

## WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

MARCH 10, 2020

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on March 10, 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 Sheldon Monson, Bill Stearns, Jon Kangas, (Absent Jim Hofer), County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Information Technology Coordinator Dave Hotchkiss, IT Network Support Tech Rhonda Dittberner, Part Time IT Network Support Tech Bryan Kirsch, Public Health Director Cindy Pederson, Jeffery Wigren, *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:** County Coordinator Ryan Odden asked for #7, Joint Powers Agreement between the Wadena County Sheriff's Office and the City Of Wadena, to be removed from the day's agenda since it was still in the works. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the day's agenda as presented with the removal of #7 from the day's agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

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

### CONSENT AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the following consent agenda items with the change on the Appropriation Ag Society from "maintenance" to "operating" expenses:

- Approve the minutes from the 2-18-2020 meeting, with minor wording changes.
- Approve the Wadena County Personnel Committee Charter.
- Approve the Resolution Correcting a Clerical Error in the Resolution Approved on March 3, 2020 to Amend Conditions for Conditional Use Permit #ZP18-8500 for the Park Rapids Clay Dusters DBA/ R.D. Offutt Huntersville Sportsmen's Park.
- Approve \$15,000.00 from 01-801-000-0000-6915 Appropriation Ag Society for maintenance (changed to operating) expenses.
- Approve the Public Health Director to sign the pre-movie advertisement agreement with Calm Computers for the time period 4-3-2020 to 4-2-2021 in the amount of \$2,375.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

### REGULAR AGENDA:

**Emergency Planning Committee Charter:** Cindy Pederson, Public Health Director, spoke about the Emergency Planning Committee Charter. It was recently reviewed with the Management Team last week. In the Charter it has an annual update and that is what Pederson spotlighted with goals from 2019; to recruit members in vacant roles, define roles, finalize the Committee Charter and to set goals.

Pederson cited that by looking at the Charter, they have a fair amount of members. It is a good committee for sharing emergency preparedness. Both Tri-County Hospital and Lakewood Hospital have representatives in regular attendance. There is also participation from the Red Cross, Human Services and other regional representatives.

She featured some highlights from 2019:

- The group met quarterly with good attendance.
- There were updates from partners at each of the meetings.
- They recruited new members.
- Planning and training for the full scale exercise that occurred on September 14, 2019.
- Training and updating of shelters to make sure they were meeting their needs.
- Completed some work on PODs (Points of Dispensing) for vaccines or medications.

For the 2020 Charter, new goals were set:

- To continue with partner awareness and coordinate plans to make sure they were not overlapping.
- Completing shelter education and planning.
- June 17, 2020 a full scale exercise for Public Health with Anthrax dispensing work as a group, so they are ready for the drill.
- More exercise and training.
- Recruitment and training of volunteers.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the Emergency Planning Committee Charter as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Update On Tri-County Health Care Proposed Realignment Of County Road 169:** Last week Commissioner Stearns, Commissioner Monson, Wadena City Administrator Janette Bower and County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden met to make sure everyone was on the same page with the proposed realignment. Odden stated, when the Board last talked they were asked by the consultant engineer for Tri-County's site plan about the idea if the County would be willing to vacate the County's road portion and then the new road portion would have to be underneath a different road jurisdiction. This letter from the consultant engineer was sent to Otter Tail County and Wadena County. Wadena County was favorable of the proposed intersection and the safety improvements that it brought.

Otter Tail County sent a letter back to the consultant engineer for Tri-County, since that was who the original letter came from. Otter Tail County was not interested in the 300 foot segment. They said to work with Compton Township. When they said to work with Compton Township, the property had not been yet annexed by the City of Wadena. Now the annexed process is almost complete. The underlined authority is going to be the City of Wadena.

Odden spoke to a MnDOT official and asked him a couple questions regarding the proposed realignment.

