The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on February 18, 2020 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by Commissioner Horsager via Zoom and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call by the Chair of the Commissioners.


Amend/Approve the Day’s Agenda: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the day’s agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Recognize Interested Citizens: None present today.

CONSENT AGENDA: Item H, Personnel Committee Update, pulled by Commissioner Kangas for discussion.

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

- Approve the Minutes from the 4-21-20 meeting.
- Approve the Planning Commission Minutes from the 4-16-20 meeting.
- Accept Next Generation 911 GAS Federal Grant Funds in the amount of $13,762.39 and NG911 Call Premise Equipment grant in the amount of $16,267.00.
- Approve the Low-Income Septic System Replacement Grant for the owner of property having PID #15.018.1030 in the amount of $9,375.00 which is 75% of the low quote received from Bluffton Hardware, and to accept the low quote from Bluffton Hardware to design and install the new system.
- Approve the 2020 Sponsorship to The Economic Alliance for $30,000.00.
- Approve the 1st half Allocation to Kitchigami Regional Library in the amount of $49,700.50.
- Approve the 1st half Allocation to Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District: County Allocation $16,000.00, Ag Inspector Program $7,500.00, County Feedlot Officer $3,833.50, Water Plan Allocation $11,255.50, Wetland Conservation Act $9,954.50 for a total of $48,543.50.

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

Personnel Committee Update: Commissioner Horsager brought up that there are 3 positions open at Human Services for social workers in child protection. Commissioner Kangas wants to know if these are new positions or replacements and what the financial implications to the county will be. Commissioner Hofer stated that these are all replacement positions due to resignations. This request is to approve the posting of these jobs and the financial implication will not be for certain until the hiring possess happens. Moved by Commissioner Kangas seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the Personnel Committee Update that includes the posting of 3 human service Social Workers in the Child Protection Unit. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Approve Conditional Use Permit for the development of a Common Interest Community for Wes Renneberg/Renneberg Holdings LLC: Deana Malone presented the request to pass the conditional use permit for the development of a Common Interest Community on property in Section 4 of Blueberry Township as described in the application and located in an R-1 Suburban Residence District. Wes Renneberg and Steve Pachel were on the phone for this portion of the meeting. The plan is for 16 twin homes to be constructed in Blueberry Township section 4. Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commission Hofer to pass the following resolution:

Wadena County Board of Commissioners

A Resolution Establishing a Conditional Use

WHEREAS, Wes Renneberg, Renneberg Holdings LLC have made an application for Conditional Use for development of a common interest community for single family and or multi-family dwellings on property The North 300’ of the NE1/4 SW1/4 & the West 660’ of the S1/2 of SE1/4 NW1/4 & the East 290’ o the S1/2 SW1/4 NW1/4, Section 4, Township 138N, Range 35W, Blueberry Township, located in an R-1 Suburban Residence District and having PID# 02.004.3040; and

WHEREAS, this use may be allowed in the specified Zoning District as a Conditional Use according to Section 10., C. of the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance #1; and

WHEREAS, a fully noticed Public Hearing was held on the application on Thursday, April 16, 2020, at the Wadena County Courthouse, and remotely via Zoom meeting, in accordance with MN Statute 13D.021, at 7:00 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 residential housing already exists in the surrounding area.
2. The requested use will not significantly depreciate nearby properties and it could increase properties.
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 it is orderly development and improvement of the surrounding vacat land and could possibly stimulate more in the area.

4. There are adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities being provided; because the application is very thorough, done professionally and meets the standards. Adjustments will be made of the access roads and the applicant has all the tools to deal with those.

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, the plan indicates there is adequate parking according to the mapping provided.

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 there will be a Home Owners’ Association in place which it will self-control any nuisances and is a residential district and a certain amount of lighting will be necessary.

7. The requested use is consistent with the Wadena County Land Use Control Ordinance, because they went through the process of getting the property re-zoned to residential and the Suburban Residential District allows multiple dwellings.

8. The requested use is not in conflict with the Wadena County Comprehensive Plan because we want to encourage development in Wadena County where it makes sense.

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 Wes Renneberg, Renneberg Holdings LLC to allow development of a common interest community for single family and or multi-family dwellings

THE WADENA COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THE WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS has caused this resolution to be adopted this 5th day of May, 2020.

