

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

April 18, 2023

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on April 18, 2023 in the Wadena City Council Chambers, 222 2nd St. SE, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Chairperson Weyer and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were: Michael Weyer, Bill Stearns, Jon Kangas, Murlyn Kreklau, Ron Noon, County Coordinator Ryan Odden, Chief Deputy Joe Schoon, Deputy Jake Maros, County Engineer Darin Fellbaum, County Attorney Kyra Ladd, Planning/Zoning Director Deana Malone, Solid Waste Supervisor Wade Miller, Britne Haasch, Renee Godding, Chris McConn, Dan Sartell, Cedar Walters, *Review Messenger* reporter Matt Johnson and *Independent News Herald/Verndale Sun* reporter Trinity Gruenberg, Public Health Director Erica Keppers via Zoom, Human Services Director Jennifer Westrum via Zoom, Administrative Services Supervisor Amie Gendron via Zoom, Transit Director Randy Jahnke via Zoom, Sheriff Mike Carr via Zoom, Sergeant Bryan Savaloja via Zoom, County Recorder Tracy Borchert via Zoom, Breanna Erlandson via Zoom, Kim Dailey via Zoom, Jeffrey Hentges via Zoom, Jessica Schwie via Zoom.

Amend/Approve the Day's Agenda: Coordinator Odden wanted to pull consent agenda Item I. from the consent agenda and voted on it separately. Commissioner Kangas said item 19 was submitted as an action item and is presented today as a discussion item. He would like item 19 to be an action item and also moved up in the agenda order. Per Board Chair Weyer it was moved to 13.5 and will be an action item. Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Noon to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Recognition of Interested Citizens: None present today

CONSENT AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Approve the 4-4-2023 minutes.
- Approve the Warrants from 3-31-23 and 4-6-2023 for a total of \$289,352.25.
- Approve the Humans Services Warrants from 4-18-2023 for a total of \$34,578.74.
- Approve the Wadena County Human Services UCARE Contract.
- Approve LISSTS Septic System Replacement Grand PID 15.026.3020
- Approve the donations to Transit Department/Friendly Rider.
- Approve the Special Use Permits for Twin City Trail Riders.
- Approve the Special Use Permits for River Valley Enduro Riders.
- Approve the Lawful Gambling Permit for Blowers Chapel to hold a raffle.

- Approve the Resolution to obtain a grant for a Trunarc Handheld Narcotics Analyzer through Sourcewell.
- Approve the 2023 Annual County Boat and Water Safety Grant Agreement.
- Approve the Board of Appeal and Equalization Committee Charter 2023.

Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda Item I is the Renewal of Liquor Licenses for Ernie Rose Golf LLC dba Vintage Golf and Blueberry Holding, Inc. dba Blueberry Pines. Insurance information came in late and he asked the board to approve the liquor licenses contingent on the County Attorney's approval. Moved by Commissioner Kreklau and seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve Consent Agenda Item I, the renewal of the two liquor licenses presented contingent on the County Attorney's approval. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

FRIENDS OF WADENA COUNTY YOUTH INTRODUCTION: Dan Sartell, representative for the Friends of Wadena County Youth which is a recently formed nonprofit to help the Wadena County 4-H Program, came before the board and said that the 4-H building on the fairgrounds is an adequate facility for holding a banquet for 250-300 people but the building could be better. The back meeting hall is not insulated. Anyone holding a meeting there has to bring in tables and chairs and there is no sound system. The group invested money in an architect that specializes in restaurants and large areas like the 4-H building. He passed out copies. They are ready to begin fundraising to fix up the building. One of the most pressing needs is the restroom facilities. The group understands that there is money available that the county has in a fund. The group is here to ask for money to get the bathrooms, kitchen floors and plumbing redone. That is the cornerstone of the project. If they could get the funds for that they could pursue the other aspects: insulating the back room, buying new tables and chairs, adding a cold storage space, and redoing some of the HVAC system. The newly formed Friends of Wadena County Youth would be taking on the responsibility of raising the additional money. Everything would be coordinated through the county and bids would be received for the projects. Chair Weyer asked if he was coming before the board to request money for the bathrooms. Sartell said they are estimating to redo all the bathrooms, update the plumbing in the kitchen area, finish the floors, extend the bathroom on the north side to have a uni-sex bathroom and rebuild the concession stand. That is what they are asking the county to take on. It was asked if he had any estimates of costs. He said he did not. He said it was difficult to spend the money without a commitment from the county. Kangas wanted to clarify which fund he was talking about. Weyer said it was the fairgrounds fund. Kreklau wanted to know who was responsible for the expenses relating to heating, electric and sewer. It was said that 4-H is responsible for that. The intent is that the building is used for the 4-H organization during the fair and other 4-H activities. Stearns said that there is leftover money from the tornado and has just been sitting there and until now saw no reason to spend it, but feels this is worth it and would make a difference. The proposal has seating for 400 people. This is a meeting facility that is needed in this area. The 4-H organization would be renting

