The Wadena County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting was held on May 12, 2020 in the Small Courtroom, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 South Jefferson Street, Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Commissioner Horsager via Zoom and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call by the Chair of the Commissioners.

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, Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson, Chief Deputy Joe Schoon, Public Health Director Cindy Pederson, IT Director David Hotchkiss, IT Consultant Shawn Larsen 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: Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to approve the day’s agenda as presented. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Recognize Interested Citizens: None present today.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- Approve the minutes from the 5-5-20 meeting with a revision on the Update from the Committee Reviewing Assessor Data on the County Website with the second motion passed to read: “to require Wadena County assessors to obtain written permission from property owners prior to taking any photos of private property.”

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

REGULAR AGENDA:

Filing for Office Update: Report by Auditor/Treasurer Heather Olson on the filing period that begins May 19th through June 2, 2020. The notices have been sent out to cities, townships and the official newspaper. The notice is also posted on the outside doors of the courthouse. There are packets for filing at the entry door of the Courthouse for people to pick up. We are also encouraging people to file through the mail or call into the courthouse to make an appointment to file.

Selling of Transit Bus: Presented by Transit Director Randy Jahnke a request to sell the 2009 bus with 263,000 miles on it. He would like permission to sell this bus on MNBID with a $500 reserve. The bus has a cracked frame and it cannot pass the DOT inspection unless it is repaired. The estimate to repair it is $8,200.00. Moved by Commissioner Monson, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to sell the bus on MNBID with a reserve of $500.00 and with full disclosure of the repairs needed. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.
COVID 19 Emergency Executive Committee Update: Ryan Odden reported that there has been discussions of Graduation Ceremonies and Community Events that will probably be canceled. There will be further direction from the State of Minnesota coming this week on Wednesday on what will be allowed after the 18th. Commissioner Hofer stated that several fairs have been canceled now as well as other events that will take place in June.

Commissioner Kangas wants to know if more information could be given to the community members about where the cases are within the county. Public Health Director, Cindy Pederson, told that information concerning cases within the county are covered under the HIPAA Law. The only information about cases that can be released is if there are cases in a congregate living situation within the county.

Budget Discussion: Commissioner Horsager asked about the financial impact of the Pandemic on the County. Commissioner Hofer asked to know how much more the county has had to spend because of the Pandemic. Heather reported that as of now the county has spent $3,300.00 on extra costs. The Department of Transportation has estimated that there will be a drop in the gas tax of 15%. This will impact the road projects and could put the repairs off for a year. The Local Option Sales Tax is down approximately 10% over the last 2 months. Commissioner Horsager asked that departments look at the costs that will be coming up in the next year. Commissioner Hofer said that the IT department is looking at the storage capacity and the bandwidth capability of the county network. The Sheriff Department is purchasing a new squad out of reserves. Commissioner Kangas would like the departments to look and see where cuts could be made in services provided that are not required. He wants any additional funding to be put to levy reduction. He would like to set a goal of a levy reduction instead of a minimal increase to the levy this year. He does not think that the income increases in the county support the increases in the tax levies for the residents.

Heard from Shawn Larsen for technology impact to the county and spoke of the need of more storage. The Pandemic is causing the need for more storage as the usage for technology has increased during this time. The use of body cameras will take much more storage for the county. He suggested that the county needs more storage in order to keep up with the current technology. Commissioner Hofer thanked Dave for the video being added to the meeting this morning.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Stearns: 5/11 Solid Waste Committee Meeting, 5/11 Building Committee Meeting, 5/12 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Monson: 5/7 Meeting Staff with Senator Gazelka, 5/11 U of M Extension Committee, 5/11 Building Committee Meeting, 5/11 Todd Wadena Corrections Meeting, 5/12 Board Meeting.


Commissioner Kangas: 5/5 Liaison Meeting with Human Service Director Jennifer Westrum, 5/12 Board Meeting, 5/11 Solid Waste Committee, 5/12 Board Meeting.

Moved by Commissioner Stearns, seconded by Commissioner Hofer to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 am. Roll call vote: Stearns-yes, Monson-yes, Hofer-yes, Kangas-yes, Horsager-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

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

5-12-2020 PAGE 3