

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Finley, ND

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:00am. Present were Chairman Richard C. Strand, Commissioners Russell Walcker, Ted Johnson, and Brian Tuite. Present via phone was Commissioner Brandon Krueger.

Agenda Additions: Lease lot payments, delinquent taxes, trash pickup date at Golden lake, Fire Declaration

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

IT Director, Travis Palm, met with the board to discuss budgeting for the courthouse rewiring project.

Auditor, Emily Wigen, the 2020 audit discussed with the board.

Auditor Wigen also advised the board that Juneteenth was approved as a State holiday. Per the Steele County Policy Manual, the county recognizes all state holidays and will be added to the policy manual.

The courthouse elevator repair was discussed and reviewed. The estimate for the repair of the broken door operator is \$20,000. The elevator is no longer supported and in need of an update.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the courthouse elevator updates at estimated \$65,000. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

The county cell phone policy was discussed. The departments should budget for any expenses pertaining to their cell phone replacements or needs. Each situation will be approved on an individual basis on replacement costs.

Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 and Emergency Fund usage related to that declaration was briefly discussed before being tabled until Emergency Manager Gates was present.

Public Health Nurse, Kathryn Good, provided the board with a department update including the status of vaccines. There is no interest in county residents receiving the vaccine currently. Good presented a recap of funding for 2020 in Public Health.

Sheriff, Wayne Beckman, provided an office update in which he has seen an increase in mental health cases, burglary, and an increase of drug cases.

Clerk of Court, Jenny Foss, met with the board to provide a department update. Foss also discussed maternity leave in June. She discussed the request to work entirely from home during her leave. Foss will work with IT to get set up properly. Notice will also be provided to the public for days the office will be available. Deputy Clerk of Court, Aurora Moore, will be in the Clerk of Court office on Wednesdays and Fridays each week.

A motion by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to recess 9:07 am. The meeting was called to order again at 9:13 am.

Extension Agent, Angie Johnson, provided a quarterly department update for the office. Johnson also presented hiring her office staff at \$17 with 22 hours per week. The board advised her to advertise with a range of hours and wages determined upon hiring.

Road Superintendent Reed Oien, Emergency Manager Ben Gates and Engineer Mike Bassingthwaite joined the meeting. Oien presented the board with a breakdown of gravel bid roads and costs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to award gravel bids to KRB for County Roads 10, 9 and 1, and Lakeside Construction for County Roads 12, 16 and 20. Roll call vote: Johnson – yes, Tuite – yes, Walcker – yes, Krueger – yes. Chairman Strand abstained. Motion carried.

Oien requested the Commission approve summer hours for the Road Department to leave at noon on Fridays.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to allow the Road Department to be off at noon on Friday from Memorial Day to Labor Day. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Mike Bassingthwaite, with Interstate Engineering, met with the board to discuss the Federal Aid program sheet. Steele County currently has bridges scheduled for 2022 projects. County Road 11 overlay and County Road 5 funding from FEMA were discussed. This project is scheduled to be 75% funding cost share in 2022 if funding is approved.

County Road 11 overlay project is estimated to cost approximately 1.5 million. This does not include the cost of culverts. Discussion was held regarding potentially borrowing ahead on Federal Aid funding.

Gates presented the board with the cost of new radios that qualify under a new state grant. This would cover radios for the local fire departments. The county will need to front the bill for these purchases and be reimbursed by the local fire departments in the amount of \$51,460.20.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve funding the radios for reimbursement of the grant and fire departments. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Gates presented a grant for the generator to be funded 85/15 split in a reimbursement grant in the amount of \$66,565.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to approve applying for the grant on the generator. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

The COVID-19 Emergency Declaration and spending from the Emergency Fund for COVID expenses was discussed while Gates was still present. Any spending from the Emergency Fund will need Chairman approval prior.

Gates wanted to rediscuss the information pertaining to the Fire Burn Ban Declaration. Gates wanted to know what the Commission would like to do. The fire departments are open to the advice of Gates.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to rescind the current burn ban declaration, and declare a new fire emergency and burn ban declaration tying everything to Fire Index when we are in very high, extreme, and red flag warnings to include all fires.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to take 5-minute recess at 10:45 am. The commission meeting was called back to order at 10:51 am.

Tax Director, Amy Czapiewski, met with the board to present information regarding valuations after the township and city equalization meetings.

Czapiewski also provided the Commission with the yearly Title VI training that is required.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to sign the Title VI nondiscrimination statement. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the upgraded time system. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Golden Lake lease lot payments and delinquent taxes were reviewed and discussed. Certified letters were sent out by the Auditor.

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

County CD's and interest rates were reviewed by the board. The Commission would like Treasurer Dekker to check interest rates on three and five year CD's.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 am. All members voted yes. Motion carried.



Chairman – Richard C. Strand



Auditor – Emily Wigen