The Special Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on Friday, February 8, 2019 in the Multi-purpose Room, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm Chairperson Stearns and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were Commissioners: Chuck Horsager, Sheldon Monson, Jim Hofer and Jon Kangas, County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, County Assessor Lee Brekke, Zoning Director Deana Malone, IT Director David Hotchkiss, Child Support and Accounting Supervisor Amie Gendron, Sergeant Bryan Savaloja, Building Services Cody Yglesias, and Review Messenger reporter Matt Johnson.

The organizational study was handed out to those present and a sheet to rank priorities of the DDA report on recommended changes for the county.

Commissioner Horsager stated the commissioners are held responsible to have the County departments work together. The question as to whether the county should keep the same organizational chart or should some departments change? If changes are to be made, that should be decided before the physical arrangement of the building is decided.

Commissioner Kangas feels that the county board has not made much progress in the past.

Commissioner Stearns and Monson want a decision on the use of the space in the lower level made.

Commissioner Hofer would like to hear from everyone in the courthouse as to whether they are satisfied with their current space.

The need to make space for the new social worker that will be located in the Sheriff’s Department was brought up.

Discussion on where to place the election equipment was brought up.

Commissioner Hofer noted that Zoning is functioning in the space provided and does not need to be relocated. The recorder’s office seems to be satisfied with their space. The auditor’s office is undergoing some minor changes that the current space allows for. The IT department would like to be relocated to the lower level of the courthouse.

Commissioner Hofer asked for a copy of the reserve accounts.

It was decided to do things in phases. Phase 1 would be to demo and remodel the former probation area in the basement; Sentence to Serve locker room- adding a room and door for female inmates, replacement of hallway double doors by back door entrance, move and relocate the roll up window and desk to the current sheriff’s area, replace ceiling in the corridor, new lights in the corridor, addition of the deputy’s area wall, office furnishings and remove the old commissioners’ bench from the old upstairs board room.
Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to go ahead with Phase 1 for a cost of up to $30,000 from the levy building fund. Motion carried unanimously.

The other phases of remodeling the lower level and parts of the upper level were discussed.

The need of replacement for bunks in the jail cells that are falling apart was brought up. They cost $870 a piece to replace. There are 9 that are failing right now. It was decided to have this on the 2-19-19 meeting when a quote for replacement could be made available for the board to look at.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to adjourn the meeting at 4:07 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

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