

RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MARCH 4, 2025

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met at 8:00 A.M. on March 4, 2025 at the Richland County Courthouse with Commissioners Tim Campbell, Terry Goerger, Nathan Berseth, Rollie Ehler, and Perry Miller. Others included Administrative Personnel Fossum and South, State's Attorney Kummer, Jesse Sedler, Donnie Witt, Mary Vetter, Jenny Anderson, Lynn Flieth, Representative Cindy Schreiber-Beck, Kory Kaste, Steve Dale, Daily News Reporter Cameron Sutphin, and a few visitors.

Commissioner Campbell called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to approve the agenda. Vote was unanimous.

A motion was made by Ehler and seconded by Miller to approve the minutes of meetings February 4 and February 25. Vote was unanimous.

TREASURERS REPORT

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Goerger to approve the Treasurer's Report. Vote was unanimous.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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

- Load restrictions went into effect at 6:00 A.M Monday, March 3rd.
- Department was blading last week and will continue this week, weather permitting.
- Flashing beacons were placed on both sides of Hull Road last Friday; signs will be placed to warn that cross traffic doesn't stop.

MISC/CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence from MDU Natural Gas – Proposed natural gas pipeline from Richland County to Brushville Seed. Concerns should be submitted by March 15, 2025.

A motion was made by Miller and seconded by Goerger to approve a raffle permit for the Hankinson Sandhills Saddle Club. Vote was unanimous.

Fossum informed the Board that she would be attending the Five County Meeting on March 6th.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT continued

Bid Opening – Gravel Crushing – The following bids were received with contractor's license and bid bond appearing to be in order:

Central Specialties Inc, Alexandria MN	\$3.84/ton
Knife River Materials, Bemidji MN	\$6.25/ton
Krause Brothers Construction, Wahpeton ND	\$2.249/ton
Mark Sand and Gravel, Fergus Falls MN	\$2.61/ton
Rogge Excavating, Ghent MN	\$1.90/ton
RTS Shearing, Jamestown ND	\$2.069/ton

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Ehlert to accept all gravel crushing bids received. Vote was unanimous.

The possibility of a 3% cap was discussed and how it would affect future projects.

Bid Opening – Culverts – The following bids were received:

Contech Engineered Solutions, Fargo ND	24" pipe	\$32.30/ft
True North Steel, Fargo ND	24" pipe	\$30.40/ft

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Miller to accept all culvert bids received. Vote was unanimous.

Sedler informed the Board that he would like the Highway Department to try placing some of their own small box culverts in 2026. Sedler has been working with Cass County Highway; they placed five small box culverts in 2024.

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE

Mary Vetter gave the following VSO updates:

In 2024, the Veterans Service Office had 2,317 communications logged in digital state solutions. This number includes office, home visits, and claims work. It does not include outreach, local events, presentations at local service organizations, Salvation Army Board, biannual training, volunteer transportation services (over 100 last year), or time and research spent obtaining historical gravesites (over 50 last year). Vetter shared some of the challenges the department has been facing as well as the solutions they have come up.

Vetter requested a procedure change to the county's per diem policy as she feels it creates an unintentional financial burden on employees in certain situations.

The Board of Commissioners requested that any revisions be tabled for the next meeting so proper language can be determined.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) HSZ Board – A meeting was held last week in Milnor.

B) Buildings & Grounds – Nothing to report.

C) Public Health – Mandatory STS testing will start at the jail, tests will be supplied by a state grant. The Community Resource Coordinator continues to see more people for Medicare enrollment. The department performed 71 TB screenings last year. Tobacco tax increase should bring more funding from the state. Public Health is looking at the possibility of a Public Health District; Kayla Carlson is gathering information to present to the Board.

D) JDA/JPA – JDA approved a loan in Lidgerwood. JPA - Legacy Lakes was approved last night at the Planning Commission, phase I will bring 109 residential lots to Wahpeton. The red Queen Anne-style house in Wahpeton has gone to another individual who is ready to rehabilitate the residence.

