

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to adjournment, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners met in the Pennington County Justice Center Board Room in Thief River Falls, MN, on Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. Members Present: Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, David Sorenson, Darryl Tveitbakk, and Neil Peterson. Members absent: None.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lawrence and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Lawrence asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. County Coordinator Kevin Erickson requested that Mark Borseth and Erik Beitel be added to the agenda. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the Board agenda with the changes presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens – None present.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the County Board minutes of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$231,130.52 and the following Commissioner warrants. Discussion followed with the Board requesting clarification on the bill for electric service at the new railroad crossing at Highway 32 S and CSAH #8. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was carried.

County Revenue	\$107,134.00
Road & Bridge	\$ 22,561.47

Mark Borseth from the City of TRF met with the Board to discuss the residential abatement program and the proposed Angle Project on Highway 32 S.

Mr. Borseth stated that the residential abatement program began in 2010, was renewed in 2015, and expired in 2020. The latest abatement program is set to run for five years and allows for three-year abatements for the original owners of single-family, residential housing units. Following discussion, the Board took the information under advisement.

Mr. Borseth discussed the proposed Angle project by M.A.K. Properties on Highway 32 S. The project consists of a 93-unit apartment building along with commercial space and a daycare facility. Discovery Place has agreed to lease the daycare facility and it was noted that Pennington County is in need of 200+ daycare spots. Mr. Borseth stated that a new road approach will be installed off of Highway 32 S. for the property and will also incorporate a realignment of Oakland Park Road and a new turning lane for safety. The City of TRF will hold a Public Hearing on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, regarding the Economic

Development T.I.F., which has a maximum term of 9 years. The City of TRF is requesting a letter or resolution of support from both Pennington County and ISD #564 prior to the Hearing date. Discussion followed on daycare needs in the county as well as past and present T.I.F. districts in the city of TRF. The Board thanked Mr. Borseth for the information presented.

Human Services Director Julie Sjostrand presented the consent agenda from the Pennington County Human Services Committee held on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. On a motion by Commissioner Tveitbakk and seconded by Commissioner Peterson, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Services Committee for March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted. Motion carried.

#### SECTION A

- I. To approve the February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Human Services Committee Meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the agency's personnel action as presented.
- III.
  - A. To adopt and approve DHS's Merit System Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action guidelines as the agency's EEO and AA action plan.
  - B. To approve and re-authorize the Pennington County Pre-Petition Screening Team and the list of screeners as presented.
  - C. To approve the purchase and installation of the following items and services from ReadITech IT Solutions as quoted: 1) Two Laptops.

#### SECTION B

- I. To approve payment of the Agency's bills.

Chairman Lawrence noted that the Building Committee recently met with the architectural firm SEH to review two proposed options for Human Services. The first option consists of a remodel the third floor of the Government Center, with the second option being a remodel of the existing Human Services building. The two options were then displayed and reviewed in greater detail by Ms. Sjostrand. Commissioner Tveitbakk noted that either option will exceed \$1M, however, option one is estimated to cost less and would not involve relocation of staff during construction. Staffing has expressed concerns about parking at the Government Center should option one be selected, but the Board believes that issue could be resolved. If the Government Center option is selected, bids could be let late this summer/early fall and construction could take place during the winter. Commissioner Lawrence expressed his desire to have more county departments and employees located together and more accessible to the public. The Board noted that any questions on the project are to be directed to the Building Committee.

County Sheriff Ray Kuznia presented the following LEC items:

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the hire of Ronald Kjelland as Full-Time Corrections Officer effective March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the hire of Tara Pfeiffer as Full-Time Corrections Officer effective March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the hire of Anthony Wellentin as Full-Time Corrections Officer effective March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

Mr. Kuznia noted that some part-time positions are still vacant and he will continue to advertise for those positions.

County Engineer Mike Flaagan informed the Board that interviews for the Highway Equipment Operator position have been held and he is recommending the hire of Corey Johnson. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the hire of Corey Johnson as Highway Equipment Operator with an effective start date of March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that the following two quotes were received for gravel crushing at the pit near Trail, MN (approximately 45K yards) for 2022:

Schenkey Inc.	\$138,200
Davidson Construction	\$172,300

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the quote by Schenkey Inc. in the amount of \$138,200 for gravel crushing at the pit near Trail, MN. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that the annual contract with land surveyor George E.R. Coulombe is expiring soon, and he is requesting renewal of the contract beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Mr. Coulombe services are charged at the rate of \$75.00 per hour and include surveying section corners, filing old surveys, etc. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to renew the annual contract between Pennington County and George E.R. Coulombe for land surveying effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

The Board questioned Engineer Flaagan about the bill received for electric service at the new railroad crossing on Highway 32 S. / CSAH #8. Mr. Flaagan stated the charges may be for maintenance and not electricity. He will check into it and report back to the Board.

Inter-County Nursing Service Director Kayla Jore met with the Board via Zoom and presented a COVID-19 update. There have been no confirmed lab cases since March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. ICNS continues to hold vaccine clinics, but the county vaccination rate remains at about 60%. There are no updates on vaccinations for kids under 5 years of age. Ms. Jore also gave a update on influenza, noting that cases were below average with

42 flu-related deaths statewide and 8 people hospitalized in NW MN. The Board thanked her for her report.

Engineer Flaagan, Emergency Management Director Erik Beitel, and County Sheriff Ray Kuznia presented an update on spring flooding in the County. Mr. Beitel stated that currently there are six locations where flood water has breached a road, and they are also watching a few homes that floodwater is approaching. Many pallets of sandbags are loaded in trailers and ready for use. He also noted that the TRF dam is open and releasing more water and people downstream have been notified.

Chairman Lawrence discussed a request by Sentence-to-Serve Coordinator Wade Cota to obtain safety vests for his crew. Sheriff Kuznia said those can be obtained locally and he will see that it is taken care of.

Emergency Management Director Erik Beitel and Sheriff Kuznia noted that the county is responsible to notify residents of emergencies, and they have been exploring various methods and updates to our current systems. Three quotes have been received from Stone's Mobile Radio: 1) for maintenance of the emergency alert equipment 3 times per year for years 2022-2024 in the amount of \$4,049.20; 2) to update and refurbish the seven siren controllers in use now in the amount of \$16,514.24; 3) to install a new siren system at the mobile home court in Smiley Township in the amount of \$24,391.15. It was noted that the upgrades and new siren would include battery backup for all units. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the three quotes by Stone's Mobile Radio as presented and to utilize A.R.P.A. funds if allowable; otherwise, expenses are to be paid via from the Sheriff's budget. It was noted that no maintenance costs will be incurred for 2022. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Mr. Beitel discussed the county implications of the Enbridge Line 3 protest activity experienced from June to September 2021. Approximately \$238,000 was spent responding to the protest activity, of which approximately \$230,000 has been reimbursed by the Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Beitel gave accolades to the Sheriff's department and all counties and entities throughout the state that helped in our response to the protest activity. On behalf of the Board, Chairman Lawrence expressed his appreciation to all County, City, State, and local agencies that came to our aid during the Line 3 protest activity.

County Attorney:

County Attorney Seamus Duffy stated that there are no changes to the face covering/masking requirements in the Justice Center and court areas; they are no longer required.

County Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg stated that a Public Hearing must be held regarding the county redistricting that will occur due to 2020 census results. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to hold a Special County Board meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. and a Public Hearing at 11:15 a.m. that day to address the county redistricting plan. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to authorize the purchase of a Microsoft Surface Pro from ReadITech IT Solutions for the County Assessor's office using A.R.P.A. funding at the quoted price of \$1,708.00. Motion carried.

#### County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a Step 1 wage adjustment for Deputy Assessor-Appraiser Ashley Benson effective March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve cancellation of the Professional Service Agreement between Pennington County and Todd & Diane Sundby, DBA Sundby Cleaning, effective April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Discussion followed with the County Coordinator noting that a Full-Time Custodian I will take over the areas serviced by Sundby Cleaning. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was carried.

The County Coordinator reminded the Board and others present that the Annual Township Association meeting will be held in the Joint Use Facility Conference Room on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

#### Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Peterson gave an update from the Northern Counties Land Use Coordinating Board, stating that legislation has been proposed to change the Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) program. 95% of all PILT land in Minnesota is located in the northern half of the state, but inequities exist in PILT calculation and payment to affected counties.

Commissioner Tveitbakk reminded Board members to review the Human Services remodel options discussed earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Tveitbakk noted that Senator Tina Smith, Senator Amy Klobuchar, and other local representatives will be at the TRF Regional Airport on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 2:15 p.m. to present \$7.5M in funding received for the airport hangar project. He noted that the project was reduced from 3 bays to 2 bays, with total project costs estimated at \$13 million. The hangar will be built to allow for the addition of a third bay in the future.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to adjourn the Board meeting to April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Bruce Lawrence, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners