

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

MARCH 17, 2020

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on March 17, 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 and Jon Kangas, by telephone Commissioners Bill Stearns and Jim Hofer, County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Sheriff Mike Carr, Emergency Management Director Tyler Wheeler, Sergeant Bryan Savaloja, Planning & Zoning Administrator Deana Malone, Information Technology Coordinator Dave Hotchkiss, Public Health Director Cindy Pederson, Human Services Department Amie Gendron, Tri-County Health Care President & CEO Joel Beiswenger, Tri-County Health Care Incident Commander & Director of Quality/Compliance Tammy Suchy, Tri-County Health Care Liaison Officer in the Office of Incident Command Ryan Damlo, *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: There was an addition by the Sheriff's Department of #7.5 Emergency Declaration COVID-19 and an addition by Commissioner Horsager #8.5 Work Session. Also for the record Minnesota Statute 13D.01, Subd. 1, 2, 4 and 5 there are some provisions, due to the declaration related to COVID-19, that allows this meeting to be held electronically by Commissioners Stearns and Hofer. Commissioners Stearns and Hofer need to be able to hear everything from the Board Meeting and there needs to be a roll call on everything that has a motion. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the day's agenda as presented with the additions to the day's agenda. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. 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:

- Approve the minutes from the 3-3-2020 and the 3-10-2020 meetings.
- Approve the Auditor warrants from 2-21-2020, 2-28-2020, 3-6-2020, US Bank 3-6-2020 and 3-13-2020 for a total of \$720,761.95.
- Approve the Human Service warrants from 2-28-2020, 3-6-2020 and 3-13-2020 for a total of \$47,226.52.
- Approve the River Valley Enduro Riders' Wadena County Special Use Permit from 6-20-2020 to 6-21-2020.

- Approve the Criminal Justice Information System Interagency Users Agreement between the Wadena County Sheriff's Department and the Wadena Police Department.
- Approve the renewal of the liquor licenses for Twin Lakes Lodge-N-Resort and Vintage Golf Course in Staples.

Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Renewal of Liquor License for Wahoo Valley Bar & Grill: Ryan Odden, County Coordinator/Engineer, brought this liquor license before the Board only because it wasn't in the Consent Agenda and it was received on Thursday. Normally a liquor license has time to be given to the Sheriff's Office and the County Attorney's Office for them to sign off on before it goes to the Consent Agenda. Odden asked for approval on this liquor license contingent on their approvals.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the renewal of the liquor license for Wahoo Valley Bar & Grill contingent on the approvals of the Sheriff's Office and the County Attorney's Office. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Declaration COVID-19: Tyler Wheeler, Emergency Management Director, and Bryan Savaloja, Sergeant, cited that Wadena County decided to declare a disaster declaration for the next 30 days. They stated that there hasn't been any cases of COVID-19 in the County at this time, but they would rather be prepared up front for the unforeseen nature of the situation. The President of the United States has declared a disaster, the State of Minnesota has declare a disaster and now Wadena County is just following suit. Other counties in Minnesota have done the same.

Commissioner Kangas was concerned at a State level with the Governor telling some businesses that they have to close and that constitutional rights are being stepped on. He wants to make sure if the County declares a disaster declaration that Wadena County needs to be careful and proceed with caution.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the Wadena County Disaster Declaration for the next 30 days. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

COVID-19 Update: Cindy Pederson, Public Health Director, stated that as of March 3, 2020 the CDC has had a total of 1,629 COVID-19 cases in the United States, with a number of them not quite sure how they came about. As of yesterday morning in Minnesota 1,900 people have been tested, with 54 positive cases in 13 counties. The closest infected person is in Stearns County to Wadena County.

Symptoms of COVID-19 come 2-14 days after exposure and range from mild-severe. The symptoms include a fever, cough and shortness of breath. There is no current vaccine. It is spread from person to person that are in close contact through respiratory droplets if someone coughs or sneezes. People that are 70+ years of age or have an underline medical condition are most at risk.

