

April 6th, 2021
Finley, ND

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:23 am. Present were Chairman Richard C. Strand, Commissioners Ted Johnson, Brandon Krueger, Brian Tuite, and Russell Walcker.

Agenda Additions – Golden Lake Township new plat

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the agenda with additions. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to approve the minutes as presented. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Steele County Auditor, Emily Wigen, provided an office update including the implementation of the purchase (P-card) program as of April 1st and the updating of the current time clock system.

The Commission moved into discussion regarding the recent interviews of internal candidates for the 911 Coordinator position. There was discussion regarding the position being a better fit for the Emergency Manager, however there was great concern that he has too much on his plate currently. Starting salary for the position was also discussed. The other applicant was very capable, and the board will look into giving her more duties in the future to compensate her.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to offer the 911 Coordinator position to Ben Gates. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director, Kim Jacobson, provided the Commission with an update regarding that department.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to take a short recess. The Steele County Commission meeting was reconvened at 9:39 am.

Road Superintendent, Reed Oien, provided a department update that included replacing bridge planks, reclaiming and summer help. He also proposed increasing the county rates for blading and snow removal.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to increase the blading and snow removal rates to \$105 effective with May billings. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gravel bids received from KRB and Lakeside Construction were received and reviewed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to accept the gravel bids. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Oien advised the board the new blade will arrive in May and the new tractor lease will be in August. Drain tiling a portion of County Road 8 was discussed. Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering offered input on how other counties are using this on their county roads.

Mike Bassingthwaite of Interstate Engineering joined the meeting to discuss the County Road 11 overlay on schedule for the November 2021 bid letting using Federal aid funding. Culverts under this road need to be inspected. Bassingthwaite will arrange to inspect them with a Commissioner later.

Emergency Manager, Ben Gates, submitted his quarterly DES reports for signing. He also discussed his recommendations to tie the burn ban to the fire index with a burn ban for indexes of high, very high, and extreme.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to follow the recommendation of Emergency Manager to tie the burn ban to the State Fire Index for high, very high and extreme until November 1st, 2021. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gates discussed a nomination to apply for the Emergence Program, which is a six-month program requiring two weeks of away training in California. The board congratulated him and gave their blessing, provided it does not interfere with his duties at the county.

The Commission discussed the 911 Coordinator position with Gates. He was offered \$800 per month for these duties, in addition to his current duties and wages with the county. Gates accepted. This position will have a six-month probation period and the wage will be effective April 1st, 2021.

There were no updates regarding County Road 5, the courthouse generators or emergency shelters at Golden Lake at the time of the meeting.

Kari Dekker, Treasurer, met with the board to provide an office update which included county CD's, interest rates and percent of taxes paid for the year.

Kathryn Good, Public Health Nurse, provided an office update which included vaccine rates, county COVID rate and remaining COVID funding.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve adding new outlets in Public Health for the vaccine fridge. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Good presented two contracts for individuals assisting with COVID clinics. Reimbursement will be submitted for through FEMA.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve, and sign the contracts for help at the COVID clinics. Roll call vote: Krueger – yes, Walcker – yes, Johnson – yes, Strand – yes. Tuite – abstained. Motion carried.

Discussion was held pertaining to opening the courthouse to the public and the fogging of the courthouse. Chairman Strand asked Good to get the janitor trained and the courthouse fogged daily.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to open the courthouse to the public via the front door. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to take a short recess at 11:03 am. The meeting was reconvened at 11:07 am.

Tax Director, Amy Czapiewski, met with the board to present a building permit for Ostenson for approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the building permit for Ostenson. All member voted yes. Motion carried.

An update regarding the open Extension Administrative position was discussed.

Custodian, Dina Splettstoesser, introduced herself to the board. Chairman Strand discussed the fogger for the courthouse, a floor cleaning machine and thanked her for keeping the building looking good.

The Steele County Food Pantry was briefly discussed by the board. There was also discussion regarding calls to the courthouse for social services and the food pantry.

The board met with Deputy Auditor, Carly Idso, regarding her recent interview and her current duties.

Chairman Strand presented a new plat for the south side of Golden Lake. It has been approved by the township. These additional twenty lots were purchased by the landowners north of them, with the exception of one or two.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the new plat for the south side of Golden Lake. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve all bills as presented. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Auditor Wigen provided the board with quarterly expense and fund balances to review.

Sheriff Beckman brought forth the topic of a county auction. A spring courthouse cleaning day will be set and Sheriff Beckman will set up a date for the auction.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adjourn the meeting. All members voted yes. Meeting was adjourned.


Chairman – Richard C. Strand


Auditor – Emily Wigen