

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 – 10:00 A.M.**

Pursuant to M.S. 375.07, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners met in the Pennington County Justice Center Board Room in Thief River Falls, MN, on Tuesday, September 10th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Members Present: Seth Nelson, Roy Sourdif, David Sorenson, Neil Peterson, and Bruce Lawrence. Members absent: None.

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

The Chairman asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. County Coordinator Kevin Erickson stated that Rep. John Burkel has been added to the agenda at 10:45 a.m. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the agenda with the change presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the County Board minutes of August 27, 2024, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Auditor and Manual warrants for August 2024 totaling \$3,089,934.62 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$88,366.91
Road & Bridge	\$80,079.80

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$2,500.00 were also approved.

NWMN Multi-County HRA Executive Director Charity Brault and Finance Manager Heather Harbott presented a program update and their proposed levy for 2025. Ms. Brault noted that their levy authority is 25% of .0185% of taxable market value. An overview of the program was given, including discussion on funding, grants available, rehabilitation efforts, their rent assistance program, etc. They noted a new state rent assistance program called 'Bring It Home' and they are making application to it. The Board thanked them for their report.

Bryanna Greffthen of the Pennington County SWCD presented the 2024-2025 Aquatic Invasive Species plan. She noted that AIS funding for the county totaled \$20,394 and \$20,382 in 2024 and 2025, respectively. The two-year plan includes maintenance of the signage at the county's boat launch sites and they are planning to also put up signage at the kayak launch sites. They are monitoring for zebra mussels in the Red Lake River at several bridge sites, so far there no zebra mussels have been found. The SWCD maintains an AIS link on their website and completes all required reporting to the State. Discussion was held on the boat landings and improvements that are needed. Engineer

Flaagan said he's toured the launch sites with the MN DNR and they are hoping to improve the sites in the future. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the 2024 & 2025 Pennington County Aquatic Invasive Species Plan as presented. Motion carried.

County Engineer Mike Flaagan presented the following items:

Mr. Flaagan spoke in regard to county boat launch sites, stating that he hasn't found any grants available but he will keep searching for funding sources.

Engineer Flaagan noted that 2024 road striping project is complete and noted that this year the west 1/3 of the county was completed. He noted a final cost of \$70,330.11 and requested approval of final payment. The following resolution was motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, and upon vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, CP 57-24-06 (2024 county road striping) has in all things been completed, and the County Board being fully advised in the premises,

NOW THEN, BE IT RESOLVED, that we do hereby accept said completed project for and on behalf of the Pennington County Highway Department and authorize final payment as specified herein.

The Engineer noted that the compressor on the sign truck is no longer working. They would like to replace it with a larger one to allow them to drive larger signs and posts. The following two quotes were received:

Bert's Truck Equipment Inc.	\$11,595.00
ACME	\$11,500.00

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the quote by ACME in the amount of \$11,500 for a new compressor for the Highway Dept. sign truck. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted they have a new, larger Ferris mower and the current trailer for hauling mowers is light duty and cannot handle the new mower. They have received the following two quotes for a new, heavy-duty trailer:

Hubert's Outdoor Power	\$3,399.00
Northern Crankshaft	\$3,944.20

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the quote by Hubert's Outdoor Power in the amount of \$3,399.00 for the purchase of a new trailer for the Highway Department. Discussion followed regarding the old trailer, with Mr. Flaagan stating it might be kept for hauling their ATV, otherwise it will be sold on auction. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Mr. Flaagan discussed gravel crushing, noting the one quote for 2024 was quite high and was rejected, so no crushing was completed this year. He also stated that his department is trying a Massy Ferguson tractor from Ziegler as part of a one-month lease. He said it

is currently very difficult to find lease programs for the tractors they need. They are also looking at some used utility trucks for the department.

County Sheriff Seth Vettleon presented the following items:

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the transfer of Part-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer Tanner Wellman to Full-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer effective on September 16, 2024. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve a Purchase of Services Agreement between the Pennington County Corrections Center and the Lake of the Woods County Sheriff's Office for inmate housing, whereas the LOTWSO will contract for three daily beds at the rate of \$65.00 per day, per bed, effective September 1, 2024 – September 1, 2025. Motion carried.

John Burkel, MN Representative - District 1A, met with the Board to discuss the county's current concerns and needs. He noted the increase in County Program Aid for 2024 and hoped that and other local government aid helped. He noted that the MN Department of Revenue is considering a big change to the taxing of pipelines and other utilities. Commissioner Peterson questioned what is next and wonders how counties are supposed to budget on the revenues of a utility as they can fluctuate up and down. Commissioner Nelson noted that cannabis is a big county issue right now and we continue to discuss ordinances and try to interpret the law. Commissioner Peterson noted possible changes to the public waters inventory to include ditches, stating this would be a big 'red flag' for farmers. Sheriff Vettleon questioned Mr. Burkel about jail inmates that belong in mental health facilities but must remain in jail due 10-month waiting periods due to lack of beds. The Sheriff asked about \$5 billion that is coming into the State Human Services over the next 5 years. Mr. Burkel said this has come up with other counties and he doesn't believe the funding is going to the counties. He noted the next legislative session starts January 14, 2025. The Board thanked him for coming and for hearing our concerns on local issues.

Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Ms. Herzberg discussed the proposed department budgets for 2025. Current estimates equate to a 7.194% increase in the levy but additional budget cuts are expected before the levy is set at the September 24, 2024, County Board meeting. She noted no increase to health insurance premiums for 2025, which will help the county budget.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a new Public Health and Home Care Agreement between Pennington County and Red Lake County effective August 27th, 2024. Motion carried. It was noted that Red Lake County no longer will house any public health staff; all will be based out of the Pennington County office.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve issuance of a duplicate warrant to Ecolab Inc. in the amount of \$1,935.25 to replace lost warrant #199583 dated April 12th, 2024, without issuance of an indemnifying bond. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a quote by Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP in the amount of \$2,208.00 for the purchase and installation of an IP Communicator kit for the fire alarm system in the Government Center, which will allow the system to call out in emergencies and also to be monitored by Johnson Controls. Motion carried.

County Attorney Items:

Interim County Attorney Nathan Haase noted that today is Scott Collins last day in the office. He and Mr. Sparby are currently getting to know the office and duties, and he is helping with the 2025 department budget. The board questioned if there is a backlog of cases due to the staffing shortage, to which he replied that criminal and juvenile matters are the only items slightly backlogged. He plans to attend the Human Services Committee meeting next Tuesday.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to authorize the County Personnel Committee to hire for the position of Assistant County Attorney prior to the next Board meeting. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to authorize the County Coordinator to advertise for the position of Assistant County Attorney. Discussion followed with Mr. Haase recommending that we advertise the position as open until filled. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

The Chairman reminded everyone that the AMC Fall Policy Conference is September 11-13, 2024.

Commissioner Peterson discussed Minnesota Rural Counties (MRC) and noted that 43 counties are a part of the organization at this time.

Commissioner Nelson noted that the new roundabout at the intersection of US Highway 75 and CSAH 21 in Polk County is opening soon. He also noted that the TRF School District is asking county representatives to attend a joint meeting on October 2nd, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Lincoln High School Training Center.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to adjourn the Board meeting to September 24, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator
Pennington County

Seth Nelson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners