

McLean County Commission Proceedings

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

The second regular July meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 8:30 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; Administrative Assistant Lynda Snyder; and Assistant Road Superintendent Travis Verke.

Moved by Suydam, seconded by Lee, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting for the Discovery Wind Hearing held on April 9, 2024, and the regular meeting held on June 18, 2024, as submitted. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Verke stated that graveling has been completed at Deep Water Bay. Graveling and approach work continues across the county. Cottingham asked about the schedule for planned gravel routes. Verke stated that it is constantly changing but is charted and an ongoing record is retained. Verke went over the department's upcoming projects. Discussion followed.

Verke discussed purchasing from Neumiller Auctioneers a 2008 Loadmax trailer in the amount of \$3,630.50. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to approve the trailer purchase in the amount of \$3,630.50. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Assistant Tax Director Elizabeth Patterson joined the meeting.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for 2025 for the Highway Department and discussed the budgeted salaries for all county departments. Three different scenarios were used when calculating the salaries, as done in the past, the highest one was used for the preliminary budget presented. This salary amount includes 5.2% step adjustments with a cost-of-living adjustment. Using this scenario, the calculation leads to a 7% increase of last year's salary with most employees getting a 6% overall increase.

Verke continued the discussion of the proposed budget for 2025 for Highway Equipment Expense, Equipment Rental line item increasing from \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00 and Capital Outlay decreasing to \$722,000 from \$975,000.00. Total budget presented, \$1,607,000.00. The proposed budget for 2025 for the Highway Administration, Salaries line item increasing from \$139,690.14 to \$147,631.24; Health Insurance line item increased from \$30,000.00 to \$33,500.00; Retirement line item increased from \$23,000.00 to \$24,100.00; Employer FICA line item increased from \$8,800.00 to \$10,000.00; Employer Medicare line item increased from \$2,100.00 to \$2,500.00 and Overtime line item increased from \$2,729.25 to \$11,810.50. Total budget presented, \$232,846.78. The proposed budget for 2025 for Highway Shop-Washburn/Garrison, with no changes. Total budget presented, \$25,000.00. The proposed 2025 budget for the Highway Maintenance Sheds, with no changes. Total budget presented, \$13,000.00. The proposed 2025 budget for the Highway Maintenance/Construction, Salaries line item increasing from \$1,245,797.36 to \$1,303,913.44; Health Insurance line item increasing from \$465,000.00 to \$511,000.00; Retirement line item increasing from \$205,000 to \$215,000.00; Employer FICA line item increasing from \$85,000.00 to \$87,500.00; Employer Medicare line item increasing from \$20,000.00 to \$20,500.00; Gravel/Sand line item increasing from \$500,000.00 to \$750,000.00; Culverts line item increasing from \$60,000.00 to \$75,000.00; Signs line item increasing from \$60,000.00 to \$75,000.00 and Overtime line item increasing from \$99,663.79 to \$104,313.08. Total budget presented, \$3,537,296.52. The proposed 2025 budget for Farm to Market Road showed Engineering line item increasing from \$200,000 to \$240,000.00 and Construction line item decreasing from \$700,076.07 to \$660,000.00. Total budget presented, \$900,000.00.

Cottingham asked for any questions regarding the budgets presented. Knutson stated the health insurance amounts budgeted for Highway Administration and Highway Maintenance/Construction were calculated using five months at the current rate and seven months with an estimated 20% increase due to the increase amount being unknown.