E) Weed Board – The excess spray truck is being advertised on the Public Surplus Auction with a minimum sale price set. Will be opening bids for contractor spraying in April as the 2-year contract is up. The Board currently has four vacancies, which will be advertised. The building in Barney has had some furnace trouble, looking at LP and alternative storage options.

F) Soils Committee – Nothing to report.

G) Park Board – Meeting March 17th at SE Water 5:00 P.M. Verbiage for signs at Mooreton Pond will be determined and signs will be ordered and placed. Rock will need to be placed at Mooreton Pond to make it easier to get the docks in and out.

H) Administration – Fossum will gather org charts from department heads and bring them back to the next meeting.

The meeting recessed at 9:25 A.M.

The meeting was called back to order at 10:30 A.M. on March 4 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, Representative Cindy Schreiber-Beck, Kevin Oster, Steve Dale, Ryan Ward, Dave Sholl, Paul Laney, Dr. Deanna Dwenger, Dillon Redding, and Daily News Reporter Cameron Sutphin.

MISC/CORRESPONDENCE continued

A motion was made by Goerger and seconded by Campbell to approve the payment of the bills. Vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Goerger announced that Representative Cindy Schreiber-Beck, who was in attendance, was being inducted into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame tonight.

ELEVATUS

Representatives from Elevatus in attendance were Dave Sholl, Paul Laney, Dr. Deanna Dwenger, and Dillon Redding.

Sheriff Ruhl gave an update on the proposed project to the visitors in attendance. He reported that a breakdown had been prepared with annual operational costs for the current jail as well as projected operational costs for the proposed correctional facility. Ruhl reported that Elevatus has drawn up plans for a 212-bed facility with 32 of those beds designated for mental health. Gjerdevig reported that the current jail cost almost \$749,000 to operate in 2024; projections for the new jail would net approximately 2.4 million annually.

A discussion followed and included:

Laney shared that Cass County used a sales tax that ended 6 months early to fund their jail; he believed it was a half cent.

Cass County upped their bed contract with the Feds from 10 to 40, they were able to hire 13 deputies and 2 support staff with the additional revenue. Federal inmates were either from the region or they committed a crime in ND and were being held on Federal charges, for the most part.

Campbell asked Representative Cindy Schreiber-Beck if HB1213 has the possibility of being amended back to \$200,000,000 and who to get after if it does. Representative Schreiber-Beck stated that it does, and the bill has moved to the Senate.

Ehlert stated that 15% of the proposed facility is dedicated to mental health, which should carry weight, as it meets the mission of the Governor.

Schrieber-Beck suggested presenting solid numbers to the legislature; she was unaware that it was costing $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars annually to support what exists today.

Gjerdevig stated that there are 108 standards that need to be met annually during the jail inspection and the jail is literally one pipe away from being shut down.

Miller asked Sheriff Laney if he anticipated any potential cuts to what the Feds will pay for housing prisoners. Laney stated that he had not seen any cuts thus far to safety, security, or law enforcement, but nobody really knows what will happen.

The Commission discussed funding and asked Fossum to find out what a 1 cent and 2 cent sales tax would bring in over 30 years.

Walsh County is proposing a combination of sales tax & property tax to build their jail; it will go to a vote in May.

Dr. Dwenger stated staffing for the mental health ward would depend on the need, the goal is to progress to general population.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was the consensus of the Board of Commissioners that the best approach would be to go to Bismarck with all five counties, to testify at the legislature regarding the importance of HB1213. If legislation fails, bond rates and funding options can be revisited at that time.