ATTEST:

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Ryan Odden – Wadena County Coordinator          Charles Horsager, Chairperson

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

Commissioner Stearns asked some questions on the Dog Kennel business seeking a CUP and the discussion that were part of the Planning Commission minutes. He wants to know if the business is a USDA licensed facility or not. Deana will confirm this before the next meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on May 21, 2020.

COVID 19 Emergency Executive Committee Update: Cindy Pederson gave an update on COVID 19. As of May 3, 2020 there were 7,234 positive cases in the state. Median age of the positive cases
was 47. We have had 428 deaths so far. Of the deaths, 80% are in long term living facilities. The most likely exposure now is from community spread and congregate living facilities. Wadena County has 3 cases reported as of today. The CDC has added fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat and loss of taste and smell as other symptoms for COVID 19 to the already listed symptoms of shortness for breathe and cough. The questions facing the county are: How prepared are we to test and trace the spread within the community? Is our Hospital prepared for any surge in the area? Are we causing other health problems being overlooked at this point? Do we have the supplies to keep people safe? How is this impacting the financial health and mental health of the community? The state is looking at gradually opening up things within the state. We are still in the “Stay at Home” order for the state until May 18, 2020. The peak in Minnesota is projected to be in the summer months now. We need to anticipate that many events will not be allowed to be held this summer as we look forward to the next three months. Joel Beiswenger from Tri-County Hospital spoke then on the response of the state to the COVID 19 and an article written called “The Hammer and the Dance” which talks about the slowing the spread of the virus and the reopening of social gatherings and businesses. Cindy then talked about the modeling that is being done with statistics of the virus in other area of the world to try and predict the possible spread within the State of Minnesota.

Cindy then spoke to the structure of the EOC within Wadena County. She explained the different people that are involved on this team. They are currently meeting 3 days a week via zoom. They are working in many areas within the county. The county public information officer is the Board of Commissioners Chairperson. If any press release is sent out the Board Chairperson will be involved with it.

Tyler Wheeler, Emergency Management for Wadena County, stated that he is working with the EOC and then presented that he is working with Homeland Security on the issue of COVID 19 as well. He is also working as a liaison between all of the different pieces involved in this pandemic. We have received a generous donation of personal protective equipment from Central Lakes College are distributing them where needed.

Cindy Pederson then gave a Public Health update. They are seeing some clients by appointment only and all staff are wearing PPE during these meetings. The Public Health staff is working both at home and in the office.

Joel Beiswenger said that Tri-County Hospital is in the “State of Readiness.” They are in a good position if and when Wadena County would get a surge in the people needing hospitalization. They can have up to 49 people in the hospital and would pull staff from other areas to fill in where needed. The ICU beds have been upped from 2 to 5. They could have 5 ventilators in use at a time. They are working with other hospitals on the plan to transfer all COVID 19 patients to another hospital, but do not know if that would really be able to happen should the state have many cases in all areas. The clinics in Otter Tail and Bertha are currently closed. They are looking to reopen services that are needed for the health of some patients. Some surgeries have had to be done, but only on an emergency basis. The revenue is at only 40% of what it would have been at this time normally for the year. The expenses are high due to the preparation of a surge in patients. The building project is on hold until we are through this crisis. The hospital is ready to serve the community in getting the businesses reopened in a safe and responsible way. There are several surge models out there of what will happen within the state. The Governor’s office seems to be using the model put out by the University of Minnesota. Tri-County is looking at a different model from the Minnesota Hospital Association and it has the surge projected as a late July peak. The
surge is projected to last 12 to 14 weeks beginning in May and ending in September. The models seem to change very frequently. He then moved on to the subject of testing for COVID 19. Testing right now is only happening in the ER of Tri-County. It could begin in the clinic setting as soon as next week. The swabs needed for testing are in short supply right now. Those that can be tested are still very limited. Walk in testing is not available at this time but may become available in the future. He then talked about the antibody testing that is occurring. The helpfulness of these tests are still in question as they do not know if a person can be re-infected with the disease or pass the disease to someone else while Asymptomatic. Currently, insurance companies are not generally covering the costs of these tests. The CDC is recommending masking while out in the public. It is more about the protection of those you come in contact with. Tri-County and other sewers in the area are in the process of sewing and distributing masks to workers and residents of congregate living facilities. They will eventually give masks out to the community as well. Joel said to watch the website for information on the distributing of these. This distribution is scheduled for May 13, 2020 at this time. The Commissioners thanked Tri-County for all they are doing in the community.

