1,500. **Motion by Barta to award up to \$1,000 per city for the Self Help Program.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Presented Tyler Technologies license and services agreement for signature. The contract was supplied to all offices involved and the state's attorney's office for review. A down payment of 20% is required. Tyler is hoping to start working with Walsh County in late 2021 with the goal of being live in 2023. The current bid does not include ExecuTime for payroll or iTax for online payments. Those can be

added down the road. **Motion by Barta to sign the Tyler Contract.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- Presented 6 abatements for Daniel Thompson. Mr. Thompson provided documentation from Universal Life Church Ministries to show that he is an ordained minister and claimed that his house should be exempt from taxes as a parsonage. Mr. Sevigny stated that this claim was not part of Mr. Thompson's abatement applications and that it had already been addressed and denied several years ago. Mr. Thompson also stated that Walsh County is liable for the taxes as stated in the highway and water board bond and that we can't tax the same real estate twice and collect on it twice. Dan's daughter requested the codes for taxation from the state's attorney. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director and to deny the abatement for parcel 48-14269.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- An inspection was done on this parcel in 2019. **Motion by Burianek to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director to deny the abatement for parcel 48-14270.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call voted all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director to deny the abatement for parcel 48-14308.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Brintnell to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director to reduce the value to \$3,100. for parcel 48-14309.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director to deny the abatement for parcel 48-14310.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- There are no utilities on this parcel and it is used mainly for storage. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of the City of Adams and the tax director to deny the abatement for parcel 48-14319.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Daniel Thompson	Adams City	48-14269	2019 RET	Denied
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Daniel Thompson	Adams City	48-14308	2019 RET	Denied
Daniel Thompson	Adams City	48-14309	2019 RET	\$3,100
Daniel Thompson	Adams City	48-14310	2019 RET	Denied
Daniel Thompson	Adams City	48-14319	2019 RET	Denied

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Introduced Bob Rostvet the new blade operator for the Lankin route.
- Walsh County has 1 bridge, the Edinburg Bridge, which is eligible for the bundling projects with Grand Forks County. The County share is \$53,983.11. **Motion by Barta to sign the Resolution with Riley Bros. Construction for the Project BRR-BRO-0054(050) and move forward with the project.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- A new 2014 Kenworth semi-truck was purchased from Best Used Trucks of MN based out of Crookston, MN. It was well taken care of and did not need a wet kit. Purchase price was \$42,500.
- It has been 5 years since the excavator was purchased. It has a 5, 6 & 7 year buy back. Slow service and trouble finding parts are a current concern. It has 1409 hours on it. We will hold on to it for a while and can review again next year.
- Provided an update on trying to get Clerk of Court into 1 vault instead of 3 and moving other offices storage around to make office space for the janitor. The state will be coming to take retention documents to the Archives.
- Was asked about right-of-ways. There have been several phone calls in regard to right of ways. The ball is in their court and the state's attorney should probably be a part of the conversation.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director and Wanda Kratochvil, Director of Nursing appeared to discuss the part time nurse position for the jail. They are struggling to fill the position and have had only 1 application. They would like to restructure the position to have the position under the health district and work 25% for the health district and 25% for the jail. The county would reimburse the health district and the health district would look for grant dollars to cover their 25% of the salary. They will move forward with advertising and sharing the position.

Wanda gave an update on the vaccination clinic. They should get 200 new vaccines and 100 doses for the second vaccine. They are now working on less than 65 year olds with 2 underlying conditions. Next level is daycare providers and teachers.

Dustin Shambaugh from RDO appeared for the highway department time on the agenda to listen to the conversation about the excavator and answer any questions if there were any. However the auditor had called Sharon in at an earlier time and he missed the conversation.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director, informed the commissioners that she would be sending them a survey monkey with approximately 16 questions for them to review in regard to the administration position they are considering. She would like some feedback on the questions in the survey and thoughts on the position.

Jill Sanderson, Carnegie Library Director; Heather Szklarski, board member; Janette Lewis, past board member and library patron appeared to discuss the library agreement and mills from Walsh County. Jill provided several letters in support of the library as well as a list of services, activities, partnerships and statistics for the library. The library has 5 employees. The library also has an outreach library in Adams that is open 1 day a week. Commissioner Anderson thanked Jill for all the hard work and services the library provides. The library has come a long way since Jill has taken over. Heather mentioned Carnegie Library was open for the summer reading program and was open during Covid when most libraries were closed. Grafton City is contributing 4 mills, the maximum allowed by century code. This will be the first year without Nelson County's financial support. **Barta moved to maintain the contribution of 2.5 mills to Carnegie Library and to**

sign the Carnegie Regional Library Agreement. Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Sondra Richardson, Deputy Auditor, who handles payroll and benefits provided a chart with the current cost of health insurance premiums per month, what the cost would be if the county decided to cover health insurance premiums 100% and worst case scenario if during open enrollment all eligible employees took a policy. The county currently has 54 employees on the plan with most taking the single policy. There are still 3 grandfathered employees receiving the pay in lieu of health insurance. Our new policy with NDPHIT has better coverage and is a 90/10 policy. The monthly increase would be \$7681.60 with an annual increase of \$92,215. Discussed benefits as an important part in recruiting new employees. We need to be locally competitive. If moving to 100% is not feasible we could look at 85, 90 or 95% of the premium. There will be no increase in premiums in 2022. The trend across the state is a 15% increase in premiums however it is the hope of the NDPHIT group that increases will be minimal with the possibility of seeing a decrease instead of an increase. Other county entities such as social services and the health district are currently covered at 100% of premiums being paid for employees. Discussed if there were other avenues the highway department could take to improve recruitment, including sending job openings to schools that have big equipment programs. Tanya Wieler, HR Director, will put together a benefits survey once the updated information is available on the NDACo website.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

Kris Molde, Auditor