the facility out for large group meetings, weddings and other activities and that would generate the income that would offset the additional utilities and maintenance. Kreklau is concerned about additional expenses down the road. Sartell said that the reason the Friends of Wadena County Youth was formed was because if the 4-H organization fundraised, they would have to channel all proceeds through St. Paul and then hopefully get it back. The Friends of Wadena County Youth could retain all the funds raised and use for this specific project. Noon said that the building does need repair and feels it would be good for everyone. Kangas said he likes the idea and is not opposed to it but some questions have come up. He is wondering if this is unfair competition for private industry for an event center like this. If this is county owned and we are letting them use and rent out, will that turn it into a taxable property? If the county owns it, would the county be able to collect part of the income. Stearns said the only competition for this was the Elks Club. Kangas said we are using storage for the school busses and so then that stops a private entity from doing that. Kangas said again, he does support this, he just had questions. County Attorney Ladd reminded them again that the county owns everything at the fairgrounds. What your tenants do is what the board allows them to do. Kreklau wanted to know if anyone had a ballpark on the amount they are asking for. Sartell said that you could take action to approve up to \$100,000.00. They then could proceed with getting bids and then raise the rest of the money. The Sportsman's banquet coming up will be the launch pad for the fundraising project. Stearns said it would be nice to be able to say that the county board has designated up to \$100,000.00 for plumbing and bathroom renovation. Weyer asked if they are limiting this to the bathrooms, plumbing and flooring and would not involve any structure. They answer was yes. Weyer asked Sartell so what you are here for today is for a motion of commitment/support. Kangas said that for the record the board action form was an information item only and was not changed at the beginning of the meeting and there was none of this information supplied to them. Stearns said he has talked about this in committee reports and is not a surprise. Kangas said he does not mind if you ask for consent of the board and bring back to another meeting and wanted to point out that you cannot just run it by certain people rules. Several commissioners said that was fair. Stearns moved that the county board would support in principal the renovation of the 4-H building proposed by the Friends of Wadena County Youth and go on record in support and consider up to \$100,000.00 out of the fairground funds to be voted upon at a future board meeting. Noon seconded. Kangas said to be clear from now on, any board member can bring up a motion at any time during a meeting and does not want to be told that because it was not on the agenda you can't do it. He's been told that and Murlyn has been told that and has happened in the past. Motion carried unanimously.

HUMAN SERVICES STATISTICAL REPORTS: Human Services Administrative Services Supervisor Amie Gendron presented to the board the Wadena County Income Maintenance Caseload Summary, the Wadena County Income Maintenance Caseloads by Program, The Wadena County Human Services Open Workgroups, Intakes, Children In-Out of Home Placement, the Wadena County Human Services Monthly Balance, and their 2023 Budget Utilization Summary.

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SUPPORT FOR SEEKING FUNDING FROM

SOURCEWELL FOR A REGIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE IN REGION 5: Behavioral Health Supervisor Britne Haasch said that Region 5 Children's Mental Health supervisors are working to apply for the Community Impact Grant funding offered by Sourcewell. Region 5 supervisors would like to create a Children's Mental Health Initiative which would provide a forum for Children's Mental Health collaboration to work with the unique partners that impact the continuum of care for children which include the continued coordination of Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services (CIBS), possible expansion of respite services for children with mental health needs, and expanding in home services for children and families in Region 5. These are just some of the anticipated ways we believe this funding could impact the continuum of services for children with mental health needs in Region 5. While impacting the access and availability of services we hope that this will also reduce the number of days children with significant mental health behaviors and symptoms are placed outside of the home. Motion by Commissioner Stearns and seconded by Commissioner Noon to approve Resolution 2023-10 A Resolution establishing support for seeking funding from Sourcewell for a Regional Program for an Intensive Mental Health Service Option for Youth in Region 5. Motion carried unanimously.

