

**RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**APRIL 15, 2025**

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met at 8:00 A.M. on April 15, 2025 at the Richland County Courthouse with Commissioners Tim Campbell, Terry Goerger, Nathan Berseth, Rollie Ehlert, and Perry Miller. Others included Administrative Personnel Fossum and South, State's Attorney Kummer, Sheriff Ruhl, Steve Gjerdevig, Jill Breuer, Jesse Sedler, Donnie Witt, John Anderson, Brett Lambrecht, Alan Dahlman, Donovan Buck, Kayla Carlson, Patty Lies, Laurie Straus, Lynn Flieth, Mary Vetter, and Daily News Reporter Cameron Sutphin.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to approve the agenda. Vote was unanimous.

**JILL BREUER – REPEATER AGREEMENT CITY OF LIDGERWOOD**

Breuer addressed the Commission regarding a proposed agreement between the City of Lidgerwood and Richland County. Breuer explained that the agreement is a 10-year contract to house and use the antenna on the water tower in Lidgerwood at no cost.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Miller to approve a 10-year Repeater Agreement with the City of Lidgerwood. Vote was unanimous.

Breuer informed the Commission that this week is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Breuer reported that Senate Bill 2296 passed, making telecommunicators first responders.

Breuer reported that the administrative fees that telcos can collect has been reduced from 5% to 2% in recent legislation.

**MISC/CORRESPONDENCE**

Fossum distributed an updated organizational chart for the County to the Board of Commission for review. Fossum explained that the only thing she changed on the chart was where the Auditor fell per the Commission's request. Discussion ensued regarding the Water Resource Board and its placement on the chart. Fossum will make the edits discussed and present at the next meeting.

**SHERIFF RUHL – QUARTERLY REPORT**

Sheriff Ruhl distributed a year-to-date Calls for Service Report to the Board of

Commissioners. Ruhl reported that the department is on course to receive about 10,000 calls for service this year. There have been 438 traffic stops so far this year, compared to 126 at this same time last year.

Sheriff Ruhl announced two officers would be graduating next Friday from Bismarck.

Ruhl reported that another estimate for a sanitizer for the jail had been obtained from Hobart, for \$10,000. Anderson explained that he is hesitant to place a \$2300 sanitizer in the Jail due to its location above Dispatch. Anderson stated that with the inspection coming up, a decision would need to be made soon. A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to authorize Sheriff Ruhl and John Anderson to purchase sanitizer for Corrections. Vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Ruhl reported that the jail inspection is scheduled Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at noon.

## **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Highway personnel in attendance were Jesse Sedler and Donnie Witt. Sedler gave a brief update on the following Highway activities:

Sedler informed the Commission that he checked with the state to make sure that funding would not be pulled for the bridge work in Helendale Township. Sedler anticipates a bid opening in May with work to start in the Fall and finish in June of 2026. A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to advertise for bids on 39-105-06.01 in Helendale Township with completion date of June of 2026. Vote was unanimous.

Sedler reported that there is a preconstruction meeting for the box culverts in Lamars and Fairmount Townships next week.

Sedler informed the Commission that the total for all bids for Highway projects came in \$990,000 less than he had budgeted for. Sedler stated that he had budgeted \$2,000,000 for bridge work, but 85% of that will be reimbursed. Sedler proposed finishing Co Rd 16 from Co Rd 81 to Co Rd 7 (3 miles) and completing a small spur on Co Rd 1 north of Mooreton from the Antelope Bridge to Co Rd 10 (2.7 miles) with the available funds. A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to approve budget adjustments and advertise for bids on additional Highway projects. Vote was unanimous.

Sedler reported the department will be switching to four 10-hour shifts after Easter.

Commissioner Goerger asked for full transparency from the Highway Department's portfolio holders regarding reports of a raise for an employee in the Highway Department.

Commissioner Ehlert explained that the employee in question was previously non-exempt and was eligible for overtime. The employee's salary was adjusted so that their exempt rate would be equal to the 3-year average of their non-exempt salary. Ehlert stated that the portfolios actions were justified as it was a net savings for the county.

Commissioner Campbell stated that he was in a similar situation with another department and was under the impression that portfolio holders did not have the authority to make those decisions without the consent of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Berseth stated that the situation Commissioner Campbell was referring to was different because it was not a cost savings for the county but suggested that all matters pertaining to salaries come before the Board of Commissioners.

### **JOHN ANDERSON – DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Anderson gave the following updates:

- the chiller set up was scheduled for Friday of this week, but a broken part was discovered, that date may be pushed back
- will be scheduling a final walk through for the Courthouse, John has a punch list ready
- sanitizer for jail was discussed earlier in the meeting
- Courthouse Facilities Improvement Grant projects will start in May

### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT POLICY**

Kayla Carlson addressed the Board of Commissioners regarding an email she sent to the Board of Health about proposed retention bonuses for their department. Carlson stated that it was not her intent to circumvent any laws or formal processes; she believed the email was open for feedback. Carlson shared several examples of how grants received by the Health Department have benefited the county.

Carlson requested the Board of Commissioners consideration for offering fully grant funded retention bonuses to the 10 remaining staff members in the Health Department. Carlson explained that the proposed retention bonuses would be \$3000 for a 3-year commitment.

Discussion followed and included:

- whether there was a distinction between retiring and resigning
- process of recouping funds if an employee leaves before 3 years
- other uses the grant funds could be used for

- concerns for the morale of the employees who would be left out
- cohesion of the department under Carlson's direction
- concerns of retention bonuses becoming an expectation

A motion was made by Goerger and seconded by Campbell to accept the Health Departments retention bonus proposal. Voting NO were Berseth, Ehlert, and Miller. The motion failed.

### **RICHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Alan Dahlman and Donovan Buck were present from the Historical Society. Dahlman addressed the Board of Commissioners for an update on the Historical Society's funding request. Commissioner Miller asked Dahlman if he had received an email from the JDA last week, Dahlman stated that he had not. Dahlman and Buck will attend the next JDA meeting to address funding.

### **MISC/CORRESPONDENCE**

Commissioner Miller addressed Carlson about the allegations of discrimination from the Health Department that were reported in the Daily News. Miller asked Carlson if she had read the article, she stated that she had. Berseth asked Carlson when she was made aware of the concern. Carlson stated that she was made aware right before the special meeting called by the Board of Health. The Board of Commissioners advised Carlson to follow up with Human Resources regarding the allegation.

Fossum informed the Commission that she will be completing her Assessor Certification in November instead of May due to the Auditors being on site.

Fossum informed the Commission that the tax portion of the new accounting software will go live this week.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

#### April

15 Township Officer Meeting 7:00 P.M.

#### May

6 Commission Meeting

14 Legislative Wrap-Up

20 Commission Meeting

#### June

3 Commission Meeting

3 Equalization Meetings  
17 Commission Meeting

July

1 Commission Meeting  
15 Commission Meeting

Motion to adjourn by Campbell.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:48 A.M.

Reports Filed: Tax & Property Department – Revenue Voucher for March 2025; Sheriff’s  
Department – Revenue & Expenses for March 2025.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sandy Fossum  
Auditor/Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_CHAIRPERSON  
Tim Campbell  
Board of Richland County Commissioners