A break was taken at 10:15: am. The meeting reconvened at 10:20 am.

**Resolution for Holding Events During COVID 19 Pandemic:** Commissioner Hofer spoke to the large group gatherings being at the end of items that are to be reopened on the state plan. This item has been discussed at length many times within the COVID Emergency Committee. He spoke to the AMC webinar that he was a part of yesterday. The Governor said that large gatherings are problematic in the beginning of the summer. The actual resolution presented was then addressed. Commissioner Horsager would like the word, “will” in the last Whereas changed to “expects to.” Commissioner Kangas believes that this resolution is taking away the rights of citizens in this county. He cannot support this resolution as it is written. He believes that people need a to be able to choose what they will participate in. Deana then brought up that last fall two different events had been booked for Old Wadena Park on June 6, 2020 and June 26-28, 2020. The resolution states events planned during the pandemic and these were previously planned. Ryan Odden then said that perhaps by the time these events take place, things may be allowed. Deana then said that we are not allowing overnight camping right now. Commissioner Kangas feels that the campsites are far enough apart to allow for social distancing. Commissioner Hofer than said that resorts are the only ones allowed to be open now. Deana then asked that the graduation open house that was planned already be allowed provided that more details are gathered and a plan put in place. Commissioner Kangas then said that most summer celebrations are already planned and we should allow these events. Commissioner Stearns then asked about the County Fair and if it was going to be held this year. Commissioner Monson stated that the Fair Board is waiting for direction from the Department of Agriculture and the Governor’s office to see if the fair will be held. Commissioner Monson does not believe that we need to duplicate what the State has ordered with a resolution. Kyra Ladd then spoke. She brought up that the real issue is what kind of events will be allowed to be held on County owned property if it is contrary to the Governors orders. Commissioner Hofer stated that the resolution states that we as a county will abide by the orders that the state has in place. Kyra Ladd said that this resolution was brought forward because of the request by Commissioner Stearns to have direction for use of County owned property. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Monson to pass the following resolution:
RESOLUTION FOR HOLDING EVENTS DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Whereas, the Wadena County Board of Commissioners have made an executive order 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 are upon us, we are mindful that decisions about events where people come together such as community celebrations and large gatherings are being discussed; and

Whereas, the Wadena County Board of Commissioners have declared a state of emergency in Wadena County due to the COVID19 pandemic and said declaration remains in effect until July 15, 2020 and may be extended by future board action; and

Whereas, proceeding with any event planning should be done so with full knowledge that emergency executive orders and emergency declarations that could impact whether or not events can occur and if there are any associated restrictions with the same; and

Whereas, any planned events 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; and

Whereas, we recommend the cooperation from county residents and we voice our ongoing concern for the safety and 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; and

Whereas, Wadena County expects to comply with all executive orders and we expect others to fully cooperate as well.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Wadena County Board of Commissioners, that all events held in Wadena County shall make every effort to comply with all current Executive Orders and CDC Guidelines. LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that any event being planned on County owned property during a declared state of emergency by the County Board shall require prior County Board approval to hold the same.

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 5th day of May, 2020.

Witness my hand and seal.

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Ryan Odden, County Coordinator

Wadena County, Minnesota

Roll call vote: Kangas-no, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsgaer-yes. Motion carried 4-1.
Public Health Food, Pool and Lodging Appeals Board Appointments – Cindy Pederson made the request to have persons appointed to the Public Health Food, Pool and Lodging Appeals Board. Commissioner Hofer moved, seconded by Commissioner Stearns that Commissioner Kangas and Commissioner Monson be on the board of Appeals for Public Health Food, Pool and Lodging. Roll Call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Commissioner Hofer, seconded by Commissioner Stearns to approve the appointments for the following persons/positions (five) to the FPL Appeals Board: Public Health Advisory elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Public Health Medical Consultant (contracted Licensed Physician), County Commissioner–Public Health Liaison assigned annually by the County Board and one additional County Commissioner assigned annually by the County Board. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Waste Designation Ordinance Exemptions: Chris McConn presented the request to accept the Solid Waste Designation Ordinance with its original language before the addition of the residential self-haulers exemption or choose to rescind the Waste Designation Ordinance that was passed. Residential self-haulers were added to the language to exempt them from the ordinance after the original ordinance was sent to the MPCA. The MPCA will not change the language to allow the self-haulers to take their waste to a different county. All waste from Wadena County needs to be brought to the transfer station or the Perham incinerator. It was stated that amendments could be made to the ordinance after the MPCA approves it. Commissioner Kangas makes a motion on rescind the Waste Designation Ordinance altogether, second by Commissioner Horsager. Commissioner Stearns stated that this has been six years in the making and it is not in the best interest of the county to rescind this ordinance altogether. Commissioner Monson feels that we should not start over. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-no, Monson-no, Stearns-no, Horsager-yes. Motion fails 3-2. Motion by Commissioner Stearns, seconded by Commissioner Monson to authorize solid waste director to instruct MCPA to utilize the original waste designation ordinance language without the residential self-hauler exemption language that was added later. County will be able to request a revision to language after approval. Commissioner Kangas stated that this ordinance costs the taxpayers and businesses a lot of money. He feels that we should not mandate where garbage can be taken to. Roll call vote: Kangas-no, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-no. Motion carried 3-2.

Update from Committee Reviewing Assessor Data on the County Website: Lee Brekke reported that the committee met and all of the pictures were removed from the county by Pro-West. Commissioner Kangas stated that nowhere is it necessary for pictures of a property be taken and the photographs taken are becoming public data and are subject to a data request. Kyra Ladd stated that nothing is being done by Wadena County that is outside of the law and this would really be a policy procedure that would need to be addressed. The question was brought up as to how pictures are classified and what kind of data these become and how long they would need to be retained. Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Horsager to remove all photos and sketches related to the property assessments from the county website. Commissioner Stearns stated that this has already been done. Roll call vote: Kangas yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Commissioner Kangas, seconded by Commissioner Horsager to require Wadena County assessors to obtain written permission from property owners prior to taking any photos on private property. Commissioner Stearns believes that the Assessor’s office is using the photos wisely and it is a good tool to properly assess the property. Commissioner Hofer intends to vote no on this as these pictures are used to properly assess the property. Commissioner Monson also believes that photos
should be allowed. Commissioner Horsager then asked what happened to the photos. Kyra Ladd then stated that data collected by the county would be subject to a data request provided that person requesting the data filled out all necessary forms. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-no, Monson-no, Stearns-no, Horsager-yes. Motion failed 2-3.

**Financial Update:** Heather Olson reported on the financial condition of the county due to the current crisis the county is facing. As of April 30, 2020 we have had a decrease in the amount of money collected by the County for property taxes of 2.1 million. The swing can be attributed to the Minnesota Pipeline having paid their taxes before April 30th of last year and they have not paid their taxes as of yet this year. They have not filed for an abatement of the penalty, so we can assume that they will pay the taxes by May 15th. There have been about 30 applications for the tax abatement of the penalty turned in and this involves about 100 parcels of land in the county. The amount of liquid cash the county has is 7.8 million and holding steady.

Commissioner Reports:


Commissioner Monson: 4/23 Region 5 Meeting, 4/30 SHACK meeting, 5/4 Fair Board Meeting, 5/5 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Stearns: 4/22 Prairie Lakes Solid Waste Authority, 4/22 Regional Transit Meeting, 4/28 Budget Committee Meeting, 5/5 Board Meeting.


Chuck Horsager has decided that he will not be running for a second term as commissioner.

Kyra Ladd brought up the filing period that will open on May 19th through June 2, 2020 and she is wondering how that will take place. There will need to be some further instruction on this how this will take place. Heather Olson stated that the candidates will not be kept from filing for office. Chairperson Horsager would like this added to next week’s agenda.

Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to adjourn the meeting at 11:57 am. Roll call vote: Kangas-yes, Hofer-yes, Monson-yes, Stearns-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

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