

**RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**APRIL 5, 2016**

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met on April 5, 2016 at the Richland County Courthouse with Commissioners Sid Berg, Nathan Berseth, Tim Campbell, Rollie Ehlert and Dan Thompson. Others in attendance were Administration Personnel Bailey and DelVal; State's Attorney McBeth and a Daily News Reporter.

A motion was made by Thompson to approve the minutes of meetings March 1 and March 15; motion seconded by Berg. Vote was unanimous.

**MISC/CORRESPONDENCE**

- Notice for 5-County Meeting - April 7 in Sargent County
- Public Notice from Army Corp of Engineers re- Drain 2 Reconstruction
- Public Notice from Army Corp of Engineers re- Drain 5 Reconstruction
- Correspondence from Robert Singelman re- protest to Richland/Sargent Water Board

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Office is working on Foreclosure Notices that will be sent through Certified Mail and the Sheriff Department in May.

A motion was made by Berg to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented; motion seconded by Ehlert. Vote was unanimous.

**JILL BREUER - 911 FEE**

Breuer reported the current 911 fee is \$1.00 and has been in place since the mid-eighties. The revenue from the current fee is insufficient to adequately fund the maintenance and operations of the 911 system. Technology costs have increased. Richland County has seen a decrease in revenue for 911, partly due to less land lines in homes and also people not going with wireless contracts - they are buying prepaid plans and those fees go to the state.

Breuer presented a Resolution to the Board proposing an increase of the existing monthly fee and directing that the measure be placed on the ballot for the primary election in June. (Copy of Resolution/Measure attached).

A motion was made by Berseth to approve the Resolution authorizing the Measure to be placed on the Ballot for the June Primary Election; motion seconded by Ehlert. Vote was unanimous.

In other Business -

- Breuer reported it is National Telecommunicators Week April 10-16.
- MinnKota/Jamestown Communications and Telex will station an IP Radio System here as well as in Cavalier and Stutsman County in a proof of concept study

### **MISC/CORRESPONDENCE continued**

The Board received a written request from Sandy Meyer, Lady on the Lake Bed & Breakfast, to transfer their current liquor/beer licenses to the barn which will be called "The Colonel".

Sandy Meyer was present at the meeting. She reported they have a barn on the property they are remodeling for weddings and events but the barn will have its own name and address for liability reasons.

McBeth explained that the property, including the barn was already covered through the County issued licenses, but Meyer should provide the County the additional address for "the Colonel" and that can be added to the existing license.

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Highway Personnel in attendance were Lowell Bladow, Ron Hohenstern and Moriah Herding.

Helendale Township CR 23 & 2 - Representatives from Helendale Twsp voiced concerns about the minimum maintenance done over the last few years on County Road 23 and County Road 2 in Helendale Twsp.

Chris Walberg reported there has been increased traffic on those roads due to two campgrounds, the Cass Rural Water expansion, the National Grasslands to the South, and farmers in the area. He requested to have the roads resurfaced or brought up to good shape.

Thompson replied that the oil money funding the county received had to go to major collector roads. He also said in some instances the County has paved up some roads and turned them to gravel.

Walberg asked if these routes would qualify as major collector routes as the are tied to Hwy 46 and Hwy 18.

Bladow commented that in 2009 the County spent \$150,000 on CR 23 and on CR2, a blade level overlay was done; the concern is that it is getting too high and narrow so it would be a major reconstruction.

Campbell explained that the County has to meet specs with funding.

Bladow explained that funding would be at least eight years out and suggested some dura-patching could be done this summer. Because this is not a major collector route, it would be local funding.

Berseth asked if they would rather have a "good gravel road" or what it is now? Walberg replied - he would rather have what is there now with some patching.

Arlo Leedahl commented he would be in favor of a reconstruction with assessments.

(Damon DeVillers and Jesse Seedler of Interstate Engineering joined the meeting.)

David Oster asked when a crack seal was last done. Bladow replied maybe a chip seal could be looked at this summer.

Bladow reported a Traffic County was done by the DOT last July or August.

The Board will put together some ball park figures for Helendale Twsp and plan on some patchwork being done this summer.

In other business, it was reported that there is a plugged culvert through the Township Road at 59 St SE and Co Rd 23. Bladow replied he would look into it.

Other Department Matters -

- the Highway Crew has changed to summer hours

Eagle Township - Bridge 122-8.3 - Berseth commented that Eagle and Colfax Townships have dedicated money to the project - the issue is the Agreement with Larry Moe. The County is involved up to the Township Road - the farmers/townships are responsible for the reconstruction of the road but we need Interstate Engineering in charge. He suggested the County contribute \$15,000 towards Interstate Engineering costs, that would relieve the County of responsibility for the project.

Berg reported that some trees will need to be taken out also. Bladow replied that if Interstate Engineering is involved they can establish an alignment and work with Larry Moe.

Berseth suggested a letter from the County be sent to Larry Moe.

The Board moved on to a scheduled Bid Opening at this time - Eagle Twsp Bridge 122-8.3 discussion continued later in the meeting.

**HB1176 BID OPENING**

Bids were received for the following:

- Base Bid for CH# 21N & CH# 3
- Alternate Bid for CH# 19
- Alternates 2 & 3 to Chip Seal all projects

The following bids were received:

	Base Bid	Alternate 1	Alternate 2	Alternate 3
Central Specialties	1,411,105.21	705,111.90	207,416.20	148,819.20
Mark Sand & Gravel	1,389,437.42	764,216.15	199,367.90	143,177.98
Mayo Construction	1,456,845.94	783,156.00	217,150.50	155,596.95

A motion was made by Thompson to accept all bids received for Tabulation; motion seconded by Berseth. Vote was unanimous.

Eagle Township - Bridge 122-8.3 Discussion Continued from earlier in the meeting.

The Board discussed how to guarantee Larry Moe that the locals will do their portion.

Berg suggested Lester Johnson as the contact person to get farmers together to work it out. He also reported that Vacation Bible School is the first week of June so the project should wait until after that.

Thompson asked that Bladow work with Interstate Engineering on projected costs for Engineering Services.

Berseth recommended the County pay up to \$15,000 and any further engineering costs would be the responsibility of the two Townships.

**STEPHANIE ARTH - NEW CONSTRUCTION EXEMPTION**

Sandy Fossum reported the home was constructed in Grant Township in 2015, and has been occupied since August. The local Assessor has not provided any information. Fossum stated the County has a Resolution so her hands are tied.

Stephanie Arth was present and stated she found out about the Exemption in February.

Thompson commented that if the owner is not aware of - the County needs to write new guidelines.

Bailey suggested some education at the Township Officers Meetings so this information could be communicated by the Townships when the building permits are issued.

Following discussion a motion was made by Thompson to approve the new construction exemption for the tax years 2016 and 2017 up to \$150,000 structure value, with the stipulation that the Assessors Office be allowed to assess the property; motion seconded by Berg. Vote was unanimous. Fossum requested the Board review the Resolution for New Construction Exemptions.

**DON KRASSIN - VACANCY ON SE SENIOR SERVICES COUNCIL, INC**

Krassin reported there are six Senior Citizens Clubs in Richland County including:

- Fairmount
- Wyndmere
- Hankinson
- Lidgerwood
- Abercrombie
- Wahpeton

and three Corporations in Richland County:

- Southeast Senior Services Council Inc
- Wahpeton Harmony Seniors Citizens Club Inc
- Richland County Council on Aging Inc

Each of the three corporations have identical Boards of Directors. These Boards are self perpetuating, meaning if a vacancy occurs the board itself finds a replacement.

In the case of the Southeast Senior Services Council, a recent review of the by-laws reminded the Board that the by-laws provide that the Richland County Commissioners may nominate 1 board member.

It was the consensus of the Commission that they were comfortable with their Board of Directors making the appointment rather than the Commission.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A) Social Service - They have one retirement coming up.

B) Buildings & Grounds Committee - A structural engineer from Interstate Engineering will take a look at the Courthouse front steps to see what can be done - we have had several individuals fall.

Campbell and Ehlert will do a walk about of the LEC to review spaces

C) Public Health - A meeting is scheduled for next week.

D) Job Development Board - A meeting will be held April 20th, they have a lot of applications to review.

E) Weed Board - Have sent out bids for contract work.

F) Soils Committee - A meeting was held this week. The Portfolios will meet with Fossum.

G) Park Board - Need to get some clarification on funding.

H) Administration - No report.

## **MISC/CORRESPONDENCE continued**

A motion was made by Thompson to approve the payment of bills; motion seconded by Ehlert. Vote was unanimous.

## **EXTENSION STAFFING CHANGES**

Colleen Konwinski and a large group of visitors were in attendance.

Thompson summarized events that began in August 2015 and led to the termination of County Agent Konwinski last week by NDSU. Now, it goes on to a hearing. Thompson reported the Board never met jointly with the Extension Service to review allegations nor to discuss her termination, Thompson was told by her supervisor that she would be terminated; he added the County Board of Commissioners has no say in Extension Service Personnel or how the office is run although the County contributes funding for salaries.

Thompson reported a termination letter from Konwinski's supervisor, Ron Wiederholt, Southeast District Director at NDSU Extension Service, states she has 20 days from the date of the letter, March 28, to appeal if she so chooses.

Thompson reported he had spoke to Wiederholt earlier when concerns were raised and suggested an unbiased third party get involved to get to the bottom of the allegations - he agreed. This third person spent several weeks interviewing people. A report was written by Noah Fischer, NDSU Associate Director of Employee Development, which Thompson reviewed. Thompson stated he found it curious that unnamed people were stating things Colleen was doing wrong; no names were included in the report.

Thompson reported a Performance Review was done here several weeks back with Thompson, Wiederholt, Richland County Agent Brock Shouldis and one other person - one week later Thompson received a call that Konwinski would be terminated.

Board comments followed - Konwinski was asked by the Commission if she was put on an improvement plan by her supervisor after receiving a warning letter and she replied she was not. She had received an email that said she was to go by the policies - she asked what that meant, but got no feedback.

Thompson stated he would continue to support Konwinski and asked the rest of the Board to join him in support.

Ehlert noted all the letters of support she received - from every school district in the county, from almost everyone who works in Extension today, from those who previously worked with her, from others who work in the building, as well as people out in the community. Ehlert stated when he read the report from Fischer, he thought a lot of the information alleged was circumstantial. He stated based on the evidence provided, he would support Konwinski at the hearing.

Berg stated that her position here isn't an office job, it's to meet with the public and she has done that - it's a salaried position and you do what needs to be done and she has done that.

Berseth stated weight should be given to her past performances - there is a 14 year history of good reviews; he trusts Commissioner Thompson's intuition and will support Konwinski also. Berseth stated he does have an issue with the County providing the Extension Office space and helping pay for staff salaries but having no say in how the office is run.

Campbell stated he has major concerns of the office being functional without Konwinski being in the office; he also stated it's unfair the County Board was not involved in the process with Konwinski.

The public was then allowed to address the Board. Supporters included:

Norma Nosek, chairman of the board for the Bagg Bonanza Foundation - she stated she was surprised that no one in the area she knew was interviewed by the Extension staff about Konwinski - she went to the 4H Council (past & present), and the schools and not any of them knew anything about this. Every person she has talked to had nothing but extremely good comments.

Penny Siefert, Twin Town Gardeners Market - Commented that Konwinski has helped every year with the Twin Town Gardeners Market and has provided information on market funding opportunities; there was an issue with food safety at the Twin Town Market and Konwinski stepped in to take care of the issue in a confidential manner and worked well with all the vendors.

Paul Langseth said he's a strong supporter of Extension and has served on statewide boards for 15 years. He thinks there are a lot of personality issues, or a leadership issue at some level and a certain amount of gender bias. He could not see any reason for the termination of a tremendous county agent.

Senator Larry Luick stated he learned of the termination last week. He made a call to NDSU after he found out and spoke with Chris Boerboem, Director NDSU Extension Service; he could not tell Luick anything pertinent. Luick believes that gender bias may be a situation here that needs to be evaluated more in depth.

Renelle Bertsch commented that she found out about this yesterday; she spoke favorable of Konwinski and asked why Konwinski was not told the names of the accusers, shouldn't she have a right to know - where is their integrity level.

Karen Weber, Richland County 4-H commented that Konwinski has always been professional; she commented that most all 4H activities are after 5 PM and Konwinski is always there. She also was concerned that no one had asked supports of Konwinski for any input.

Henry Weber, 4H Leader, also spoke in favor of Konwinski.

Bailey commented that he had received a phone call from Ron Wiederholt that Konwinski won't be approving vouchers anymore, he hadn't heard anything prior to that. He found out yesterday that one County employee was contacted.



Konwinski thanked the Commissioners and everyone at the meeting for their support.

The Commissioners asked Konwinski to let them know when the hearing takes place.

**MISC/CORRESPONDENCE continued**

Bailey distributed information on the refunding bond sale of 2017-2019 Bonds for paying off the last three years of CR 8. After all fees are paid the net funds gained is \$23,055.

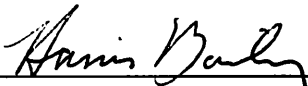
**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

April

- 12 Commission Meeting
- 14 Thompson and Ehler travel to Itasca to look at a Honeywell Project

Being there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 A.M.

Reports Filed: Tax & Property Dept - Revenue Voucher for February 1-31, 2016 and Sheriff's Department - Revenue & Expenses and Civil Balance Sheet for January and February 2016.