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SUPPORT FOR SEEKING FUNDING FROM
SOURCEWELL FOR A REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR AN
INTENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE OPTION FOR YOUTH IN REGION 5

Resolution 2023-10

WHEREAS, Sourcewell, is providing community impact funding for the Cities and Counties in Region Five that address mental health needs, and;

WHEREAS, The Social Service and Public Health agencies of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties work to prevent intrusive residential treatment interventions, prevent truancy, prevent delinquency, deflect children from child welfare, want to support and stabilize youth's mental health and functioning, provide community based services, and support families in caring for their children with mental health issues, and;

WHEREAS, The Adult Mental Health Initiative has been successful in providing a forum for collaboration and successful implementation of services for Adult Mental Health Services and;

WHEREAS, The service model of Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services focuses on strengthening parents by providing intensive mental health services for youth 8-17 years old in the family home and community, teaching coping skills, building supports, and limiting time out of the home for placement and;

WHEREAS, A Region 5 Children's Mental Health Initiative would provide a forum for Children's Mental Health collaboration to work with the unique partners that impact the continuum of care for children which include the coordination of Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services, and;

WHEREAS, Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services has demonstrated positive outcomes and costs savings in other counties in Minnesota, and has increased youth's success and connectedness, and:

NOW, THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves Sourcewell Community Impact funding application submitted by Morrison County Social Services 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.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS has caused this resolution to be adopted this 18th day of April, 2023. ATTEST: Wadena County Coordinator Ryan Odden and Michael Weyer, Chairperson

ANNUAL SOLID WASTE BROCHURE: Chris McConn and Cedar Walters who is the Public Information Education Outreach Officer for Solid Waste presented to the board that the Solid Waste Department has prepared a brochure to mail out to Wadena County residents. A similar brochure was mailed last year. There was positive feedback from the brochure. They do see more of a response when people know what programs are available and how to participate in them correctly. The quoted printing cost for \$5,800 brochures is \$1,322.54. The estimated cost for mailing is \$4,100.00. Motion by Commissioner Stearns and seconded by Commissioner Kangas to authorize the Solid Waste Department to mail the annual brochure. Motion carried unanimously.

AWARD OF 2023 WADENA COUNTY BITUMINOUS CONTRACT: County Engineer Darin Fellbaum said that on April 6th, 2023 at 10AM at the Wadena County Highway Department, sealed bids were received and opened for SAP 080-604-014, SAP 080-607-017, SAP 080-615-006, SAP 080-620-010, and SAP 080-652-004. Bid Summary, Contract, and Resolution are attached. Motion by Commissioner Kreklau and seconded by Commissioner Noon to approve Resolution 2023-12. Motion carried unanimously.

WADENA COUNTY RESOLUTION AWARD OF CONTRACT

FOR 2023 BITUMINOUS PROJECTS

Resolution 2023-12

WHERE AS: Sealed bids were received on April 6, 2023 at 10:00AM by the County Engineer for construction projects SAP 080-604-014, SAP 080-607-017, SAP 080-615-006, SAP 080-620-010, SAP 080-652-004 and

WHERE AS: Bids were received from Anderson Brothers Construction Company of Brainerd LLC for \$3,681,008.58, Mark Sand & Gravel Co. for \$3,977,179.69, Duininck Inc. for \$4,002,572.86, Knife River for \$4,223,242.99 and Central Specialties Inc. for \$4,414,354.08.

NOW THEN BE IT RESOLVED: That the Wadena County Board of Commissioners does hereby accept and award a contract for the above said construction projects to Anderson Brothers Construction Company of Brainerd LLC of Brainerd, Minnesota, based on their bid of \$3,681,008.58 for and in behalf of the County of Wadena.