To help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Cancel events greater than 50 people.
- Social distance yourself from someone else at least 6 feet.
- Establishments are closed at least until March 27.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not present.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and avoid close contact with people that are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick and call your medical provider before you go into see them.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, throw it away when you are done and wash your hands right away.
- Masks are for people who are sick, not for people that are in fear of getting sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces daily.
- If you are at higher risk of getting sick, stock up on a couple weeks' worth of supplies and stay at home as much as possible.
- Long term home facilities are currently under a no visitor advisory.
- Wadena County will have guidelines written up today to follow about staying safe.
- Stay calm, follow the recommendations and remember 80% of the infections are mild.

Joel Beiswenger, Tammy Suchy and Ryan Damlo from Tri-County Health Care (TCHC) gave an update of what is happening at TCHC. They are practicing social distancing and community mitigation efforts, because they do not want to end up like Italy. Italy has exceeded the capacity of their health care system and unfortunately they are rationing care. For TCHC in Respiratory Emergency they have 2 ventilators and there is no option unless it comes through some federal or state stock pile of equipment, so they are probably not getting any more ventilators. They are very concerned about this situation.

As of 2 weeks ago they opened their Incident Command Center which has reinforced these guidelines:

- Visitor restrictions. If you have no reason to come into the building, you are not coming into the building. This is to protect yourself, patients and workers. This includes vendors.
- There are two large tents at the entrance of TCHC south main door that are enhanced screening stations. If you have respiratory symptoms you are being asked to go to one of the tents. If you do not have this symptom you go to the other tent. This is to segregate patients having respiratory issues.
- They are eliminating events and meetings that are not related to the emergency situation.
- They are restricting travel for their internal staff if they can. Canceled corporate travel.
- Their volunteer group has been asked to stay home.
- The gift shop has been shut down.
- Special screening on any employees that have come back from travel out of the area.
- Discontinuing elective procedures as a guideline from the CDC.
- Call your health care provider if you are sick or if your symptoms get worse first before you come into the clinic or hospital.

Ryan Damlo spoke to the Sheriff's Department and asked when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) would open for the County. They are currently working through the care protocols. If the system is taxed as much as they think it could be, and they are trying to prepare for, they will not have enough beds, respirators and certain equipment to care for everyone that may need it. Then they would transfer those patients to other facilities, but they may be maxed out. They do believe it is time to open EOC,

because they want to be working with all of the other agencies to be necessary to help plan a sub-acute transfer unit for patients. The concept is when patients need in-patient care or ICU care within a facility, then the patients are through that immediate most dangerous situation they will have a step down unit for maintenance as a place other than the hospital. They want to be part of that, but they do need help of the Emergency Operations of the County and all of the resources that come with it.

Ryan Odden, County Coordinator/Engineer, wants more input as to what the County should be doing as a business from the Commissioners. He wondered about closing to the public, because another county has closed to the public and was only doing business over the telephone and through mail. Several Counties were allowing negative sick time or plt balances up to 80+ hours to all employees if they are feeling ill to stay home and authorizing the time to take care of their children that do not have daycare. This would be with the understanding that the employee would have to make the time back or pay it back if they leave the County. Another idea that some Counties were going with was authorizing the Personnel Committee to execute policy decisions in regard to the crisis with the idea that they will ratify those decisions at the next County Board Meeting.

Kyra Ladd, County Attorney, stated that it was talked about at their Emergency Management Meeting that there was going to be a lot of items going on now and between April 7th, the next Commissioners' Board Meeting. Things have been very quick lately and she thought the County would be derelict in their duties if a plan wasn't in place. There are some provisions where you can convene an emergency meeting under the Statute without notice requirements. Having a sub-committee, like the Personnel Committee, would be appropriate according to Ladd. Some of these decisions need to be made sooner rather than later. It would be her recommendation to have some sort of plan since it would be 3 weeks until the Commissioners would meet again. Ryan Odden handed out a model that Todd County was using for an Emergency Committee to consider.

