

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
JANUARY 19, 2021**

8:30 a.m. Reviewed claim vouchers.

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

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

**Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the January 5, 2021 regular meeting minutes, bills and additions of extend mask mandate, Covid funds for contract policing cities and evaluations.** Second by Brintnell. Motion carried.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, appeared during employee time to provide the commissioners with a copy of the DOCR order lifting the probationary status for Walsh County. We will no longer be required to have monthly inspections and will return to an annual inspection. The following were also discussed:

- Commissioners asked about number of prisoners allowed and the number will remain at 16. They don't feel that we have room for 21 beds back there. Commissioners also asked about the number of prisoners that should be in the Bismarck facility but are being housed here. There are 4 prisoners that should be in Bismarck.
- Commissioner Anderson mention Bill 1112 in regard to a contract with counties for reimbursement cost and encouraged everyone to contact our Representatives.
- As a condition of our license we must have a Prisoner Rape Elimination Audit which will cost the county approximately \$4,000.
- Commissioner Barta would like the newly hired employees brought to a meeting and introduced to the board when their schedules allow.

Wanda Kratochvil, Health District Administrator, appeared during employee time to inform the commissioners that the State mask mandate ended at 12:01 a.m. Jan. 18th. Kratochvil would recommend requiring continued use of masks in county buildings as they are proven to work. If an employee has a positive contact with another employee or visitor in the building they would be mask to mask contacts and wouldn't need to quarantine. The following were also discussed:

- Was asked about the vaccine roll out. There are no vaccines sitting around in Walsh County. Getting enough vaccines is a challenge. A texting group has been established with other facilities and pharmacies to make sure no vaccine goes to waste.
- **Motion by Barta to extend the mask mandate for 2 months for Walsh County.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote Barta, Burianek, Brintnell and Skorheim voted yes. Anderson voted no. Motion carried.

- The vaccination is 95% effective. Once 65-70% of the population is vaccinated we are at herd immunity which means that those people that are vaccinated are adequate to protect people who are not. We will be vaccinating for many more months prior to reaching that level.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, provided an update on the mobile home taxes. Mobile homes are different than real estate taxes. Tax statements are sent out the first part of January each year. First payment is due March 1<sup>st</sup> with the second payment due July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mobile home taxes can't be delinquent. In 2018 there were approximately \$24,500 worth of uncollected mobile home taxes going back to 1999 which were collected or written off. In 2019 and 2020 all mobile home taxes were collected. Lisa Graham, Civil Process Officer and Val Dalbey, Deputy Tax Director, were instrumental in collecting all those taxes. Commissioner Anderson publicly thanked them.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director; Val Dalbey, Deputy Recorder/Tax; Yvette Moe, Recorder; Jill Trenda, Treasurer; Debbie French, Deputy Treasurer, Kris Molde, Auditor and Sondra Richardson and Angelle French Deputy Auditors appeared to discuss the Tax Wise Software. The proposal from July 2020 would still be close for cost of software, professional services and maintenance. A down payment is required to get on the list. They would get started in 2021-2022 transferring data and we would probably go live in 2023. Tyler Technologies presented demos to county employees last summer and last week again for a new employee that had not seen the software. There are 3 counties in 2021 changing over to Tax Wise. When considering where the funds might come from all offices involved with the software are a part of the county general funds. Advantages of Tax Wise presented by the group include complete parcel history, tracking changes to a parcel eliminating having to go back and research why something was changed, expanded name search, can show multiple owners and send statements to multiple owners instead of manually doing it, can search for physical address, tax director can be working on the next year while auditor and treasurer are still working on current year abstract and tax statements eliminating possible mistakes from having to keep a log. Electronic vouchers could be utilized, departments would have real time access to reports eliminating running paper reports for other departments. Employees would have access to paystubs, taxes, vacation time, the clock system would be compliant with the Department of Labor, increase accountability of employees and can be tied to jobs.

**Motion by Barta to move forward with the Tyler Technology Software.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Ed stated that the software is "our equipment" and will provide for more efficiency. Kudos to the commissioners.

