

## WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

FEBRUARY 4, 2020

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on February 4, 2020 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Commissioner Horsager and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were: Commissioners Bill Stearns, Sheldon Monson, Jim Hofer, Jon Kangas, County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, Public Health Director Cindy Pederson, Planning & Zoning Deana Malone, Information Technology Coordinator Dave Hotchkiss, Solid Waste Director Chris McConn, *Review Messenger* reporter Matthew Johnson, *Wadena Pioneer Journal* reporter Michael Johnson and *Independent News Herald/Verndale Sun* reporter Trinity Gruenberg.

**Amend/Approve the Day's Agenda:** One addition to the agenda was made by Commissioner Kangas on the County Website Calendar which was placed in as 10A. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the day's agenda as presented with the addition. Motion carried unanimously.

**Recognize Interested Citizens:** None present today.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Approve the minutes from the 1-21-20 meeting.
- Approve the Gambling permit for England Prairie Pioneer Club, Inc. for bingo and a raffle for the August 21-23, 2020 event.
- Approve the new hire of Adam Licari, Asst. County II, \$96,753.00 (Year 1 of the 2020 Attorney Salary Schedule); full-time, Exempt, and non-union. A start date is 02-24-2020.
- Approve the new replacement hire of Human Services Rande Woodrum, Social Worker Team Lead, \$26.01 per hour, Start Date 02-24-2020. Grade: 55, Step: 3 Yearly Gross Salary: \$54,100.80, Total Salary and Employer Contributions (Taxes & Benefits): \$77,105.00.
- Approve the new replacement hire of Public Health Carrie Schreiner, Community Health Specialist, Grade 54, Step 2 at \$23.06 per hour Yearly gross salary \$47,964.80. Total salary and \*employer contribution (taxes and benefits): \$65,466.80. A start date is 02-24-2020.
- Approve the purchase of a Vermeer 6050 Disc Mower from Aldrich Tractor for \$9,600.00.
- Approve the sale of Unit No. 4618 (2018 Vermeer M6040 Disc Mower) for a minimum bid amount \$5,000.00 on Minnbid.org, the sale of Unit No. 4 (1997 Chevrolet pickup, regular cab, long box that has 179,365 miles that is not assigned to a shop) is for a minimum bid amount \$1,800.00 on Minnbid.org and the sale of Unit No. 24 (1994 Ford L9000 with 257,797 miles) for a minimum bid amount \$7,500.00 on Minnbid.org.

- Approve the family homeless prevention and assistance program, “Homework Starts at Home Grant.” Operated by Mahube-OTWA Community Action Partnership, Inc. October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2022.
- Approve the 2020 Commissioner Liaison and Committee Assignments.

Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA:

**Public Health Advisory Charter and Member Appointment:** Public Health Director Cindy Pederson spoke about the Public Health Advisory Charter. The goals of the Charter have not changed, only the membership. Pederson brought the Charter to the Commissioners’ Board Meeting because two members are being reappointed and she wants them to be able to come to the meeting held in February. The Charter will have three remaining openings for Districts 1, 2 and 3 of which she believes will be filled by the May meeting. The term appointments run for 3 years when she finds those positions.

The members that are being reappointed currently are Darlys Hamburg, for District 2, and Terri Kern, for District 4. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve those appointments. Motion carried unanimously.

**Rollover of 2019 Elections Equipment Funds:** Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson was present to continue speaking from the last Board Meeting about the election equipment grant that was just applied for and asking for a motion to move the \$12,500 from the 2019 Election budget to 2020. If the County gets approved for the election equipment grant they will have the left over fund to assist with the purchase to replace the needed equipment. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the move of the 2019 funds. Motion carried unanimously.