1. If it isn't a County Road intersection anymore, would MnDOT still allow it to be moved? The official said they would. They are not concerned if it is a State/County or a State/City intersection when it is all done.
2. Currently we are the road authority and have an intersection with Highway 10. With the realignment, the county line will stop 300 feet short from Highway 10 with it being a City street the remaining distance. From a maintenance stand point, the County Isn't going to stop plowing

for the last 300 feet when they just plowed 1.75 miles. The County has a good partnership with the City of Wadena already on streets being plowed by both. But if the County wanted to make County Road 169 a State Aid Highway, would it stop at the County line? The MnDOT official said the rules have changed and the County could designate it a State Aid Highway even though it falls outside the County line. Just for the few hundred feet, the County would not be able to draw funding for it. If the County wanted to designate it a State Aid Highway out to County Road 20, they would need Otter Tail County's participation, because it does run along the county line with them. Otter Tail County would have to designate some of their State Aid money to the project, but at this time they are not interested.

The MnDOT official did offer another idea to Odden to designate Greenwood Avenue as a State Aid Highway. Odden mentioned to him that it was a gravel City street and a departure from what he was asking. The MnDOT official said that he thought logically a lot of traffic from the City of Wadena might go to the hospital using a parallel route. He was going to do some more checking and talk internally with MnDOT to see if they had any more ideas or recommendations.

Odden cited that the consensus of the Board last time was to keep working with Tri-County on the realignment. He wanted to give an update and see if he was moving in the right direction on the project.

Commissioner Stearns felt unsettled that Otter Tail County didn't want to talk with them regarding the proposed realignment. But he thought the MnDOT official had merit to making Greenwood Avenue a State Aid Highway, because a lot of people from Wadena will be using that road. He also mentioned that County Road 169 just got done being rebuilt and that it didn't need work for another 20 years. Using State money to build Greenwood Avenue to make a safe road made sense to him. Commissioner Monson felt it was a logical option to build Greenwood Avenue for people to bicycle or walk to work.

Commissioner Kangas wanted to know if Greenwood Avenue was a County Road right now. Odden stated that it was a City street. The County would become the road authority with the City still in charge of utilities. He said he didn't know what the City would want to do with the road, because he hadn't talked to them yet about the idea. If the County did become the authority over it they would be able to draw funding from the State for urban segment versus a rural segment. The County could also draw more maintenance dollars too. Commissioner Kangas asked if most of the cost would be covered by State Aid. Commissioner Stearns cited that up to this point the County has never used County tax levy money to support the State Aid system. Higher population counties do use County tax levy money to support their State Aid System.

Commissioner Horsager shared that the proposed realignment would be a much safer intersection. In the interest of public safety the County needed to agree to go with the realignment. Odden said we should be supportive of the proposed redesign.

Commissioner Stearns added that Odden should follow-up with talking to the City about having Greenwood Avenue turned into a Municipal State Aid Road. Commissioner Kangas mentioned that if there is an update to Greenwood Avenue would someone need to speak to the Hospital, because it would affect the direction traffic would be coming in and what driveways they may use to enter. Commissioner Stearns stated the County should be pointing it out to the Hospital.

**IT Department Update:** Dave Hotchkiss, Information Technology Coordinator, gave an update to the Board on the IT Department. Along with Hotchkiss, the IT Department includes Rhonda Dittberner (29 years of service), Bryan Kirsch (3.5 years of service) and newly hired Ty Levig (4 months of service).

**Fiber Project Updates:** Last year the Board approved moving over to West Central, not only was it cost saving but it has improved the services with telephones and internet. West Central is currently splicing fiber and is getting closer to the Highway Department, where we will be able to turn that circuit up shortly.

**Transfer Station:** The IT Department also went with West Central for the Transfer Station. They are up and using the internet out there. It isn't dial up anymore.

**Sheriff's Building:** Currently the IT Department is collecting quotes for the Sheriff's Building so they can get fiber. It is one of the last Wadena Campus buildings not connected with fiber. Commissioner Horsager asked since it was close to the Fairgrounds, if the IT Department had mentioned to the Fair Board to see if they would want to receive fiber too. Hotchkiss stated that he had not yet talked to the Fair Board until he receives numbers to see if it is financially responsible.