CERTIFICATION I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator of the County of Wadena, State of Minnesota, 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 18th day of April, 2023. Witness my hand and seal. Ryan Odden, County Coordinator Wadena County, Minnesota Michael Weyer, County Board Chairman Wadena County, Minnesota

AWARD OF CP 080-133-014: County Engineer Darin Fellbaum said that on April 11th, 2023 at 2PM at the Wadena County Highway Department, sealed bids were received and opened for CP 080-133-014. Bid Summary, Contract, and Resolution are attached. Correspondence has been made with the City of Sebeka and they are in agreeance to award the contract. Motion by Commissioner Kreklau and seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve Resolution 2023-13. Motion carried unanimously.

WADENA COUNTY RESOLUTION AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CP 080-133-014

Resolution 2023-13

WHERE AS: Sealed bids were received on April 11, 2023 by the County Engineer for construction project CP 080-133-014 and

WHERE AS: Bids were received from Kern & Tabery Inc. for \$2,007,514.82, Landwehr Construction, Inc. for \$2,025,840.86, C&L Excavating Inc. for \$2,204,454.90, Kuechle Underground for \$2,212,457.68, RL Larson Excavating for \$2,298,289.67 and Hough Inc. for \$2,642,802.55.

NOW THEN BE IT RESOLVED: That the Wadena County Board of Commissioners does hereby accept and award a contract for the above said construction project to Kern & Tabery Inc. of Wadena, Minnesota, based on their bid of \$2,007,514.82 for and in behalf of the County of Wadena.

CERTIFICATION I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator of the County of Wadena, State of Minnesota, 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 18th day of April, 2023. Witness my hand and seal. Ryan Odden, County Coordinator Wadena County, Minnesota Michael Weyer, County Board Chairman Wadena County, Minnesota

AWARD OF SP 080-070-011: County Engineer Darin Fellbaum said that on April 11th, 2023 at 10AM at the Wadena County Highway Department, sealed bids were received and opened for SP 080-070-011. Bid Summary, Contract, and Resolution are attached. Motion by Commissioner

Kreklau and seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve Resolution 2023-14. Motion carried unanimously.

WADENA COUNTY RESOLUTION AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SP 080-070-011

Resolution 2023-14

WHERE AS: Sealed bids were received on April 11, 2023 by the County Engineer for construction project SP 080-070-011 and

WHERE AS: Bids were received from Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC. for \$293,941.41, and Century Fence Company for \$321,446.46,

NOW THEN BE IT RESOLVED: That the Wadena County Board of Commissioners does hereby accept and award a contract for the above said construction project to Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC of Edina, Minnesota, based on their bid of \$293,941.41 for and in behalf of the County of Wadena.

CERTIFICATION I, Ryan Odden, County Coordinator of the County of Wadena, State of Minnesota, 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 18th day of April, 2023. Witness my hand and seal. Ryan Odden, County Coordinator Wadena County, Minnesota Michael Weyer, County Board Chairman Wadena County, Minnesota

SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTION DISCUSSION: Commissioner Kangas said he received a call from a concerned person because she received a letter from Planning & Zoning saying she had to have a septic system inspection and if it fails she has to replace it. Part of the letter said that *a current Certificate of Compliance or Notice of Non-Compliance shall be required for all existing septic systems located on a property upon a transfer of ownership of the property.* This is a married couple in their 80's and have been married for 60 years. Kangas said that in his opinion that in this case all they were doing was adding the spouse's name. Again he said it was his opinion that this does not raise to a level of a transfer. The Wadena County Zoning Ordinance on page 18 defines the transfer of ownership as the conveyance of part or all rights to a parcel of property to another party or parties through the recording of a legal document. They added her name to the deed, but the definition of conveyance is the transfer of ownership or interest in real property from one person to another by a document such as a deed, lease or mortgage. Adding a spouse's name is not transferring ownership to another party. This creates an unnecessary financial burden and a lot of stress also. He feels we need to take care of this in a quick manner and we can define it better in the ordinance later. The way the Zoning department interprets the ordinance and the way others interpret the language is not specific. It is about conveyance of property and transfer. There is always going to be difference of opinions. When he went to the Shell River Township Board of Equalization another person came up to him and said he is only putting his wife's name on the deed. He said he would rather fight and the 80 year old woman said she would rather get a lawyer and fight it. Commissioner Kangas made a motion to suspend the requirement of a septic system inspection for adding a spouse to the property

