

July 1st, 2025, Steele County Commission Meeting

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m. Commissioners Brandon Oxtan, Perry Brown, Brandon Krueger, Richard Strand, and Chris Grandalen were present, as was Auditor Jana Flaten.

Commissioner Brown motioned to approve the two June minutes, seconded by Commissioner Grandalen. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

The Steele County Park Board meeting began at 8:16 a.m.

The Steele County Commissioner Meeting was reconvened at 8:32 a.m.

Reed Oien discussed the ongoing crack sealing. They are roughly getting 2 miles done a day. They should be all done by the end of July. Chip sealing will be ready to go when the date is set. GK moved down to the Hope shop and will be working out of there. The new hire will work out of the Finley shop. Looking at lead times for the new blade is still looking at 6-7 months. Bid for bump on Hwy 8 by the Grand Forks County line was talked about. Discussions were held about purchasing new equipment. This legislative session, they passed a bill to use Sourcewell. The blade has about 8,000 hours and we usually trade them in when they reach 10,000 hrs. Will push this off until the 2027 budget. Snowplows were also discussed and the option of getting a newer one.

Randy Fulgelberg was in to discuss culvert replacement on Co Rd 8a. He would like to get it done sooner rather than later. He also discussed the elevation on both sides of the roads, and it needs to be lowered on the north side. Mike Bassingthwaite from Interstate Engineering said that the installation won't be until about September, and he will be there on installation day to ensure it goes in at the proper height according to the survey. He doesn't believe it needs to be lowered, as one side needs to be lower, so the water flows through it. He will go out and survey/stake the culvert.

Brooke Whitmoore and Kyle Zerface came to discuss the 'Zerface Bridge.' Brooke would like to see the bridge replaced, as it is in bad shape. Semis can't drive across it, and they must take detours. The bridge is rated at 16 tons. Flow study or pricing hasn't been done, and there are currently no federal bridge funds to use. Brooke said that he reached out to some area farmers and businesses, and they are willing to give money to this project but is unsure if that can be done or not. Kyle doesn't want the bridge replaced as multiple other bridges in the township need to be replaced before this one. He also doesn't think it will be good on the road and with the traffic in that area. The commissioners will need to reach out to Stock, the state attorney, to see if private entities can even help pay for it, and they suggest that Brooke go and talk with the Barnes County township, as the bridge connects Steele County and Barnes County, before anything is done.

Hanson drain was also discussed. The stakes are out to get it backfilled. The landowners on the south side are instructed to backfill the stakes, but it won't happen until fall. Mike Bassingthwaite stated that the culvert looked good, and once it is backfilled, everything should be good to go.

Mike Bassingthwaite discussed the bid for Co Rd 8 bump. Commissioner Brown moved to approve the bid, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Seal coat is starting at the beginning of August, just waiting for chips to get made.

Ben Gates gave an update on the recent weather impacts in Steele County. FEMA will declare an emergency for the area/state. The City of Hope will qualify and has been working with the town auditor, and the county will more than likely also qualify. He reached out to Colgate Twp and Luverne, and they didn't know yet. Commissioner Strand asked Gates to reach out to them and help them through the process and get

everything submitted for them, as they will need help over the next few weeks/months with all the damage. Gates mentioned that the state will more than likely extend the submission process another 30 days, as there was so much damage. It will be a long process. Gates will walk through with Kyle on how things work when working with FEMA.

Gates mentioned he's waiting for the architect's signed contract.

One building permit needed approval. Commissioner Krueger moved to approve the permit, seconded by Commissioner Grandalen. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

At 9:20 a.m. Commissioner Oxtan moved to take a 5 min recess, seconded by Commissioner Strand. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:26 a.m.

The 2026 budget was discussed and approved. A 4% cola, steps, and grades were also discussed. The coroner vehicle was discussed as being placed on a sealed bid as it is no longer needed.

The 911 department and new sirens in the local town were discussed. City of Hope- the newer one is not working; and currently using the old one. Gates will look at it.

Spraying for Townships was also discussed, and Gates will reach out to Josh about spraying.

Commissioner Strand moved to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner Brown. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Commissioner Krueger moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Grandalen. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Brandon Oxtan- County Chairman,



Jana Flaten -County Auditor