**Network Refresh:** Some of the switches/equipment were nearing 10-12 years old. The IT Department was diligently replacing the older equipment to prevent any failures. They want to be on a proactive cycle in rotation. They are replacing the equipment with CISCO products. They have Human Services and Public Health as their two last major buildings left to get equipment replaced. If equipment arrives soon they plan to replace it this weekend.

**Backup Systems:** The County is protected with Veeam, which is a backup utility. The IT Department is doing daily backups. They also are doing hourly backups on one of their servers. Other servers, do to severity, are backed up every four hours. Then they have regular backups done weekly and monthly.

**Server Room Fire Protection:** Hotchkiss has two quotes for Fire Protection; one is around \$18,000.00 and the other is around \$12,000.00. The current server room in the courthouse does not contain what would be called fuel; boxes, tables, carpet – things that could combust. They have been lucky there has not been a fire, but it does have brick surround walls. They are weighing out the costs to see if it is financially responsible to do the endeavor. Now that the IT Department has an offsite repository with a heat sensor in the room, they can receive an alert at Dispatch if the room starts to get hot. Then Dispatch has a policy and a procedure to follow to make sure that the room is safe.

**Wadena County Intranet:** They have wadconet or a Share Point. The County can start putting documents and data up on wadconet. The IT Department has put Human Resource internal documents out there for people to review. It is not 100% designed and is in progress. You have to be inside the County to access the site.

**Help Desk 2019 Report:** In 2019 the IT Department had 1959 Open Tickets, with 1944 tickets being closed. Hotchkiss encourages the County to use the Help Desk tickets for everything; setting passwords, helping to do a website addition/subtraction, etc. so they can get true analytics on what the IT Department is doing. Help Desk broken down by type of help topic, Computer Software was the item that needed the most help last year.

**M-Files Projects:** This has been started backup with a meeting held this week. There will be weekly meetings. In the future this will be in place of App Xtender.

**Network Upgrades:** Within the next couple months the IT Department will be completely replacing old network equipment with new network equipment.

**Re-IPing of the Wadena County Network:** The goal in 2020 is to re-IP the Network. The County is on one of the most common sub-nets in the world, so there is a need to isolate ourselves from potential risks.

**Two Factor Authentication for all VPN Users:** This will go into effect for the County. VPN users will be required to use their username/password plus a forced text message code.

**New Firewalls:** The Board approved these with the Department of Homeland Security and State grants, which will be put in place this weekend. The existing firewalls will be broken apart with one far end and one near end. There will be a firewall at the Courthouse or at Highway, with the second firewall put into an EOC go kit for emergencies.

**PC Rotation:** The IT Department is looking at a 4-5 year rotation on PCs. PCs that they are ordering have a three year warranty.

**Storage:** It is getting significantly low. Right now they have two 10 terabyte devices. One is at 2.7 terabytes free and the other is at 3.5 terabytes free. They need 15-20% available overhead otherwise they run into corrupt and lost files. In 2020-2021 the IT Department will need to go before the Board to ask for a new storage unit.

**Website Re-design:** It is currently in the progress. March 20<sup>th</sup> the IT Department needs to add pictures of the County to the website. Before they go live, they will bring the website back to the Board for suggestions.

A break was taken at 10:06 am. The meeting reconvened at 10:17 am.

**2020 Census Partnership Presentation and Agreement:** Jeffery Wigren, local Community Partner Specialist for the US Census Bureau, spoke about the 2020 Census. His job is to share information and educate communities about achieving a complete count in Minnesota during the 2020 Census.

Young children are the largest under counted group in the United States. In 2010, 1.2 million children under the age of 5 in America were missed in the Census. Children that live in multiple households are getting left off, because one parent may think that the other parent counted them on their form.

