The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on April 14, 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 via zoom and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were: Commissioners Bill Stearns via zoom, Sheldon Monson via zoom, Jim Hofer via zoom, Jon Kangas, County Coordinator/Engineer Ryan Odden, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, Chief Deputy Joe Schoon, Bryan Savaloja, Dave Anderson VSO via Zoom, David Hotchkiss IT Director, Heather Olson via Zoom, Cindy Pederson via Zoom, Review Messenger reporter Matthew Johnson via Zoom, Wadena Pioneer Journal reporter Michael Johnson via Zoom and Independent News Herald/Verndale Sun reporter Trinity Gruenberg via Zoom.

Amend/Approve the Day’s Agenda: Ryan Odden requested that 4-7-20 minutes be tabled until 4-21-20 for some revisions. Commissioner Kangas requested would like to add to the end of the meeting at 15a a discussion on County Property Inventory and Elected/Appointed positions. Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to add to the agenda at 15a a discussion on inventory of the County Properties and the Elected/Appointed positions in the county. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

Recognize Interested Citizens: None present today.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There was nothing on the consent agenda to present.

REGULAR AGENDA:

County Veteran’s Service Officer Annual Report and Sourcewell Resolution for Grant Funding: David Anderson gave his annual report for the last year. He saw 1,234 walk in veterans between the three sites that he serves at. He took 1,116 veteran phone calls in the last year. The veterans ride program is ending as there were only 3 runs in the last year. In the 2019, $15,406.18 was spent on Dental, Optical and Special Needs grants for veterans in the county. He received a $10,000.00 grant which he used for advertising at the Cozy Theater, a new lap top computer, monitor and docking station and a Veteran Form and tracking system called Vetraspec.

Dave requested a passage of a resolution to establish support for seeking funding from Sourcewell for Veterans Community Supported Agriculture to support ten veteran families with the delivery of healthy foods every two weeks for a year. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to pass the following resolution:

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A Resolution Establishing Support for Seeking Funding from Sourcewell for Veteran Community Supported Agriculture (VetCSA)
Whereas, Sourcewell is providing Innovation Funding for cities and counties in Region 5; and

Whereas, Wadena County, along with regional partners has identified a need for the VetCSA; and

Whereas, the VetCSA is currently seeking $66,350.00 with no match to implement the VetCSA. The goal of the VetCSA program is to improve the overall quality of life for veterans and their families throughout the region. This initiative delivers healthy foods and provides additional knowledge and skills on how to prepare them. Building a healthy lifestyle creates a positive effect on physical and mental health and brings veterans, families, growers and communities together.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves the Sourcewell application for the VetCSA.

CERTIFICATION

I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator, Clerk to the Wadena County Board of Commissioners, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Wadena County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held on the 14th day of April, 2020.

Commissioners voted: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

IT Internship: David Hotchkiss presented the request for hiring two IT interns. These interns would be hired at $12.00 per hour and need to be attending college. Sourcewell will reimburse the county for these positions. Dave was asked how many hours this would be for. Sourcewell will cover 640 hours of work for each position. This is a one-time program offered from Sourcewell. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Kangas the Wadena County Commissioners approve the IT director to enter into a contract with funding from Sourcewell for the purposes of seeking candidates for two IT internships for a maximum of 640 hours per intern. Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

Public Health Resolution for Support of Sourcewell Innovation Grant Funding Requests: Public Health Director, Cindy Peterson presented requests for two grants for through Sourcewell. The first grant supports wired kids education. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the following Resolution:

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Resolution #1

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SUPPORT FOR SEEKING FUNDING FROM SOURCEWELL FOR A REGIONAL PROGRAM THAT SUPPORTS WIRED KIDS EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Sourcewell, is providing innovation funding for the Cities and Counties in Region Five, and:
WHEREAS, The Human Service and Public Health agencies of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena Counties work to use the power of collaboration for the promotion of the healthy development of children at an early age, and:

WHEREAS, Wired Kids Education focuses on strengthening parents by providing learning to examine the impact of screen time on early childhood development, and:

WHEREAS, Wired Kids Education provides information on what is appropriate technology for young children with developing brains and bodies, and:

WHEREAS, Wired Kids Education will provide information on strategies to coach parents and caregivers on establishing healthy screen time habits.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves Sourcewell innovative funding application submitted by Cass County Public Health on behalf of Region V Counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena to collaborate with a professional organization that will build capacity within our communities to support families and children in need of healthy development.

