The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on February 5, 2019 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:02 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, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Human Service Director Curt Kreklau, Chief Deputy Joe Schoon, Planning Zoning Director Deana Malone, County Recorder Soledad Henriksen, Transit Director Randy Jahnke, IT director David Hotchkiss, Payroll/Benefits Supervisor Janet Kern, Building Maintenance Cody Yglesias, Katie Heppner, Victoria Selander, Brian Hagen, Wadena Pioneer Journal reporter Michael Johnson and Sebeka/Menahga Review Messenger reporter Matthew B. Johnson.

Approve/Amend the day’s Agenda: Ryan Odden requested that changes be made to the agenda. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to delete #9 from the agenda, add #8.5 Approval for Participation in FTA Conference (out of State Travel) and #9.5 Wadena Fire Department Relief Association Computer Donation and an addition of a second to a motion on the 12-18-18 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to pull from the consent agenda the 1-22-19 minutes for further discussion and add the second for the motion noted on the 12-18-18 minutes in the Solid Waste Ordinance #3 Amendment section. Approve the minutes from the 12-11-18, 1-8-19, and 1-15-19 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

1-22-19 Minutes: Commissioner Monson felt that he made it very clear that this approval of the Comprehensive Re Entry Position was for a one year only position. Motion by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Horsager to amend the minutes to include after the “Human Service Budget” for only 12 months, commencing with the hire date. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Approved the appointment of Mike Weyer, representing District 2, to the Wadena County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment to serve on the Commission through and including October 2020.
- Approve the hiring of Lori Lorz as the Highway Accountant, Full-Time, Exempt Pay Grade 54, Step 9, $28.69 per hour, $59,675.20 annual (2019-B Wage Schedule).

Motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

Pay Equity Report: Curt Kreklau and Janet Kern presented the Pay Equity Report that will be sent to the State of Minnesota. The Commissioners asked to have this brought back to the Board at next week’s meeting after they can take time to review the report.

Paid Temporary Limited Volunteer County Staff Time for BR & E Survey Process: Deana Malone and Katie Heppner made a request to have some county employees volunteer for up to 4 hours of regular time to assist with a Business Retention and Expansion Survey Process for Economic Development. Moved by Commissioner Horsager for resolution as presented, died for lack of second. Moved by
Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Horsager to add another line to the resolution allowing up to 24 hours of paid county employee time to assist in this survey. Wadena County Board of Commissioners:

A Resolution Allowing Temporary Limited Volunteer County Staff Time to be Used in the Business Retention and Expansion Survey Process for Economic Development

WHEREAS, Wadena County has identified Economic Development as an area of concern in the County through its strategic planning process and has formed a Strategic Planning Economic Development Committee through that process to pursue improving conditions in the County for economic development, and,

WHEREAS, Wadena County is a partner in The Economic Alliance, which covers all of Wadena County, and which is partnering with the University of Minnesota to coordinate a survey of businesses within each municipality in the County as well as businesses located outside of municipal limits in the County, to determine what barriers there might be for existing business to expand or to continue to operate in the county; and,

WHEREAS, this type of study has proven successful in other communities in Minnesota toward improving economic development in the area of business retention and expansion; and

WHEREAS, County Commissioners and other lead County staff will be participating in the survey by interviewing selected businesses and they will be required to pair with an individual who will be responsible for recording answers to survey questions as they are presented; and,

WHEREAS, a request has been made to utilize the skills of other County employees for the purpose of attending interviews to record survey information on a voluntary basis and with a limited number of paid hours per employee; and,

WHEREAS, the Teamster’s Local 320 business agent has been contacted and is in agreement that there is no violation of any portion of the Union Contract in place in allowing this activity to take place;

WHEREAS, the Wadena County Board of Commissioners acknowledge that economic development in Wadena County is essential and that retention and expansion of existing businesses in Wadena County is equally as essential and that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners supports the efforts of The Economic Alliance in its movement toward Business Retention and Expansion.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the recommendation from the Strategic Planning Economic Development Committee to allow County staff to volunteer to assist with the information gathering process outlined by The Economic Alliance Business Retention and Expansion project for businesses located outside the municipal limits of any city and within Wadena County; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves this as a limited effort beginning February 12, 2019, and concluding on April 9, 2019, that up to 6 employees may volunteer, and be compensated for regular pay hours, during a regular work week, up to 4 hours per employee, for a total of 24 combined staff hours, and that each employee volunteer must have the approval of their supervisor and must attend the training provided by The Economic Alliance to be eligible to participate in this effort.

