

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM
SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2023 – 10:00 A.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, September 12th, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Members Present: Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, Neil Peterson, and Roy Sourdif. Members absent: David Sorenson.

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

The Chairman asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Hearing none, there was a motion by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Board agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Board minutes of August 22nd, 2023, as presented. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the Auditor/Manual warrants for August 2023 totaling \$1,534,566.65 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$237,068.28
Road & Bridge	\$ 79,851.97
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 67.50
Ditch Funds	\$ 42,108.68

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$2,374.11 were also approved.

Emergency Management Director Erik Beitel presented an update. Work continues on updates to the hazard mitigation plan and things are progressing smoothly. He has been working on the contract and with the State and local college.

Pennington County and the City of TRF have filed a hazard mitigation notice of intent with the state for local property issues along the Red River. FEMA has stated that program money is available for such issues, and Mr. Beitel will meet with them to explore the funding opportunities.

Mr. Beitel stated that Governor Walz has declared September as Emergency Preparedness Month. ‘Bugout bags’ were discussed, which consist of the supplies needed if a person is forced from their home in an emergency.

Mr. Beitel notified the Board and he and Dispatch Supervisor Shad Cooper will be attending the Association of MN Emergency Managers Conference from September 17-20 at Breezy Point Resort.

Mr. Beitel stated that by July 2024 we will be required to do a complete functional test of the local dam. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has created a two-day, EAP Exercise Design Course that will be held this October in San Jose, CA. A City of TRF employee will be attending and Mr. Beitel requested the Board's permission to attend on behalf of the county. The course will help us to create the 2024 testing exercise for the dam. Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to authorize Mr. Beitel to attend then EAP Exercise Design Course training in San Jose, CA in October 2023. Following discussion on the training, the motion was carried.

County Sheriff Seth Vettleson and Office Manager Misty Manderud presented the following items on behalf of the LEC:

Sheriff Vettleson requested an increase in daily rates for non-contracted, out-of-county inmates from \$60.00 to \$65.00, and a daily rate of \$150.00 for high and special needs inmates. These new rates would be effective 01/01/24. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the new daily inmate rates as specified above. Motion carried.

Sheriff Vettleson discussed a quote and service agreement by Lexipol for staff training documentation and compliance. The quote covers 24 jail employees, 6 civilian employees, and Jail Canteen Funds can be utilized. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve a quote by Lexipol in the amount of \$1,995.00 for training documentation services, to be paid from the Canteen Fund, and to enter into a service agreement with Lexipol regarding such services. Following discussion on what services will be provided, the motion was carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve renewal of a Purchase of Services Agreement with Lake of the Woods County, whereas LOTW County will contract three daily beds at the rate of \$55.00/day and agrees to pay a \$125.00/day rate for inmates with special needs, for the period of 09/01/23 – 08/31/24. Motion carried.

Sheriff Vettleson discussed the 2024 budget for the LEC. He noted the budget includes two new squad vehicles that when fully equipped will cost approximately \$90k each. Deputy body and squad camera purchases are budgeted but will be covered by state grants for the first 5 years, then it will likely be the county's responsibility. He noted the budget does include the new dispatch software for 2024. Food prices for inmates are currently \$5.40/meal and he is hopeful any increases to food prices in 2024 will be offset by the new daily rates taking effect January 1st, 2024.

County Engineer Mike Flaagan and Highway Accountant Lori Marquis presented on behalf of the Highway Department.

Engineer Flaagan noted that one of two pickups ordered earlier this year has arrived. Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the purchase of a Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD from Northern Motors, Inc. at the quoted price of \$52,610. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to authorize the County Engineer to advertise for bids for the Kratka Bridge replacement project. Discussion followed with Mr. Flaagan noted that the online bid opening will be held on October 16th, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in his office. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

The 2024 Highway Department budget was presented, with Engineer Flaagan noting the increases expected for wages and health insurance. A portion of the county's share of the roofing project is in the budget, however we may be able to delay our payment until 2025. Purchase of a plow truck and new tractor leases are also planned for 2024. Mr. Flaagan noted that he would like to order the plow truck budgeted for 2024 as soon as the state bid prices are available, due to the extended lead times for such vehicles. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to authorize the County Engineer to order a new plow truck budgeted for 2024, as soon as the state bid pricing is available. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that the plow truck currently on order is still at Bert's Truck Equipment and stated that the warranty won't start until we physically acquire the vehicle.