I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator, Wadena County, Minnesota hereby certify that I have compared the forgoing copy of the resolution of the County Board of said County with the original record therefore on file in the Administration Office of Wadena County in Wadena, Minnesota as state in the minutes of the proceedings of said board at a meeting duly held on this 14th day of April, 2020, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and the whole therefore, and that said resolution was duly passed by said board at said meeting.

Witness by the hand and seal this 14th day of April, 2020.

Ryan Odden, County Coordinator

Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsgaard-yes, carried unanimously.

The second resolution is for Safe Families for Children. This is support for families to help before children are taken out of the home. The goal is to put in place services for families that are really struggling and assist them so the children can remain in their homes. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to pass the following resolution:

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Resolution #2

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SUPPORT FOR SEEKING FUNDING FROM SOURCEWELL FOR A REGIONAL PROGRAM THAT SUPPORT FAMILIES

WHEREAS, Sourcewell, is providing innovation funding for the Cities and Counties in Region Five, and:

WHEREAS, The Human Service and Public Health agencies of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena Counties work to prevent child abuse, deflect children from child welfare and want to support and stabilize families, and:
WHEREAS, Safe Families of Minnesota focuses on strengthening parents by providing “breathing room”, allowing families to stabilize while children are in a safe and loving environment, and providing family coaching to struggling parents that is distinctly different from social work/casework, and:

WHEREAS, Safe Families of Minnesota supports, and stabilizes families in crisis by surrounding them with caring, compassionate community, and:

WHEREAS, Safe Families of Minnesota is nationally recognized by the Federal Children’s Bureau for their work with local and State agencies that keep children safe and families intact.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves Sourcewell innovative funding application submitted by Morrison County Public Health on behalf of Region V Counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena to collaborate with a professional non-profit organization that will build capacity within our communities to support families and children in need.

I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator, Wadena County, Minnesota hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the resolution of the County Board of said County with the original record therefore on file in the Administration Office of Wadena County in Wadena, Minnesota as state in the minutes of the proceedings of said board at a meeting duly held on this 14th day of April, 2020, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and the whole therefore, and that said resolution was duly passed by said board at said meeting.

Witness by the hand and seal this 14th day of April, 2020.

Ryan Odden, County Coordinator

Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

COVID 19 Emergency Executive Committee Update: Ryan Odden brought up that Governor Walz extended the Stay At Home order to May 13, 2020. Departments are doing their best to keep employees safe. The Court House is using only one entrance and the Assessor’s office is handling the screening of all that are entering into the building. The Disaster Declaration for Wadena County was brought back to extend it 90 days until July 15, 2020. If the conditions change the declaration can be shortened, and the county will look into that option if possible. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to pass the following resolution to extend the Wadena County Disaster Declaration until July 15, 2020:

WADENA COUNTY DISASTER DECLARATION

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic event will impact the population of Wadena County and its cities due to the disruption of services to include the closure of schools, daycares, and other services that will negatively impact day to day life: and

WHEREAS, response and support to affected individuals, communities, medical systems, businesses, and government will cause a significant impact to the county as a whole; subject matter experts have determined that protective measures must be undertaken to reduce the impact of COVID-10 and activity will be beyond the usual resources of Wadena County; and

WHEREAS, all locally available public and private resources available to mitigate and alleviate the effects of this pandemic may be insufficient to meet the needs of the situation; and
WHEREAS, the Wadena county Emergency Management Director requested the Wadena County Board of Commissioners to declare Wadena County in a State of Emergency beginning March 17, 2020 for a period of 30 days, which would expire on April 16th, 2020.

WHEREAS, the Wadena County Emergency Management Director requests the Wadena County Board of Commissioners extend the State of Emergency for 90 days, which would be July 15, 2020.

NOW THEREFORE, the Chair of the Wadena County Commissioners has declared a State of Emergency on behalf of Wadena County and will execute for and on the behalf of Wadena County, the expenditure of emergency funds from all available sources, the invoking of mutual aid agreements, and requesting assistance from the State of Minnesota.

