

**WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS EMERGENCY MEETING**  
**JULY 9, 2010, 9:00 A.M.**

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners Emergency Meeting was held on Friday, July 9, 2010, at the Wadena County Courthouse in the Commissioners Room at 415 Jefferson St. S., Wadena Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman William Stearns and the pledge of allegiance to the flag was said.

Present: Commissioners Dave Schermerhorn, Ralph Miller, Rodney Bounds, Auditor/Treasurer Char West. Absent: Commissioner Lane Waldahl. Also presented was Highway Engineer Ryan Odden, 4-H Coordinator Kris Huebsch, Sheriff Mike Carr, Building Maintenance Director Sean Uselman, Assessor's Office Appraiser Shaun Beck, Agriculture Society representatives Sheldon Monson and Mike Olson, City of Wadena Mayor Wayne Wolden and City of Wadena Financial Officer Lloyd Lanz.

Chairman Stearns stated the purpose of the meeting would be to discuss and take possible action relating to the Wadena County Disaster Recovery effort resulting from the June 17, 2010 Tornado.

Sheldon Monson, Agriculture Society representative, informed the Board that the Fair Board was concerned about the safety of using the Dairy Barn. He commented that he had been directed to Solien & Larson Engineering out of Fargo, ND who provided them with a proposal outlining two options. The first option was to provide a simple analysis of the building and a written report for a cost of \$1,000 that would indicate whether the Dairy Barn was or was not safe to occupy during the Fair. The second option was for a full analysis regarding snow load, long term viability of the building and how to fix it, which would cost approximately \$3,000; the assessment was tentatively scheduled for, July 13, 2010, depending on the County Board's decision.

Chairman Stearns pointed out that the Dairy Barn was a building with historical significance that was over 50 years old, thus it would be eligible for FEMA funds to repair the building.

Discussion was held as to what action the County would take, as it related to the Dairy Barn, if FEMA funds were not available. The Board agreed that the first step would be to hire an Engineering Study that would provide the information that was needed in deciding whether it was worth repairing the existing building or not.

Ms. West informed the Board that the MCIT Loss Control representative will be viewing the fairgrounds on July 12<sup>th</sup>; they will be looking at their liability interest but not the buildings for the long term. She added that the MCIT representative had indicated she was not knowledgeable in regards to grand stands.

Mr. Monson suggested the Engineer could possibly assess the Grand Stand.

Discussion was held as to the cost of having the Engineer assess the Grand Stand at the same time as the Dairy Barn; FEMA's participation in the repair of the Dairy Barn, the building's historical significance and the funds available to build a new building. Further discussion was held regarding the additional cost of Option 1 – simple analysis and Option 2 – full assessment of the Dairy Barn and the increased cost if the Engineer returned at a later date to complete Option 2; the possible payment for the expense from Department #114 Building Fund or it may be eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

Motion by Miller, seconded by Bounds, to approve the proposal presented by Solien & Larson Engineering to proceed with Option #1; provide a simple analysis of the building and a written report for a cost of \$1,000 that would indicate whether the Dairy Barn was or was not safe to occupy during the Fair and Option #2; full analysis regarding snow load, long term viability of the building and how to fix the Dairy Barn, for a total expense of \$3,000,

Commissioner Schmerhorn nay; Commissioner Miller aye; Chairman Stearns aye and Commissioner Bounds aye, motion carried.

Mr. Monson informed the Board that a company that specialized in steel structures would be viewing the Grand Stand that day; they had a certified welder on staff to provide an informal opinion as to what condition the structure was in. He suggested that, if the Board so desired, the Engineer from Solien & Larson Engineering could also assess the Grand Stand.

Discussion was held as to whether the damage to the concrete base under the Grand Stand affected the structural integrity of the Grand Stand. It was deemed that the steel Grand Stand structure was a stand alone structure; all the block was just for the concession stand area.

Mr. Monson informed the Board that the 1974 and 2000 Lease Agreements between Wadena County and the Agriculture Society stated that the Baseball Association owned the lights, the dugouts and the fencing around the ball field.

Chairman Stearns pointed out that the Fairgrounds land and all structures were owned by the County as State statute would take precedence over the Lease Agreement.

