

**RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 18, 2024**

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met on June 18, 2024 with Commissioners Nathan Berseth, Tim Campbell, Rollie Ehlert, Terry Goerger and Perry Miller. Others included Administration Personnel Fossum and South, State's Attorney Kummer, Melissa Brown, Rick Score, Brett Lambrecht, Jill Breuer, Jesse Sedler, Donnie Witt, John Anderson, Leon Steckler, a Daily news reporter, and a large group of visitors.

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

MELISSA BROWN – PILOT APPLICATION

Tax Director Brown reported that Vaderstad Properties LLC has applied for a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) on their new multi-level office building. The value of the new structure was estimated to be about \$10,000,000; Vaderstad's is applying for a 5-year PILOT. Brown distributed the application and payment schedule to the Board of Commissioners prior to the meeting. Brown reported that the taxes paid over the 5-year PILOT would be about 50% of the taxes paid over 5 years, which is typical for the PILOT exemption. Brown introduced Leon Steckler to the Board of Commissioners and stated that he was there for any questions the Commissioners may have.

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Berseth to approve the PILOT incentive for Vaderstad on parcel 17-3396.100. Commissioner Miller asked if there was any discussion.

Goerger asked Steckler what type of training would be done at the facility. Steckler reported that training would be for the dealer network in the United States and Canada; the second addition to the building is where the training will take place.

Berseth asked Steckler what his title was at Vaderstad's. Stecker stated that he is the Financial Controller. Berseth asked if he was hired when the new facility was built. Steckler reported that he was the first hire after Vaderstad purchased the company and was managing a Case IH Dealership in North Dakota before he came to Wahpeton.

Berseth stated he was on board for the PILOT and extended an invite to Vaderstad's Leadership Team to meet with the JPA to discuss investing in multi-family apartment unit. Steckler stated that Vaderstad's Leadership Team would be willing to do so.

Ehlert stated that Vaderstad's has had significant employee growth.

Miller asked Steckler how many employees Vaderstad's has compared to what Wil-Rich had. Steckler reported that Wil-Rich had 105 employees when they sold the company, Vaderstad currently has 150 full-time employees.

Campbell asked Steckler if Vaderstad's has a contract with NDSCS. Steckler stated that they do not but have hired students and graduates from NDSCS.

Berseth asked when the project is expected to be complete. Steckler stated that it should be complete in Mid-July; the transition will occur from August through October.

With no further discussion, the motion was voted on. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

Sedler reported that he received the road mileage certification for townships and needs a motion for the Certification to be approved.

Miller asked what the numbers came out to be on the mileage. Sedler reported that the mileage claimed by townships was 1812 and does not fluctuate much.

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Berseth to approve the County Road Mileage Certification for Townships. Vote was unanimous.

Engineer Sedler gave the following updates:

- Drain Tile Project - Tiling has been postponed to next week due to the rain.
- CO RD 16 Project - Knife River Materials will start the project on August 5th with completion planned in November.
- Right of Ways are about 95% complete, waiting on one person.

Berseth asked when the anticipated end date of the CO RD 16 Project is. Sedler reported that it is sometime in November and that it is achievable. Sedler anticipates that it will cause some issues during harvest as traffic will be pushed east to CO RD 1; will need to revisit at the next Commission Meeting.

Sedler reported that there is a Propane Bid opening today and proceeded to open the 2 bids that he received.

- Lakes Gas in Walcott - \$1.54 across the board.
- Farmers Union Oil - \$.90 during the summer months to fill the tank in Hankinson, \$1.10 to fill the tank in the winter, and \$1.40 at the other shops throughout the year.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to accept liquid propane bids. Vote was unanimous.

MISC/CORRESPONDENCE

Fossum reported that Richland County received a request from the City of Lidgerwood regarding a home they tore down due to delinquent taxes. JVX charged the City of Lidgerwood \$15,000, Lidgerwood is requesting \$5,000 from Richland County to help with the cost.

Fossum reported that the parcel is still owned by the individual, she does not think the county should get involved at this point.

JOHN ANDERSON – BUILDING & GROUNDS

Anderson reported that he has two change orders for the Courthouse Project that he needs approval for. The first change order is for extra plumbing demolition of old steam lines in the tunnel and going up to the first and second floor, totaling \$13,281. The second change order is for old thermostats that need to be demoed out and wall patching, totaling \$4100.

Campbell asked how much was set aside in the budget for change orders on the project.

