

December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019  
Finley ND

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:20 am. Present were Chairman Randy Richards, Brian Tuite, Russell Walcker, Richard Strand and Ted Johnson.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve and sign two County Deeds presented by Auditor Wigen for properties sold at the 2019 County Tax Sale. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Auditor Emily Wigen provided an office update which included Human Resources, Commission portfolio's, and a panic button request. The Commission requested that Gates replace batteries and test all panic buttons.

Road Superintendent Reed Oien, Sheriff Wayne Beckman, Emergency Manager Ben Gates and Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering joined the meeting at 8:45 am.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand to explore a three-month trial of comp. time for exempt employees. The motion was rescinded.

Chairman Richards tabled the HR topics until later in the meeting.

Road Superintendent Reed Oien discussed a \$79,000 plow truck available in Minnesota. The board tabled the topic until next spring/summer. Richards requested a report of number of signs being updated and replaced by the road department.

Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering met with the board and provided a Final Pay Estimate (#6) in the amount of \$384,286.30 payable to Knife River for the County Road 23 project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the settlement agreement with Knife River. Roll Call vote: Tuite - yes, Walcker - yes, Johnson - yes, Strand - yes and Richards – yes. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to pay the Final Pay Estimate #6 and sign the mediation settlement agreement. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

The Steele County Water Resource District joined the meeting to discuss updates with the board. SCWRD attorney Cassie Tostenson advised that the water board is approving the revised policy manual which included minor changes for political subdivisions. SCWRD Engineer Lyndon Pease, with Moore Engineering, provided an update on the Lake Tobiason project. Moore Engineering also provided an update on the Maple River Dam. There was a brief discussion regarding the County Road 5 Dam with the possibility of breaching it in the future.

Bassingthwaite discussed the seeding down by Hope. Central Specialties has requested \$6,708 for work completed and has not responded to Bassingthwaite regarding payment or work remaining. The board discussed the liquidated damages and the amount of payment that should be made.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to pay \$3,500 to Central Specialties for seeding. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Federal Aid bridges were discussed. The two bridges submitted on the Federal Aid program sheet were rejected. Bassingthwaite presented maps of bridges that are deficient, posted and rating for the board to consider for future Federal Aid bridge projects.

Karen Bergstrom and Holly Stromsodt joined the meeting at 10:27 am. Stromsodt provided financial summary for the Job Development Authority as of November 30<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the JDA is deficit spending and will need to request more mill levy funding down the road to continue operating. Bergstrom is still working on the website but cannot give a timeline when it will be complete.

Ben Gates and Amy Czapiewski joined the meeting for the Tax Director Department. A past due mobile home was discussed. Current Tax Director Gates and Sheriff Backman will work together to get this matter taken care of immediately.

The board requested that Gates get the panic button system tested, location issues resolved and employees without a button, a replacement button.

Gates discussed the new farm exemption. He will not be requiring the tax returns any longer and will simply be using the income worksheet. The Tax Director position is in the process of being moved to Czapiewski. Dates for training will be worked out between the Tax Director and Auditors Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to close the courthouse on December 24<sup>th</sup> as a paid holiday. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gates requested his old laptop for personal use. Gates was advised to get pricing and talk with Czapiewski to see what her preferences and needs are. He will also discuss with the county IT Travis.

Miscellaneous office reports were reviewed including Razor Tracking reports, Extension Office positions, and a quote for automatic light switches in the restrooms.

Sheriff Beckman discussed purchasing a new vehicle and using the old sheriff pickup for the county Emergency Manager.

Don Huso provided a brief update regarding the proposed elevator repair quote and will update the board again next month.

The board discussed having the Road Department put in a sump pump in southwest corner of the basement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve adding motion lights to the bathrooms at the quoted price by Precision. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

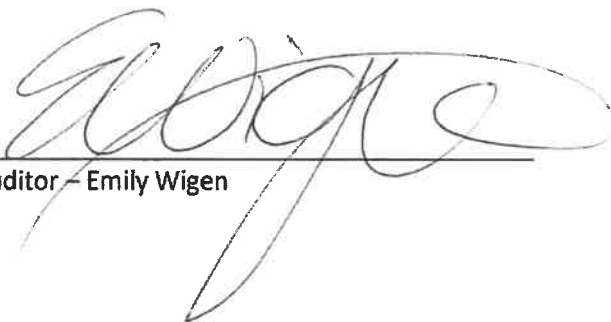
The topic of comp. time for exempt employees was reviewed and discussed at length. Discussion included allowing comp. time to be used within two weeks. No banking of time allowed with 37.5 hours as a work week except for the road department.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to allow a three-month trial for exempt department head employees to earn and use comp. time within a two-week time frame. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Strand to approve paying the bills as presented. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 pm. All members voted yes. Meeting adjourned.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman – Randy Richards

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Auditor – Emily Wigen