Commissioner Stearns thought it was a good idea to have a small group initiate some plans and procedures to get some things done, and also wanted the Board to meet on March 24 not for a Planning Session but for a COVID-19 update. He felt the rest of the Board should know what was going on because constituents ask what the County is doing. Commissioner Hofer agreed with Commissioner Stearns to have an update meeting held on March 24 at 2:00 pm. Ladd shared that update email communications could be sent to the Commissioners from the Emergency Committee, they just could not engage in any communications with each other as to not break any open meeting laws.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to adopt the creation of the COVID-19 Emergency Executive Committee. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Horsager cancelled the Work Planning Session and instead a Regular Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 2:00-4:00 pm.

Any actions taken by the County to close doors and do business over the telephone/mail or using negative sick/plt balances will be brought before the COVID-19 Emergency Executive Committee at a later time.

A break was taken at 10:08 am. The meeting reconvened at 10:16 am.

Emergency Management Performance Grant Agreement: Tyler Wheeler, Emergency Management Director, needed to bring the Emergency Management Performance Grant Agreement back before the Board to be signed by the Chairman of the Board and the County Coordinator. It was on the Consent Agenda a month ago, but the State sent the Agreement back for signatures.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to approve the Resolution Authorization Execution of the Emergency Management Performance Grant Agreement. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Human Services Statistical Reports: The Human Services Statistical Reports were presented by Amie Gendron. The first report she featured was the Income Maintenance Caseload Summary Report from January – February 2020. The Maxis cases (included support programs of Diversionary Work, General Assistance, MN Supplemental Aid, Group Residential Housing, Medical Assistance and totals account for unduplicated cases) had decreased and the Mets cases (include Medical Assistance and MN Care cases managed in the MN Eligibility Technology System) had decreased. The Human Services Financial Supervisor said they dropped because of the annual renewal and people did not have their incomes submitted with the renewals which closed the cases, but they are slowly starting to see them open up again. Next she showed all of the programs across the board for January – February 2020; MFIP Cases (Cash Assistance) was down, SNAP (Food Support) was down, Diversionary Work Program was up by 2 cases, General Assistance (Cash Program) was down, Minnesota Supplemental Aid was down, GRH (Group Residential Housing) was up 2 cases and Medical Assistance was down.

Then was the Children in Out of Home Placement from January – February 2020 which went down from 55 to 51 cases. Following was Intakes January – February 2020, and February Intakes was at 133 which was close to average. Open Workgroups (on open services cases) January – February 2020 was slightly higher in February at 1,125 cases.

Gendron gave the Monthly Balance for their fund for the end of February 2020 which was at \$1,697,711.00. Looking at the actual budget utilization February is at 17% of the year and their fund is right on budget. Salaries and Benefits are below budget currently. Overhead and Administrative Costs are above budget at this time because they make many annual payments up front at the beginning of the year. Program Costs are above budget and are an unknown if they will stay above their budget.

Comprehensive Re-Entry Program Update: Britne Haasch, Behavioral Health Unit Supervisor, and Hope Torma, Comprehensive Re-Entry Social Worker, were at the Board Meeting to speak about an update on the Comprehensive Re-Entry Program at the Wadena County jail. Torma said the program started on September 19, 2019 and since then she has gathered about 6 months' worth of data. In that time frame there has been about 295 people booked in the Wadena County jail. Torma has met with roughly 66% of these inmates and did screenings for either Mental Health, Chemical Dependency or other barriers that the inmates might be facing. She does not meet with inmates that are strictly on a DOC hold, being held for another County or a 6-8 hour hold. If you were to remove those type of holds, she believes she has met 80-85% of the inmates in the last 6 months.