deed until this language can be clarified in the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Kreklau seconded this motion. Planning and Zoning Director Deana Malone said she is not in disagreement to alter the language if you want to move forward with the moratorium. The language that was developed was done in such a manner that it would be legal. It was run through our County Attorney. When questions have come up on that, the County Attorney has been consulted. We felt that our interpretation is correct. However, if the board wants us to amend that and provide an exception for this within the ordinance, we can certainly do that. Noon concurs with Kangas. He would recommend and advise that we do amend the ordinance just to stipulate adding a spouse only in this condition so the ordinance is not thrown out in its entirety. Noon thinks this comes down to common sense and practicality. Weyer had a question on whether the commissioners could do this or does it need to be sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Malone said it needs to go through the Planning Commission. Malone had a question for County Attorney Ladd as for as the moratorium on that. Do they need to establish a time frame? Ladd said yes, and to clarify Commissioner Noon's point you can't just change an ordinance. There would need to be clarification on that. Another point of clarification about making some exceptions for a spouse/adding a spouse. To be clear, when talking about transfers, we are talking about ownership, interest and property. So whether one person's name is on the title or ten people's name are on the title, the amount of ownership interest on that title of property is split out between how many or how few you have on it. And the reasons why people are on title or not, it's not our business. There is estate planning that is part of that on why someone is excluded, there are tax implications, there is homestead stuff. There are all sorts of legal reasons why people make decisions to or not to include somebody. But as soon as someone is on title or off title, that changes the interest of the property on whoever is remaining. So that is a transfer because the interest rights transfer when that occurs. So when this was first looked at back in 2016, we were looking at the interests and who had interest of property or not, because it is a slippery slope on the exceptions. Ladd understands the spouse thing, but people make decisions all the time about adding somebody or not adding somebody to the property whether you are married or not. We didn't want to go there, we just wanted to say if you are changing the interest in the title of the property that constitutes the transfer. We tried to make it very basic for that reason. Again, people make those decisions all the time. It was a definition that we had to employ so that it was objectively applied regardless of whether people were married or not because we are not going to discriminate against married people, because you can have people co-habiting that are in a relationship with each other. We were trying to be objective so that we were not having an ordinance that could run afoul of some sort of discriminatory act. Kangas said he needs to respond to that. He disagrees that it has to be changed in the ordinance. It says a transfer of ownership, it does not say adding a spouse. He is asking that we are not going to say that if you are adding your wife's name on your deed is a transfer. It is being interpreted that way by Deana, but it's not in the ordinance, it says for transfer of ownership. In Minnesota, everyone knows somebody that got divorced and it doesn't matter whose name is on that deed, they are splitting that property. By being married to that person, they have an entitlement. Ladd says they have some rights but there is not statute that says if you are married you are automatically on all property title of your partner's property or visa versa. There is no statute that makes that automatic, just to be clear. Kangas said