IN TESTAMONY WHEREOF THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS has caused this resolution to be adopted this 5th day of February, 2019.
FTA Conference: Randy Jahnke was present to request that he be allowed to attend the 14th Annual FTA Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference in Milwaukee, WI at a cost of $542.00 to the county on April 2-4, 2019. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to allow Transit Director Randy Jahnke attend the 14th Annual FTA Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference in Milwaukee, WI pm April 2-4, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

WFDRA Computer Donation: Wadena Fire Department Relief Association requested a computer from county. The IT department would completely wipe all data, and reload the computer to a factory default status. Kyra Ladd asked that a policy would be put into place to help decide who would receive old electronic equipment from the count. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to approve the donation of a Dell 5530 to the Wadena Fire Department Relief Association. Motion carried unanimously.

Overpayment of Salary for County Coordinator/Engineer: Kyra Ladd presented the information that a mistake was made in the payroll department which caused the County Coordinator/Engineer to be overpaid. The exact amount is not certain at this point, but it is around $18,000.00. Ryan Odden indicated that he would like to make a one-time payment to correct this error. Curt Kreklau and Janet Kern explained that the paymate programming did not calculate the payroll accurately because of the split of the salary between the two departments and changing the salary mid-year. The error was found when the salary was calculated by hand for the beginning of the 2019 year. Commissioner Kangas questioned whether there are other mistakes being made in the payroll and wonders if an investigation needs to be done into all of the payroll numbers for the county employees. Brian Hagen expressed that this mistake should not have gone on for 7 months and that someone should have noticed this big of an error. Heather Olson suggested that an outside CPA firm that would have knowledge of tax knowledge and withholdings information be brought in. Kyra Ladd recommended that Clifton, Larson, Allen out of State Cloud be hired to look at this situation and make corrections. There was discussion on where the funds or this would come from. Commissioner Hofer informed the board that the budget has a line item for auditing and it should come from there first. It was agreed that the cost would come out the line item for auditing. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to have Heather Olson secure the services of Clifton, Larson, Allen to do a forensic analysis of how this happened and to present formally to the board the dollar amount that needs to be refunded including preparing the necessary printed W-2 forms and PERA, Social Security, not to exceed $6,000.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Closed session to discuss medical records: The closed session began at 10:24 am. pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 2 (a)(4) to discuss in individual’s medical records.

The meeting reopened at 10:41

Unpaid leave of absence for Employee #18: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to grant an unpaid leave of absence to employee #18 until May 10, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

Break was taken at 10:42 am. Meeting reopened at 10:52 am

Interested Citizens: Brian Hagen was given 5 minutes to express his feelings as an interested citizen. He believes that too much money has been spent on outside investigations for problems within the county. He feels that the commissioners need to be more involved and they need to work the problems out between the different department heads without bringing outside sources in that cost more money to the tax payers. He feels that the department heads need to be able to run their departments with some guidance from the commissioners. He would like Ryan Odden to return to his position as the County
Engineer and eliminate the Coordinator position. He feels that the commissioners should be able to oversee the county operations without a coordinator. Commissioner Stearns replied, that having 5 bosses and micro managing did not work well for the county operations.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Monson: 1/23 Meeting with Gazelka and Poston, 1/23 SCHA Meeting, 1/24 Region 5 Meeting, 1/25 special board meeting, 2/4 Building Committee, 2/5 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Stearns: 1/23 Meeting with Gazelka and Poston, 1/23 SCHA Meeting, 1/24 Economic Development, 2/5 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Hofer: 1/25 IT Liaison meeting, 1/25 special board meeting, 1/31 Hearing on Health and Human service in St. Paul, 2/4 IT Committee, 2/5 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Kangas: 1/23-25 AMC County government 101, 1/25 Special Board meeting, ½ Solid waste committee meeting, 1/30 Central MN Emergency Services Board, 1/31 Teamsters negotiation meeting, 2/5 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Horsager: 1/24 Economic Development Committee, 1/25 Special Board Meeting, 1/31 County Attorney Meeting, 2/5 Board Meeting.

A 5 minute break was taken.

**Closed Session for Negotiation Strategy:** The closed session began at 11:19 am. Open meeting reconvened at 11:38 am.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to adjourn the meeting at 11:39 am. Motion carried unanimously.

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Ryan Odden,  Bill Stearns, Chairperson
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer  Wadena County Commissioners