

McLean County Commission Proceedings

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

The first regular March meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by Chairperson Steve Lee. Present were Commissioners Lee, Steve Cottingham, and Curtis Olson. Also present were Auditor Beth A. Knutson; Chief Deputy Auditor Lori A. Foss; Road Superintendent Jim Grey; and Disaster Emergency Services (DES) Director Noelle Kroll.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Cottingham, to approve the minutes of the meetings held on February 11, 19, and 25, 2025, as submitted. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Kroll requested burn restrictions be placed effective immediately for 2025.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to approve the 2025 Fire Emergency Burn Restrictions as follows:

**2025 Fire Emergency Burn Restrictions  
For  
McLean County, North Dakota  
March 11, 2025**

**Whereas**, McLean County, North Dakota has and is expected to continue to endure periods of dry conditions with significant vegetative fuels available; and

**Whereas**, all available resources remain committed to protecting life and property; and

**Whereas**, McLean County, has either sustained or been threatened with rural fires in the past and McLean County Emergency Management Office has consulted with local fire departments; and

**Whereas**, the impacts of fires could threaten the health, well-being, and safety of the citizens in McLean County; and

**Whereas**, the cost of emergency response, inordinate equipment wear/tear and the fire damages could exceed available McLean County resources; and

**Whereas**, McLean County, wishes to regulate activities within McLean County, which pose a potential hazard for such loss, should the present weather conditions continue.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Board of McLean County Commissioners declares a Fire Emergency and Automatic Burn Restriction effective when the North Dakota Rangeland Fire Danger Rating is Very High, Extreme and/or a Red Flag Warning has been issued for McLean County, North Dakota, effective immediately through December 31, 2025.

**What's Included (when the ND Rangeland Fire Danger Rating is Very High, Extreme and/or a Red Flag Warning)**

No Open Burning: includes burning of leaves, grass clippings, garbage/pits, ignition of farm or crop residue/land, hay land, sloughs, construction debris, fallen trees, fireworks (ground & aerial), and campfires/bonfires/recreational fires.

**What's Excluded**

Controlled Devices: only when device(s) (gas, charcoal, wood-fired/pellet grills, patio fireplaces and chimineas, gas camp stoves, and smokers/pellet grills) is/are on a hard, non-organic surface and 15' away from vegetation and an extinguisher or water is available on site.

**Any Individual Who Willfully Violates This Burn Restriction Is Guilty Of A Class B Misdemeanor (NDCC 37-17.1-10.1; Maximum Sentence Of 30 Days In Jail And A \$1,500.00 Fine), And Restitution Of Fire Suppression Costs May Be Sought From The Court. The Mclean County Sheriff's Department Is Authorized To Issue Citations To Violators.**

Burning is prohibited if the Fire Index is in Extreme Category as Issued by NWS (ND Administrative Code – Title 33.1 Article 15 Chapter 4).

The North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Guide is posted on the McLean County website: [www.mcleancountynd.gov](http://www.mcleancountynd.gov) or residents can contact the McLean County Sheriff's Office at 701-462-8103.

**Dated** at Washburn, North Dakota this **11<sup>th</sup>** day of **March, 2025**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Lee, Chairman  
McLean County Commission

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Knutson  
McLean County Auditor

Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Kroll went on to discuss additional grant funding available through the 2022 Homeland Security funds. She has applied for additional funding in the amount of \$17,671 to procure additional AEDs and related supplies. Since there is a short window of acceptance, she is requesting authorization to accept the grant when and if it is awarded.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to authorize the DES Director to accept the grant if awarded. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Grey presented spring road load restrictions that went into effect last week for official board approval.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Cottingham, to retroactively approve the following resolution implementing road load restrictions effective at 7:00 a.m. on March 4, 2025:

**Resolution**

**Whereas**, NDCC '39-12-03 provides that whenever any highway will be seriously damaged or destroyed by reason of deterioration, rain, snow, or other climatic condition unless the weight of vehicles, trucks, or other commercial vehicles thereon is limited, local authorities may by resolution impose restrictions as to the weight of the vehicles and the same shall be noticed by erection of signs designating the provisions of the resolution at each end of the portion of the highway effected thereby; and

**Whereas**, the Board of McLean County Commissioners has determined that highways which are under its jurisdiction may be seriously damaged by reason of deterioration, rain, snow or other climatic conditions unless the weight of vehicles, trucks, or other commercial vehicles thereon is limited;

**Therefore, It Is Hereby Resolved;** that 6 ton per axle not to exceed 65,000 pounds road restrictions are imposed on all McLean County asphalt roads except McLean County 18/3<sup>rd</sup> St SW to the Rainbow Energy Center;

that 6 ton per axle not to exceed 65,000 pounds road restrictions are imposed on all other McLean County roads except McLean County 16/39 ½ Ave NW extending 7 miles south of Riverdale to the Fisher Industries (Sand and Gravel) Plant.

**It Is Hereby Ordered** that the McLean County Highway Superintendent shall cause notice of such restrictions to be posted at each end of the portion of the highway effected thereby. Road restrictions imposed shall begin within 24 hours after said signs have been erected.