Chuck Horsager, Chair, Wadena County Board of Commissioners

Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

COVID 19 Property Tax Hardship Penalty Waiver Policy: Auditor/Treasurer, Heather Olson, presented that there are four or five different ways that this is being handled around the state. She stated that she is in favor of giving the waiver to many taxpayers, giving them the opportunity to apply for this abatement. Commissioner Hofer said that the State legislature is back in session and could still act on this, so he is in favor of waiting another week to act on this. Commissioner Kangas would like to waive the penalties for all tax payers not just those that homestead their properties or are laid off from their jobs. Heather Olson said that she does not believe that those with escrowed tax payments would need to be part of this abatement. Commissioner Stearns stated that AMC does not believe that the state will act on any bill that will affect the May 15, 2020 tax deadline. If anything is done by the state it will affect the October 15, 2020 tax deadline. He is in favor of allowing anyone who wants to apply for this abatement to be allowed to apply. Commissioner Monson feels that delaying this another week will not give taxpayers enough time to make the application before April 30, 2020. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve this tax abatement policy for payments due on May 15, 2020. Commissioner Kangas wants to make an amendment to include all property owners in Wadena County, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the amendment. Vote on the amendment: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, amendment carried. Vote on the motion to include all property owners in this tax abatement policy of the penalties and interest until July 13, 2020: Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously. It was requested that a press release go to all the papers.

Office of the State Auditor Engagement Letter: Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson presented the letter from the State Auditor Engagement Letter. The price per hour went up from last year. For this year, we need to approve the letter because we are tied into this contract. If the county would make a decision to go with a different firm for the audit it must be done by August 1 of any even year. The Commissioners directed Auditor/Treasurer to look into the possibility of having another firm do the audit before the August 1, 2020 deadline. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to sign the engagement letter. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

Correction to the GIS PERA Budget: Auditor/Treasurer, Heather Olson pointed out that the budgeted amount for PERA in the GIS department was incorrectly reported. She is asking for the amount to be changed to the correct amount of $4,758.00. The difference of $4,002.00 will be taken out of the cash reserves account. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to make the
change to the GIS PERA budgeted amount to $4,758.00 from $756.00 with the difference coming from cash reserves. Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horager-yes, carried unanimously.

**Fairgrounds Water Valve Replacement:** Ryan Odden presented the bid for the water valve replacement at the Fairgrounds. He reported that the current valve was leaking all winter. Brian Wegscheid presented a bid for the project along with the plans for the replacement. He was the only plumber to submit a bid for this project. Commissioner Hofer asked what the budget source for this project would be. Ryan suggested that it come out of the MCIT dividend fund. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to allow the County Coordinator to approve the hiring of Brian Wegscheid Plumbing and Heating for the replacement of the water lines and valve at the Wadena County Fairgrounds for up to $11,000.00 to be taken from the MCIT dividend fund. Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, motion carried unanimously.

**Inventory of Properties owned by Wadena County and Elected/Appointed positions:** Commissioner Kangas asked that an inventory of the real estate properties owned by Wadena County be put into one document for the commissioners, staff and the public to access. He wants the parcel ID numbers, field cards and perhaps a map included of all properties the county owns. He would also want the tax forfeited parcels on a list. He also wants to discuss the Elected versus Appointed positions at the County level. Commissioner Hofer stated that the State of Minnesota passed a statue concerning this issue last year. Commissioner Hofer would like the statute and all other documents brought back to the board for review. Commissioner Stearns stated the Personnel Committee has looked into this in the past and he would like the current Personnel Committee to continue the vetting of this issue before it will be brought back to the board. The laws will need to be looked at closely and the process of how to proceed will need to be addressed before it be bought back to the board. On the issue of the County owned properties inventory, this will have to be done by multiple departments. Commissioner Stearns feels that there needs to be a working group with Ryan, Heather and Lee included in this group. By consensus it was decided that Ryan Odden would be in charge of this inventory. Heather Olson is requesting a list of what Commissioner Kangas wants included in this so the information can be gathered.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Commissioner Kangas: 4/7 IT Committee, 4/9 Trauma Informed Care Committee, 4/13 Solid Waste Committee, 4/14 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Hofer: 4/7 IT Committee, 4/9 Todd Wadena Community Corrections interviews, 4/13 Todd Wadena Community Correction Executive Board, 4/14 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Monson: 4/13 Todd Wadena Community Correction Executive Board, 4/14 Board Meeting.


Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to adjourn the meeting at 10:49 am. Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

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Ryan Odden,                                      Charles Horsager, Chairperson
Wadena County Coordinator/Engineer                Wadena County Commissioners