

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
JUNE 4, 2019**

June 4, 2019 - 9:00 a.m.

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

**Motion by Anderson to approve the May 21, 2019 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and agenda additions of Park River Baseball Team, Walsh Water equipment, courthouse steps, July 5<sup>th</sup>, Social Service update, Rostvet road issue.** Second by Burianek. Motion carried.

Chairman Barta congratulated the Park River Baseball Team on winning the Class B State Championship.

After the Social Service Redesign meeting in Bismarck on June 11<sup>th</sup> Walsh, Pembina and Cavalier Counties will meet to discuss forming a zone. We will invite Terry Traynor from NDACo and Chris Jones DHS Director.

Auditor asked if the auditor's office and other offices could be closed on July 5<sup>th</sup> if they used vacation time. The Commissioners agreed that offices could be closed if the employees used vacation time.

Chairman Barta mentioned the water tours again. He plans to attend the Devils Lake Tour on June 19<sup>th</sup> and FM Tour on June 31<sup>st</sup>. There is also a Red River Joint Water meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, was present so he gave a brief update. He is still short 2 jailers and 2 deputies. They are still waiting for the new toilet to be installed. Two more toilets are leaking. Discussed the audit and are working on some policies and procedures. Commissioner Skorheim asked about the events that led up to the arrest of a Walsh County man. The issue is a civil matter not a criminal matter with a lot of unknowns. The parties are waiting on the private surveyor that did the work several years ago.

Daniel Thompson appeared to discuss some tax issues. He provided some documents to the commissioners. Mr. Thompson feels that his obligation to pay taxes are discharged dollar for dollar based on his interpretation of century code and Title 18. He also filed an Application for Property Tax Exemption for a religious organization which had been denied by the City of Adams at their City Equalization Meeting. It was denied based on Century Code 57-02-08(9). Linda Leadbetter, State Supervisor of Assessments, also agreed with Ed's findings based upon the information provided. **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of City of Adams and deny application for Property tax exemption.** Second by Wild. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Pursuant to NDCC 57-12-01 the County Commissioners met as the County Tax Equalization Board at 9:35 a.m.

Present were Dennis Cole, Sr., Dennis Cole, Jr., Loretta Moe, Ann Berg, Doug Erickson, Dennis Erickson, John Holm, Robert Gruchala and Valerie Dalbey.

Ed Sevigny presented 2019 assessments. Residential assessments increased about 2.5%. Commercial assessments increased about 6.3%. Ag land assessments increased about 1.5%. Average value per acre is about \$911/acre or 90.4% of state mandated average value per acre. The entire Ag land valuation schedule increased on 1%. 33 soil types in the "Ridge Area" received a 10% reduction in PI's. Adjustment applications have been available since October of 2018. The tax director has processed 466 adjustment applications to date with proper documentation, about \$4.6 million reduction in value. Has 15 applications left to process. Ed will provide final assessments at the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Dennis Cole, Jr. asked about his family land in Rushford Township. Ed asked if he had the adjustment paperwork that was sent out to all landowners. Cole will work with Ed to file paperwork and determine if they qualify for an adjustment.

Loretta Moe, Lampton Township, discussed the continued increase in her taxes over the last few years. She was informed that in 2018 the soils types went into effect. Moe will also work with Ed to determine if she qualifies for an adjustment.

Jim Langerud provided some information about the "F" soils and the 33 ridge soil types. Discussion ensued. Walsh County followed Grand Forks County on the "F" soils. Grand Forks wouldn't allow adjustments where as Walsh County has. It may be something the soils committee can look at.