Laney stated Elevatus would get the business plan finalized so they can invoice out phase I of the project and hopefully move forward with phase II.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March

- 6 Five County Meeting
- 8 Coffee with Legislators
- 17 Park Board Meeting
- 18 Commission Meeting
- 24 PSC Hearing – Flickertail Solar

April

- 1 Commission Meeting
- 15 Commission Meeting

May

- 6 Commission Meeting
- 14 Legislative Wrap-Up (Tentative)
- 20 Commission Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 11:53 A.M.

ATTEST: _____

Sandy Fossum
Auditor/Administrator

_____CHAIRPERSON

Tim Campbell
Board of Richland County Commissioners

The following claims were approved for February, 2025

PAYROLL (inclusive)

General	\$	317,406.26
County Highway	\$	116,509.55
911 Communications	\$	57,569.67
County Agent	\$	7,822.65
Veterans Service	\$	11,043.08
Weed Officer	\$	680.00
Public Health Fund	\$	73,378.28
Income Maintenance	\$	71,670.22
Foster Care	\$	19,529.61
Child Protective Svc	\$	38,297.14
Parent Aid	\$	4,736.30
Family Soc Worker	\$	5,333.41
Social Services	\$	72,531.41
In-Home Care	\$	23,872.72
Admin Support	\$	17,383.09
PAYROLL TOTAL	\$	837,763.39

EXPENSES: ** Refer to resolution records

County General Accounts	\$	394,065.90
County Highway	\$	144,377.02
Bridge Replacement	\$	9,917.42
Road & Bridge Equipment Fund	\$	-
Prairie Dog Disbursements	\$	-
15 Mill Road	\$	-
Social Services Fund	\$	-
Emergency Assistance Donation	\$	-
Emergency Fund	\$	-
911 Communications	\$	29,230.18
NDRIN	\$	158.90
Capitol Improvement	\$	156,005.17
Water Rescue	\$	63.46
Special Response Team	\$	-
Civil Asset Forfeiture Fund	\$	-
K9 Dog Donations	\$	-
American Rescue Plan Funds	\$	1,140.99
County Agent	\$	3,043.88
Veterans Service	\$	5,073.31
Veteran Assistance Donation	\$	50.00
Weed Control Levy	\$	2,058.69
Public Health	\$	50,718.73
Haz Chem Fund	\$	150.49
Income Maintenance	\$	24,558.60
Foster Care	\$	6,123.67
Child Protective Svc	\$	13,291.65

Parent Aid	\$	1,381.05
Family Soc Worker	\$	3,412.94
Social Services	\$	21,433.19
In-Home Care	\$	9,252.55
Admin Support	\$	16,785.78
HSZ Board	\$	-
Safety Permanency Fd	\$	-
Foster Care	\$	-
Unallow Fed Costs	\$	-
General Assistance	\$	-
American Rescue Plan Funds	\$	-
State Medical Levy	\$	30,057.52
Three Rivers Crisis Center	\$	-
FEMA Disaster Reimbursement	\$	-
Garrison Div	\$	30,057.52
Domestic Violence	\$	-
Twsp Share Gas & Oil	\$	71,952.88
TeleComm Tax Fund	\$	-
State Aid Distribution	\$	19,470.38
Jail Concession	\$	-
Sobriety Test Fund	\$	1,725.00
SEMCA	\$	1,278.27
County General Accounts	\$	50,000.00
Diversion Settlement	\$	855,742.47
ND Income Tax W/H	\$	-
Sr Citizen Fund	\$	30,697.07
Historical Society	\$	7,671.49
Co Agent Special	\$	-
Soil Cons District	\$	19,573.09
Water Mngt Levy	\$	84,902.31
Joint Water Resource	\$	45,086.34
Estimated Real Estate Tax	\$	-
Current Tax Holding Fund	\$	-
EXPENSE TOTAL	\$	2,140,507.91
 TOTAL PAYROLL & EXPENSES	 \$	 2,978,271.30

ATTEST: _____
 Sandy Fossum
 Auditor/Administrator

_____CHAIRPERSON
 Tim Campbell
 Board of Richland County Commissioners