Knutson opened discussion on the Farm-to-Market levy which expires in the 2024 tax year but can still be levied for this year with the 2025 budget. Knutson recommended that we levy for this based on the legislation passed that requires 20% of the second 10 mills the county receives be distributed to the cities, approximately \$180,000.00. Discussion followed.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to continue to levying 10 mills for Farm-to-Market for the 2024 tax year. Discussion followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Suydam, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Patterson presented two applications from the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on July 15, 2024.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to concur with the Planning and Zoning Commission and approve the Conditional Use Permit submitted by Tyler J. and Tiffany M. Kinn, of Turtle Lake, ND, requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit involving land located in the E½SE¼ of Section 3, Malcolm Township, more specifically identified as Outlot A containing 4 acres. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Suydam, to concur with the Planning and Zoning Commission and approve the Conditional Use Permit submitted by Dan and Kim Lorenz, of Mayville, ND, on behalf of landowners David W. and Jodi L. Mautz requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit involving land located in a portion of the W½NE¼ of Section 15, Township 148 North, Range 84 West, contingent upon ownership and completion of land surveys. Discussion followed. Discussion Followed. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Suydam, Lee, and Cottingham. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Knutson discussed the county audit and informed the Commission that the state is enforcing a law in Century Code which makes it harder for counties to hire auditing firms other than the State Auditor's Office. This law makes it so the auditing firms are not able to prepare financial statements for counties and audit them. Eide Bailey has proposed a solution to this that complies with state law; however, the cost will be between \$125,000 to \$150,000 every two years. Discussion followed.

Knutson informed the commission that the Property Tax Measure will be on the November 2024 General Election ballot. Discussion followed.

Knutson discussed the Property Tax Relief Credit with the commission.

Sheriff J.R. Kerzmann and Chief Deputy Sheriff Richard Johnson joined the meeting to discuss the department's 2025 budget. Knutson stated that the salaries were budgeted in the same manner as other departments. Overtime for the Sheriff's Department was a flat amount of \$300,000.00. Discussion followed. Johnson reviewed Capital Outlay and the current leased vehicles and upcoming changes. Discussion followed.

Kerzmann and Johnson went on to present proposed 2025 budgets for Sheriff, Sheriff's Vehicles, and Vehicle Impound & Towing. In the Sheriff budget, Salaries line item increased from \$2,415,527.29 to \$2,652,272.90; Travel line item increased from \$8,000.00 to \$12,000.00; Prisoner Meals decreased from \$90,000.00 to \$75,000.00 and Data Access Charges line item increased from \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00. Total budget presented, \$3,575,772.90. Sheriff's Vehicles and Vehicles Impound and Towing showed no changes. Total budget presented for Sheriff's Vehicles, \$282,000.00. Total budget presented for Vehicle Impound & Towing, \$6,000.00.

Building and Maintenance Supervisor Curt Malo joined the meeting to discuss the proposed budget for 2025 for Building and Grounds and Motor Pool. Discussion followed. Malo stated he intended to retire in March 2025 and asked about hiring his replacement and including that in the budget for 2025. Discussion followed. Malo discussed concerns with the reliability of the motor pool vehicles. Discussion followed.

Malo presented the Building and Grounds budget, Salaries line item increased from \$170,406.32 to \$179,403.94 and Lights, Tools, Misc-LEC line items decreased from \$10,000.00 to \$5,000.00. A new line item Equipment Purchase was added for the \$40,000.00 proposed of a sweeper to attach to the skid steer for the parking lot and another vehicle. Co Extension Rental Agreement line item increased from \$13,632.51 from \$14,352.32. Total budget presented \$807,756.26. He then presented the Motor Pool budget, Gasoline line item increased from \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00; Tires line item increased from \$1,200.00 to \$1,500.00. Total budget presented, \$13,100.00.

NDSU Extension Agents Sarah Bedgar and Kamile Moderegger joined the meeting to discuss the 2025 preliminary budget for the Extension Agent. Salaries-Agent's line item increased from \$55,756.00 to \$58,992.00; Salaries-Administrative Asst. line item increased from \$59,775.71 to \$63,160.64; Fair Supplies line item increased from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00; Fair Supplies line item increased from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00; Printed Publications line item increased from \$700 to \$1,000.00; Education/Meeting Materials line item increased from \$1,400.00 to \$1,500.00 and Capital Outlay line item increased from \$2,500.00 to \$3,000.00. Total budget presented, \$142,442.64.