**Annual Report to the County Board - Planning & Zoning, Parks, GIS & Passport Acceptance:** Planning and Zoning Administrator Deana Malone highlighted many areas of these departments. Starting with **Planning and Zoning** in 2019 the total permits issued was 189 and was down in comparison to 2018 and 2017. This also allowed permit fees to be down about \$4000.00 from the previous year. There were 164 total compliance inspections on buildings. They received 126 compliance inspections on existing systems through transfer of ownership or building permits on an addition to a house. 41 of the ordinance violations have been addressed with 13 of them being outstanding into 2020. Most of the outstanding violations are septic related and could not get resolved before winter. Some of the overview of Planning and Zoning for 2019 included amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, working extensively with attorneys for the successful outcome on the appeal for the Clay Duster’s Shooting Range, working with land sales by the DNR in the County, active participation in One Watershed One Plan for the Red Eye Watershed, continuing education and recertification for SSTS inspector with Soil Training and incorporating meetings onto the County’s website.

With **Parks**, the Camping fees are up from 2018 more than \$4000.00. Some of the Parks overview for 2019 included the Maintenance Operator was combined with the County Building Maintenance, only 24 fire rings are left to install out of 100 purchased, the Pavilion building and split rail fence are completed at Old Wadena, a new landing has been installed at Anderson’s Crossing and a new sign for building had been built at Stigman’s Mound.

In the **Passport** acceptance area, 440 new passport applications were accepted in 2019. There were 304 passport renewal applications. There was lots of positive feedback on the availability of the service and how helpful Wadena County is in the Passport department.

The Geographic Information Systems (**GIS**) department did 33 locates for new E911 signs, in addition assisting the City of Wadena in GPS locates for the new development in the City. The NG911 (Next Generation) project is ongoing, but hopefully will be completed in 2020. Also there have been completed parcel splits/combinations on the GIS parcel map and working with the Auditor's Office Tax Specialist for accuracy.

**MPCA Waste Designation Ordinance Letter:** Solid Waste Director Chris McConn was present again to talk about the MPCA Waste Designation Ordinance since it was tabled at an earlier meeting. The Ordinance letter to the MPCA is to further secure the waste to pay revenues and debt obligations for the solid waste program. McConn was back to get the County Commissioners' review and answer any questions.

Commissioner Kangas had a few observations on why he didn't support the Waste Designation Ordinance. First he stated that Wadena County tipping discounts were not in line with surrounding counties falling in at \$9/ton, Otter Tail County at \$14.50/ton and Todd County at \$25/ton. He stated when you are near the border it makes it difficult to compete. This isn't part of the Designation Ordinance, but he mentioned that it kind of ties in together.

Commissioner Kangas' main point after studying with McConn and doing research is if it is going to pass, it is going to make criminals out of normally law abiding citizens. Kangas voices that Section 5 states that all designated waste contained in a designated area, which is Wadena County, must be delivered to a designated facility and may not be delivered to any other site or facility for final disposal. This would mean that all waste has to go to the transfer station or Perham. Furthermore, Kangas recites Section 14 that any person who fails to comply with this provision, with the provisions of the designation of this Ordinance, is guilty of a misdemeanor. Part B states that a person who fails to comply with this Designation Ordinance is subject to penalties including, but not limited to the following, a civil penalty payable to the County of up to \$10,000.00 per day for each violation. This would include self-haulers; individuals who do not generate a lot of waste and take 1-2 bags to their own facility of their choice.

Commissioner Kangas was expressing that if a person lived in the northern portion of Wadena County they would need to drive their waste, if they were a self-hauler, to the transfer station 25 miles away or to Perham 45+ miles away. Although the Ordinance was constructed as a benefit to maintain an obligation of MSW deliveries to the Perham Incinerator, it also creates a hardship to all of the self-haulers and taxpayers. If a self-hauler takes their waste out of the County they would be breaking the law, and that is not the intent of the County Board nor why Commissioner Kangas couldn't support the Ordinance.

Commissioner Horsager asked if Commissioner Kangas had spoken with McConn about changing the Ordinance with those concerns. McConn stated that Commissioner Kangas had many good points. McConn shared that Wadena County's discount is less than the surrounding counties and it can be changed whenever the County wants to change it, but that is unrelated to whether or not the County decides to do the Waste Designation. He also stated that if it's fair to have your citizens bring their waste to another location, he is open to suggestions if the Board wants to work on some revisions to the language of the Ordinance. McConn mentioned that the Board could even send the Ordinance to the

MPCA and work through the changes while it is out. The vote that McConn was looking for is permission to send the Ordinance to the MPCA. He said that were're not at the point of looking for a vote on the Ordinance, since that would need a public hearing.

