

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**January 5, 2021**

January 5, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.

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

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

**Commissioner Barta moved to approve the December 15, 2020 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and additions of vaccine update, JDA update, service awards recognition, evaluations, review bills, travel rate, Covid/Cares funds, active shooter policy and update on workstations and remove the Thompson abatements from the agenda.** Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

Wanda Kratochvil, Health Department Administrator, appeared to give a vaccine update. Vaccinations will be provided in phases. We are in Phase 1A vaccinating health care workers and longer term care residents which are broken in to tiers for prioritizing. We should be at Phase 1B 3-4 weeks into January. This phase will take some time as it includes, in order of priority, persons age 75 and older, person 65-74 with 2 or more high risk medical conditions, staff and persons living in other congregate settings (such as the jail), persons age 65 and older with one or more high risk medical conditions, person age 65 and older with or without high risk medical conditions and person with 2 or more high risk medical conditions regardless of age. Vaccination of the general public will possibly take place in the spring. There is an excellent link/website on the health department's website with frequently asked questions, answering myths and debunking conspiracy theories.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, asked for permission to order his 2 new vehicles for 2021. **Motion by Anderson to accept the state bid from Gilleland Chevrolet out of St Cloud, Minnesota for a 2021 Chevrolet Tahoe Police Unit, \$39,500 after rebate and a 2021 Chevrolet 1500, \$34,813 after rebate with the 2017 F150 being traded.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried. The bid does not cover, tax, title, license, radios, or decals for vehicles.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared for the following:

- Informed the commissioners that Grafton City did not pay for all the expenses billed to them for October. The tower and network expenses weren't covered. Brent will meet with Nick Ziegelmann, Grafton City Administrator, next week.
- The estimate to repair and paint the back offices in the LEC Building for the veterans officer were \$857. Pastorek Construction provided a bid of \$3,501 for 2 new doors and installation. Commissioners would like to see a second bid. It is possible that the highway department may help with some of the work.
- There is no update on the work stations. Brent is still waiting on the provider.
- Was asked about the security meeting. Sharon Lipsh will schedule a meeting.

Tanya Wieler, Human Resource Director, appeared at the request of commissioner Barta to provide some information in regard to a possible county administrator position.

- A county administrator is not the same as a county manager. Because Walsh County is a Home Rule County the position of a county administrator could be created. The commission would determine what the job description would entail.
- Cass County is the only county with a true county administrator whose time is divided up between community, commission, human services, risk manager, buildings and grounds. The salary of the Cass County Administrator is \$127,535.
- Grand Forks County has a director of administration with a salary of \$86,915. The director supervises and oversees buildings and grounds staff and no other departments. Is responsible for leases and insurance. The auditor/treasurer do not share duties with the administrator or answer to them. Grand Forks County is not a home rule county so they are not able to create the position of County Administrator.
- City Administrator salaries in North Dakota range from \$76,000 to \$190,000 per year with an average of \$128,000.
- Commissioner Burianek reminded the board that in 2020 we lost \$150,000 in revenue from the LEC Building and that a nurse and court security officer position were created and budgeted for adding to the budget for 2021. This would probably be a \$100,000 position.
- Discussed that as individuals retire it might be a good time to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan. Tanya will work on a committee with Commissioners Barta and Anderson volunteering to be on the committee.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared for the following:

