

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Members Present: Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, Neil Peterson, David Sorenson, and Roy Sourdif. Members absent: None.

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. The County Coordinator noted that Sheriff Vettleson can be removed from the agenda. Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Board agenda with the change presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the Board minutes of September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as presented. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$307,761.14 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$43,632.70
Road & Bridge	\$14,646.07
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 10.00
Ditch Funds	\$19,265.00

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$43.20 were also approved.

Charity Brault – Executive Director, and Heather Harbott – Finance Manager, of the NW MN Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, provided an annual update to the Board. They noted that recent legislation approved their levy authority through 2032. Ms. Brault noted that they levy in six counties and calculate their revenues from taxable market values. Ms. Harbott discussed the revenues and expenditures for 2023 year to date. The rental rehabilitation and small cities development programs were discussed, and it was noted that \$50,000 is committed from the levy to Thief River Falls for rental rehab. The Pennington County down payment assistance program was a part of 15 home purchases in fiscal 2023, involving 6 different lending institutions and a total of \$112,250. The Section 8 housing choice rental program assisted with rent for about 95 families each month in 8 counties, averaging \$373.00 each with payments going directly to landlords. Commissioner Lawrence questioned if the vouchers per month are increasing, as the ratio in Pennington County seems high in comparison to other counties.

Ms. Harbott replied that overall, the program is decreasing, but they would have to research that to be certain. The Board thanked them for their report.

Human Services Director Julie Sjostrand presented the consent agenda from the September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Human Service Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Sourdif and seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for September 19, 2023 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

#### SECTION A

- I. To approve the August 15, 2023, Human Service Committee Meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the agency's personnel action as presented.
- III.
  - A. To approve the CY 2024 Rural Transportation Collaborative access transportation Service Contract with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. as presented.
  - B. To approve the CY 2024 Purchase of Service Agreement with the Occupational Development Center as presented.
  - C. To approve the CY 2024-25 MFIP/DWP Employment Services Purchase of Service Agreement with the Career Force Center as presented.
  - D. To approve the CaseWorks Residential Self-Service Portal.

#### SECTION B

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

County Engineer Mike Flaagan presented the following items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the transfer of Kyle Wikert from Highway Equipment Operator to Lead Highway Equipment Operator effective September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at Step 2 of the union contract wage schedule. Following discussion on the position and interviews conducted, the motion was carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that a used tractor trailer was sold on auction this spring, and they have received the following quotes for another used tractor trailer: Allstate Peterbilt of Fargo – Peterbilt truck with 411k miles for \$84,990; J&M Truck Sales Inc. – Mack truck with 616k miles for \$64,900 (\$59,900 after \$5k discount), also a Western Star truck with 473,700 miles for \$69,900. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to authorize the purchase of a Western Star tractor trailer from J&M Truck Sales Inc. at the quoted price of \$69,900. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted he has received two quotes for a 9'2" plow for the new Silverado HD 2500 pickup truck:

Bert's Truck Equipment	\$10,668.00
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Northwest Power Systems

\$11,293.89

Engineer Flaagan recommended the local quote of Northwest Power System. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the purchase of a snowplow from Northwest Power Systems in the amount of \$11,293.89. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan voiced his concerns over the delays in truck production and deliveries, stating we could order one in November this year and likely not receive it in 2024. He proposed the idea of ordering two trucks once the state bids are available, and paying for each in the year they arrive. The Highway Committee will review state bids when they are available and may consider ordering more than one truck at a time.

Engineer Flaagan provided an update on local projects, noting that reclamation on CSAH #7 will begin this week with paving to follow the week after, and then shouldering.

