

McLean County Commission Proceedings
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

The second regular March meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chairperson Steve Cottingham. Present were Commissioners Cottingham, Steve Lee, and Barry Suydam. Also present were Auditor Beth A. Knutson; Deputy Auditor Diane L. Blumhagen; Road Superintendent James Grey; and Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to approve the minutes of the previous regular meeting held on March 5, 2024, as submitted. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Grey presented the updated Road Policy to the commission. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to accept the changes made to the Road Policy. Discussion followed which resulted in Lee withdrawing his motion due to previous agreements with grandfathered sections. Lee requested Grey consult with State's Attorney Ladd Erickson.

Grey presented an update on department operations reporting that a section of County Road 27 is being eroded by water. Discussion followed.

Michael Thyberg of Washburn joined the meeting.

Grey reported that Matthew Richard has been hired as Equipment Operator II for the Washburn area.

Knutson discussed using interest earned from Certificates of Deposits as previously discussed at the March 5, 2024 meeting. Discussion followed with Lee stating to leave it to the discretion of Knutson.

Knutson received communication from a Vision West representative requesting to host a meeting in McLean County on November 20, 2025. Discussion followed.

Chief Deputy Auditor Lori A. Foss joined the meeting to present changes to the Deputy Auditor-Tax and Risk Management job description.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to approve the changes to the Deputy Auditor-Tax and Risk Management job description. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Tax Equalization Director Todd Schreiner and Assistant Director of Tax Equalization Elizabeth Patterson joined the meeting.

Chairperson Cottingham recessed the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

Chairperson Cottingham reconvened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and opened an abatement hearing for a request submitted by Michael Thyberg for land described as Lots 1-2-3-4 in Section 1, Township 144, Range 84, which includes 34.70 Industrial Acres. The request was to lower the value of the acreage from \$168,300.00 to \$140,540.00. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to reject the abatement request and leave the assessed value at \$168,300.00. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairperson Cottingham proceeded with the second abatement application request submitted by Michael Thyberg for land located in SE¼ of Section 32, Township 145, Range 83. The request was to lower the assessed land value from \$133,500.00 to \$131,800.00. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to reject the abatement request and leave the assessed value at \$133,500.00. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairperson Cottingham concluded the abatement hearing at 9:45 a.m. and recessed the meeting.

Chairperson Cottingham reconvened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Paul Hardy, Chief Deputy Auditor Lori A. Foss, Road Superintendent James Grey, Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke, and State's Attorney Ladd Erickson joined the meeting.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to enter into Executive Session for an employee grievance hearing. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to leave Executive Session. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairperson Cottingham reconvened the commission meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to decline the appeal on the termination of Paul Hardy. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, 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: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Rainbow Energy Center Representative Lindsey Rimmick joined the meeting.

Erickson presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Rainbow Energy Center (REC) and McLean County. Discussion followed.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, to adopt the MOU between REC and McLean County. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to set the hearing for Apex Clean Energy's application seeking approval of their Discovery Wind project for 7:00 p.m. on April 9, 2024, at a Special Meeting of the McLean County Commission to be held in the McLean County Courtroom. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m. The commission minutes and agenda can be found on the county website at <https://www.mcleancountynd.gov>.

Steve Cottingham, Chairperson

Diane L. Blumhagen, Deputy Auditor