

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 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, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. Members Present: Darryl Tveitbakk, Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, and Neil Peterson. Members present via Zoom: Dave Sorenson (5:02 p.m.). Members absent: None.

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

Chairman Peterson asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. County Coordinator Kevin Erickson stated that Jim Trojanowski will not be in attendance and that Commissioner Tveitbakk will present the NWRL budget. Mr. Erickson requested that ICN Director Kayla Jore be added at 6:30 p.m. Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Board agenda with the changes discussed. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the County Board minutes of August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the following Human Services warrants totaling \$540,698.88 and also the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$76,661.97
Road & Bridge	\$67,919.27
State Funds	\$ 1,291.51

(Commissioner Sorenson joined the Board meeting via Zoom at 5:02 p.m.)

Human Services Director Julie Sjostrand and Fiscal Supervisor Stacy Anderson presented the consent agenda from the August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Human Services Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Tveitbakk and seconded Commissioner Lawrence, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

SECTION A

- I. To approve the July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Human Services Committee meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the Agency's personnel action as presented.
- III. A. To approve the CY 2022 Clinical Supervision Purchase of Service Agreement between Sherry Jose-Sobolik and Pennington County Human Services, as presented.

SECTION B

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

Ms. Sjostrand and Ms. Anderson presented the 2022 Human Services budget. They noted that the budget featured a 1% increase for wages and 6% for health insurance. The County Board took the budget proposal under advisement.

Peter Nelson, Barb Molskness, Ricky Peterson, and Greg Hilgeman of the Pennington County SWCD presented their proposed 2022 budget. Mr. Nelson reviewed the expenditures and revenues expected for 2022 and the projects planned for next year. They are asking the county for a 4% increase in their appropriation. The County Board thanked them for the presentation and took their budget request under advisement.

Commissioner Tveitbakk presented the NWRL budget for 2022 on behalf of Jim Trojanowski. They are requesting a 1% increase for year 2022. He reported that the NWRL is open for business again following the pandemic and their counts are higher than pre-pandemic. During the pandemic they did most business curbside, but administration continued as normal. The County Board took the budget request under advisement.

County Engineer Mike Flaagan stated that construction of the engineering building is complete and he is requesting final payment. He noted that total construction cost was \$228,493.00. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve final payment of the engineering building to Klopp Construction in the amount of \$21,196.22. Discussion was held on the interior of the building with Mr. Flaagan stating that some shelving and miscellaneous work is still needed. He plans to utilize Sentence to Serve for most of the labor. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Flaagan presented a proposed agreement with the law firm Rinke Noonan for legal counsel on ditches and ditch law. He stated that given the number of ditch-related issues we've had recently he feels it would be beneficial to enter into such an agreement, and we've done business with them in the past. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve entering into an agreement with Rinke Noonan for legal counsel on ditches and ditch law on a retainer basis at a cost of \$200.00/month + hourly services thereafter. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Flaagan updated the Board on the box culvert project taking place south of the TRF Regional Airport. Taggart Construction is expected to begin the project this week.

Chairman Peterson noted that some county residents have expressed their appreciation for the ditch mowing that has been completed recently. Mr. Flaagan noted that the recent rains have made road grading more effective and most of roads are in good shape now.

County Sheriff Ray Kuznia presented an agreement with the U.S. Marshals Service - Prisoner Operations Division to house federal detainees in the Pennington County Justice Center at a per diem rate of \$66.00. Mr. Kuznia has signed the agreement and no action is needed by the County Board.

Mr. Kuznia noted that the 2022 LEC budget is almost ready for presentation now that health insurance premiums for next year are known. An LEC Committee meeting was set for September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. in Meeting Room A of the Government Center.

Sheriff Kuznia informed the Board that the Enbridge Line 3 project is near completion in our area, the pipe has been covered now and the Red Lake Treaty camp has cleared out for the most part.

Michelle Landsverk and Mike Barry of Advance TRF met with the Board to discuss their 2022 budget and provide an activity report. They are requesting an appropriation of \$25,000 from the county, the same requested and received in 2021. They thanked the board for their past and continued support. Ms. Landsverk announced a 'Come Home' campaign that is in the works, which will utilize the stories of people that left the county and later returned to live here again. She noted that 10,000 mailers will be printed and sent to alumni of the area, and e-versions will be pushed out as well. They are working to increase for the workforce pool by 1) holding a career fair on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021; 2) offering a youth skills training program that grant money is available for, which could roll out fall of 2022; 3) grants - they are watching 4 grants closely at this time, one being a possible \$400k for main street revitalization, and another for entrepreneurs that could provide financial and legal training. She is expecting more funds for businesses to come this fall, these funds would come directly and would not funnel through the county. A childcare state grant is also coming this fall with approximately \$5 million available statewide. Commissioner Nelson questioned Advance TRF's involvement in local housing, to which Ms. Landsverk replied they support and encourage housing development but haven't been involved beyond that. Commissioner Tveitbakk questioned the latest census results for the county, which showed only a small increase in population, and he noted that employers are struggling to find workers, the county included. Ms. Landsverk then requested a letter of support from the Board to D.E.E.D. for a downtown TRF project yet to be disclosed. She stated it would be a large project and there would be no financial obligation to the county. Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to send a letter of support to D.E.E.D. for a proposed project in the City of Thief River Falls. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

