The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on April 21, 2020 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:01 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, David Hotchkiss IT Director, Zoning Director Deana Malone, Solid Waste Director Chris McConn via zoom, Human Service Amie Gendron, Deb Nelson, Assessor Lee Brekke, 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: Moved by Commissioner Stearns, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the agenda for today as published. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Approve the Minutes from the 4-7-20 meeting.
- Approve the Minutes from the 4-14-20 meeting with the following changes, under IT interns add an “s” to Commissioner in motion and change to “seeking candidates for two IT internships for a maximum of 640 hours per intern.” Under the COVID 19 Emergency Executive Committee Update: Change the sentence to read, “If the conditions change the declaration can be shortened, and the county will look at that option if possible.”
- Approve the Warrants from 3-20-20, 3-27-20, 4-3-20, 4-9-20, US Bank Warrants 4-9-20 and 4-17-20 for a total of $684,803.47.
- Approve the Human Service Warrants from 3-20-20, 3-27-20, 4-3-20, 4-13-20 and 4-17-20 for a total of $72,649.46.
- Approve the 1st Half Allocation to Todd Wadena Community Corrections for $155,640.00
- Accept the draft minutes from the 4-14-20 Planning Commission Meeting.

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

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Score Agreement: Chris McConn presented the request to sign the agreement with Minnesota Pollution Control for the recycling that is collected by the county. This is required for the $67,000.00 payment that will come from the State of Minnesota. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve MPCA Score Agreement. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

Conditional Use Permit for Dawn Glordano (aka Dawn Houchin) on parcel #15.019.1010: Zoning Director, Deana Malone presented the request for a conditional use permit to operate an auto repair business with custom vinyl creation and application on parcel #15.019.1010 in Wing River Township. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to pass the following resolution:

Wadena County Board of Commissioners
A Resolution Establishing a Conditional Use

WHEREAS, Dawn Houchin has made an application for Conditional Use to allow an automotive repair and custom vinyl design and application shop located in Section 19, Township 135 North, Range 34 West, Wing River Township, described N 40 Rods of E 40 Rods of NE1/4 NE1/4; in an A-3 General Agriculture District and having PID# 15.019.1010; and

WHEREAS, this use may be allowed in the specified Zoning District as a Conditional Use according to Section 8., C. of the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance #1; and

WHEREAS, a fully noticed Public Hearing was held on the application on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at the Wadena County Courthouse, and remotely via Zoom meeting, in accordance with MN Statute 13D.021, at 2:00 p.m, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission did due diligence in hearing the application and have made a recommendation to the Wadena County Board of Commissioners to approve the application with the following Findings of Fact:

1. The requested use will be compatible with the surrounding area because the structure is already there and with the recommendations we have made to them, it would be compatible with the surrounding areas and we do see other plots along that highway that have machinery that sits out, some in good repair and some in not such good repair.
2. The requested use will not significantly depreciate nearby properties because with the stipulation put forward as to keeping things in an orderly fashion. We do find times that, when you have a mechanic in the area to work on vehicles, it could actually appreciate the property to have people there to get the work done and a lot of rural auto repair shops have disappeared.
3. The establishment of the requested use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area because the information we received from the County Assessor regarding property values, it would not impede.

4. There are adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities being provided; because there is good access of County Road 23 and drainage is good down to the low ground and other conditions are going to be added.

5. Adequate measures have been taken or will be taken to provide off street/road parking and loading space to serve the proposed use because a condition will be added to put up screen fencing and orderly parking.

6. Adequate measures are in place to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration so as not to constitute a nuisance, and measures taken to control lighted signs or other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result because any careless or excess exhibition should be reported to the Sheriff’s Department for enforcement.

7. The requested use is consistent with the Wadena County Land Use Control Ordinance; because it is an allowable use as a conditional use in this district.

8. The requested use is not in conflict with the Wadena County Comprehensive Plan because we want to encourage rural business development and, with the disaster that some of the agriculture people are having today, if we are going to have people living in the township, we have to have a way for them to make a living.

And with the following condition(s):

1. A privacy or screen fence be constructed and situated so as to protect the view of customer vehicles from County Road 23 directly in front of the customer vehicles and also traffic that would be traveling from the south to the north on County Highway 23.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approve the recommendation of the Planning Commission for issuance of the Conditional Use Permit for Dawn Houchin to allow an automotive repair and custom vinyl design and application shop with the condition the construct a privacy or screen fence be constructed and situated so as to protect the view of customer vehicles from County Road 23 directly in front of the customer vehicles and also traffic that would be traveling from the south to the north on County Highway 23.

THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS has caused this resolution to be adopted this 21st day of April, 2020.

ATTEST:  WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Conditional Use Permit for Adam and Melissa Gunderson on parcel #10.012.3030: Zoning Director, Deana Malone present the request for a conditional use permit to operate a gunsmith shop, with firearms sales, custom builds, hydro-dipping, refinishing and restoration of firearms on parcel #10.012.3030 in Red Eye Township. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the following resolution:

Wadena County Board of Commissioners
A Resolution Establishing a Conditional Use

WHEREAS, Adam M. & Melissa Gunderson have made an application for Conditional Use to allow the operation of a Gunsmith Shop, including custom builds, hydro-dipping, refinishing and restoration of firearms, and Firearms Sales on property located in Section 12, Township 137 North, Range 35 West, Red Eye Township, described as The E1/2 SW1/4**exc that part lying south of County Road 13**exc that part lying north & east of Cat Creek; A-2 Mixed Agriculture Forestry District, and having PID# 10.012.3030; and

WHEREAS, this use may be allowed in the specified Zoning District as a Conditional Use according to Section 7., C. of the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance #1; and

WHEREAS, a fully noticed Public Hearing was held on the application on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at the Wadena County Courthouse, and remotely via Zoom meeting, in accordance with MN Statute 13D.021, at 2:00 p.m., and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission did due diligence in hearing the application and have made a recommendation to the Wadena County Board of Commissioners to approve the application with the following Findings of Fact:

9. The requested use will be compatible with the surrounding area because the shop facility is already there.
10. The requested use will not significantly depreciate nearby properties because, as Mr. Gunderson stated, all the work is going to be done inside of the building so therefore it shouldn’t affect neighboring properties. A gunsmithing shop might also help people in the area that do have guns and from time to time need to find a gunsmith and they are getting harder to find all the time.
11. The establishment of the requested use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area because the area does offer a number of areas of state land that people like to hunt and other forested land, so gunsmithing may be quite valuable in that area.
12. There are adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities being provided; because the facilities are already there.

13. Adequate measures have been taken or will be taken to provide off street/road parking and loading space to serve the proposed use because, due to the minimal amount of traffic at this time, it shouldn’t be an issue and all roads are in place and the number of people he expects to see should not be a problem.

14. Adequate measures are in place to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration so as not to constitute a nuisance, and measures taken to control lighted signs or other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result because this is a county state aid highway that would require a setback out of the road right of way for any signage.

15. The requested use is consistent with the Wadena County Land Use Control Ordinance, because it is an allowed use in this agriculture district through a conditional use permit.

16. The requested use is not in conflict with the Wadena County Comprehensive Plan because we welcome new business in the county and when we worked on revising the Comprehensive Plan we are looking and hungry to develop some rural business to keep Wadena County alive.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wadena County Board of Commissioners approve the recommendation of the Planning Commission for issuance of the Conditional Use Permit for Adam M. & Melissa Gunderson to allow operation of a Gunsmith Shop, including custom builds, hydro-dipping, refinishing and restoration of firearms, and Firearms Sales.

THE WADENA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS has caused this resolution to be adopted this 21st day of April, 2020.

ATTEST: WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryan Odden – Wadena County Coordinator Charles Horsager, Chairperson

Roll Call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Hosager-yes, carried unanimously.

Human Service Statistical Report: Amie Gendron from Human Service gave the reports. There has been an increase on the amount of MAXIS and METS cases for Wadena County since February. The children out of home placement has remained the same. The overall budget is at 25% of the annual budget for the year. At the end of March the current cash balance is $1,374,200.00. Commissioner Monson thanked Amie for bringing the reports to the Board each month.

Wadena County Program/Socioeconomic Regional Report: Amie Gendron and Deb Nelson were present to report on the different human service programs within the county. The following is the percentages of the county population using these programs; General Assistance
– 1%, Housing Support – 1%, MFIB – 2%, Minnesota Supplemental Aid – 1%, Child Care Assistance Programs – 0%, Medical Assistance – 29%, SNAP – 10%, with a total unduplicated number of 35% of the population within the county using some type of human service program. Commissioner Monson asked about the number of people on Medical Assistance. Deb Nelson stated that persons that have a low income must be on Medical Assistance rather than another insurance program. This rule contributes to the higher number of residents on Medical Assistance within the county.

Amie then showed the county statistics compared to the other counties within Region 5. Wadena County has the lowest population of children within the region. We have the 2nd highest number of children living in poverty at 20.7% and the lowest median income for the region at $40,953.00. We have the highest number of children in out of home placement at 30.1 per thousand children of the 5 counties in the region. The lower income could be a contributing factor in the children out of home placement numbers.

**COVID 19 Emergency Executive Committee Update:** Ryan Odden presented the fact sheet on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for information. Commissioner Horsager then read a statement that was written by the Emergency Executive Committee concerning the future events that normally take place within the county over the summer months. The statement reads:

Wadena County is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and those spending time in our communities. As the seasons change and spring and summer is upon us, we are mindful that decisions about events where people come together such as community celebrations and large gatherings are being discussed. Any proceeding with event planning should be done so with full knowledge that emergency executive orders could impact whether or not events can occur and if there are any associated restrictions with the same. Any events planned that require permits and licenses issued by the County will be done so in accordance with any emergency executive orders and the accompanying restrictions that are in place. We commend the cooperation from county residents; and we voice our ongoing concern for the health of our public, the need to follow CDC guidance, and the economic and social implications felt by so many. During these uncertain times, it is unfortunately not business as usual and various factors need to be carefully considered. Wadena County intents to comply with all executive orders and we expect others to fully cooperate as well.

Commissioner Hofer stated that the Old Wadena Rendezvous may not happen and that all 4-H events are canceled up to the State Fair.

Attorney Kyra Ladd stated that any executive orders will have to be followed and this could determine what will be allowed within the county in the future. As things change daily, the commissioners will have to be up to date on what will be allowed to take place.

Commissioner Stearns would like to vote on the statement that was read at the next meeting. Commissioner Kangas commented that there is a growing number of protests happening within
the state and he wants to take into account that many want to get back to work and start holding some events, with the individuals choosing to attend weighing the risks to themselves.

**Assessor Information on the County Website:** Commissioner Kangas stated that he received some correspondence from a number of county residents. The residents were concerned about the data that is available for the public to view on the county website. The main concern was about taking photos of buildings on private property and that they are available on the website. These people feel that this shows too much of what a person has on their property and is in a violation of privacy. Commissioner Monson asked, “What does the State consider as public data?” He feels we need to know that before we act on any motions. Commissioner Kangas wants the citizens to have the choice as to when pictures can be taken of their property and feels that pictures reveal too much to the public of what a person owns. He feel that pictures are not necessary for the assessment of a property. Commissioner Stearns stated that the information that the assessor’s office has is used for the insuring of a property as well as assessing the property and he used that information regularly as an insurance agent. He feels that the information available is not out of the ordinary for counties around the state. He stated that we need to know more information on privacy before anything could be decided. Commissioner Hofer feels that the information needs to be available in order to do a proper assessment of a property. Assessor Lee Brekke commented that the pictures were recently added to the county website so that people who would normally come in and request the information could access it due to the closure of the building because of COVID 19. When it first went on the website, all pictures were available. He contacted ProWest and had them take down all picture except the first photo for each property. He also contacted other county assessors to see what they have available to the public. He said that it was varied by county as to what is available and whether there was a cost associated with getting the information.

County Attorney, Kyra Ladd, then spoke to the issues that she sees being brought forward with this discussion:

1. What is allowed by the Assessor’s office for the purpose of completing an assessment on a property,
2. How the data collected is stored and
3. Whether that data is accessible and available to the public.

These are all things that will need to be looked into before any decision can be made.

Commissioner Kangas commented that he does not believe that any photos need to be taken at any property for an assessment to take place. Motion by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Kangas to table this matter for two weeks for more information to be gathered on these concerns. Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**
Commissioner Monson: 4/21 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Stearns: 4/21 Board Meeting.


Commissioner Kangas: 4/21 Board Meeting.


Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commission Hofer to adjourn at 10:30 am. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes, carried unanimously.

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