Minutes of the Board of Ward County Commissioners

December 19, 2023

The regular meeting of the Ward County Commission was called to order by Chairman/Commissioner Fjeldahl at 9:01 AM with Commissioners Anderson, Olson, Rostad, and Weppler present. Also present were department heads Brian Vangsness, Dana Larsen, Jason Blowers, Emily Burkett, Kelly Haugan, Kerrianne Boetcher, Kristi Frederick, Kristin Kowalczyk, Lolly Gorze, Marisa Haman, Noreen Wilkie, Robert Roed and Roza Larson.

Moved by Comm. Rostad and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the agenda as presented along with moving 9D to 3.5, adding Law Enforcement Resiliency Grant Program as 5B, adding the 2024 Ward County Historical Society contract under 9C, adding Liquor Licenses for 28 Club LLC, Parkland USA Corporation DBA Superpumper, and Farmers Union Oil of Minot DBA Enerbase Cooperative Resources under 9F, adding Raffle Permit for 5 SFS Defenders Association under 9G and added item 10 as the Flex Funding Grant with Highway Engineer Dana Larsen presenting two resolutions for the Chairman to sign. Roll call; all voted yes, motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Olson to approve the minutes from the Special Commission Meeting on November 29, 2023 and November 30, 2023 for Department Head Evaluations and Regular Commission Meeting on December 5, 2023. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Anderson and seconded by Comm. Olson to approve regular bills totaling $684,381.51 and HS Zone direct cost bills totaling $39,267.02. Marisa Haman, Auditor/Treasurer pointed one item under the Highway Department for the Rydell Auto Center Inc. and was bid out last December in 2022 and approved for the 2023 budget. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Marisa Haman, Auditor/Treasurer spoke regarding the Grant Agreement between the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and its Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) (STATE), the North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo), Ward County, and Youthworks (GRANTEE). Lisa Jahner from NDACo also spoke via phone stating Ward County is the still the decision maker and their position remains the same as before.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Rostad to approve the Grant Agreement between the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and its Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) (STATE), the North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo), Ward County, and Youthworks (GRANTEE) as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

A Discussion among Commissioners was held regarding the Newman Township Section Line Obstruction. Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Rostad to table the Newman Township Section Line Obstruction. Roll call; 2 voted yes and 3 voted no; motion failed.

The following individuals came forward to speak regarding the Newman Township Section Line Obstruction: Brian Lee of 24201 97th St SE, Sawyer, ND 58781, Joel Newman (Chairman of Newman Township), Paige Zietz of 8623 247th Ave SE, Sawyer, ND 58781 (daughter of Robin and Paulette Zietz) and John W. Vincent, Sr. of 22801 97th St SE, Sawyer, ND 58781. Roza Larson stated pursuant the North Dakota Century Code, the fence cannot go down the section line and the Township has to write a letter to Robin and Paulette Zietz giving them notice to remove the fence and giving 30 days and the township cannot remain neutral. Ms. Zietz requested that if the fence needs to be removed that an extension be made since it is the middle of winter and wait until the spring.

Robert Roed, Sheriff presented a request to purchase a Hydraulic Lift for coroner use at the 900 13th St SE County Building.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Olson to approve the purchase of the Hydraulic Lift in the amount of $4,195.00 plus estimated shipping in the amount of $985.00 as presented and to use contingency funds or general miscellaneous funds. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Captain Jason Kraft of the Sheriff's Department presented the application for Law Enforcement Resiliency Grant Program request. Program started in 2020 and is used to provide peer support and counseling services for current or retired law enforcement and correctional personnel experiencing secondary stress, funded by the state and $100,000.00 is awarded to each agency.

Moved by Comm. Olson and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the Law Enforcement Resiliency Grant Program application request as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Noreen Wilkie, Director of Tax Equalization presented the Tax Roll Adjustments with a correction to item 5 as the property owner is the YMCA, not Ward County

Moved by Comm. Rostad and seconded by Comm. Weppler to approve the Tax Roll Adjustments as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Anthony Owens, Captain of the Jail presented the Contract for Boarding Renville County Inmates and the Joint Powers Agreement Contract for Stutsman County Residents (new juvenile contract).

Moved by Comm. Olson and seconded by Comm. Weppler to approve the Contract for Boarding Renville County Inmates and the Joint Powers Agreement Contract for Stutsman County Residents as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Lolly Gorze, Human Resource Director appeared with the following pay amendments: Kubas, T., Highway; Bachmeier, D., Highway; Schiele, S., State's Attorney; Connell, L., Jail; Morgan, L., Jail; Crowe, T., Jail; and Brunner, L., Library.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the Pay Amendments as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Marisa Haman, Auditor/Treasurer appeared.

Moved by Comm. Olson and seconded by Comm. Rostad to receive and file monthly reports including financials as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

A discussion was held regarding the Coroner Contract and proposed death investigator positions as the current contract expires on December 31, 2023. Ms. Haman will check with Trinity on getting an extension of the current contract into the first quarter of 2024 as they are not hiring death investigator position at this time.

Moved by Comm. Rostad and seconded by Comm. Olson to approve the 2024 Contracts as presented for Berthold Development Corporation, Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Inc. (amended previously with new dollar amount), Lake County Historical Society, Makoti Development Corporation, Minot Area Chamber EDC (MACEDC), Ryder Historical Society and Ward County Historical Society. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Olson and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the Contract for Legal Services for Mental Health Cases in Ward County – Agreement between Thomas Law Firm, Timothy C. Wilhelm Law Firm and Ward County as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Anderson and seconded by Comm. Weppler to approve the 2024 Liquor Licenses as presented for HOPR, LLC, Minot VFW Post 753, Inc., Pinks Bar & Grill, LLC, The Hunter's Den, Inc., 28 Club, LLC, Parkland USA Corporation, DBA Superpumper and table the liquor license Farmers Union Oil of Minot DBA Enerbase Cooperative Resources until the personal attachments and fire inspection is completed and received. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Olson and seconded by Comm. Rostad to approve the Raffle Permits as presented for Habitat for Humanity Northern Lights and 5 SFS Defenders Association. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Rostad to approve the Omitted Property Assessment as presented. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the 2024 Polling Places and Precincts. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Anderson and seconded by Comm. Weppler to approve the Commission Reorganization and 2024 notice of meetings of the Board of Ward County Commissioners along with the Agenda order of business and have the chairman sign. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the Appointments of Commissioners to Department Boards and other boards. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

A discussion was held on establishing a Security Committee in the future.

Jason Blowers, Information Technology Administrator came forward to speak regarding physical security and cyber security.

A discussion was held on the current committee openings and applications received. Interviews will be conducted on January 2, 2024 after the Regular Commission Meeting for existing members and new applicants that have applied.

Dana Larsen, Highway Engineer presented the first resolution supporting pursuit of 2023 Flex Fund Grant.

Moved by Comm. Rostad and seconded by Comm. Anderson to approve the Flex Fund Grant as presented from NDDOT for the base stabilization and paving of a seven-mile segment of County Road 14 and have the Chairman sign the Resolution. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Lastly, Mr. Larsen presented the second resolution supporting pursuit of the 2023 Flex Fund Grant.

Moved by Comm. Weppler and seconded by Comm. Olson to approve the Flex Fund Grant as presented from NDDOT for the replacement of six (6) township bridges and have the Chairman sign the Resolution. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

At 10:26 AM with no further business, the meeting was adjourned.