

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF WALSH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022**

September 6, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.

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

The meeting was called to order and bills were reviewed.

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

Commissioner Skorhiem moved to approve the August 16, 2022 regular meeting minutes, monthly bills and additions of jail tour, bonus incentive and Devils Lake Basin. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

Adam Trahan, Head Corrections Officer, introduced Nicolette Molina who started in August and has 1 year of experience as a correction officer. He also introduced Robert Trahan who starts tomorrow. He comes to Walsh County with 9 years of experience.

Brad Brummond, Extension Agent, appeared to give an update on the fair building. The hockey group took out the insulation and are walking the seams. They are also looking at the warming area. They should be done by October 1st. The fair is coming along. The new furnaces have been installed.

Sarah Johnston, Soil Conservation District Manager, appeared to provide a basic overview and provided an updated budget with mills included for revenue. The soil conservation district is doing more than they have in the past. They are branching out and working with cover crops, tours, demos and watershed programs. A soil health team was started in 2020. Staffing, payroll and benefits are the hardest part on the budget. Walsh County is known as the Burleigh County of the east. Our greatest problem is being so successful but we don't have enough staff. We get so many offers but don't have the man power. We will continue to work to maintain our goals and not the goals of others. Culture and change are hard. The commissioners appreciate what Sarah and Brad are doing.

Leanna Emmer, from NDLTAP, appeared to inform the commissioners that the guardrail maintainer that the Walsh County Highway Department designed took first in regional and state competition. It was then submitted for the National Bold category and took 1st place. Dean Thompson and Stuart Swartz were present to receive the award. There will be a webinar on September 15th where counties will share their innovations.

Amy Sobolik and Sheila Goodwin, dispatchers, appeared to address the 2023 pay plan, where raises sit and inequities. Presented the market adjustments sheet with those over and under the 100% highlighted. Was wondering what the reasoning was for the 12% increase for law enforcement. They stated the pay plan does not provide for life timers and asked what incentive is there for long timers to stay?

Commissioners explained that it is not a perfect system. As far as law enforcement goes there were 6 candidates for 65 open positions in the state of North Dakota. We need to be competitive with other counties. We need to compete and retain law enforcement personnel. Working at the top of the pay plan is a good place to be. You're not always trying to get to the top.

Amy asked "do you understand our jobs?" It is mentally taxing. We make sure the callers get the help they need whether it is ambulance, fire or law enforcement. Officer safety is stressed when we are training new dispatchers. Dispatchers are the ones that listen to callers screaming on the phone when they call in a situation.

The increase in the health insurance premium was also discussed. The county will continue to pay 75% of the premium for single with dependent and family plans.

Jason Johnston, Highway Superintendent, appeared for the following:

- Presented 5 drainage permits for Cyril Suda & Sons which are just for maintenance. **Motion by Barta to approve drainage permits for Cyril Suda and Sons, Section 36, Fertile Township; Section 25, Martin Township; Section 3, Prairie Centre Township; Section 23, Acton Township and Section 35, Martin Township.** Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Presented a utility permit for Nodak Electric. **Motion by Skorheim to approve the utility permit for Nodak Electric on County Road 9 between Sections 15 and 22.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- Gave an updated on the mold in the LEC Building. The air quality has been checked. More mold has been found, 2 water lines have been capped and the humidity is still around 50%. So far, the costs are at \$10,000.
- Presented another invoice for bridge inspections and load rating. **Motion by Brintnell to sign certificate of local match and pay the invoice for Project BRS0099011 for \$18,598.72.** Second by Anderson. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.
- We have graveled almost 180 miles of roads.
- Walsh County will meet with DOT at 7:45 a.m. on Tuesday, October 4th at the Annual NDACo Conference.
- Looking for a head count for the meal put on by KLJ on Sunday night before the conference.
- Devils Lake Basin has a lidar mapping resource the county can access. Jason is aware of this.
- Bonus incentives were mentioned for those that go above and beyond. Discussion included the pay plan, tiers and department head involvement.
- Received a call from the Garden Club at Homme Dam about the weeds in the flower gardens.

Jail tour at Barnes County took place on August 23rd. Need to decide which offices/departments will be at the new site. Need to find a location, hire an architect and review process. Pembina, Cavalier and Trail Counties would like to be a part of the conversations. Possibly contracting a number of beds. How much can we borrow without going to a vote of the people? Do we know what annual operating costs will be? There is

the possibility of contracting for marshal services as well. Jail committee will meet and come up with a plan which they will present to the commissioners.

Due to the NDACo Conference the October 4th commission meeting will be moved to October 5th.

Auditor reminded commissioners about early registration for the NDACo Conference. She will register Commissioners Barta and Skorheim.

The county received reimbursement for the Court Faciliatory Grant which was for the front doors. The county also received a letter for the grant for next year. They would like to have the benches in the courtroom covered.

Informed the commissioners that had we stayed with our old health insurance policy we would have seen a 30% premium increase. The county has high usage and high-cost prescriptions.

Presented 2 spreadsheets for the budget. When carrying numbers forward 2 mills were used for the county agent. Last year it was half a mill. Before we approve the final budget we will need to review the county agent budget and decide if we want to drop it back down or leave the two mills that were approved at the preliminary budget.

Motion by Anderson to appoint Katrina Hodny to the Carnegie Regional Library Board. Second by Brintnell. Upon roll call vote all voted yes. Motion carried.

Report of county offices for fees collected during August County Recorder \$7,794.42 and Sheriff fees \$3,804.20

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Lawrence Burianek, Chairman

Attest:

Kris Molde