The Census needs to know every single person in Wadena County to capture Federal funding that you have been predetermined to receive. The State Demographic Center did a calculation looking at 2010 Federal funding allocation per capita compared to what the Census is expecting for 2020 over the next decade and it is a jump of almost 50%. Every year from 2010-2019, one person was worth \$1,900.00 in Federal funding for public works, public infrastructure and other services that are critical to people that are in the social safety net. This time around the Census is looking at \$2,800.00 per year per person. Every person that is counted in Wadena County based on the demographer's calculations will be worth \$28,000.00 over the next decade.

There is only one chance to get the Decennial Census count correct otherwise it would require a Federal lawsuit by the County, which would cost in the range of 1-2 million dollars. The Census needs to get this right the first time around, so there is no recounting. The good news is that they have 75% of the people that want to work for the Census in Wadena County recruited. Some are getting phone calls right now to get trained in late April to work in May. The Census would like another 25 people to apply, which would round out to 100 people. They assume that 33% of the people would be hired. The County would have 33 Census takers going throughout the County, primarily by automobile, to households that did not count themselves.

This will be the first time in the history of the Census that a vast amount of people will respond by internet or the telephone. The benefits of that are that it is quick, it is more confidential, you are not bothered by a Census taker and it is available in multiple languages (up to 59 on the internet and 14 by telephone). Places that have

poor internet connection in the County will have questionnaires delivered to their homes. Anyone else that has a PO Box or a Fire Number will receive a questionnaire delivered to their door. If they do not fill out the form; either by internet, telephone or the form left at their home, the Census will go back to the home up to 5 times to leave a questionnaire in the homeowner's door to remind them to fill it out. On the 6<sup>th</sup> time, the Census taker will knock on the door, but they will not cross the threshold if they need to help a person fill out the form.

The Census takers will be equipped with a tablet that will show them which houses they need to drive to and they can leave the forms at the door. They will also have a Census phone to keep in touch with their field supervisor. About 5% of the homes will have the forms dropped off, with 95% expected to self-respond sometime before the end of April. Confidentiality and data security are always big concerns. All identifiable information reported by a household is protected for 72 years. All Census workers are required for life to take an oath to protect and secure all data they collect.

For those people that are extremely hard to count, the Census is asking Counties and Cities to take a roll in a Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Center. After March 30<sup>th</sup>, the Census could equip one of these locations with a Census Response Representative to assist people with their questionnaires.

Starting this Thursday, people will start receiving an invitation letter in a Census addressed envelope. In the letter it will describe how they can go on-line or over the telephone to fill out their questionnaire. There is a Census ID on the form that is unique to each household. One person in a household is responsible to count everyone living in their house as of April 1, 2020, biological residents or not need to be counted.

Heather Olson, Auditor/Treasurer, has been in contact with someone from the Census in Duluth. They have asked her if the County could help prepare for the Census. The County is looking at having a Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Center at the Courthouse sometime in May, putting information on the County website, reaching out to the City to see if an informational flyer could be placed in utility bills.

#### **Commissioner Reports:**

**Commissioner Monson: 3/4/2020 Family Service Committee, 3/5/2020 Meeting with City of Wadena, 3/7/2020 Poston & Gazelka Meeting, 3/9/2020 Building Committee.**

**Commissioner Kangas: 3/4/2020 Family Collaborative Meeting.**

**Commissioner Horsager: 3/4/2020 Management Team, 3/5/2020 Economic Development, 3/9/2020 One Watershed Plan.**

**Commissioner Stearns: 2/22/2020 PLSWA, 2/20/2020 Wadena County Solid Waste, 2/20/2020 RCTT, 2/20/2020 Region 5 Transit, 2/25/2020 MRC, 2/26- 2/27/2020 AMC Legislative Conference, 3/5/2020 Economic Committee, 3/5/2020 Meeting with City of Wadena, 3/9/2020 Building Committee.**

**Commissioner Kangas moved, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 am. Motion carried unanimously.**



**Ryan Oden,  
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer**



**Charles Horsager, Chairperson  
Wadena County Commissioners**