

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM
DECEMBER 28TH, 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 Thursday, December 28th, 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. Hearing none, there was a motion by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Board agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the Board minutes of December 12th, 2023, as presented. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$477,296.23 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$272,186.71
Road & Bridge	\$ 48,754.66
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 8,154.24

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$847.19 were also approved.

Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to transfer \$104,443.17 from various ditch maintenance funds to the Road & Bridge Fund for work done by the Highway Department in 2023. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to authorize the County Auditor-Treasurer to make temporary transfers, as outlined by Auditor-Treasurer, to bring ditch balances to a positive balance at the end of 2023. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to schedule an Economic Development Tax Abatement Hearing for January 23rd, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the Justice Center Board Room regarding the following properties:

<u>Parcel Number:</u>	<u>Property owner:</u>
25.121.024.10	Haven Kuehn

25.121.017.10
25.121.020.10

Kevin Roberts
Rebekah Lion

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve an engagement letter with Baker Tilly to conduct arbitrage monitoring services for our Series 2013A Drainage bonds, General obligation 2016A bonds, and the General obligation Capital improvement plan bonds series 2016B. Motion carried.

County Coordinator Items:

On behalf of the Human Services Director Julie Sjostrand, County Coordinator Kevin Erickson presented the consent agenda from the December 19, 2023, Human Services Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for December 19, 2023 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

SECTION A

- I. To approve the November 21, 2023, Human Service Committee meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the Agency's personnel action as presented.
- III.
 - A. To approve the CY 2024-2025 Child Support Cooperative Agreement between the State of MN, Pennington County Attorney's Office, Pennington County Sheriff's Office, and Pennington County Human Services as presented.
 - B. To approve the Pennington County Inspection Report Certificate of Approval 2023.
 - C. To extend the current CY 2023 Behavioral Health (Temporary Confinement) Purchase of Service Agreement between Sanford Behavioral Health and Pennington County Human Services pending finalization of new agreement for 2024.

SECTION B

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

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve two MOUs between the Pennington County Highway Department and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local #49 (detailed MOUs on file); the first regarding a seasonal work schedule for one current Highway Equipment Operator for December 1 through April 1 of each year, and a \$2.00/hour shift differential, with the MOU sunseting April 1, 2026; the second regarding I.U.O.E. Local #49 member agreement to contribute all unused compensatory time balance at date of retirement or resignation into an employee VEBA Plan. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve issuance of a duplicate warrant to Jessica Olson to replace lost warrant 113720 issued on May 11, 2023, to in the amount of \$6.42, without issuance of an indemnifying bond. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson read aloud a letter of resignation and retirement from Veteran's Service Officer Steve Stone. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to accept a letter of resignation/retirement from V.S.O. Steve Stone effective April 5, 2024, and to thank him for his 22+ years of service to Pennington County. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to authorize advertising for the position of Full-Time Veteran's Service Officer. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve a Collection Bargaining Agreement between Pennington County and AFSCME Council 65, Local #3452, which includes employees of the Human Services Department, for a three-year period effective January 1st, 2024, to December 31, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve a Collection Bargaining Agreement between Pennington County and Law Enforcement Labor Services Local #548, which includes the positions of Jail Administrator and Assistant Jail Administrator, for a three-year period effective January 1st, 2024, to December 31, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a Collection Bargaining Agreement between Pennington County and MN Teamsters Local #320, which includes the positions of Corrections Officer, Dispatcher/Jailer, Sergeants, Jail Program Director, and Sentence to Serve, for a three-year period effective January 1st, 2024, to December 31, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve a Collection Bargaining Agreement between Pennington County and MN Teamsters Local #320, which includes the positions of Deputy Sheriff, Investigator, Drug Task Force Officer, and Juvenile/Fraud Investigator, for a three-year period effective January 1st, 2024, to December 31, 2026. Motion carried.

The County Coordinator discussed non-union COLAs and wage adjustments. A 2023 pay study showed county employee wages to be below market with area counties and other MN counties of similar size. To stay competitive in the employee market, the Personnel Committee is recommending COLAs and a change to a seven-step wage system for county employees, which would eliminate the current 'start' wage column and add wage steps six and seven. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve adoption of the new, seven-step wage chart effective January 1, 2024, and also COLAs and wage step adjustments for non-union employees for years 2024, 2025, and 2026 as follows, excepting the positions of County Engineer

and Crime Victim Advocate: 5% COLA and one step increase effective January 1, 2024; 5% COLA effective January 1, 2025 and one step increase effective July 1, 2025; 4% COLA effective January 1, 2026 and one step increase (if applicable) effective July 1, 2026. Discussion followed regarding the pay study results, the need to stay competitive with area wages and to encourage employee longevity. It was noted that wage steps on anniversary dates will not apply during 2024-2026. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

The County Coordinator reviewed proposed changes to the Pennington County Personnel Policy, which are being recommended by the Personnel Committee. Changes include incorporation of MN Earned Sick and Safe Time into sick leave policies; Time Donation Program change allowing non-union employees ability to donate sick leave or comp time to county employees in need; addition of Juneteenth to the holiday schedule; closure of the Government Center at 12:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and to allow other non-union employees to leave at 12:00 p.m. that day as able; increase to longevity pay and step schedule; updated language (to reflect current practices) regarding health and life insurance, cafeteria plans, meal reimbursements, progressive discipline, offensive conduct/reporting procedures, inclement weather, and Addendum III relating to HRA/VEBA accounts. Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve changes to the Pennington County Personnel Policy as reviewed and mentioned above effective January 1st, 2024 (detailed changes on record). Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the following elected official salaries effective January 1st, 2024: County Attorney - \$140,000, County Sheriff - \$117,800. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve an additional 4% COLA for the positions of Assistant County Attorney effective January 1st, 2024. Discussion followed with Commissioner Lawrence noting that current ACA salaries are above step seven of the new wage chart, so the additional COLA is necessary due to market conditions and to be competitive with recent salary increases for attorneys in the MN Public Defenders office. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

County Attorney Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to accept a letter of resignation from Assistant County Attorney Max Schafer-LaCoursiere effective January 2nd, 2024, and to thank him for his service to Pennington County. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to authorize the County Attorney to advertise for the position of Assistant County Attorney. Motion carried.

Committee Reports: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to adjourn the Board meeting to January 2nd, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners