The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on January 15, 2019 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:04 am by Commissioner Stearns and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were: Commissioners Jim Hofer, Sheldon Monson, Chuck Horsager, and Jon Kangas County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, County Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Human Service Director Tanya Leskey, Human Service Administrative Services Supervisor Amie Gendron, Planning and Zoning Director Deana Malone, IT Coordinator David Hotchkiss, Social Worker Naomi Van Batavia Wadena Pioneer Journal reporter Brian Hansel and Sebeka/Menahga Review Messenger reporter Matthew B. Johnson.

Amend/Approve the day’s Agenda: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda: Moved by Commissioner Horsager, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to accept the following consent agenda items:

- Approve the minutes from the 11/20/18 board meeting, 11/26/18 board meeting with the addition of some of the Commissioner Reports that were missing from the posted version and 11/26/18 Truth in Taxation meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

Closed Session for Negotiation Strategy: The open meeting closed at 9:05 am for negotiation strategy. The open portion of the meeting began again at 9:42 am. A break was taken and the meeting reconvened at 10:00 am.

Commissioner Committee Assignments:

Counties Providing Technology Representative: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Horsager to name Jim Hofer as the Representative to Counties Providing Technology with Jon Kangas as the alternate commissioner. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Committee Assignments:

Budget Committee: Hofer, Kangas
Building Services Committee: Monson, Stearns
Personnel Committee (Chair & Vice Chair): Stearns, Horsager
Road and Bridge Committee: Stearns, Kangas
Highway 10 Committee: Monson, Stearns
Strategic Planning:
Communication/Management: Monson, Hofer
Economic Development: Stearns, Horsager
Space/Building: Monson, Stearns

Tax Forfeiture Land/DNR Sales: Horsager, Kangas
Tax Abatement Committee: Horsager, Kangas
Todd/Wadena Corrections Joint Powers Executive Board and Advisory: Monson, Hofer
Morrison Todd Wadena (MTW) Community Health Board: Monson, Stearns
West Central Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA): Stearns, Horsager

Strategic and Efficient Government Committees:
AMC Environmental and Natural Resources Committee: Horsager
AMC General Government Committee: Hofer
AMC Health and Human Services: Kangas
AMC Public Safety: Monson
AMC Transportation, Leg. Steering Comm. Complete Streets, County Futures: Stearns
Recorder’s Compliance Fund Committee (Land Records): Monson, Horsager
Health Insurance Advisory Committee: Hofer, Kangas
Management Team Committee (Chair and Vice Chair): Stearns, Horsager
Negotiations Committee: Hofer, Kangas
Personnel Policy Committee (Chair and Vice Chair): Stearns, Horsager
Zoning and Planning Commission: Horsager
Safety and Security Committee (Chair and Vice Chair): Stearns, Horsager

Community Growth Committees:
Comprehensive Re-Entry: Monson, Hofer
FSC Collaborative-Corrections: Hofer
FSC Collaborative-Human Services: Kangas
FSC Collaborative-Public Health: Monson
Mental Health Task Force: Stearns
Old Wadena Committee: Hofer
Region 5 Development Committee: Monson
SHIP Public Health Community Leadership Team (CLT): Monson
Public Health Advisory: Monson
Transit Board: Hofer, Stearns
Wadena County Parks Board: Horsager, Kangas
Wadena New Ideas Committee (City/MState/Tri-County Hospital/Schools/County): Monson, Stearns

Environmental Resources Committees:
Judicial Ditch Committee (District 2 Rep. & 1 other Commissioner): Hofer, Kangas
IT Committee: Hofer, Kangas
GIS Committee: Monson, Stearns
Implementation Policy for 2019 Non Union Compensation: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to providing 1% increase to any Non Union Employee that is not receiving longevity that is over the 2019-B pay scale on their anniversary date. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation on the County Organizational Study: Gary Weiers presented his recommendations for the organization after the DDA organizational Study. He stated that he interviewed almost 40 employees of the county. He feels that the employees are very committed to providing services to the public. He recommends that the Commissioner Board Meetings be recorded and available for the public to view to remain transparent to the public. He suggests that the County Coordinator be changed to a full-time County Administrator with an Administrative Assistant who works with the Administrator. He is
suggesting combining the Assessor, Auditor/Treasurer, Planning and Zoning and the Recorders office into one Land Services Department on the lower level of the courthouse. The upper level of the courthouse would be used for the Deputy Offices and a Workroom, the IT Department, the breakroom for staff and a conference room for meetings. The suggestion is to perhaps have the Human Service Department partner with other counties. This could help with the government mandates that are in place currently and that could be coming in the future. The Human Services and County Attorney’s Office need to work on the relationship probably through a mediator. The janitorial services for the county buildings is not consistent. Some services are done by the county staff and some are contracted out. This should be examined to see the most cost effect way to clean the building.

Commissioner Horsager asked for counties that have a land service department and are currently using this format. Gary Weiers said that some counties use this format and he could provide the board with information on the counties.

Commissioner Stearns thinks that the strategic planning of the structure of the County organization should be looked at and also the use of the courthouse space. It was suggested that a work session be planned for the near future to look at this document. Friday, February 8, 2019 at 2:00 pm was decided on for a work session about this report.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Stearns: 1/9 Management Team, 1/15 Board Meeting


Commissioner Monson: 1/14 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, 1/15 Board Meeting

Commissioner Hofer: 1/9 Strategic Planning Communication Management, 1/10 Negotiation Committee, 1/10 IT Meeting, 1/14 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, 1/15 CGI Meeting, 1/15 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Kangas: 1/8 Board Meeting, 1/15 Board Meeting.

Moved by Commissioner Monson to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 am , seconded by Commissioner Hofer. Motion carried unanimously.

Ryan Odden,  
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer

Bill Stearns, Chairperson  
Wadena County Commissioners

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