Carter Nelson met with the Board via Zoom and stated that he is considering purchasing the Northland Village apartments in TRF. He stated that they are in poor condition, are estimated at 70% vacant, and he would completely remodel them. He would like to make them market value and release them from HUD, eliminating the associated income guidelines. He noted that \$259,355.15 is currently owed for 2022 and 2023 taxes and utilities, with approximately \$119,331 outstanding for property taxes. He requested that the county forgive the property taxes owed so he can put such funds into the remodel of the building. Discussion was held on the amounts owed for taxes and utilities, with Mr. Nelson noting that the City of TRF told him responsibility for delinquent utilities would remain with the current owner. Mr. Nelson will follow up with the County Board at a future meeting.

Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a quote by Government Management Group for preparation of the county's Central Services Cost Allocation plans for fiscal years ending 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027 at an annual cost of \$3,750. Motion carried.

County Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg discussed the 2024 budget, noting that a significant portion of increases are due to wages and benefits. She discussed a 7% levy for 2024, noting that based on the current tax capacity, tax rates would decrease 3% for 2024. The Board thanked the Auditor-Treasurer and all department heads for their work on the 2024 budget.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the following resolution, the 2024 proposed levy of 7.0%, and the County budget as written. Motion carried.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners have reviewed the 2024 budgets submitted by the various departments; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed levies have been reduced by the amount to be received from the State of Minnesota for the following: County Program Aid - \$1,100,630 (estimated).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the proposed budgets for 2024 are approved and that the following proposed levies be adopted:

	Levy Before CPA	CPA*	Net Levy After CPA
Revenue	\$8,157,652	\$722,013	\$7,432,639
Road and Bridge	\$1,754,879	\$155,189	\$1,599,690
Welfare	\$2,531,366	\$223,428	\$2,307,938
G.O. Jail Bond	\$755,167	0	\$755,167
G.O. Justice Center CIP Bond	\$380,415	0	\$380,415

\*County Program Aid

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to change the time of the December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, County Board meeting from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to schedule a Truth in Taxation meeting for 6:00 p.m. on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the Justice Center Board Room. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to change the date of the last Board meeting of the year from December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Motion carried.

The Auditor-Treasurer reminded the Board members that there will be a joint City, County, and School meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Imperial Room of the Ralph Engelstad Arena.

Kayla Jore – Director of Pennington/RLC Public Health & Home Care, presented an update to the Board. She thanked the Board for their partnership and support of this year’s ‘Be The Voice’ event, which was a great success and featured a great speaker. She stated the Opioid Committee is down to some core members who plan to meet monthly. Their discussion has focused on families that would benefit from the program and she noted that any participants will have to sign confidentiality agreements. To date, no opioid settlement funds have been spent. The Committee continues to research the gaps and needs of the community to determine where funding should be spent.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve issuance of a duplicate warrant to Dawn Fore in the amount of \$2.00 to replace lost

warrant #186440, dated July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, without issuance of an indemnifying bond.  
Motion carried.

County Attorney Items: None.

Committee Reports:

The Board members reported on their respective committee assignments from the recent AMC Conference:

Commissioner Sourdif – General Government: tax forfeitures were a large topic of discussion along with revisions to MN PERA disability coverage for the Police & Fire Plan.

Commissioner Lawrence – Public Safety: police officers in schools were discussed as well as emergency services member pay and funding to recruit for such positions. The Corrections Commissioner addressed the topic with statistics, noting that while the severe crimes are down, the age class of offenders is becoming younger at an alarming rate. Also discussed were prisoner parole and how many are eligible, and the reduction of prison sentences for some by up to 50%. Such changes would result in savings for the State of MN but an increase in county costs and additional work for probation agents.

Commissioner Nelson – Health & Human Services: the focus this year was mental health, sustainable funding for services, and modernization of software. They want to show the legislature how updates to the system would result in more efficiency and interest from job seekers.

Commissioner Peterson – Environmental & Natural Resources: The biggest topic of discussion was the drainage information portal. They also received reports from the State agencies.

Commissioner Sorenson stated that at a recent Advance Thief River meeting he learned that ERICCO Manufacturing is converting an old, onsite homestead into a daycare. The licensing should be completed next week and will allow for 10 children.

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

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners