

February 6th, 2024, Steele County Commission Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8:01am and roll call was taken; Brown-here, Oxton-here, Huso-here (via Zoom) Strand -here, Krueger- here. Also in attendance, Jana Flaten- County Auditor, and Ben Gates-DES.

Strand made a motion to approve the January minutes with the amendment of fixing County Road 18 , second by Oxton. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Strand had some Agenda additions- Steele County CD's and Golden Lake Liquor license.

Huso made a motion to approve the agenda. Second by Krueger. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

There will be no park board meeting today.

Keith Palmer with Westfield township discussed his meeting with the state to discuss the option of how to fund the bridge project that was approved by the state. The state would work with the county alone or with the county and township. He did mention that if the township is part of the bills to get reimbursed, it would take a little longer. As this is not a grant, they will pay the bills (their terms are 60-90days) after reviewing the bill. The state wants the township and county to work together and have the township have the lead role and just use the county as a lender for the money. Most townships don't have the funding for these big jobs. The legal team is looking over the contract and Tracy will get it to us when she receives it back. The contract needs to be signed before any purchases can be made. The project was submitted for \$128,800. Commissioner Kreuger made a motion for the county to pay the bills and send them to the state and then receive the reimbursements from the state. This was seconded by Oxton. No further discussion, Brown, Oxton, Huso and Krueger voted aye. Strand sustained from vote. Motion carried.

Auditor Flaten discussed the 2023 budget amendments and transfer.

Budgets that need amendment as there were no budget amounts made:

Capital Project General Fund	\$27,087.53
ARF-COVID	\$136,480.94
LATCF Funding	\$38,000.00
Flood 2020	\$6,579.23
Emergency Fund	\$337,060.37
Flood 2022	\$357,517.97

Budgets that need amendments due to overspending on approved budget:

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Amend</u>
County sales tax	\$52,000	\$411,183.72	\$360,000.00-blade
Weight Restriction	\$4168.00	\$5673.96	\$1,600.00-Load/pass
County Road& Bridge	\$860,423.00	\$997,254.83	\$140,000.00-Fuel/pay

5 Mill Road	\$241,000.00	\$293,130.34	\$53,000.00-gravel
911 Program	\$34,288.00	\$43,730.93	\$10,000.00-Trail Dispatch

Transfers:

Transfer from General fund to Capital Project general fund:

<u>Beginning balance</u>	<u>Debits / Credit</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Transfer amount</u>
\$3,872.80	-\$27,087.53	-\$23,214.73	\$23,214.73

Non-General Funds

County Road and Bridge

<u>Beginning balance</u>	<u>Debits / Credit</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Transfer amount</u>
\$175,094.65	\$997,254.83/754,965.91	\$67,197.27	\$67,197.27

Transfer from Highway tax distribution to County Road and bridge

County Bond 2017

<u>Beginning balance</u>	<u>Debits / Credit</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Transfer amount</u>
-\$28,099.31	\$27,934.72/0	-\$56,034.03	\$56,034.03

Transfer from County Bond 2019 to County Bond 2017

Commissioner Strand made a motion for the county to approve the amendments and transfers as listed. This was seconded by Krueger. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering provided a minor structure inventory packet and updated bridge map. He also discussed County Road 18 and the courthouse project. He reviewed and commented on what they're doing for the new parking lot. Northeast of the courthouse, they are widening that paving area out just a little bit as it makes it easier to get into some parking stalls right next to the courthouse. Southeast of the courthouse where the road runs north and south, they are widening the road and adding parking on the east side of the courthouse. There will also be a sidewalk up to the ramp on the east side.

Handicap parking will be on the east side and close to the building.

This project also included mill and overlay on all the Asphalt, roadways, and parking lots around the courthouse.

Mike would not recommend adding landscaping or replacing any trees as part of this project and recommended hiring it as a separate project.

Commissioner Strand made a motion to approve the plans and specs of County Road 18 and the courthouse parking lot. This was seconded by Huso. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Mike discussed how and why the state recalculated their budget for the bridge budget/funding. All 37 counties bridge projects got pushed back because of funding issues. The Steele County bridge project has now been pushed back a year until 2026. To conserve funds, they have come back and said at this point that they're not going to fund the low water crossing replacements.

This means that the bridge we had submitted will likely not be funded but will be kept on the list for a culvert project.

He also discussed the bridge project up north. There is a change order that will need to be added. 1,500 cubic yards of borrow material to build this road in lieu of using the not-so-great material that was found in that riverbank. It will be around \$28,725 for the change order. The job is funded at 80 federal and 20 local. Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve that change order. This was seconded by Strand. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Reed gave an update of the fall work that was done last year. Everything looks good and is holding up. They've just been doing maintenance on trucks. The new blade should be here in about 3 weeks. The guys are also blading and working on County Road 9. The last 3 to 2 miles gets hit hard with traffic.

Commissioner Huso gave an update about new phone lines that he thinks need to be added. He thinks the lunchroom, Tax Director, and another line for the auditor's office are needed. Our system is capable of handling 16 lines.

Huso will look at the cost of adding those lines. Sheriff Beckman did mention that he will need a line for his room on the 1st floor for the intoxalizer. It sends the reports out to Bismarck via the phone line. Travis put a jack in there and the line that is in there is hooked up to that and should be re-labeled to the sheriff's line.

