

May 5th, 2020
Finley, ND

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:50 am. Present via WebEx were Chairman Ted Johnson, Commissioners Randy Richards, Russell Walcker, Brian Tuite, and Richard Strand.

Agenda additions: Highway Patrol assistance with weight restrictions and County Road 5 Culvert.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the April meeting minutes as presented. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

The board reviewed office reports and a brief discussion was held regarding the courthouse cleaning and mowing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to sign the renewal agreement for dental and vision coverage through BCBSND. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Auditor Wigen provided an update to the commission regarding the 2020 Primary Election. Both political parties have appointed a judge to serve on the election board.

The probationary period for two employees were reviewed and discussed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Strand to approve the 3% increase for the two probationary employees beginning May 1st. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to request Highway Patrol assistance with weight restriction enforcement. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Work on the culvert along County Road 5, near Randy Richards place, is scheduled to be completed in May.

The County Road 8 culvert, east of Keith Jacobson's, was discussed. The cost of this culvert will be the responsibility of Randy Fugleberg. It will be his responsibility to maintain the culvert along with the ditch from drain tile pumps to the culvert.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Strand to approve a 24-inch culvert between section 1 and 2 that can be lowered one foot. If the culvert through 8A as running full he must shut off the drain tile pumps in accordance to previous agree. Roll call vote: Richards-yes, Strand- yes, Johnson- yes, Tuite- yes, Walcker- yes. Motion carried.

Gravel bids were reviewed, Gates went over the details including extra gravel along County Road 6 due to the width.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to approve awarding of gravel bids for County Roads as presented by Gates. Roll call vote: Richards- yes, Walcker- yes, Tuite – yes, Johnson- yes, Strand - abstained. Motion passed.

Roads Superintendent, Reed Oien, inquired about purchasing a new blade for the Road Department. Commissioner Richards suggested holding off with that purchase due to concerns over revenue. Auditor Wigen agreed and has concerns over the revenue estimated to come into the County due to COVID-19.

Oien updated the board regarding not hiring summer help, they will do the crack sealing with the current staff. He also requested that the Road Department be done at noon on Fridays.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Strand to start the Road Department at 48 hours per week next week May 11. Roll call vote: Tuite- yes, Richards- yes, Walcker- yes, Strand- yes, Johnson- yes. Motion carried.

Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering met with the board and discussed an update on County Road 5 west. The project will be placed on hold as funding for the Prairie Dog bill is in question. Bassingthwaite will also get bids for seeding on County Road 5 near Richards residence. Spring flooding was discussed. Damage is mostly to township roads at this time.

TriState Paving estimate to fix a dip in County Road 8 and County Road 5 site on both sides of the bridge, and County Road 11, a total of four spots is estimated at \$25,000.

A motion was made by Strand, seconded by Tuite to approve the estimate from TriState Paving to repair and pave four spots. Roll call vote: Richards- yes, Walcker- yes, Tuite- yes, Strand- yes, Johnson- yes. Motion carried.

Oien and Gates are working on a haul road agreement, south of Highway 200 to have the Hefty Seed driveway, to allow for 80,000. Hefty Seed will be responsible to maintain that portion of the road.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to recess the meeting for five minutes at 10:39 AM.

Emergency Manager, Ben Gates, provided the board with a COVID-19 update. He also discussed the Steele County building reopening and employees returning back to work.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to allow the purchase of masks up to \$3400. Roll call vote: Strand-yes, Richards- yes, Walcker- yes, Tuite- yes, Johnson- yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Strand to bring employees back to work on Monday, May 18th and reopen the Steele County buildings to the public as of June 1st. Roll call vote: Strand- yes, Richards- yes, Walcker- yes, Tuite- yes, Johnson- yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Walcker that employees using annual leave to leave the state must quarantine for two weeks upon arrive back home. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Emergency Manager Gates presented a Fire Emergency Declaration for the board to discuss.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Richards to adopt the resolution and follow the North Dakota land fire danger rating May 1st through November 1st. Roll call vote: Richards- yes, Strand- yes, Tuite- yes, Walcker- yes, Johnson- yes. Motion carried.

Tax Director, Amy Czapiewski, provided the board with an update on April equalization meetings. Two appeals were presented at meetings and are expected at the June equalization meeting.

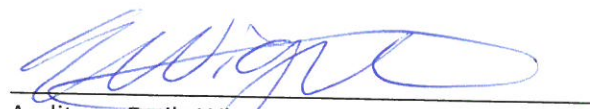
The Steele County Water Resource District quarterly update was reviewed by the board. The Commission requested oaths and appointment dates for the Steele County Water Board.

Steele County JDA was discussed. Ben Gullicks has agreed fill Mike Satrom's term on the board. The JDA's next meeting is scheduled for May 15th. The Commission requested Auditor Wigen to draft a letter to the JDA board, asking for an update regarding the coordinator position and also advising them that Gullicks will replace Satrom on the board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Strand to allow Chairman Johnson to review and approve the April bills. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned.


Chairman – Ted Johnson


Auditor – Emily Wigen