

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

April 11, 2023

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on April 11, 2023 in the Wadena County Courthouse, 415 Jefferson Street S, Wadena, Minnesota lower level Multi-Purpose Room. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chairperson Weyer and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were: Mike Weyer, Bill Stearns, Jon Kangas, Murlyn Kreklau, Ron Noon, County Coordinator Ryan Odden, County Engineer Darin Fellbaum, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Veteran Service Officer David Anderson, Eric Schiller MnDOT, Derek Schmidt WSB, Mike Olson Ag Society Director, *Review Messenger* reporter Matt Johnson.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss topics and no formal board actions will be taken.

Recognition of Interested Citizens: None present today

Veteran Service Officer Annual Report: Veteran Service Officer David Anderson presented to the board his Seventeenth year summary. He broke down the number of visits, phone calls and emails for the year 2022 and showed them the comparison from 2021. He discussed the VA spending in Wadena County and the veteran count in Wadena County. He thanked the board for giving him and chance to serve the veterans in Wadena County. The board thanked him for his hard work.

2025 TH 10 Roundabout Discussion: County Engineer Darin Fellbaum said that at the 3/7/23 County Board Meeting, the topic was discussed of a Roundabout at CSAH 54 (Harry Rich Drive) and TH 10 and the County's involvement/cost participation in that in anticipation of the TH 10 4 Lane Expansion project in Wadena in 2025. The board directed me to contact MnDOT's project manager and have him come to a board meeting for further discussion. Darin introduced Eric Schiller from MnDot and Derek Schmidt from WSB to have a question and answer session. They presented and talked about the most up to date conceptual layout from MnDOT and a layout of the roundabout at CSAH 54 (Harry Rich Drive). The commissioners asked questions and Schiller and Schmidt answered the hot topics. Fellbaum said he should be able to apply for some federal funding for this project.

The Conservation Fund Parcels Discussion: Planning and Zoning Director Deana Malone led a discussion on the Conservation Fund Parcels and the purchase feasibility and grant application. The Conservation Fund Committee came up with a priority list of parcels and recommended that the County offer the DNR the opportunity to apply for funding for the low priority parcel on the list that is 120 acres. The Northern Waters Land Trust is submitting a grant proposal to the Outdoor Heritage Fund on behalf of several counties and tribal governments for this purchase. Once the Northern Waters Land Trust acquires these parcels, they will be transferred to Wadena County for permanent forest and conservation management. Commissioner Kangas said he

would like to see townships and schools benefit from the timber sales of these parcels. The commissioners would like to see parking spaces and maintained trails and the parcels to be open to the public. Deana asked the commissioners if they had any questions regarding the application process. The consensus of the board is to go with the recommendation of the Conservation Fund Committee's priority list. The board will need to act on this at next week's board meeting.

A break was taken at 9:39 a.m. Meeting reconvened at 9:43 a.m.

Ag Society Update: Director Mike Olson of the Ag Society gave Ag Society update. There are five new board members. They are down one member, they have 10 and usually have 11. There has been a lot of turnover. They are working well together. Dennis Lindner is the President. Commissioner Kreklau asked how the board worked, what is their function. They run the Wadena County Fair, and set up other things to raise money for the fair such as the Haunted House, Enduro races, bus garage rent, etc. The board would like to get a priority list of things that need to be fixed on the fairgrounds. The maintenance dollars allocated to the Ag Society for the fairgrounds will stay under the county's control. The other money allocated to them for operations is being closely monitored. This year's budget has been drawn up. They have not asked for their allocated operation money yet. It was asked of Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson if she would be comfortable with giving them the allocated money. She said yes. Commissioner Kreklau said he would not be comfortable with giving them the money. He wanted to know how they were going to make the numbers work and how they were going to obtain them and would vote no until he sees how they were going to make them work. He doesn't have a lot of faith in the numbers. Heather said the previous year's budget cannot be judged. She feels this budget is more in line. Kreklau would like to see a better financial report and wanted to know if there was a way the county could help them with their books. Heather said they are basically starting from scratch. Commissioner Kangas wanted to know if she looked at their check register and she said she does not check the books/financials for every organization that allocated funds are given to. Commissioner Noon feels that with new management the society will be run correctly but he does think some oversight is needed. Commissioner Weyer would like to see a monthly report from the society on where the funds are going. Kreklau feels that when they ask for the allocated funds, that expenditures and income to date are accounted for at that time. Noon wanted to know if the board could have some financials showing accountability by the end of May to show there is progress and accountability. Mike Olson said yes, as there was a meeting tonight. The board thanked Mike for serving and said they look forward to improvements from the current board.

Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Noon to adjourn the meeting at 11:27 a.m. Motion carried unanimously.



Ryan Odden
Wadena County Coordinator



Michael Weyer, Chairperson
Wadena County Commissioner