Brent Nelson appeared for the following:

- Discussed the Everbridge Agreement. **Motion by Anderson to sign the Everbridge Agreement for 3 years at \$4462.50 per year.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Discussed the Covid subgrant agreement that basically covers sheriff and emergency responders expenses which is \$3700. **Motion by Brintnell to sign the Public Assistance FEMA Subgrant Agreement.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

- Katrina Hodny, Veterans Officer, was present to discuss the move to the LEC Building. Prices for doors and a lock from Menards was presented. If the highway department installed the doors with the products from Menards it would save about 50% on the project. The doors are metal and fire rated. **Motion by Anderson to purchase the doors from Menards and have the highway department install.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote Anderson, Barta, Brintnell and Skorheim voted yes. Motion carried. Burianek abstained as he didn't have paperwork for review.
- Nick Ziegelmann, City Administrator, was present for the discussion about the Grafton Police Department balance on a bill that the city will not pay. Nelson briefly explained to newly elected Commissioner Brintnell that Grafton City and County previously had an agreement that the City would pay 1/3 of the LEC budget. The City radio base and antenna still are on county property. The radio base and antenna allow dispatch to connect with the police department and will be replaced by SIRN. The police department will be removed off our server opening up accounts. **Motion by Barta to allow the Grafton City until March 1, 2021 to remove the teletype software and get the city off the server.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Discussed a bid from Minn-kota Communications for workstations for the dispatch relocation. He would like the workstations in by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioners would like a second bid, possibly check with Norby's.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director, appeared for the following:

- Informed the commissioners that Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which allowed paid leave from April 1 through December 31, 2020 has ended. If an employee were to miss work due to Covid they would need to use sick leave or annual leave now unless the commissioner want to extend the hours they previously granted on May 19, 2020. Some of the FFCRA is in effect until March 31, 2021. **Motion by Brintnell to extend the additional 80 hours from the County until March 31, 2021.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. If an employee has already used the 80 hours from the county they don't get any additional hours.
- Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, was present to discuss the highway department pay plan adjustments. The pay plan was distributed and explained. There is an 8, 10 & 12% adjustment provided on the chart. The County's market average is 7-8% behind market. To make the pay plan affordable we put the market at a step 11 and where it should be is more like step 8. Ultimately our pay plan is always behind. In order to be more comparable to the NDDOT where our last 3 employees have gone, a 12% increase is needed. Sharon talked to another employee who currently has 2 job offers. The job pool is limited. The numbers would support a 12% increase. **Motion by Barta to use the 12% increase to the highway department pay plan as presented.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Maybe not everyone gets a 12% based on documented performance deficiencies.

- Commissioners suggested that we look at the pay plan at budget time. The annual increase should be tied to the employee's performance and not everyone should get it if there are issues.
- A meeting will be scheduled to begin discussion on the administrator position.
- Commissioners should do their evaluation on department heads by February 1<sup>st</sup>. The portfolio list will be sent out again.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- The box culvert for Dam 5 by Edinburg that is bundled with Grand Forks has to be advertised for construction engineering as Federal Aid dollars are pay 80% of the cost. Also need to sign the contract with NDDOT for the project. All signing will be done electronically. **Motion by Anderson to sign the NDDOT Contract # 38210019.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Anderson to approve the Polar Communications utility permit to install fiber optic cable on County Road #11, Section 3 & 10, Township 157 Range 56.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Provided a financial recap for highway funds. The gas tax revenue has dropped during the Covid pandemic.
- **Motion by Barta to approve the highway budget amendments for 2020 as presented.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Misc. Rd/Bond Fund - Original budget of \$50,000 amended to \$104,300.65 for Covid expenses, safety grant, federal aid flood damage and in/out transactions. 2019 Flood – Original budget of \$0.00 amended to \$356,138.80 for 2019 spring flood expenses  
2019 Fall Flood – Original budget of \$0.00 amended to \$107,774.15 for fall flood damage  
2020 Spring Flood – Original budget of \$0.00 amended to \$645,138.27 for spring flood costs.
- **Motion by Brintnell to approve the janitor's budget amendment for 2020 as presented.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. Janitor – Original Budget \$128,505.12 amended to \$152,162.19 for LED Grant, down payment for steps, vacation payout, raise & \$1200 paid out incorrectly.
- Mickey Schumacher has been hired for the janitor position. May start on the January 25<sup>th</sup> or February 1<sup>st</sup>. Tom Anderson is doing the snow removal. Looking at possibly hiring out mowing.

**Motion by Anderson to approve the county general fund budget amendments for 2020 as presented.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Co. Gen. Misc. – Original budget of \$177,350.00 amended to \$188,708.07 for snow removal, HR contract and insurance expenses.

Health Insurance – Original budget of \$329,600.00 amended to \$355,360.99 for counties share of employee premiums

RRRC Contribution – Original budget of \$42,000 amended to \$42,200 for annual contribution.

Commissioners reviewed list of possible uses for CARES funds. Auditor will create a list with all the items.

Discussed reimbursement of CARES Funds to cities that have contract policing with Walsh County. **Motion by Anderson to reimburse cities that paid into contract policing for 2020 based on formula.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote Barta, Brintnell, Anderson and Skorheim voted yes. Burianek voted no. Motion carried. Park River will be reimbursed for their share of law enforcement payroll for December.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

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Kris Molde, Auditor