Discussion on the highway budget continued, with the fuel budget being about the same as in 2023. Gravel crushing costs will be higher in 2024. Commissioner Sourdif questioned fuel pricing and the bid process. The Board noted that bids are taken in the spring and normally are a discount on pump prices. Discussion was held on possible ways to get higher fuel discounts, such as buying in bulk. Mr. Flaagan noted that the State of MN purchases their fuel in the same manner as us as overall it's cheaper in comparison to costs associated with bulk purchasing and storage.

Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg discussed 2024 revenue department budgets. Election budgets will be up about \$50k due to it being an election year; data processing costs will be up due to a change in IT providers; the Assessors budget is up in part due to an increase in insurance benefits; the Justice Center budget is up about \$150k due to a new roof planned for 2024. It was noted that the costs associated with the new Tyler Technology programs are being paid from the ARPA funds. After reducing the budget by \$1.1M in County Program Aid the levy is currently estimated at 6% for 2024. Commissioner Peterson stated that the levy must be set on September 26, 2023, and after that it can only be reduced. Ms. Herzberg said she can provide line-item budget detail for anyone interested.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve renewal of a three-year lease agreement with the City of TRF for dispatching, records, and space use in the LEC, with rate increases set at 3% in 2024, 3.5% in 2025, and 3.75% in 2026. Motion carried.

Ms. Herzberg noted that ReadITech is discontinuing providing Information Technology services in this area. True IT, based out of Fargo, ND, is willing to provide the county IT services and September 28, 2023, would be the switch over date if approved. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve a contract between Pennington County and True IT for information technology services with an effective date of September 28, 2023. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lawrence noted that True IT will take care of our computer and IT services and the county is currently discussing phone services with Garden Valley Technologies.

Ms. Herzberg noted that she has a meeting today with Tyler Technologies to get things started with their tax and other programs; she is hopeful the system will go live in winter, 2024.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the hire of Brandi Larson for the Human Services position of Full-Time Case Aide effective September 29, 2023. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve a MOU between Pennington County and I.U.O.E. Local 49 to address the creation and approval of the Lead Highway Equipment Operator position, to include such position classification in the CBA, and to post and fill the position internally. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve issuance of a duplicate warrant to Paul Maloney in the amount of \$178.33 to replace lost warrant 192970 dated November 24th, 2021, without issuance of an indemnifying bond. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve issuance of a duplicate warrant to Angella Amiot in the amount of \$20.00 to replace lost warrant 193690 dated February 25th, 2022, without issuance of an indemnifying bond. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the new position of Full-Time Assessor Clerk, rated at Grade 5 by BCC, and authorize the advertising of such position. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson notified the Board that asbestos testing was conducted on the gymnasium floor of the Auditorium and the results were negative. He will reach out to asbestos contractors regarding quotes for asbestos removal in the Auditorium.

County Coordinator Kevin Erickson provided an update on the Government Center 3rd floor remodel project. Most interior doors recently arrived and are being installed. Work continues on ceiling tile and light installation. An onsite meeting with the Building Committee, the architect, and contractors will be held next week to discuss progress and any questions on the project.

Mr. Erickson updated the Board on the health insurance renewal for 2024. Overall, premiums are increasing by 2%, but the plans will again be realigned. The realignment will result in 4 of the plans getting less than a 2% increase and one plan getting an increase over 3%. The realignment is most often caused by shifts in plan enrollments.

County Attorney Items: None.

Committee Reports:

Commissioner Peterson noted that four of the Board members will be attending the AMC Conference this week in Alexandria.

Commissioner Nelson recently attended a traffic advisory meeting where they announced a new Amber Alert messaging through text messaging, it will 'ping' phones in a 10-mile radius from the incident location. Discussion was also held on some complaints received regarding the signage at the new roundabout east of the Seven Clans Casino; that issue is being addressed.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the Board meeting to September 26th, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners