

April 1st, 2025, Steele County Commission Meeting

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

A moment of silence was given to Steele County employee Eddy Haugen and his family.

Chairman Oxton gave his deepest condolences to the Haugen family, and they will continue to be in our prayers.

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

Additions to the agenda: Public Health, Hope Renaissance Zone, and RFQ Paperwork (Gates)

Reed Oien gave an update on how things are going in the shop. The snowplows are ready for the last snowfall of the season and will then continue crack sealing after it warms up. The sealer needed a new pump and gear chain. Those are all fixed, and it is ready to go. Load limits will be going into effect on Monday. There have been 3 summer applications. Gates will get the paperwork to get them started in late May. There are no applicants for the blade job.

Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering discussed the gravel bid for this spring/summer. There will be 31 miles to do, with an estimated cost of 1.3-1.4 million. Bids will be opened on April 15th and reported back in May.

A hydraulic study will be done in Carpenter Township to determine the kind of culvert to get. Discussed Co Rd 6 and Co Rd 20 and the culverts on this road. Both will need to be upgraded/replaced. Arch pipe and one high, along with one lower metal culvert pros and cons were talked about with each kind. Co Rd 6 will get a small arch pipe, and Co Rd 20 will get a round pipe. Mike will get the bid forms ready and send them out.

Casey Olson came in to discuss the three building permits. Commissioner Grandalen motioned to approve the permits, seconded by Commissioner Brown. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Commissioner Brown discussed the letter from the City of Hope regarding renewing the Renaissance zone. The city is looking for support. Commissioner Strand motioned to write a letter of support, seconded by Commissioner Brown. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Flaten discussed the elections and running other tax districts' elections. It was discussed that the county will no longer run the school districts as they hold elections yearly, and we were currently only running one school district out of 7. It would also need multiple different ballot styles.

Flaten talked about the 2026 budget and will get them out to all the departments and would like them back by May 14th, 2026.

Gates discussed the new ambulance districts and the meeting on April 7th. He will report back at the next commissioner meeting.

Sheriff Beckman discussed the 100-year celebration for the courthouse next summer and asked if he could add a budget line for this celebration. A committee will be formed to plan and discuss the event.

At 9:10 a.m. Commissioner Strand motioned to take a 5-minute recess, seconded by Commissioner Brown. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Scott Wheeler joined the meeting to discuss the proclamation honoring the Lawrence Welk Show and the 70th Anniversary. Commissioner Grandalen moved to approve the proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Strand. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried.

Bobbie, Hepper Olson, and Eric, CMTA, discussed HVAC upgrading and different options for cooling and heating. Talked about the pros and cons of the three options presented and will take some time to discuss the best choice for price and the courthouse. No decision was made. Flaten will send the energy bills to Hepper Olson so they can see how much money we could save if we switch to a new system.

Gates discussed the RFQ (Request for Qualifications for Architectural Services) and his recommendations on moving forward with this large outside project on the courthouse. Commissioner Strand moved to approve the RFQ, which Commissioner Grandalen seconded. There was no further discussion, and all members voted aye. The motion carried. Gates will post on social media and other places and gather the RFQ for the May meeting.

The commissioners discussed the waterboard and ongoing concerns regarding a few drains. Bown has been attending meetings, discussing with the waterboard, and waiting for their next step. The commissioners discussed that they would work with the waterboard and get things correct, as the waterboard sees fit.

Public Health Administrator Hannah Zamora joined the meeting to discuss the grant funding and some of the funding the Public Health office is losing. She is looking at about \$50,000.00 in grant funding that she will lose. This was not planned; it was brought to her and the rest of the public health offices throughout the state early this month. She will continue to work on billing insurance, as she does get funding back through them, but it does take time to see that funding gets back to the county. This was previously not done in the past few years, so that will be a nice income after losing some grant funding. Other than the loss of grant funding, things are going well in her office.

Commissioner Strand motioned 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 10:17 am

Brandon Oxtan- County Chairman



Jana Flaten -County Auditor