In the time Torma has been at the Wadena County jail, there has been 41 referrals to Mental Health services outside the jail, which would be setting up appointments before they get released. There has been 25 Mobile Crisis or ICTS (special funding under the Adult Mental Health Initiative) referrals, where they can contact local Mental Health facilities to provide Mental Health services to inmates while in

custody. Four referrals for Adult Mental Health Case Management that have happened in the last month and have they started to see more inmates asking for these services to help follow-up with them after their release. They have done 57 Chemical Dependency referrals. Ten referrals for Rule 25 Assessment, which an assessor gathers information about an individual and decides whether the individual needs treatment and if so, what type. Four referrals for Civil Commitments from the jail then they get them in for Mobile Crisis at that time it might lead to some level of commitment. Lastly, six people have received referrals for housing after they have left the jail, which leaves them no longer homeless. Thirty-nine former inmates have called Torma after being released from jail as a follow-up.

Sheriff Mike Carr can tell by going through the jail that after the inmates have had a meeting with Torma it calms them down. There has been a lot of success stories with what Torma is doing Carr shared. Sergeant Bryan Savaloja finds that every once in a while there might be an inmate complaint he needs to hear, but most of the time they want to speak to Torma. The majority of the inmates want to meet with her and see what she can do for them.

Strategic Planning Economic Development Committee: Deana Malone, Planning & Zoning Administrator, gave an update of what the Strategic Planning Economic Development (SPED) Committee has been working on.

Strategic Planning Charter – has been approved, but they are thinking of amending it and adding new information.

Splash Page for Economic Development on the County Website – it isn't currently on the County website, but it is linked to the Economic Alliance website.

Revolving Loan Fund – this is something they do not have the capacity for right now.

Review of Zoning Districts with Planning Commission and Looking at Expanding the Zones – it was looked at a while back and there was consensus not to expand at that time. There could be some possible commercial district amendments in uses to recommend to the Board.

Billboards Encouraging Economic Development – decided that it would not produce enough benefits for the cost.

Develop a Plan for Inviting Developers & Businesses to Locate to Wadena County – it hasn't been recently discussed.

Participation in the BR&E (University of MN Study) and Provide Input as an Ad Hoc Group – that process is completed and participants are moving forward with plans to address the issues identified.

Parks Picture Book and Recreational Map – everything is in place for both projects, they are just wanting to receive good current photos in 2020.

Property Assessed Clean Energy Program – the PACE program has been adopted.

County Website Reorganization – the Information Technology Department is currently working on the reorganization.

New Tax Abatement Policy – the new policy moved forward through the Board.

Child Care Zoning Requirements – there is a lack of child care in Wadena County, so SPED looked into zoning ordinances to see if they could be less restrictive.

Housing Study – has been approved by the Board. Currently RFP's are waiting to come in. This could be a helpful tool for drawing developers to Wadena County.

Doug Griffith's 13 Ways to Kill a Community Presentation – the SPED group is pursuing grant dollars and other funding to hold this workshop for County officials, City officials and business owners.

Spotlight on Business in Wadena County – a promotional program hosted on the County website about area businesses in Wadena County that is still in the works.

Annual Development Conference – hopefully in the works for early 2021. A conference for developers, contractors, lenders and realtors to share information about areas available for development, regulations and programs available in Wadena County.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Hofer: 3/11/2020 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, 3/16/2020 Emergency Management Meeting.

Commissioner Monson: 3/10/2020 Annual Township Meeting, 3/11/2020 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, had phone conversation with Renodry representative.

Commissioner Kangas: 3/10/2020 Human Service Director Meeting, 3/11/2020 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, 3/12/2020 TIC.

Commissioner Horsager: 3/10/2020 Historical Society, 3/10/2020 Human Service Director Meeting, 3/11/2020 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting, 3/11/2020 Pipeline Meeting, 3/12/2020 TIC, 3/12/2020 Liaison, 3/16/2020 Soil and Water, 3/16/2020 Child Care Innovation Meeting, 3/16/2020 Emergency Management Meeting.

Commissioner Stearns: 3/10/2020 Human Service Director Meeting, 3/11/2020 Todd Wadena Community Corrections Meeting.

Commissioner Monson moved, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 am. Commissioner Monson- Aye, Commissioner Horsager- Aye, Commissioner Kangas- Aye, Commissioner Hofer- Aye, Commissioner Stearns- Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Ryan Odden,
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer

Charles Horsager, Chairperson
Wadena County Commissioners