

August 3rd, 2021
Finley, ND

The Steele County Commission meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. Present were Chairman Richard C. Strand, Commissioners Ted Johnson, Brandon Krueger, Brian Tuite, and Russell Walcker. Also present was Travis Palm and Tyler Flaten.

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

Travis Palm met with the Commission to review a quote to update the courthouse phone system and courthouse wiring. The phone project is estimated at approximately \$30,000. The project would require the network wiring project to be completed first. The network project was discussed at previous meetings and is estimated at \$120,000.

Tyler Flaten of North Star Electric joined the discussion for the lights and the flickering issue. Flaten believes a new circuit would need to be added to resolve the problem.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to move forward with the estimate of \$800 from North Star Electric to resolve the lighting issue. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A list of Tax Foreclosure properties was provided to the commission to review. The properties were published in the press per ND Century Code guidelines.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to support the nomination of Aurora Moore for the NDACo Excellence in County Government Award. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Auditor Wigen provided a brief overview of the 2020 Census and redistricting process coming up. An update for the Auditors Office and a recent public request were discussed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to follow Attorney General guidelines regarding charges for open records requests. All members voted yes. Motion carried

Auditor Wigen provided the board with a summary from the county auction that was held. Total of \$4,600 was profited from the sale of items.

A motion was made by Commission Krueger, seconded by Commission Johnson to move the regular Commissioner meeting in October to the 12th to accommodate the yearly NDACo conference. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the building permit for Thompson. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the building permit for Palmer. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Tax Director, Amy Czapiewski, provided a department update regarding state equalization and the assessing of properties within the county. Discussion regarding the county GIS system was held and after discussion with Gates, Czapiewski will be taking over the software from Gates.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to move the CD at Citizens State Bank to a three-year CD. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to take a 5-minute recess at 9:03 am. The meeting was called back to order 9:08 am.

Beth Morrow, Child Welfare Supervisor, and Jackie Kraaling with Foster Care and in home services, met with the board to provide a review of the safety framework model for child welfare. AVHSZ Director Kim Jacobson was recently asked to serve as co-interim director for Cass County, in addition to her duties with AVHSZ, for a period of three to four months.

Angie Johnson and Amber Stockeland joined to provide a department update for the board.

Mike Bassingthwaite with Interstate Engineering and Road Superintendent Reed Oien joined the meeting. A review and discussion regarding a quote from Bituminous Paving in the amount of \$4,508.00 for paving by the City of Hope was held.

A motion was made by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to approve the quote from Bituminous Paving in the amount of \$4,508.00. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Bids were solicited for the County Road 11 culverts project. Bids were only received from Lakeside Construction and KRB Gravel. Several options regarding this culvert project were discussed in order to make the most cost-effective decision.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the lowest bid from Lakeside Construction in the amount of \$70,000 for work on three large culverts, without asphalt. Roll call vote. Johnson – yes, Krueger – yes, Tuite – yes, Walcker – yes, Strand – abstained. Motion carried.

Bassingthwaite presented figures to proceed with the two bridge projects on the DOT schedule. A quote of \$2,500 for culture and resources per bridge, and a quote for field wetland delineation for the two projects estimated at \$5,000 and \$7,700. Bassingthwaite expects to be able to get that down closer to \$10,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Tuite to accept both quotes presented for both bridges to proceed. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Oien provided an update which included graveling on County Road 11 that is currently being finished up. A brief discussion, regarding a question brought forth by a citizen, was held on crack sealing on County Road 5.

Kathryn Good, Public Health Nurse, provided a department review. New wifi data loggers were discussed for the vaccine freezer and coolers due to lost vaccine recently. The cost was \$250 each and \$50 per year for cloud data. These costs will be covered under the Covid grant. She also provided an

update regarding COVID-19 and recommended masks for unvaccinated citizens coming into the courthouse. Upcoming vaccine clinics are scheduled in the evenings.

Emergency Manager, Ben Gates, met with the Commissioner and requested the board commit to 25% of the PSAP SORN upgrade with Traill County. This is estimated to cost a total of \$420,788. Payments will be made at a time that is agreeable to both Counties. Final payment will be due in 2023, which Steele County will be responsible for 25% of the total paid by cost.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to sign the letter committing Steele County to pay 25% to Traill County for the cost of the PSAP SORN project. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Basement security was discussed, and Gates provided an update regarding ideas how to seal off the IT room. Chairman Strand would like it sealed off as originally discussed with brick put back into there. A concern is to ensure fire extinguishers were in place in the basement electrical and IT area.

Gates presented a generator quote from Hope Electric. North Star Electric came in at lowest bid in the amount of \$83,234.32.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuite, seconded by Commissioner Walcker to accept the bid from North Star Electric for the generator project in the amount of \$83,234.32. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Steele County night out event was presented to the commission which included a request that the board approve the courthouse closing at 1:00 pm to allow employees to assist with the set up for the event.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to allow employees who are able to help set up for event during work hours. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to take a 5-minute recess at 11:18 am. The meeting reconvened at 11:23 am.

Requested changes to the current Steele County Policy Manual discussion was held by the board. States Attorney Stock offered an opinion that PTO and dress code policy changes be removed from consideration as they are not feasible. County vehicles and security protocols were reviewed. The accrual rate of vacation leave was discussed. Discussion continued with the request by exempt employees to not use the time clock system, work the 8 am – 4:30 pm schedule guidelines and maintain a 37.5 per week minimum. States Attorney Stock will provide a draft policy to the commission by August 23rd per their request.

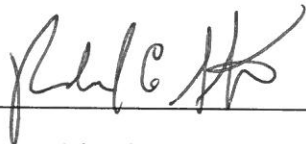
Auditor Wigen presented the preliminary levy calculations based off the July budget figures. Also presented to the board were levy histories, comparable counties, and maximum levy information. Salary increase calculations were provided with figures for 2% - 4%.

Gates joined the meeting to review his department budget requests with the board. Gates requested raises in both his DES and 911 wages and provided his reasoning for the request. Czapiewski also met with the board to discuss her department budget with transitioning to Tax Director four or more days a week.

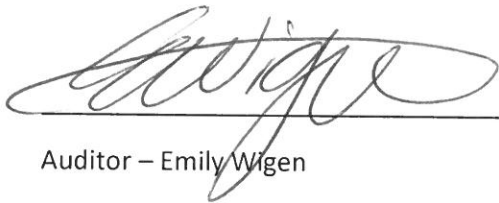
After lengthy discussions over the 2022 budgets, the board agreed to hold another meeting on Monday August 9th at 1:00pm.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Walcker, seconded by Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 pm. All members voted yes. Meeting was adjourned.



Chairman – Richard C. Strand



Auditor – Emily Wigen