Miller stated that there was a contingency of \$200,000 on the project.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Campbell to approve PR4 and PR5 for the HVAC project. Vote was unanimous

Anderson reported that the Courthouse Project is about 3 weeks ahead of schedule.

SHERIFF RUHL – LIFE SAVING AWARDS

Sheriff Ruhl reported that on August 1st, 2023, Richland County Dispatch received a call for service at Mooreton Pond for a possible drowning. When Law Enforcement arrived, the Mooreton Fire Department was already on the scene. All present worked together and were able to get the individual out of the water and pulled to safety until EMS arrived.

A letter was sent to the state to recognize the lifesaving efforts of those involved. The state recognized the following individuals with Life Saving Awards: Jeff Skovholt, Chad Klosterman, Ryan Ward, Taylor Ford, Officer Whitney Link, Brandon Ward, Zack Sletten, and Officer Tyler Mauch.

Sheriff Ruhl gave lifesaving pins to other individuals in the group who helped with the call for service but weren't recognized by the state.

Commissioner Goerger told all involved that he was very proud of them and thanked them for their heroic efforts.

ELEVATUS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY PRESENTATION

Cory Dietz from Elevatus Architecture introduced himself to the Board of Commissioners and thanked Sheriff Ruhl and the Board for their invitation to present. Dietz gave a brief history of the company while a proposal letter from Elevatus was distributed to the Board of Commissioners. Dietz introduced Paul Laney, former Cass County Sheriff and Chris Saylor, a retired Sheriff from Indiana who were in attendance to answer any questions the board may have. Laney and Saylor both had correctional facilities built with Elevatus.

Dietz explained that Elevatus helps counties and communities understand what their current needs are, where the desires are to go and grow, and then build a facility to support the future.

Paul Laney stated that he had the privilege of running a 350-bed facility in Cass County that saw 2 additions while he was in office. He stated that it is a process that needs to be detailed; this is where Elevatus can help. Elevatus is currently in the process of building new correctional facilities in Walsh County and Devils Lake and a Fire House in Medora.

Cambell asked what capacity Walsh County Jail held. Laney answered that it was 50 bed facility being built.

Campbell asked if Elevatus has built facilities that have mental health in a different capacity than the jail. Laney stated that Elevatus has, and he anticipates many more of these facilities in the future as he knows there is a great need for it.

Ehlert asked if Elevatus would be prepared to tell Richland County in the planning phase, if they thought the facility size chosen was not adequate for future needs.

Laney stated that Elevatus will always give the best advice possible, they are here to help us with our future needs. Elevatus believes in not only building for current needs but planning for future needs. Laney stated a jail is not a business, but there are things that can be done to help offset some of the cost for taxpayers. Contracts can be obtained to house federal inmates, who are not necessarily from other regions, but have federal charges being brought against them. These contracts help to offset the cost to the community.

Dietz stated that the study that Elevatus does will identify the needs, and the budget to meet those needs. If the budget is too high, then we can take another look at the needs and see if there is something we can scale back on to find a balance.

Berseth asked if Elevatus had a business plan that they would be willing to share.

Saylors stated that he would be willing to send his budget from the year he retired. When his new facility was built in Indiana, he signed letters of memorandums with other counties who did not have enough beds at their facilities. Saylors stated that his new facility generated \$300,000 in 10 months by taking prisoners from other counties.

Campbell asked Saylors if he knew how much money it was costing his county to transport inmates out prior to building the new facility. Saylors stated that between transportation, services, and lost reimbursement, he estimated about 1.3 million in a 2-3 year period.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Campbell to approve phase 1 of the program/conceptual design for a new correctional facility and have it include a business plan. Vote was unanimous.

MISC/CORRESPONDENCE continued

Fossum reported that she received a budget memo from the Association of Counties; they are predicting that Richland County will get a \$5,000,000 disbursement for Prairie Dog in Quarter 1 of 2025.

Campbell reported that last year there were 33 deficiencies during the jail inspection, this year there were only 6.

Fossum reported that the Primary Election went well. There was an election observer in Wahpeton who gave a good report.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

July

23 Commission Meeting

23 Budget Meetings

August

6 Commission Meeting

20 Commission Meeting

September

- 3 Commission Meeting
- 17 Commission Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 A.M.

ATTEST: _____
Sandy Fossum
Auditor/Administrator

_____CHAIRPERSON
Perry Miller
Board of Richland County Commissioners