ICNS Director Kayla Jore presented a COVID-19 update to the Board, noting that there were 32 new cases from August 20-24, 2021. More cases are being seen with children and also some breakthrough cases in fully vaccinated people. The county vaccine rate is currently at 53% or 6412 residents. She stated the Delta variant going around is twice as contagious and it's likely that vaccinated people can spread the virus. ICNS is highly encouraging vaccinations as the likeliness of severe illness, hospitalization, and death are extremely low if fully vaccinated, and also helps protect those that can't be vaccinated yet, such as young children. Commissioner Tveitbakk questioned the booster shots and if they are recommended for someone like him who is vaccinated but has also had COVID-19. She noted that booster shots and third doses are different, and neither are approved at this time. She said that in-person meetings are becoming normal again and thus everyone should be mindful of distancing, good hygiene, and masking when necessary. The Board thanked Ms. Jore for her report and asked that she continue to provide updates to them as the situation warrants.

#### Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

It was noted that the AMC Fall Policy Conference will be held on September 16-17, 2021 in Alexandria, MN.

Commissioner Tveitbakk noted that Arctic Cat presented a UTV to the TRF Regional Airport for perimeter patrol at the site. The TRF Airport Authority will be sending a letter of thanks to Arctic Cat for the donation.

#### County Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg informed the Board that the Auditor's office would be administering the absentee balloting for the ISD #561 and ISD #564 elections to be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 and requested a resolution to establish the absentee and UOCAVA Ballot Boards for the election.

The following resolution was introduced by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, and upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye, was unanimously carried.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Pennington County Board of Commissioners hereby appoint the following staff of the County Auditor-Treasurer's office as the Absentee Ballot Board:

Jennifer Herzberg  
Kevin Erickson  
Julie Stennes  
Linda Brown  
Ann Ulrich

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the foregoing Auditor-Treasurer staff also serve as the UOCAVA Absentee Ballot Board.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve renewing an agreement with DS Solutions Inc. for online election judge training for a period of three years effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at a cost of \$500.00 per year. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Ms. Herzberg noted that the Enbridge tax refund for years 2012-2018 is ready for payment and totals \$2,569,022.92. She stated that interest stopped accruing on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 but there is still a shortfall of \$17,797.92 following the state's refund estimate. She would like to pay the county's portion of the refund this week and the state's balance when tax settlements are in. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve payment of the county's share of the Enbridge tax refund totaling \$2,569,022.92 and also to pay the entire shortage of \$17,797.92. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the retirement of DMV Deputy Registrar Carol Horien effective 10/22/21. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried. The County Board wished to thank Ms. Horien for her service to the county and wished her well in retirement.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve advertising for one Full-Time Motor Vehicle Deputy Registrar. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the hire of Tony Marsh as Custodian II effective August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Mr. Marsh will be compensated at the Custodian I level until a Special Boiler license is obtained (required within one year of employment).

Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye.  
Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the hire of Amy Momerak as Deputy Assessor-Appraiser with an approximate start date of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye.  
Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve renewal of the lease agreement between Pennington County and St. Bernard’s Catholic Church for use of the Auditorium gym at a cost of \$325.00 per month, effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Rent is payable for each of the 7 months that the gym will be used. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson provided an update to the Board on the health insurance for 2022, noting that the NW Service Cooperative went out for bids as required every 4 years and Medica had the lowest bid and will be the new claims administrator beginning January 2022. He noted that we will keep our current plans and that all teams involved are working hard for a seamless transition for employees and their families. Medica offers great wellness programs and a large provider network, and their lower administration costs should save the county and employees money in the future.

Mr. Erickson provided an update on oil and filter recycling by new vendor Safety-Kleen, noting that oil will be picked up free of charge, but recycling of the oil filters will be charged at \$50.00 per barrel. The Board requested that two oil tanks be available at the TRF location and that the locations be checked monthly.

Commissioner Nelson questioned if a lean-to addition was considered for the oil recycling location in Goodridge. Commissioner Lawrence and Peterson commented that a lean-to addition wouldn’t be conducive with the long-term future of the building.

County Attorney Items:

None.

With no further items to come before the Board. Commissioner Lawrence motioned, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the Board meeting to September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners