

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 1, 2021**

June 1, 2021 – 8:15 a.m.

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

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

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

Commissioner Barta moved to approve the May 18, 2021 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and JR's Bar Softball Gaming Permit and additions of NE 9 Meeting, burn ban and June 8th meeting. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

Discussed the burn ban. It is still working the way it is. Even with the recent rains it is still dry out and with 90 degree weather coming the burn ban will remain in place.

There is a NE 9 meeting on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at the armory meeting room in Devils Lake at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners Barta, Brintnell and Skorheim plan to attend.

Motion by Anderson to sign the Inmate Housing Agreement with Grand Forks County. Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

A quorum of commissioners needs to be present for the snag & clear assessment hearing on June 8th at 10:00 a.m. Commissioners Burianek, Anderson and Skorheim plan to attend.

Motion by Brintnell to approve the second reading of the following new and updated personnel policies; Section 2.8 Drug/Alcohol Free Workplace, Section 6.3 County Vehicle Operation, Section 6.4B Personal Protection Equipment, Section 6.4C Stop Work Authority and Section 4.2 Sick Leave, Donating Sick Leave section. Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

The May 20th budget memo in regard to step plan adjustments was discussed to give department heads guidance for budgets. Last year employees got 1 step and no COLA. We continue to fall behind with the current pay plan and need to fix the pay plan to get market values competitive. The salary recommendation for department heads is to move the market value down one step and move employees up one step with a 2% COLA. Will request updated pay plan from Tanya so department heads can work on budgets.

Pursuant to NDCC 57-12-01 the County Commissioners met as the County Tax Equalization Board at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Ed Sevigny and Valerie Dalbey from the tax directors office, as well as Justin Sobak, Dewey Township Assessor, Bjorn Flaten, William Cookman and Ann Berg from Park River City.

The 2020 Commercial sales median ratio came in at 94.5%. The 2020 Residential median ratio ended up at 84.7% which is below the 90% threshold required by the state. Grafton sales are separate from the County's. The residential ratio for the small cities was 92.05%. The residential ratio in the townships was 61.45% with most sales higher than the assessed value. Golden, Dewey and Cleveland Townships have not had any residential value increases in the last 2 years even though the market has still gone up.

Justin Sobak, Dewey Township Assessor, was present to appeal the Flaten property assessment. The township reduced it by \$20,000. The land is not accessible, no crops have been produced on it in 18-20 years. Tax Director, Ed Sevigny explained the proper process that should take place which could include the changing of land use to pasture or marsh. Ed will work with Sobak and Flaten.

William Cookman missed the Grafton City hearing date and was told to attend the County Board of Equalization meeting. He bought the old River of Life Church as a workshop for retirement. He has added a pole shed addition which he built himself to store stuff and keep the property looking neat. His value has gone up the last 2 years from \$25,000 to \$40,000 and now \$65,000. Ed will also meet with Mr. Cookman as well.

The simplest fix to get the county within tolerance would be to do an 8% increase on Golden, Dundee and Cleveland Townships. If we don't do anything the state will come in and do it and we don't want that. **Motion by Barta to follow the recommendation of the tax director and increase Cleveland, Dewey and Golden Townships by 8% on residential structures.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- The janitor has been picking up cigarette butts around campus. The county has designated smoking areas and we have receptacles in those areas. Must be 20 feet from all entrances when smoking but the issue seems to be the public. Will order "do not throw cigarette butts on the ground" signs to post at the entrances. If the signs don't work we may have to consider going to a smoke free grounds.
- There is a railroad project on Highway 81 on the east west stretch near Ardoch from June 7th to June 11th. Detour signs will be posted.
- The results from the county auction were reviewed. Some lots did not sell. The largest lot that didn't sell was the courthouse lawnmower. Will try advertising the lawn mower for sale or possibly put it on an auction. Some tools were donated to the highway department from the sheriff's office. **Motion by Burianek to award the bids as presented.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Anderson to approve the flowage easement for Carl Unruh, Fertile Township, Section 2.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Provided a bridge list and map of all the bridges in Walsh County and asked what the commissioners wanted to see on their bridge tour. A sampling of bridges will be included on the tour with a date to be determined.
- Will remove the large evergreen located by the back parking lot so that employees will park back there. The employees don't like all the sap that comes off the tree.

Wanda Kratochvil, Health District Administrator, appeared to introduce the new hires. Allen Anderson from Minto, ND has been hired for the Health District Administrator position. He has worked for Grand Forks Public Health for the last 19 years. Joelle Schmuck from Grafton has been hired as a Registered Nurse and will be the jail nurse as well. She attended UND for nursing.

Dennis Skorheim thanked Wanda for her years of services and getting us through the last year.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, informed the commissioners that PREA will be back next week. They have concerns about dispatch leaving the building. He mentioned that recent events at the jail was a team effort with lots of assistance from area entities. The victims have received referrals.

Report of county offices for fees collected during May: County Recorder \$7,335.40 and Sheriff fees \$2,771.79

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

Kris Molde, Auditor