- Presented an abatement for Loree Osowski. **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of Grafton City and the tax director to approve the Osowski abatement for 2020.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Loree Osowski Grafton City 37-11330 2020 RET \$36,400
- Presented an abatement for Warren & Marilyn Hall to remove a structure as it was put on the wrong parcel. The structure will be added to the correct parcel. **Motion by Burianek to follow the recommendation of Hoople City and the tax director to approve the Hall abatement for 2020.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Warren G & Marilyn S Hall Hoople City 42-13189 2020 RET \$1,700
- The 2021 average value per acre for Ag land in Walsh County is \$1,018.31. We are required to be within 90-100% of the calculated value. If we are not in tolerance the state will set it for us at 93%. No action by the board would be cutting it close. A 1% increase is hardly worth doing. He would recommend a 2% increase. **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of the tax director and increase the value to Ag land by 2%.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Discussed repairs for depressed tracks on County Road 9. Had 2 bids, one for \$128,000 and one for \$46,000 for similar products. **Motion by Barta to accept the bid from Northwest Asphalt & Maintenance for \$46,942.00 for material and labor.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Red River Regional Council is still working on the Homme Dam Shelter Project. The project total is \$106,142.31. The County is required to pay 15% cost share which would be around \$11,000. The cost share can be reduced with in kind services. The old school house will be torn down as part of the project. **Motion by Barta to sign the letter committing to the Homme Dam Shelter Project and local matching funds.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Roch Tweten would like to recreate an old World War II plaque that was destroyed. He would like it housed at the courthouse. Once the Veterans Memorial Park is built it should be housed at the memorial park.
- Informed the commissioners that she has a good candidate for the janitorial position. Like previously discussed, the potential janitor may not want to do snow removal and is not as mechanically inclined so some items will need to be hired out. But Bonnie's Cleaning Service will be discontinued once a janitor is hired. Tom Anderson is doing snow removal with Sharon handling the salt and sand for the sidewalks. Bonnie's is still cleaning all the janitor areas on Tuesdays and Thursdays but the health district requested their service daily. Employees will pitch in until someone is hired.
- The highway department currently has 3 job openings. All of them went to the NDDOT. Interviewed 5 applicants, offered it to 4 candidates and 3 declined the position. Their starting salary at DOT is the county's Step0 with a 5% increase after probation plus fully paid health insurance. Tanya joined the meeting and asked what is the reason we can't hire anyone? It is an employee market and there aren't enough qualified applicants. To make our pay plan affordable we started the market average at Step 11. We may need to move that down to a Step 5 or 6. We have adjusted the pay plan over the years for similar situations in social services, dispatch and the jail. Tanya will look at the local market and make adjustments to the pay plan. Once adjustments have been made Sharon will make another offer to those that previously declined the positions.

Evaluations have been distributed to department heads. Not many offices have completed the evaluation. Tanya will send out a reminder to department heads with a deadline. Newly elected Commissioner Brintnell asked about what happens if an employee receives an unsatisfactory performance. Discussed getting more training for those that may have areas that need improvement. Also mentioned possible mid-year evaluation. Tanya will send out email to commissioners again so that they can evaluate department heads that they hold portfolios for. Evaluations can be done on elected officials if they choose but are not necessary. Sheriff Jurgens said that he would welcome feedback.

Commissioner Burianek signed a TAP Grant for the City of Grafton on December 23rd. The deadline was December 31st and the next commission meeting wasn't until January

5th. The County must sign off as the sponsor being the population of Grafton is under 5,000. The City of Grafton is responsible for all cost.

Pipeline revenue will be down this year. Expected 2021 revenue is \$466,323.30. Down approximately \$81,000 from last year. Those funds are distributed between the county, townships, schools and fire districts.

All of the county general budgets combined spent 94.90% of the allotted 2020 budget. This left a carryover of the county general fund in the amount of \$237,264.58.

At their December 16, 2020 meeting, the JDA Board approved a grant of \$13,000 as part of the local share of a CDBG grant that was awarded to the Fordville Senior Citizens Club for building renovations and improvements to meet ADA accessibility guidelines.

Employees receiving service awards will be recognized at a commission meeting and a picture will be taken in February since there was no employee appreciation party to do it at this year.

Commissioners will start meeting at 8:30 to review bills. Previously it was discussed to increase the amount of a purchase by a department from \$500 to \$1500 without commission approval but there was never a motion and nothing was found when reviewing the commission minute book. **Motion by Barta to allow department heads to make purchases up to \$1500 without commission approval. Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.**

Effective January 1, 2021 the state/county rate for mileage will be 56¢.

Received an email from the City of Minto inquiring about CARES Funds. Auditor will research request. Also discussed use of the funds for radio systems, tax software or other possible needs. Auditor will send out email to department heads to see if there are any needs that they are not aware.

Report of county offices for fees collected during December: County Recorder \$6,339.20 and Sheriff fees \$2,319.65.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

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Kris Molde, Auditor