At 10:05 a.m. the commissioners returned to their regular meeting.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, presented the following abatements:

- Discussed the land use change on the Dennis & Mary Jelinek abatement. **Motion by Skorheim to follow the recommendation of the tax director and approve the 2018 abatement for Jelinek.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Dennis & Mary Jelinek Eden Twp 17-4331 2018 RET \$113,148
- Discussed the land use change for the Dennis & Linda Slominski L-E. **Motion by Anderson to follow the recommendation of the tax director and approve the 2018 abatement.** Second by Skorheim. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Dennis & Linda Slominski Harriston Township 06-1473 \$11,422
- Reviewed another abatement for land use change for Dennis & Linda Slominski L-E. **Motion by Burianek to follow the recommendation of the tax director and approve the 2018 abatement.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Dennis & Linda Slominski Harriston Township 06-1462 \$8,160
- Reviewed another abatement for land use change for Dennis & Linda Slominski L-E. **Motion by Burianek to follow the recommendation of the tax director and approve the 2018 abatement.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.  
Dennis & Linda Slominski Harriston Township 06-1460 \$11,422

Tanya Wieler, Human Resource Director, appeared for the following:

- After discussions with Katrina Hodny, Veterans Service Officer, Tanya has drafted a joint power agreement with Pembina County for the shared Veterans Service Officer position. It has not been reviewed by either state's attorneys. It would be a 60%-40% split. Salary, travel and fees would increase. Current salary is \$3,397. Recommendation from Tanya is \$3,741. Katrina is requesting \$4,344. The shared position would be a savings to both counties. Commissioners recommended going with the salary of \$3,741 for the 2019 budget. Tanya will be attending the Pembina County Commission meeting later today to discuss the proposal.
- Discussed evaluating department heads and employees using the 360 degree approach. Each department head or employee could be evaluated by 5-7 other employees, supervisors, department heads and commissioners/portfolio holders. Commissioners will review questions and would like some input on questions in the survey. Survey monkey allows free evaluation services with up to 10 questions. Just because we budget for salary increases doesn't mean it has to be given if there are poor reviews. Budget doesn't take place until January 2020. Will look at starting with department heads in August once we get through the budget process.
- Tanya feels strongly about following the pay plan. We need to maintain it and keep up with the pay plan or we will be right back where we were before. Discussed the current CPI which is 1.5%. The pay plan scale will be adjusted with a 1.5% COLA and will be sent to department heads to use as a starting point for budgets. Tanya is currently working with the sheriff to become more competitive with salaries in his department.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- The old pup trailer is for sale and an ad has been placed in the paper.
- County Road 10 may close sooner than later. The County will maintain the old 1 mile stretch and will start maintaining the new route.
- Sharon has visited with the sheriff in regard to sharing the position and budget for the weight management position. At this time both department heads prefer to leave it as is. Commissioners agreed to leave it as is.
- Load limits are coming off tomorrow at 7:00 a.m.
- Discussed flood expenses for County Road 15. Currently no invoices have been submitted. Once dollar amounts are available we will look at paying out of the emergency fund.
- Received a \$1,000 grant from Polar Communications to apply towards the dock at Homme Dam.
- Discussed the amount of comp time that Kelly has. GRIT is not getting done and we will need the bridges done soon. GRIT is used for determining road funding. Sharon isn't getting out of the office due to the work load. If we have to hire out the GRIT it will be expensive. Sharon proposed that Tami Mecham become a Highway Administrative Officer I effective July 1<sup>st</sup> with a proposed salary of \$3414. Tanya Wieler from HR worked with Sharon on the salary. Tami would continue to pay bills in the auditor's office. **Motion by Skorheim to approve the Highway Administrative Officer I with a salary of \$3414.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll

call vote, Burianek and Wild voted no and Anderson, Skorheim and Barta voted yes. Motion carried.

- Walsh Water has left equipment in the Right of Way which could be a safety issue. Sharon will contact them.
- Courthouse steps and the Chase Building steps are falling/chipping away. Sharon will get some bids for repair.
- Gave a County Road 2 update.
- Sharon has talked to several land owners along County Road 15. They are planting cover crops in the right of way and will plant grass afterward. We will take a wait and see approach.
- State's Attorney Kelley Cole will get a letter out to Jay Gudajtes in regard to the bridge they damaged with farm equipment.

There was no interest from any of the commissioners to sit on any Standing Committees. Chairman Barta is still on the Resolution Committee.

Report of county offices for fees collected during May: County Recorder \$9,966.60 and Sheriff fees \$3,763.98.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ernie Barta, Chairman

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kris Molde, Auditor