

November 5th, 2019
Finley, ND

The Steele County Commissioner meeting was called to order at 8:09 am. Present were Chairman Randy Richards, Commissioners Brian Tuite, Russell Walcker, Richard Strand and Ted Johnson.

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

Auditor, Emily Wigen, introduced the new Public Health Nurse, Courtney Tangen, and the new Deputy Auditor, Carly Idso, to the board.

Auditor Wigen presented an update on the county website. The JDA coordinator has been very busy and needs to get info put together for the website still. Wigen also reviewed upcoming dates of note for the board and provided an update on the servers and electrical updates needed.

Emergency Manager Ben Gates and States Attorney Charlie Stock joined the meeting.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Emergency Declaration. Verbal approval was given by all commissioners, and Chairman Richards signed the declaration for official approval at the next regular commissioner meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to backdate and sign the Emergency Declaration for October 22nd, 2019. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Emergency Manager, Ben Gates, provided the Steele/Trail Joint Powers Agreement for review and discussion. There was a question regarding if the expense of travel and mileage will be paid by Traill County. Gates will contact them to review and add that to the agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the Joint Powers Agreement between Steele and Traill with the addition of travel time/mileage pay added. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gates brought forward the topic of switching offices with Stock. Gates stated there would be no cost, as he and Don will do all the work needed with the phone lines.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to approve the switching of offices. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gates provided an update on the Farm Exemption program and worksheet details. The Commission advised Gates to place an ad in the Steele County Press of the information so the farmers were aware of the requirements in advance. Gates will also present the information at the upcoming township officer's meeting.

Mike Bassingthwaite joined the meeting and provided an update on the Seal Coat project stating that it will not get completed until next year. Bassingthwaite suggested withholding 1% retainage until the project is complete and hold \$650 in liquidated damage to pay the additional cost of striping for their late work.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to withhold 3% of the retainage and assess liquidated damages of \$650. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to pay \$62,312.97 to Astech for pay estimate number 2. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve pay estimate number 5 to Central Specialties for \$65,325.53, reducing the retainage from 5% to 2%. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

There was a brief discussion regarding the highway right of way being turned back to landowners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve decreasing the right of way from 150 feet to 75 feet. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Bassingthwaite discussed the Safety Signing project. He will notify NDDOT to get the final acceptance date and finalize this project.

The County Road 5 bridge west of the golf was discussed. The project would include one mile of reconstruction involving a lot of utilities and wetlands. This project will require time and coordination to potentially use the Prairie Dog Bill funding. Bassingthwaite estimated this to cost \$750,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve and sign the project contract with Interstate Engineering for County Road 5 bridge at an hourly rate, with costs not to exceed \$65,000 total. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Road Superintendent Reed Oien provided a department update.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to tentatively contract with John Deere for the 2020-2021 tractor lease. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to reimburse Nerby for monthly cell phone usage for county business at a rate of \$45 per month. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

The Federal-Aid program sheet was reviewed and discussed. The board discussed adding two potential bridges. Gates and Oien will finalize the details and return the sheet to NDDOT.

Extension agent, Angie Johnson, provided the board with a department update including a 3rd quarter review of extension programs and meetings help. Johnson provided an estimated crop loss due to the October storm and discussed it with the board. Recently an interview was held for the one applicant for the open Family and Community Wellness position. NDSU will follow up with the applicant and decide if they are a good fit for the position. Township officers meeting will be on December 18th, 2019 at 8:00 am in Finley. The office assistant is currently being advertised as well with no applicants at this time.

10:24 am recessed for Steele County Weed board meeting.

10:42 am reconvened the Steele County Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the transfer of Hwy distribution fund to the Road and Bridge fund. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the transfer from the County Park Fund to the General Fund. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Auditor Wigen provided a quote for repair and replacement of parts for the elevator at an estimate of \$19,176.77. The estimate was tabled until December giving Don Huso time to review the quote and get in contact with the company that maintains the elevator.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to dissolve and distribute the funds of the East Central County Commissioners fund. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A discussion was held regarding the water in the courthouse basement. The Commissioners would like the Road department to install a new sump pump hole in the southeast corner of the room.

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

The board discussed Human Resources issues at length. Auditor Wigen will provide monthly updates and the board will be more involved with staff and any issues that arise.

Amy Czapiewski joined the meeting to discuss the Tax Director position. The board discussed taking over current Tax Directors' salary for position to do duties during normal business hours. She will take over the position on January 1st, 2020. It was also discussed that she will be reimbursed for continuing education credits needed before the start of the position in the New Year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Tuite to hire Amy Czapiewski as Tax Director beginning January 1st, 2020. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Walcker to adjourn the meeting at 12:59 pm. Meeting adjourned.



Chairman – Randy Richards



Auditor – Emily Wigen