that all our ordinance says is transfer of ownership. We are interpreting in house what constitutes transfer of ownership. In his mind, in his opinion, that is from one party to another. Now if you are adding a child on to it that would be different because that is continuing that in your family. But when you are just adding your husband or wife's name to the deed it's not a transfer. It can be clarified in the ordinance in the future, but it's not going to be interpreted as this is conveyance from one person to another. Kreklau said he needs to do research on what are all the things that generate a septic system inspection. He would like to see the board delay the two septic system inspections. He agrees with Jon on this. He would like Wadena County to promote growth in the county. He feels when at the recorder's office it could be explained to them what would constitute a septic system inspection instead of finding this out in a letter. Kangas said if they don't add her name to the deed, they will probably live there until they die. There would be no inspection. Again, adding a spouse's name to the deed is not a transfer. Malone said that the way it has been interpreted from the beginning, how far back to you want to go to forgive. Kangas said from now on. Commissioner Stearns asked could we say that adding a spouse's name will not trigger an inspection. Kangas said that is what the motion is. Malone said to amend the Zoning Ordinance needs to go through the Planning and Zoning Commission to amend the Zoning Ordinance to include that exception to clarify it. Kangas said in the meantime he thinks we should suspend the requirement if it is just to add a spouse's name. Malone believes you can do that, to put a moratorium on that part of it with a time frame. Kangas said that was spelled out in the language of his motion. Malone said that to be clear; that if a document comes through for adding a spouse's name from today to whenever the new language could be adopted, we would do nothing on those. The consensus was that it would not trigger an inspection. Kreklau said everyone should be told the consequences of transferring ownership. Kangas said that this is not a transfer of ownership. Malone said that our legal counsel has told us that it is a transfer of ownership regardless of anyone's opinion. Kangas called for the question which is a motion to suspend the requirement of a septic system inspection for adding a spouse to the property deed until this language can be clarified in the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Kreklau seconded this motion. Motion carried unanimously. Malone said no time frame was put on this. Ladd said this cannot be suspended indefinitely. Malone believes this can be done in 90 days. The motion was amended to say: A motion to suspend the requirement of a septic system inspection for adding a spouse to the property deed until this language can be clarified in the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance and said clarification to be done within 90 days and to include suspending septic system inspections for Parcel #'s 06-027-1010 and 12-005-4030. Commissioner Stearns seconded this motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MINNESOTA STATUE 13D.05 SUBD. 3(B) WITH ASSIGNED ATTORNEYS TO DISCUSS PETE V. WADENA COUNTY: Motion by Commissioner Noon and seconded by Commissioner Kreklau to go into closed session at 10:37 a.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting went back to an open session and a break was taken at 11:14 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:21 a.m.

APPROVE LAWN MOWER PURCHASE FROM TAX FORFEITED LAND SALE PARK

RESERVE: Planning and Zoning Director Deana Malone said that a purchase of a new lawn mower was discussed during budget meetings in 2022. The purchase is less than \$10,000.00 and three quotes were obtained. The Parks Department is recommending to approve the low quote from Merickel Ace Hardware for a Husquavarna Zero Turn with 48” Fabricated Deck. Moved by Commissioner Kreklau, seconded by Commissioner Noon to approve the purchase of a Husquavarna Zero Turn Mower with a fabricated deck for the purchase price of \$3,399.99 from Merickel Ace Hardware and the purchase funded through the Tax Forfeited Land Sale Park Reserve Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE SUPPORT NORTHERN WATERS TRUST APP FOR OUTDOOR HERITAGE GRANT RE: THE CONSERVATION FUND PARCELS TRANSFER TO COUNTY

OWNERSHIP: Planning and Zoning Director Deana Malone said that the Conservation Fund Committee is recommending moving forward with NWLT in their application for Outdoor Heritage funding to purchase The Conservation Fund parcels presently owned in Wadena County, understanding that if funds are made available for a purchase, NWLT will then transfer those lands acquired into County ownership for the purpose of forest management and conservation. CFC is recommending the possible acquisition of these lands only if funding can be obtained through the grant process and no levied funds should be used. The priority list developed by the committee will be used in the event the full parcel purchase is not funded. Motion by Commissioner Kreklau and seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the priority list developed by the Conservation Fund Committee, included that PID # 12.026.1010 be offered to the DNR for their application to Outdoor Heritage. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Commissioner Noon and seconded by Commissioner Kreklau to approve moving forward with Northern Waters Land Trust’s (NWLT) application for Outdoor Heritage Funds to purchase the remaining parcels held by the Conservation Fund in Wadena County and transfer to Wadena County. Kangas is in favor as long as the public has access to it. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Commissioner Stearns and seconded by Commissioner Kreklau to approve the Letter of Support for NWLT’s application on behalf of the County. Motion carried unanimously.

TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE ROOM MODIFICATIONS: There was discussion by the board regarding the construction of the Technology Conference room. Construction has started on the Technology Conference room that was approved at the April 5, 2022 board meeting. With the removal of the walls it provides for a better visualization of the future space and how it will be used. Motion by Commissioner Stearns and seconded by Commissioner Kreklau to make no changes to the original plan except eliminate the sink from the plan. Kangas wanted to know how much time county employees has spent on this update. He feels it could have been done sooner if we had contracted it out. Motion carried 4-1. Noon opposed.

County Coordinator Report: Coordinator Odden said Hope Williams from EDA stopped by and she is going to municipalities to get a good ready of what is going on. She will attend a future board meeting. 4-12-23 Management Team Meeting. Made a sub-committee to try and do a better job of

employee recognition. 4-13-23 met with MCIT personnel on-site to go through 8 buildings in the county. 4-17-23 Personnel Committee meeting. Getting information ready leading up to negotiations next year and discussing some personnel policy changes they may be changing. 4-17-23 Solid Waste Committee Meeting. 4-17-23 Building Committee meeting. 4-17-23 Todd Wadena Community Corrections. They met with the architect. They received a new claim amount from MCIT and it came in higher. There will be no FEMA claim on the loss because the insurance dollars should cover the loss.

Commissioner/Committee Reports:

Commissioner Kangas: 4-4-23 Menahga Open Book Valuation meeting. Several contractors were there and they are all concerned about the higher tax valuations. One said he has slabs poured but is considering not building because of the higher taxes. One said he brought his plans to the assessor's office and got preliminary estimates and then after it was built the valuation was \$100,000.00 more per unit. They wanted to know why the Wadena City rentals were valued and taxed so much cheaper. They said Wadena County Zoning is prohibiting growth by restricting easy multiple parcel splits like other counties do. One said he went in to get an addition split on his parcel to build a house and was told absolutely not. He also bought six parcels of tax-forfeited land and his taxes are almost \$5,000.00 on each one. These are rentals, single family homes, slab homes. The county portion of the tax is \$1,861.00. But you have Wadena Townhomes are taxed at \$1,372.00. So he is paying three times the county tax in Menahga that what is paid in Wadena. This needs to be looked into. 4-10-23 Shell River Township Equalization meeting. People are justifiably upset. He said their taxes went up 60%. It is three times what the county average is. After 3 ½ hours they had a motion to reduce all valuations by 20%. The Assessor said that the state does not allow that. They only allow 1% of the total. How can the assessor raise it 60% and the township can only raise it one. If everyone is treated the same that is one thing. They recessed their meeting and will be meeting again on the 24th. 4-11-23 Board of Commissioners workshop. 4-13-23 Red Eye Township Equalization meeting. There was concerns about their tax increases. 4-17-23 Solid Waste Committee. There is a big brush pile there and it was recommended not to burn it. The Solid Waste Director, Wade Miller is getting quotes to grind it. The pile is from the storm event last year. There was discussion on curbside recycling reimbursements. There was discussion on refrigerant recovery. A lot of appliances are coming in and Miller would like to do this in house to save the county money. 4-17-23 Building Committee meeting.

Commissioner Noon: 4-10-23 Wadena County Extension Committee. Special speaker via Zoon and Kim Daily provided update on 4-H. 4-11-23 Board of Commissioners workshop. 4-17-23 Todd Wadena Community Corrections meeting.

Commissioner Kreklau: 4-11-23 Board of Commissioners workshop. 4-11-23 Wadena County Historical Society Meeting. 4-12-23 Management Committee Meeting. 4-13-23 EDA meeting in Menahga. Attended with Hope Williams. 4-17-23 Soil & Water Committee meeting. 4-17-23 Personnel Committee meeting.

Commissioner Stearns: 4-11-23 Board of Commissioners workshop. 4-11-23 Fair Board meeting. He gave a handout and feels they are doing a lot better. Weyer suggested that they itemize a little better and to look at updating their storage fees. 4-17-23 Solid Waste Committee meeting. 4-17-23 Building Committee Meeting. 4-17-23 Todd Wadena Community Corrections meeting.

Commissioner Weyer: 4-11-23 Board of Commissioners workshop. 4-12-23 Management Team meeting. 4-16-23 Old Wadena Annual meeting in Staples. Deana Malone gave an excellent history on the county parks. 4-17-23 Personnel Committee meeting. Talked about part-time employees and pro-rating the benefits. Updated the board on liquor license fees.

Moved by Commissioner Weyer, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.



Ryan Odden
Wadena County Coordinator



Michael Weyer, Chairperson
Wadena County Commissioner