ATTEST:   
Harris Bailey  
Auditor/Administrator

 CHAIRPERSON  
Tim Campbell  
Board of Richland County Commissioners

The following claims were approved for March, 2016

PAYROLL (inclusive)	
General	212,493.88
County Highway	65,352.22
Social Services	90,114.54
911 Communications	46,935.96
Drug Court	1,417.50
County Agent	4,590.09
Veterans Service	2,948.06
Weed Officer	400.00
Public Health Fund	66,976.68
SEMCA	9,560.93
JDA	180.00
<b>PAYROLL TOTAL</b>	<b>500,969.86</b>

EXPENSES: \*\* Refer to  
resolution records

County General	218,513.71
County Highway	220,825.06
Bridge Repl Fund	560.00
Rd & Bridge Fund	67,303.95
15 Mill Road fund	76,553.54
Social Service	46,178.21
911 Communications	20,199.83
911 Wireless	2,949.02
NDRIN Fees	235.00
Drug Court Fund	738.66
Special Response Team	529.68
County Agent	2,616.22
Veterans Service	1,319.10
Weed Control Levy	1,079.74
Public Health	39,834.54
Haz Chem Fund	537.70
State Medical Levy	30,375.42
FEMA Disaster Reimb	1,725.69
Garrison Div	30,375.42
Domestic Violence	175.00
Twsp Share Gas & Oil	224,590.05
Jail Concession	1,417.57
Sobriety Test Fund	1,885.00
SEMCA	2,004.51
JDA	7,052.54
Sr Citizens Fund	98,004.43
Historical Society	7,593.91
County Agent Special	265.00
Soil Conservation	30,375.42
Water Mngt Levy	121,501.70
Joint Water Resource	60,750.94
<b>EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>1,318,066.56</b>

**TOTAL PAYROLL &  
EXPENSES** **1,819,036.42**

ATTEST:

  
Harris Bailey  
Auditor/Administrator

  
Tim Campbell  
Board of Richland County, Commissioners

CHAIRPERSON

**Richland COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA  
RESOLUTION TO INCREASE THE EXISTING  
EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS (9-1-1) FEE**

WHEREAS, the emergency services communication (9-1-1) system is critical to public safety in Richland County; and

WHEREAS, the monthly fee on "assessed communications services" (telephone exchange access service, wireless service, active prepaid wireless service, and voice over internet protocol service) imposed pursuant to North Dakota Century Code 57-40.6 is essential to the operation and maintenance of the emergency services communication system (9-1-1); and

WHEREAS the current fee limited to \$1.00 per month per "communication connection" (telephone access line, wireless access line, unique voice over internet protocol service connection, or functional equivalent uniquely identifiable by a number, internet address, or other designation) was implemented by resolution of this board and approved on November 3, 1998 by the voters of Richland County;

WHEREAS the revenue from the current fee is insufficient to adequately fund the maintenance and operations of the emergency services communications (9-1-1) system, it is proposed that the fee maximum be increased up to \$1.50 per "assessed communication service" however the county commission could impose an amount less, but no more than that maximum; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota Century Code section 57-40.6-02 provides a process of imposing 9-1-1 fees by governing board resolution and approval of the voters.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Richland County Board of Commissioners proposes an increase of the existing monthly fee, and directs that the following measure be placed on the county ballot for the statewide primary election scheduled for June 14, 2016 and shall become effective October 1, 2016.

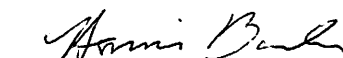
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the fee shall be collected by the "assessed communications service providers" and paid to the County within thirty (30) days after collection from the subscriber or customer unless the provider has fewer than ten subscribers or customers in a jurisdiction, in which case the provider may pay the proceeds quarterly. An assessed communications service provider may retain the actual costs of administration in collection of the fee, not to exceed five percent of the fee collected.

Dated this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 20~~16~~<sup>16</sup>

Approved:

Attest:

  
Tim Campbell, Richland County  
Commission Chairman

  
Harris Buikey, Richland County Auditor

### Richland County Measure #3

Should the current emergency services communication (9-1-1) fee not to exceed \$1.00 per month per "communication connection" (telephone access line, wireless access line, unique voice over internet protocol service connection, or functional equivalent uniquely identifiable by a number, internet address, or other designation) for the operation and maintenance of the 9-1-1 emergency services communications system be increased up to a maximum (not to exceed) \$1.50 per month?

Voter approval would allow a fee, not to exceed \$1.50 per month per "communication connection" to become effective October 1, 2016, with the revenue dedicated to maintaining and operating the emergency services communication (9-1-1) system as required by State law.

- YES      A "YES" vote means you approve the proposed increase of the fee up to \$1.50 per month
  
- NO      A "NO" vote means you do not approve the fee increase and it would remain at \$1.00 per month