Commissioner Horsager mentioned he was in agreement with Commissioner Kangas and didn't want to be in a legal battle with the self-haulers that the Ordinance would affect. He opted to maybe strike a few sentences. McConn said sure the Board could do this, but it's a grey area and where does the line get drawn how much waste is sent outside the County. The primary concern is with the commercial haulers.

After going back and forth, McConn offered the County Board a few options for the Ordinance. They could deny the request as is, approve it as is and let it go on to the MPCA or approve it with a discussion with whoever the Board delegates, the MPCA and the Solid Waste's attorney to review the language of the self-haulers. McConn stated that when this was brought up before the Otter Tail County Board what was approved to be sent to the MPCA and through discussion, there were numerous changes. It was brought back as an approved document to the Otter Tail County Board. Then it went to a notice for hearing.

Commissioner Hofer asked McConn if the County had ever had to discipline a self-hauler that he was aware of. McConn said, "No, not that I am aware of." Commissioner Hofer then said he was comfortable to move forward, subject to if they could tweak the section on self-haulers to protect the County and work with the neighboring counties. Commissioner Stearns asked McConn if he could contact the law firm that drew up the Ordinance and if they could reword the fine for \$10,000.00 a day to only affect commercial haulers.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, and seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve this draft to be forwarded on to the MPCA for action to be reviewed. Commissioner Kangas-Nay, Commissioner Hofer-Aye, Commissioner Stearns-Aye, Commissioner Monson-Aye, Commissioner Horsager-Aye. Motion carried 4-1.

Commissioner Stearns brought up another topic with McConn while he was still present. Currently there is an issue with re-insurance for waste to energy facilities in the area. MCIT is working on it. A meeting has been set-up to discuss the situation on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020 at 8:00 am at the InterContinental Hotel in St. Paul.

**Wadena County Website Calendar:** Commissioner Kangas believes the Wadena County website calendar isn't running to the fullest capacity. Many of the committee meetings are not posted, do not have an agenda or do not have minutes. Commissioner Kangas voiced that there are three different locations on the website to look for meetings and sometimes a meeting isn't on any of the three locations. He suggests one County calendar on the front page that is easy to find. Another issue of Commissioner Kangas' is that when a meeting changes a date/time it isn't relayed quick enough and other plans could be made by the attendees. There needs to be a better source for responding to when a meeting gets changed.

Information Technology Coordinator Dave Hotchkiss assured the County Board that the IT Department is in the process of revamping the County website, which will include a new calendar, and will require a 6-8 month process. The IT Department, who will be working with Civic Plus, needs that amount of time for pages to be working and for items to be not broken. The Home Page will be one of the first pages that will be worked on, but it is a step by step process.

Commissioner Stearns questioned Hotchkiss as to why Crow Wing County's website and calendar looked nice. Hotchkiss replied that their county also uses Civic Plus as a vendor, the same as Wadena County, but it will just take some time. County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden also mentioned to the County Board that if they want to add a meeting to the website to send an email his way. Other departments and committees send him emails all the time and that is how their events/meetings have been added to the website's calendar.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Stearns: 1/22/2020 PLSWA Meeting, insurance, 1/27/2020 Solid Waste Committee, 1/27/2020 Budget Committee, 1/27/2020 First Children's Finance, on home daycare, 1/29/2020 Economic Alliance Committee.

Commissioner Monson: 1/24/2020 Fair Board Meeting - they appointed Kim Carmermon, and had a resignation, \$18,000 cash on hand. Not currently registered at the state.

Commissioner Kangas: 1/22/2020 PLSWA Meeting, 1/27/2020 CPT Meeting, 1/29/2020 EMS Board.

Commissioner Horsager: 1/21/2020 Economic Alliance, 1/27 Rural Childcare, 1/29/2020 Economic Alliance, 1/31/2020 Mahube-OTWA, 2/3/2020 ACE's Seminar, 2/4/2020 Liaison.

Commissioner Monson moved, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 am. Motion carried unanimously.

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Ryan Odden,  
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer

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Charles Horsager, Chairperson  
Wadena County Commissioners