

REGULAR MEETING OF HETTINGER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
September 14, 2022

Chairman Tom Geerts called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with commissioners Todd Lutz and Angela Carlson in attendance. Also, in attendance was Elliott Finck, Road Supervisor.

Lutz motioned to approve the previous minutes as presented for the August 10th and Special for August 24th meetings, with a couple of additions/changes. When the employee manual approval was approved, Juneteenth is still a holiday, just not a paid holiday for the employees, and it was missed during Finck's report that the Kouba Bridge got accepted in the DOT Bridge program, seconded by Carlson. All voting aye.

Carlson motioned to approve agenda with addition to add random drug and alcohol testing, seconded by Lutz. All voting aye.

Commissioners reported on their other boards: Carlson noted that the SWRCCC had a slight change in their budget, but would not increase their request. They will be going to request of the upcoming legislature the possibility of increasing the bed amount, as the state helps with a payment per bed. Will look into the capability of using ARPA funds to help with salaries of those working in Hettinger County that work for the Human Service Zone. The auditor will give Sherry Adams, of the SW Health District, a call to see if there's a possibility to have the annual meeting by proxy, rather than having to come in person to the annual meeting. Lutz mentioned the Weed Control will have the chemical disbursement tomorrow.

Discussion was held on some bills. There are a couple of bills that will be discussed with the office heads, when they come to the meeting.

Heidi Marxen, County Agent, met with the board to give her extension report. She mentioned that it was confirmed that Palmar Amaranth was found in a field. There were ten plants and they have been taken out and destroyed. Marxen also mentioned that the weed control chemical sale is tomorrow. Lutz mentioned he will not be able to attend, and discussion followed that there should be enough to work. She asked if the measure for the continued levy for the Extension Office would be on the November General Election ballot. There was no motion to do so, and the commissioners felt that it can wait until the 2024 election.

Discussion was held on the possible ability to help with the wages for the Human Services workers in Hettinger County as they are not receiving any raise at the time for the increase in the cost of living.

Sheriff Warner came in to give her monthly report. She has received the quote from Arrow with the added JDA bathroom. Lutz motioned to accept the bid, using ARPA funds, seconded by Carlson. All voting aye. Warner mentioned there is a different retirement and which is offered for the police officers at a slightly higher rate. Sondra Bullinger, Human Resources, came into the meeting to explain this retirement more. Warner mentioned since the budget is set, she would be willing to adjust her miscellaneous account to accommodate this retirement increase. Carlson made the motion to approve this retirement utilizing the Sheriff's Department miscellaneous fund, motioned died for lack of second. The commissioners would like to learn more.

Sondra Bullinger, Human Resources, met to let the board know that the prior quote given by NDPHIT for Health Insurance included a 1% discount that required the county to be active in the Wellness Membership. Lutz motioned to join the membership, seconded by Carlson. All voting aye.

Elliott Finck, Road Supervisor, reported on his department.

Billy Doerr, Brosz Engineering, updated them on the progress on the Bentley Bridge. The pre-construction meeting with the companies/DOT was held. The work such as the fencing and dirt work are scheduled to begin this week. He mentioned the county should start working on the RFP (Request for Proposal) for the Kouba Bridge, so that it is ready in order to start doing interviews in December.

Melanie Bauer Dukart, Rural Development - USDA, met with the board to go over what the county will need to do for the 504-Handicap Accessibility. She also distributed information to the commissioners of many different types of aid that can be applied for through the USDA.

Corey Warner was asked to come to the meeting. He discussed with the board the need to have some work done on some of the valves on the radiators and/or the thermostats controlling them in the courthouse. They were really bad in the State's Attorney office and the JDA office. When Martin's comes to do the boiler work, they will be incorporating what needs to be done then.

Terry Traynor, prior Executive Director of NDACo, and currently doing some work for the North Plains Connector, stopped in to say hello and to drop off some updated maps of the proposed transmission line that will be going through Hettinger County.

Gary Greff, representing the Enchanted Highway, wanted to meet with the commissioners to update them on the meeting he had with the State regarding his request for funding to continue the Enchanted Highway project. He was told that the state needs to see support not only from the county, but the cities.

The ARPA CD is maturing and will be transferred in to the ARPA Cash Fund to be utilized. Currently the thoughts are to use the funds for the Road and Bridge and courthouse utilizing two-thirds and then have a meeting to see where the rest can be best used in the community.

Commissioners reviewed the current CD investments.

The commissioners discussed janitorial duties, mowing and snow blowing, regarding what time would be needed for the position or if the position should be split up. A suggestion was also to hire someone full-time with benefits for all the duties. Geerts will talk to Corey Warner, current holder of this position, and ask him to come in next month regarding the position and ask his thoughts.

The ability of putting the tax statements on-line will be looked at.

Terry Kirschmann met with the board because she had heard that there were changes to the committee that were working on the new county website. She mentioned that the employees met together and wanted the board to know there is help from the employees if needed and also mentioned the concerns that it seems to be under the JDA, rather than the county, or it could be just miscommunication.

The bills that had questions, had been answered and Carlson made a motion to approve the bills as presented for the following: General \$53,268.53; Highway Dist. 379.74; R&B \$83,270.57; ARPA \$8,755.56; 24/7 398.00; Sheriff Drug Canine Fund \$2,125.90; County Agent \$774.03; Weed Control \$2,628.98; Preservation \$7,950.00 Sheriff \$6,232.16. The bill approval was seconded by Lutz. All voting aye.

Carlson motioned to cancel Check #13265 and reissue due to lost check, seconded by Lutz. All voting aye.

It was the time designated for the 2023 Budget hearing. No one appeared to contest the budget. Carlson motioned to approve the budget with the adjustment of the following: Sheriff budget will adjust from \$10,000 in the miscellaneous to \$1,000 and the equipment fund will adjust from \$35,000 to \$25,000. County Agent budget will have the \$10,000 health insurance subtracted. The motion was seconded by Lutz. All voting aye.

The board was informed that the County Park Board met and disbursed the funds equally to each of the city parks after expenses. According to ND Century code, the board is to be paid for meeting and travel reimbursement.

Lutz made the motion to accept Jason Jung, Travis Gunwall and Charlotte Meier as inspectors and the polling locations to be the Enchanted Castle in Regent, Memorial Hall in New England, and the Legion Hall in Mott, for the upcoming General Election, seconded by Carlson.

The random drug/alcohol testing was discussed. The commissioners were told that the random testing is actually done quite frequently. New employees in the Road and Bridge department get tested before they start working for the county. Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

ATTEST

Jeri G. Schmidt, AUDITOR

Tom Geerts, CHAIRMAN