Bedgar and Moderegger discussed updates within their department.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for the County Commission. Salaries line item increased from \$69,607.16 to \$75,454.17. Total budget presented \$80,454.17.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for the Auditor. Salaries line item increased from \$261,386.52 to \$270,744.79; Miscellaneous line item from prior years was removed; and Tyler Technology's yearly contract was added in the amount of \$33,000.00. Total budget presented, \$309,744.79.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for the SSNTF. Salary line item increased from \$57,372.27 to \$61,127.66; Medical Insurance line item increased from \$24,510.24 to \$27,500.00; FICA line item increased from \$3,750.00 to \$4,000.00; Medicare line item increased from \$875.00 to \$900.00; Retirement line item increased from \$9,500.00 to \$10,000.00; Unemployment line item increased from \$300.00 to \$325.00; Supplies line item decreased from \$3,257.98 to \$1,500.00; and Equipment line item decreased from \$30,504.68 to \$8,000.00. Total budget presented \$127,256.42.

Knutson presented a new proposed 2025 budget item for Special Assessments; County Owned Property Specials line item was added in the amount of \$18,000.00. Total budget presented \$18,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Employee Benefits. Employee Drug/Alcohol Test increased from \$1,300.00 to \$1,500.00; Medical Insurance increased from \$1,300,000.0 to \$1,450,000.00; Life Insurance increased from \$250.00 to \$350.00; Employee FICA increased from \$275,000 to \$285,000.00; and Employee Medicare increased from \$62,500.00 to \$67,000.00. Total budget presented, \$2,520,950.00.

Knutson presented the proposed budget for Emergency Fund. Emergency Reserve line item increased from \$45,000.00 to \$40,000.00. Total budget presented \$40,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Election Expenses. Primary and General Election line items were decreased from \$50,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Total budget presented, \$10,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Utilities with only one decrease to the Telephone-Non-Sheriff line item from \$33,000.00 to \$30,000.00. Total budget presented, \$175,500.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Non-Departmental Expenses. Financial Audit line item increased from \$50,000.00 to \$150,000.00; Property Insurance line item increased from \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00; Presort Plus-Elections was decreased from \$5,000.00 to \$0.00; Presort Plus-Tax Notices was decreased from \$15,000.00 to \$10,000.00; Presort Plus-Misc was decreased from \$8,000.00 to \$1,000.00; Notary Expenses was increased from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00; Library Board Mileage line item was increased from \$0 to \$250.00. Total budget presented, \$627,750.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Dues/Membership. Oil & Gas Counties line item increased from \$2,500.00 to \$3,000.00; NACo line item decreased from \$500.00 to \$450.00; NDACo increased from \$12,050.00 to \$12,393.00; Lewis & Clark RDC increased from \$13,000.00 to \$13,327.00; County Agent line item increased from \$300.00 to \$400.00; Dakota Prairies RCD

decreased from \$100.00 to \$0.00; and Veteran's Service Officer line item increased from \$300.00 to \$390.00. Total budget presented, \$627,750.00

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Unorganized Township Road with no changes. Total budget presented, \$500,000.00.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for School Resource Officer. The Salary line item increased from \$59,760.90 to \$63,137.41; Medical Insurance line item increased from \$24,511.00 to \$27,500.00; FICA increased from \$3,750.00 to \$4,000.00; Medicare increased from \$875.00 to \$1,000.00; Retirement increased from \$9,750.00 to \$10,500.00; and Unemployment increased from \$300.00 to \$350.00. Total budget presented, \$106,490.77.

Knutson presented the Jobs Promotions, the Parole & Probation, and Coroner budgets with no changes proposed for 2025. Total budget presented for the coroner was \$36,000.00 and \$0.00 for both the Jobs Promotions and Parole & Probation Budgets.

Knutson presented the proposed 2025 budget for Senior Citizens with only one change to the Meals Program line item increasing from \$180,000.00 to \$182,000.00. Total budget presented \$217,600.00.

Knutson introduced Administrative Assistant/Receptionist Lynda Snyder to the Commission.

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.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m. The commission minutes and agenda can be found on the county website at <https://www.mcleancountynd.gov>.

Steve Cottingham, Chairperson

Diane Blumhagen, Deputy Auditor