Dennis Kubischta with Hugo Township discussed his meeting with the state to discuss the option of how to fund the bridge project that was approved by the state. The commissioners discussed keeping it the same as the Westfield Township to keep things fair. Commissioner Krueger made a motion for the county to pay the bills and send them to the state then receive the reimbursements from the state. This was seconded by Strand. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Dennis Kubischta also gave a brief update for Veterans Services, and it is going very well. He said it's been fun working with the veterans in Steele County. He stated that it's a whole different atmosphere walking into this courthouse and that it's been fun to come in and meet people.

Ben Gates provided the NFIP 2nd reading- no changes were made from last month.

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve the NFIP second reading, second by Commissioner Oxton. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Gates also discussed the performance evaluation and how that truly ties into what that salary schedule would look like. He stated that there is an employee meeting tomorrow at noon, to discuss the self and supervisor portion of the performance evaluation and the due dates for that. The performance evaluation of the department head must come to the commissioners.

There needs to be evaluations done and that gives the commission information on where to go on the salary schedule.

There will be two commissioners for each department head evaluation. Commissioner Brown would like to divide each department up so all the commissioners can be involved. Gates will get in contact with the commissioners to get it all lined up. It will be up to the commissioner to schedule a day to best fit their schedules. At the end of the evaluation is going to come the salary discussion which he said they should be prepared for. Commissioner Strand would like to see when employees were hired and starting wage. Gates and Flaten will work on getting that together.

Sam Hoffman gave an update on the public health department. They've been doing all the grant reporting every month and everything has been approved.

For the office they've been ordering office supplies and updating all the educational supplies along with using grants to help pay for the updating.

Sam also discussed the budget lines for all the grants and would like to combine them into one line. She currently keeps track of all her grants in her office, so she doesn't think that the auditor's office needs to keep track as well. It would make bill vouchers easier for her and the auditor's office as there would be only one line to take grant funds from. Sam would then share her monthly numbers with Jana.

Commissioner Huso made a motion to combine all grants to one fund line. This was seconded by Krueger. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Sam is in the process of setting up the billing, there is lots of paperwork that goes along with it. But should be done soon. Vaccines are ordered and on the way. Some of them are here and if somebody comes in for a vaccine and she has it on hand, she can vaccinate them. The billing process is still getting worked on and she hasn't had the chance to bill anyone. Sam did go down to Ransom County, and they have been helpful with

the Administrator side of things and plan to get to training on the billing process soon. Home visits are going well and there are 8 clients in total. Sam will continue to do those visits weekly.

Kim Jacobson with AVHSZ came to briefly discuss the open spot on the board at AVHSZ. She provided a little background about the board. Human Service boards are meant to be community driven boards that help provide input and allow citizens to engage with the government operations. The board discussed the applicants. Commissioner Strand made a motion to appoint Dawn Carter to fill the open position on the AVHSZ board. This was seconded by Commissioner Krueger. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried. Flaten will contact Carter and email the paperwork to both her and Kim Jacobson.

Jacobson also discussed the new eligibility worker that's joining the team. This position will be in the Finley office here at the courthouse. The person hired will start on February 26th.

Commissioner Strand motioned for a 5min recess. Seconded by Commissioner Oxton. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried. 9:55am

Meeting reconvened at 10:04am

Charlie discussed the donation of sick time policy and stated that he thinks everybody's understanding was that the donated sick leave would be used to cover the employees' wages while out on sick leave. As he looked more into our sick leave policy and transferring sick leave, when the policy was revised, it states donated sick time is only to be used to cover the health care benefits for the county. Charlie would like to update the policy this year as nobody really realized that that was in there and he stated that it was not in our old one as far as he knows. The transfer was approved and done with the understanding that that would cover the employees' wages while sick and would continue his employment. Charlie is asking if the commissioners are okay with it and is looking for a motion to retroactively waive that portion of the policy manual discussing the sick leave donation policy for this and to talk more in depth about how that policy reads because it's kind of confusing.

Commissioner Strand discussed the CDs the county has throughout the banks in Steele County. On many of them the terms are expiring, and he discussed that with Kari. Discussion was had as to what is the best rate. On some of them we will need to pay the penalty, but it would make up for it by doing the better rate. Also discussed was moving money from savings to a CD. Commissioner Strand made a motion to update all the county CDs and include the penalties for early withdrawal so we can get better interest, and to move half of the money from savings to a CD. Seconded by Commissioner Oxton. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

The Golden Lake Liquor license is looking for approval. Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve the Golden Lake Liquor license, seconded by Commissioner Strand. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

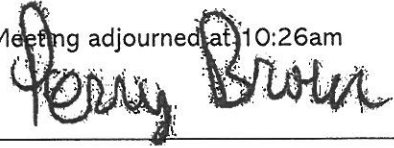
Commissioner Oxton made a motion to pay the bills, seconded by Commissioner Huso. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Tax Director Casey Olson discussed the County lots east of the courthouse. The two lots are 5 by 100ft between houses which were acquired by the county from unpaid taxes. The county would be selling to the owners of the house touching the lots. Charlie's working on the legal paperwork to get deeds made. It'll just be one parcel number.

Casey provided a tax department update. He was out assessing yesterday. All Golden Lake Township is done. He's working on sales ratios with Kayla from Traill and Vanguard. He is looking for approval on a building permit for building a grain dryer and all dues have been paid for it. Commissioner Oxton made a motion to pay the bill seconded by Commissioner Huso. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Oxton, seconded by Krueger. No further discussion, all members voted aye. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26am

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Perry Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Chairman Perry Brown

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jana Flaten". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Auditor Jana Flaten