

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

November 17, 2020 - 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Madam Chairman Anderson, Commissioners Burianek and Wild. Commissioners Barta and Skorheim appeared via telephone.

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

Motion by Burianek to approve the November 2, 2020 regular meeting minutes and agenda additions of chairs for dispatch, resignation, fridge for Chase/RRRC, sign truck update, letter and thank you. Second by Wild. Motion carried.

Ron Jurgens, Sherriff appeared during employee time for the following:

- Met with the City of Adams and they would like to renew their policing contract as soon as possible. They will sign the contract for next year and pay the monthly fee for December to resume services immediately.
- The open deputy position has been filled and the individual will start next week.

Wanda Kratochvil, Health Department Administrator, appeared to provide a Covid-19 update.

- Initially, when asked to be on the agenda her intent was to ask for a mask mandate but since the governor did it she will not pursue it.
- Had visited with a few department heads and is ok with keeping doors open to county building.
- Walsh County has 371 active cases with 8 deaths. Most of the deaths have been in the last month and are elderly individuals. The daily rate for Walsh County on November 16th was 25.76% which is 1 in 5 testing positive. Walsh County's rate per 10,000 people is the highest in the state of North Dakota.
- Staffing shortages in nursing homes and hospitals are high, almost critical causing stressful and difficult working conditions. A shortened CNA course is being offered to help with the current staffing issues. Wanda said "Anything we can do that will help hospitals and nursing homes to keep them functional we should be doing". Local hospitals are accepting Covid patients.
- The Covid vaccine is the next step. Shipments will be sent before it is approved by the FDA. Once approved vaccinations will begin. An ethics committee will determine which groups are a priority.
- The goal of schools is to keep them open. Schools provide safety and meals for some students. The schools and the health district are working well together.
- Small gatherings seem to be the biggest area of community spread. General public is not aware of near crisis level in the county.

Jesse Irvine, Park River Park and Rec Director, appeared to discuss the use of the Chris Midgarden Arena for private rentals with the intent to provide kids with exercise/activity for their mental and physical well-being. Ben Suda and Chris Thompson were also in attendance.

- There would be no organized hockey or figure skating practices. It would just be an activity. There have been no outbreaks in hockey in North Dakota since the season

opened on October 2nd. Masks and social distancing have been working at hockey. Grafton Parks and Rec are having the same discussion at noon today.

- The individual renting the arena would be the responsible party enforcing masks, social distancing, and maintaining list of skaters and zero tolerance.
- There are a lot of unanswered questions with the governor's order. Many are seeking answers and clarification.
- Plans need to be submitted to the health department.

To keep the agenda on schedule and due to the land sale Anderson asked to move on with the agenda and come back to arena issue after the land sale.

Sharon Lipsh, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- **Motion by Barta to approve the Drainage permits for Jay Gudajtes, Harriston Township, Section 25 County Road 15 and Ops Township, Section 23 County Road 8.** Second by Skorheim. Upon roll call vote all voted us. Motion carried.
- Had a blade man resign. The highway department now has 2 open positions. **Motion by Wild to advertise for a truck driver and a blade man.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The fridge in the RRRC/Chase building is not working. Wayne's tried to fix it. **Motion by Wild to purchase a fridge from Wayne's Heating and Cooling for \$1034.** Second by Burianek. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- The sign truck didn't sell at the on-line auction. Will re-advertise and sell to the highest bidder. Will reach out to those that had an interest in it. Was told the starting bid of \$10,000 was too high.
- There has been a Covid outbreak within the highway department with only 3 people working today.

Ed Sevigny, Tax Director, appeared to inform the commissioners of the 6 parcels for abatements for 2017, 2018 and 2019 that Dan Thompson filed. It is too late to address the 2017 abatements. Those should have been done in 2019. The 2018 abatements have already been addressed. The 2019 abatements have been forwarded on to the City of Adams for approval or rejection. States Attorney's office has also received a copy to see if there is anything else to address.

Chairperson Anderson received a letter from Linda Thorson, District 10 Republican Representative for the General Election Canvassing Board. In light of all the news about the integrity of the ballots across the country she wanted to let the commissioners know of her appreciation of the work of the auditor and her staff in the election and canvassing process.

Pursuant to public advertisement, the sale of real estate forfeited to Walsh County for delinquent taxes was held at 10:00 a.m. with Commissioner Burianek reviewing guidelines for the sale and presiding over the land sale.

The following parcel was sold:

16-4056	Pt of SW1/4NW1/4	1.60 Acres	Brian Reilly	\$1356.01
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The remaining parcels will be offered to the respective townships/cities for sale.

Motion by Skorheim to accept the bid of \$1540 from Connect Interiors for 2 chairs for the dispatch center. Second by Barta. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barta thanked Commissioner Wild for his years of service as the Walsh County Sheriff and the last 4 years as Commission.

The Judgeship No. 5 at Cavalier and Langdon, Northeast Judicial District will be filled.

The meeting returned to the discussion of the Chris Midgarden Arena and the possibility of renting it out to private individuals.

- Who would police it? Goes against governors orders. Zero tolerance for rule breaking. One person screws up and everything is cancelled.
- Parents are spreading Covid more than students.
- Ben Suda read the order stating there is no mandatory closure of buildings. The area is considered a venue. Asked about the tremendous amount of authority that is given to county and state health departments and employees. This is something that we can't control.
- Chris Thompson stated that he is not representing any club or organization. He felt that the Park River kids would remain in Park River and the Grafton kids would skate in Grafton on their own time and their own dime. These kids are together all day in school what is another ½ hour or hour of activity. He urged the commissioners to open the arena.
- **Motion by Barta to move forward with guidance from health district with zero tolerance and closed if broken, masks required, practicing social distancing, 25% of occupancy, roll call of people in building and control of outside visitors.** Second by Wild. Discussion continued with concerns of interpretation of order. Public versus private. Health department is willing to work with any group. Upon roll call vote Barta and Anderson voted yes. Commissioners Burianek, Skorheim and Wild voted no. Motion failed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Karen A Anderson, Madam Chairman

Attest:

Kris Molde, Auditor