**Dated:** This 4<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025.

**McLean County Board Of Commissioners**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Lee, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Cottingham

\_\_\_\_\_  
Curt Olson

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth A. Knutson, Auditor

**It Is Hereby Resolved** that the above-stated road restrictions are hereby removed.

Dated: This \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**McLean COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Lee – Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Cottingham

\_\_\_\_\_  
Curt Olson

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth A. Knutson, Auditor

Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Grey went on to request authority to institute future load restrictions due to early spring thaws at his discretion prior to official commission approval. Knutson suggested the board annually grant such authority at the first meeting in February to account for early thaws in future years. The board and Grey agreed with Knutson that would be the appropriate way to move forward.

He went on to report that blading should be starting soon while crack sealing is ongoing. The department is hosting a Work Zone Safety training for department staff and neighboring counties' personnel which is happening today at the Washburn Shop. He informed the board that up to three department personnel, including himself and Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke, will be attending the annual Titan Machinery event held at Tomahawk, WI at the end of the month.

On behalf of Chief Deputy Sheriff Richard Johnson, Knutson requested authorization to purchase pads and batteries for AED units that were donated to the Sheriff's Department by the State Health Department five years ago. The total purchase price for the pads and batteries is \$4,416.00 to be funded by the department's Capital Outlay budget.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to authorize the purchase as presented. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Knutson presented and discussed the new monthly State Aid Distribution calculation which now includes the new ambulance districts. She presented data showing effects based on the previous calc versus the new one.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to approve the McLean County Auditor's Sweep Account Transfer of Funds Resolution from February. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

McLean County Sweep Account Transfer of Funds Resolutions are on file in the McLean County Auditor's Office

Knutson presented the Pledge of Securities received from TruCommunity Bank for the period ending February 28, 2025. The total public deposits were \$26,687,782.55 and the total pledged securities were \$27,006,906.78 with an overage of \$319,124.23.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Cottingham, to accept the Pledge of Securities as presented. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Knutson presented the Flexible Transportation Program Funding Reimbursement Request for signing by Lee requesting the fourth distribution for Bridge Project FXS-2841(053) in the amount of \$12,290.00.

Knutson presented two Gaming Site Authorization applications submitted by Turtle Lake American Legion Post #133 for bingo, raffles, pull tab dispensing devices, sports pools, twenty-one, poker, and electronic pull tab devices at Gramma Jo's Shoreside of Mercer. The first application runs from May 19, 2025 through June 30, 2025, and the second runs from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Cottingham, to approve both Gaming Site Authorization application as submitted by Turtle Lake American Legion Post #133. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Tax Director Todd Schreiner joined the meeting.

Received and ordered filed the fee collection report from the Recorder's Department for the month of February in the amount of \$1,959.00.

Received and ordered filed the fee collection report from the Sheriff's Department for the month of February in the amount of \$2,074.90.

Jody Reinisch and Carey Larson representing the Ryder-Makoti Fire District joined the meeting.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to approve the following vouchers for payment:

A detailed list of checks is available for public inspection anytime during regular business hours in the McLean County Auditor's Office.

Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Schreiner presented abatements filed by Michael Thyberg on property described as SE¼ of Section 32, Township 145 North, Range 83 West, containing 158.37 acres including 49.4 industrial acres mined by Falkirk Mining Company and Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Section 1, Township 144 North, Range 84 West, containing 185.5 acres including 108.2 industrial acres mined by Falkirk Mining Company. Schreiner stated that the land has not been reclaimed at this time and Lee questioned what the value of the land will be after reclamation to which Schreiner answered that has not been established at this time and would require a soil survey for it to be credible.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Olson, to deny the abatement and accept the taxes paid under protest by Thyberg. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Daryl Simmons, Graling Steinwand, and Paul Schlichting representing the Garrison Fire District joined the meeting.

Chairperson Lee recessed the meeting at 9:19 a.m.

Chairperson Lee reconvened the meeting at 9:22. a.m.

Reinisch and Larson discussed the concerns of the Ryder-Makoti Fire District with regard to current established boundaries that may be affected by the establishment of the White Shield Fire District. Schlichting went on to discuss the same concerns on behalf of the Garrison Fire District. Both are in favor of the White Shield Fire District being established for their local area though they have concerns with the loss of tax revenue base for current districts and also a possible lack of coverage due to lack of proven manpower in the new district. Lee questioned Knutson as to the status is of the establishment of the White Shield Fire District at this time to which she stated she has not received any further communication since the last discussion with this board. Knutson stated that an election will need to take place and public hearings will be held. The commission will have final say on boundaries of the new district

based on public input. If boundary lines are adjusted at that time any petitions would have to be again reviewed to ensure they still meet established guidelines. Mutual aid agreements were also discussed in relation to the current districts and how they are intended to be utilized on an exception basis only.

Knutson presented a voucher for the final payment to Starion Bond Services for the Lakeview Estates Assessment Bond in the amount of \$45,817.50.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Cottingham, to approve payment to Starion Bond Services. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Olson, and Lee. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Knutson notified the board of the meeting of Fire Chiefs with DES Director Noelle Kroll to be held in the McLean County Commission Room tomorrow night, Wednesday, March 12, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m. The commission minutes and agenda can be found on the county website at <https://www.mcleancountynd.gov>.

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Steve Lee, Chairperson

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Lori A Foss, Chief Deputy Auditor