

McLean County Commission Proceedings

Thursday, July 6, 2023

The first regular July 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; Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke; and Chief Deputy Auditor Lori A. Foss.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on June 20, 2023, as submitted. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Building Maintenance Supervisor Curt Malo joined the meeting.

Grey presented an update on department operations reporting that ditch mowing will start in August. An ad will be placed in local publications the middle of July notifying interested individuals of the county's mowing start date.

Grey presented the following boring permits requested by Falkirk Mining Company requesting to bore two under County Road 17 in NW¼ of Section 32, Township 145 North, Range 83 West, placing 10-inch pipe to convey water from mining pits; and one in NW¼ of Section 32, Township 145 North, Range 83 West, to SW¼ of Section 29, Township 145 North, Range 83 West, by placing a 10-inch pipe to convey water from mining pits.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, to approve all three boring permits requested by Falkirk Mining Company as presented. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Cottingham opened discussion regarding proposed increase for the following Highway Department positions: Equipment Operators, Shop Foreman Troy Kittler; Road Superintendent James Grey, and Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke. Cottingham asked Foss if there is anything the increases are based on and Foss responded that it is a four-step increase based on the salary survey. Discussion followed which included the starting wage would increase by four-steps as well. Foss stated that a four-step annual adjustment for Kittler would go from \$56,945.00 to \$63,402.56; Verke four-step annual adjustment would go from \$63,053.00 to \$70,990.40; and Grey four-step annual adjustment would go from \$88,113.00 to \$98,945.60. Discussion followed.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, to approve a four-step increase in current salaries for the all Equipment Operators, Grey, Kittler, Verke, and equivalent adjustments to starting salaries. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to advertise for one or more Equipment Operator II positions for the Garrison area and one Equipment Operator III with possible underfill of Equipment Operator II for the Butte area with increased starting wage. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, to allow the Highway Department employees to reside within 60 minutes travel time of the county shop they are assigned to. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Foss presented a quote from NRG Technology Services to purchase an upgraded backup device which included a 6-terabyte (TB) version and a 4-TB version. Foss proposed purchasing the 4-TB backup device for the amount of \$2,199.00 with a monthly cost increase to \$184.29. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to accept the quote for the 4-TB backup device and monthly increase as presented. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

NDSU Extension Agents Sarah Bedgar and Kamile Moderegger joined the meeting.

Malo informed the commission that the retaining wall project is almost completed. He stated that when the contractors were taking out the old retaining wall, they encountered an existing cement box that housed propane underground and needed extra fill dirt. Malo also stated that the flag pole in front of the courthouse was leaning and requested approval to have A & C Land Development Inc. repair the concrete and remount the flag pole for the amount of \$2,500.00.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to approve the repair in the amount of \$2,500.00. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Malo discussed the agreement with ABC Seamless Siding (ABC), stating that a \$7,000.00 down payment was received by ABC in June 2022 and they still have not been here to replace the damaged gutters. Knutson requested the phone number for ABC and will be contacting them.

Malo presented a bid from C & H Glass, of Bismarck, for the amount of \$11,500.00 to replace some of the courthouse windows with aluminum framed fixed windows. Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to accept the bid of \$11,500.00. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Clerk of Court Bonnie Bohnsack and Deputy Clerk of Court Jenna Corrigan joined the meeting.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to authorize North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) to complete a salary survey for the county not exceeding \$500.00. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Received and ordered filed the fee collection report from the Recorder's Department for the month of June in the amount of \$13,192.40.

Received and ordered filed the fee collection report from the Sheriff's Department for the month of June in the amount of \$1,624.52.

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.

Bohnsack introduced new Deputy Clerk of Court Jenna Corrigan.

Bohnsack presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Clerk of District Court, with the only change being the Salaries line item has been left blank. Total budget presented, not including Salaries, \$33,500.00.

Bohnsack presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Juvenile Court, with no changes. Total budget presented, not including Salaries, \$2,000.

Moderegger presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Extension Agent, Salary Agent line item increased from \$54,517.00 to \$55,756.00; Travel line item increased from \$7,000.00 to \$8,000.00; Cell Phone line item increased from \$1,080.00 to \$1,090.00; Training/Conventions line item increased from \$800.00 to \$1,000.00; Office Supplies line item increased from \$900.00 to \$1,100.00; Fair Supplies line item increased from \$800.00 to \$1,100.00; Printed Publications line item increased from \$500.00 to \$700.00; and Capital Outlay increased from \$1,500.00 to \$2,500.00. Total budget presented, \$128,726.00.

Bedgar updated the commission on current NDSU Extension operations.

Sheriff JR Kerzmann and Chief Deputy Sheriff Richard Johnson joined the meeting.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Unorganized Township Road, with no changes. Total budget presented, \$500,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Weed Control Board, Health Insurance line item decreased from \$25,000.00 to \$24,511.00. Total budget presented, \$257,965.00.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for McLean County Coroner, Autopsies line item increased from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00; and Transport Expense line item increased from \$18,000.00 to \$24,000.00. Total budget presented, \$36,000.00. Knutson received a request from States Attorney Ladd Erickson to increase the monthly county coroner fee from \$750.00 a month to \$1,000.00 a month.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Emergency, Emergency Reserve line item increases from \$40,000.00 to \$80,000.00. Total budget presented, \$80,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for Utilities, Electricity – Non-Sheriff line item decreased from \$70,000.00 to \$65,000.00; Gas – Non-Sheriff line item increased from \$14,000.00 to \$18,000.00; Telephone – Non-Sheriff line item increased from \$30,000.00 to \$33,000.00; Electric – Sheriff line item increased from \$36,000.00 to \$40,000.00; Gas – Sheriff line item decreased from \$9,000.00 to \$6,500.00; and Water, Sewer, Sanitation – Sheriff line item decreased from \$10,000.00 to \$7,000.00. Total budget presented, \$178,500.00.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2024 for County Commission, Salaries line item has been left blank; Travel line item decreased from \$4,500.00 to \$4,000.00; Training/Conventions line item decreased from \$1,200.00 to \$1,000.00. Total budget presented not including Salaries, \$5,000.00.

Knutson presented the Uncollected Tax List for years 2020-2022 showing a total of \$1,162,095.59.

Knutson presented the current list of delinquent tax payers owing more than \$4,000.00 showing 40 taxpayers owing \$424,548.22 in back taxes.

Knutson presented the budget narrative for period ending June 30, 2023. She presented data showing property tax collections are at 92% collected including 96% with discount for 2023 or \$18,768,080.24; government reimbursement revenues totaled \$1,444,899.46 compared to \$1,563,948.00 in 2022; fees and miscellaneous revenues totaled \$1,048,851.61 compared to \$797,393.75 in 2022; and expenditures were at 42.57% of total budget for 2023.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 10:25 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