Discussion was held as to whether the Grand Stand could be saved and the opportunity for the Engineer to review the Grand Stand so a decision could be made as to whether it could be repaired.

Motion by Bounds, seconded by Miller, to extend the contract with Solien and Larson Engineering to include a full assessment of the Fairgrounds Grand Stand and provide a written report, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Monson informed the Board that he had received an estimate for replacement of the chain-link fencing along Highway 10 and around the restaurant to the west of the Fairgrounds; 1,200

linear feet would cost approximately \$18,000. He pointed out that an estimated total of 2,400 linear feet of the fence had been lost. Mr. Monson added that he was also approached by a person who was willing to donate his time to install the 1,200 linear feet of fence.

Discussion was held regarding the possible replacement of the fencing near the residential area adjacent to the Fairground as a safety precaution.

Mr. Monson informed the Board that he had contacted Young Excavating to request an estimate to remove the Quonset Building footing that were left after the building was destroyed.

Mr. Odden commented that the Highway Department could provide this work but Young Excavating could remove the footings faster as they had the proper equipment. He also pointed out that the Quonset Building was covered by insurance.

Motion by Bounds, seconded by Schermerhorn, to authorize an extension of the Young Excavating contract to remove the Fairgrounds Quonset Building footings, at the pre-assigned rates, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Monson informed the Board that Sentence to Serve had repaired the 4-H Building so it was rain-tight, an electrician had completed some minimal work and the power was back on; water would be turned on in the next day or two.

Kris Huebsch, 4-H Coordinator, commented that the 4-H Building looked okay but there were about 25 to 30 ceiling tiles that did have damage and there was water on the floor from the holes in the roof. She questioned whether the Insurance Adjusters had indicated whether the building would be occupy-able.

Chairman Stearns commented that, for safety and liability reasons the Board may want the Engineer from Solien & Larson to assess the 4-H Building as well.

Ms. Huebsch pointed out that the kitchen would have to be re-licensed by the Public Health Department for use before the Fair, which was done annually. She added that the exhaust fan turned on but the Insurance Adjuster had indicated that it had to be remove and replaced.

Chairman Stearns recommended having an electrician check the exhaust fan to make sure it would not cause a fire and was safe to use. He advised that Mr. Monson was looking into new ceiling tiles for the 4-H Building ceiling.

Motion by Bounds, seconded by Miller, to authorize Solien & Larson Engineering to conduct an assessment of the 4-H Building for the purpose of determining the safety of the 4-H Building, motion carried.

Mike Carr, Sheriff, and Sean Uselman, Building Services Director, came before the Board regarding the need for storage of items that previously were stored in the Quonset Building that was now destroyed.

Sheriff Carr informed the Board that the Quonset Building had been used by the Sheriff's Department for multiple purposes; from five to 10 forfeited vehicles were stored there as well as a snowmobile, 4-Wheeler, jet ski, cones, etc. He pointed out that the snowmobile, 4-wheeler, and jet ski were elsewhere at the time of the tornado, so they were not lost but the vehicles and a snowmobile that had been forfeited were lost. Sheriff Carr commented that it was suggested they check out the northeast side of the Wensman Building which they found had sufficient room for storage. He presented the Board with a list of needed improvements; installation of overhead garage door and opener, walk-in door, plywood and framing, lighting and electrical, wallboard for south wall, concrete apron and miscellaneous items for a total estimated cost of \$12,050. Sheriff Carr pointed out that a place for the forfeited vehicles was still needed.

Mr. Uselman advised that the garage door, lighting and electrical and walk-in door needed to be done right away with Sentence to Serve providing the labor.

Discussion was held regarding the remodeling of the east side of the Wensman Building for use by the Sheriff's Department.

Chairman Stearns advised the expenses could be paid from #114 Building Fund as it was a proper building expense.

Ms. West commented that she had contacted the Insurance Adjuster to inquire as to whether insurance would cover improvements at a different location. She read the Insurance Adjuster's response; "The County could take the Actual Cash Value, (ACV) amount of the loss on the building of \$47,279.46 and spend it on as many buildings as they would like, however the depreciation withheld or \$8,041.54 would not be recoverable. The only way the depreciation would be recoverable is to rebuild the same building. If they fixed the temporary building and built a new Quonset, or rebuilt the Quonset, the depreciation was recoverable."

Chairman Stearns recommended paying for the improvements to the east side of the Wensman Building for the Sheriff's Department from #114 Building Fund and saving the insurance funds to rebuild.

Motion by Bounds, seconded by Miller, to approve making the necessary improvements to the Wensman Building to accommodate the Sheriff's Department for storage needs due to the Tornado destruction; cost of \$12,150 will be paid out of #114 Building Fund, motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Stearns recessed the Emergency Board Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Stearns reconvened the Emergency Board Meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. West informed the Board that County Assessor Lee Brekke was unavailable but had requested that she provide the Board with additional information received from the Department of Revenue regarding Property Tax Relief for Damaged Property.

Also present were City of Wadena Mayor Wayne Wolden, City of Wadena Financial Officer Lloyd Lanz and Wadena County Assessor's Office Appraiser, Shaun Beck.

Ms. West and Ms. Beck informed the Board that the Assessor's Office had been contacted the previous day by the Department of Revenue to inform them that Disaster Relief Property Tax information would need to be distributed by the County at the Disaster Recovery Center that would be open July 9<sup>th</sup> through July 12<sup>th</sup>. The Department of Revenue fact sheet and application for abatements and credits that would be distributed to the public, were distributed and reviewed.

Ms. West reminded the Board that Mr. Brekke had come before them at a previous Emergency Board Meeting to distribute and review Disaster Relief Property Tax information that indicated that it would be the decision of the County Board to approve or disapprove Wadena County's participation in the programs. She pointed out that the County Assessor had directed his staff to be available at the Disaster Recovery Center to distribute the information and answer questions.

Ms. Beck informed the Board that at this time the Assessor's Office staff were viewing the properties to determine which ones were 50% or more destroyed; they would also be available to assist individuals in filling out the abatement forms. She commented that she had just spoke to Mr. Brekke who requested that she inform them of the Department of Revenue information that stated that State law allowed the county board, at its discretion, to extend property tax relief to non-homestead property if it was believed that the structure had sustained damage of 50% or more due to a disaster. Ms. Beck added that Mr. Brekke had indicated that he would like to see the credits extended to all properties as well as the abatements.

Discussion was held regarding property tax abatement and property tax credit procedures.

Mayor Wayne Wolden questioned Ms. West whether the property tax abatements and property tax credits included each taxing jurisdiction.

Ms. West responded that she had e-mailed the Department of Revenue this question, which she had not received a response on, to date.

Mayor Wolden commented that it appeared that the State allowed the County Board, at its discretion, to extend property tax relief; clarification of this would be important.

Discussion was held regarding the portion of the abatement or credit the State may reimburse the County; it was deemed that clarification of the State Programs was needed before the Board could make any decisions.

Ms. Beck pointed out that the assessment of damaged properties could take some time as they were waiting for structural engineers to view the properties.

Mayor Wolden commented that the Assessor's Office had to determine if 50% or more of the property was damaged; there were properties that had already been torn down and no assessment

had been made. He added that he thought it appropriate to question FEMA whether the loss in possible tax revenue for the County, City and School might be eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

Chairman Stearns requested clarification from the State as to abatement for property taxes relating to voter approved tax levies.

Ms. West advised the Board that Department of Revenue information indicated that a taxing jurisdiction had the authority to Special Levy the following year for the loss of tax revenue due to a disaster.

Discussion was held regarding residents walking away from their damaged or destroyed properties.

Ms. Beck commented that there were some people who were walking away as they did not receive enough insurance to cover the expenses.

Mayor Wolden requested the Assessor's Office contact the City of Wadena if they received information that property owners were walking away from their property so they could follow up on them; there were safety aspects that needed to be taken care of.

Commissioner Bounds commented on the possibility of large County expenses that would be incurred due to the disaster, prior to FEMA reimbursement.

Ms. West informed the Board that the County had the availability of issuing a Certificate of Indebtedness related to a disaster or Grant Anticipation Bonds, which she was researching.

Chairman Stearns adjourned the Emergency Board of Commissioner Meeting at 10:30 a.m.

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Charleen West, Auditor/Treasurer

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William Stearns, Chairman