

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**May 18, 2021**

May 18, 2021 – 8:30 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 Anderson moved to approve the May 4, 2021 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and additions of highway resignation, load limits, masks, Tyler bill and commission picture.** Second by Brintnell. Motion carried.

Brent Nelson, Emergency Manager, appeared during employee time to inquire if the commissioners are getting a lot of calls in regard to the burning ban, if it should remain in effect or if any changes should be made. The ban is working the way it is and should remain in effect.

Chairman Skorheim presented service awards to Elizabeth Thompson, 5 years; Sharon Laxdal, 5 years; Lawrence Burianek, 5 years; Stuart Swartz, 5 years; Wanda Kratochvil, 25 years and Brent Nelson, 25 years. Due to Covid last year the employee appreciation party was canceled and the county was unable to present service awards.

Larry Tanke, Daryl Campbell, Albin Jallo and Jennifer Lindenberger from the water board appeared to give a water board update. Gave an update on Drains 87, 71 and 28. Discussed Dougherty, Union, Skyrud, Melstad & Chyle Dams. Gave an update on the retention on the North Branch of the Park River and possibly working with Grand Forks, Ramsey and Nelson Counties on a snag and clearing project on the Forest River with Forest River to Minto being the worst area. Briefly mentioned the County Road 15 project that took 4 years to complete.

Jill Denault, Zone Director, appeared to discuss a new vehicle for the zone. The vehicle would be used in Walsh County and could be parked at the county shop in Park River. The state prefers the use of a zone vehicles over reimbursing employees for the use of their personal vehicles. State funds would be used to purchase the car but the upkeep is considered an indirect cost which the county is responsible for. There are 2 vehicles in Walsh County and next year she would like to replace the Traverse. OMB cost for a new Traverse is \$25,474. A rough estimate from D & B Motors was \$35,000 - \$36,000. **Motion by Anderson to approve the purchase of a new vehicle with Walsh County paying the indirect costs of maintenance for the vehicle.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote, all vote yes. Motion carried.

The State is still recommending employees work from home and several will continue to work from home. The social workers are back and forth between home and the office. The concern on the county's behalf is whose insurance is responsible for the county property when it is off premises should something happen to it. Ron Jurgens, Sheriff,

stated that he misses the interaction with the local office and seldom gets a call back when they call the centralized intake line. There is always a need for additional mental health services and addiction services to be able to meet the needs of the community.

Commissioners Barta and Skorheim went to look at the flooring issue in the zone bathroom/breakroom area after last week's meeting and no work will be done to the floor.

Ron Jurgens, Sheriff, presented a report on the task force work for 2020-2021 which included search warrants, parole searches, arrests, and controlled buys. Most of the cases are in the City of Grafton. Discussed how working with the City of Grafton is going since they have relocated. Sheriff Jurgens also explained how the asset forfeiture process works.

Katrina Hodny, Veterans Service Officer, provided packets to the commissioners which included pamphlets and miscellaneous items relating to her office. Gave an update on her office, the scanning project and discussed mental health services for alcohol and PTSD in St. Cloud.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Introduced new hires Ryan Kohler, Assistant Bridge Foreman and Eli Hartje bridge crew worker/truck driver.
- Will be chip sealing Co Rd 15 from Minto west to Vesleyville, Co Rd 9 from Edinburg to Co Rd 16 and Co Rd 22 from Fairdale to Highway 17. Randy Hahn asked if the county could chip seal his parking lot. If we do it for one we have to do it for all that request it so we will not do it. Sharon will provide Randy with names of other companies that could do the work for him.
- Blade man from Park River has resigned. **Motion by Anderson to advertise and fill the position.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Barta to approve the drainage permit for Cyril Suda & Sons, Acton Township, Section 23.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- **Motion by Brintnell to approve the utility permit for Nodak Electric, Adams Township, Section 13 & 14.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The county received a 5% premium discount for participating in the LMS program and for participating in the claims management & drug free workplace training program. The county also received a premium dividend credit for aggressive claims management. Sharon would again like to put those funds into the safety funds to be used for employee requests for chairs, vari-desks and other requests. **Motion by Anderson to deposit the \$5,144.25 into the safety funds for employee safety requests.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all vote yes. Motion carried.
- Townships will be getting approximately \$6000 in funding possibly as early as August.
- Do to the possibility of additional funds being available the county should have another project ready to go. Sharon will set up a bridge tour.

- **Motion by Barta to remove load limits.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote Anderson, Barta, Brintnell and Skorheim voted yes. Burianek voted no. Motion carried.
- Answered some questions about the county auction. There are items from other departments as well as unclaimed items from the sheriff's office on the auction.

Tanya Wieler, HR Director, appeared and discussed a budget memo that neither the commissioners or auditor received via email. In February the cost of living adjustment (COLA) was 1.4%, March 3% and currently is 4.9%. The average annual COLA is 1.5 – 2%. Provided some numbers and different scenarios with adjustments to the pay plan as shifting the whole plan is a lot of numbers. Because the pay plan was never fully implemented we continue to fall further behind. Salaries are an ongoing expenses. We need to be aggressive moving the market point down 1 or 2 steps. Need to come with some guidance so that departments can start working on budgets. Commissioners also asked Tanya to resend Administrator survey.

Kelley Cole, States Attorney, appeared to give an update on the Gudajtes case. Howard Swanson is helping with the claim due to counter claims. There was an error and the county has been asked to pay 50% of the legal fees for Swanson. Howard is doing a good job. The indigent defense fund can be used to pay for the expenses. The case has been moved from June to December 3rd with the pretrial being November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Discussed the American Rescue Plan funds that are coming from the US Treasury. The auditor watched a webinar in regard to it but the commissioners have not received any information. Auditor recommended putting the funds in a separate special fund. **Motion by Brintnell to deposit the American Rescue Funds into a separate special account with the auditor managing the funds.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Discussed wearing masks in the county buildings. **Motion by Anderson to lift the requirement of wearing masks in county buildings.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

The county has received a bill for the down payment of TaxWise software from Tyler Technologies. **Motion by Brintnell to use the Cares Fund to pay for the TaxWise down payment.** Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Will look at setting up a date in June for commissioner's picture.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

---

Dennis Skorheim, Chairman

Attest:

---

Kris Molde, Auditor