

McLean County Commission Proceedings

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

The final regular February meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chairperson Barry Suydam. Present were Commissioners Suydam, Steve Cottingham, and Steve Lee. Also present were Auditor Beth A Knutson, Highway Superintendent Jim Grey, and Chief Deputy Auditor Lori A Foss.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Cottingham, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as submitted. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Chief Deputy Sheriff Richard Johnson joined the meeting.

Highway Superintendent Jim Grey was present with an update on department operations. He reported that the continued extreme cold weather has pushed the guys into the shop for continued equipment repairs. He went on to discuss this year's County Road 9 (CR 9) project which involves milling and overlay. He recently visited with Mike Rivinius of Wold Engineering who informed him that the state has a project planned for State Highway 37 which is near CR 9. The state's bid opening is set for April. Rivinius feels it would be in the county's best interest to hold off on the CR 9 bid opening until May in hopes of a better bid on our project since contractors would already be in the area for the state project.

Grey presented a Consent for Right of Entry form for signing from the ND Public Service Commission (PSC) involving portions of the right-of-way of McLean County Highway 15 in W2 of the NW4 of Section 17 and E2 of the NE4 of Section 18 of Township 148 North, Range 84 West. The project will involve boring in ditches to determine if any areas need additional fill.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Lee, to sign the Consent for Right to Entry form giving consent to the PSC to perform exploratory drilling in the area designated. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Grey informed the board that a termination has created an Equipment Operator III vacancy in his department that he would like to fill at the Equipment Operator II (EO II) level. He requested permission to advertise for one or more EO II positions based in the Washburn shop due to the vacancy.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Cottingham, to approve advertising for one or more EO II positions based out of Washburn. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Chief Deputy Johnson requested approval to acquire 22 licenses for OpenFox Mobile Messenger through the State of North Dakota at a cost of \$450.00 per license which includes maintenance for the first year. The total first year cost will be \$9,900.00. The software is used for patrol communications via mobile laptops in their patrol vehicles. The current method of communication is not compatible with Windows 10 and will be terminated on June 30, 2021. Ongoing maintenance after the first year will be charged at a rate of \$2,200.00 per year.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Cottingham, to approve the purchase of 22 licenses for OpenFox Mobile Messenger through the State of North Dakota at a total cost of \$9,900.00. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

He then updated the commissioners on the E-911 readdressing project that was started and tabled last year due to election addressing concerns. There will be nearly 2,000 address changes involved in the project. The ND Association of Counties suggested that the information be made available on the county website for public input. Johnson is working the creation of a searchable PDF for that purpose. Lee questioned whether it is possible for individuals to request changes to their addresses at this point to which Johnson replied that any changes would have to meet the new standards but changes are possible. One of the next steps in the process is to send all changes to the United States Postal Service Regional Office in Sioux Falls for input into their addressing system. The projected date for the new addressing to take effect is April 1, 2021.

Knutson updated the board on delivery of furniture and other items for the relocated NDSU Extension Service Office along with additional details of tomorrow's planned move of NDSU Extension-McLean County and the Tax Equalization Department.

The board signed a service recognition certificate for retiring employee, Valda A Yunker, who worked for Dakota Central Human Service Zone for 16 years. Certificates were also signed for former county board members, Roger Britton and Fred Tomlinson, who served seven and eleven years respectively and declined reappointment this year.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Lee, to set the start date of Deputy Auditor Kayla Oberlander's adjusted salary, which was approved at the February 2 meeting, to February 1, 2021. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Cottingham, to change the details of the purchase approved at the February 2 meeting for patrol vehicles from 2021 Chevrolet Tahoes to 2021 Ford Expeditions expending \$9,088.00 more than approved at that same meeting. Discussion followed stating that additional funds are available in the Sheriff's Department Forfeiture Fund if needed to complete the outfitting of each vehicle. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Marlin Leidholm, Washburn, joined the meeting.

The board was notified that Blackwater Township would like to utilize the county's assessing services at \$150.00 annually.

Moved by Cottingham, seconded by Lee, to approve offering an assessing contract to Blackwater Township. Roll Call Vote: Aye: Cottingham, Lee, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Leidholm discussed property he owns located within the City of Falkirk and a road that has historically been used for truck traffic that accesses his property in the event that the train cuts off other means of access. He stated when he was a County Commissioner, the road in question was maintained by the county but is now in bad shape. He went on to question the recent

placement of road closure signs. Knutson informed the board that this road is the same road that was discussed by the Commission with regard to the Lowell and Julie Rader property at the County Commission Meetings held on November 26, 2019 and May 5, 2020. Cottingham said it was not an official county road closure as it is not the county's road. The sign was placed in an effort to truncate traffic on the road. Leidholm questioned how he is to access his property in light of the road closure. Knutson responded that he is still allowed to use that road if that is the only access to his property. Leidholm's final comment was a suggestion to the board that a sign be placed on US Highway 83 informing semi-truck traffic that there is a closure ahead to avoid any possible mishaps.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Cottingham, to approve the following vouchers for payment:

A detailed list of checks is available for public inspection anytime during regular business hours in the McLean County Auditor's Office.

Roll Call Vote: Aye: Lee, Cottingham, and Suydam. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Suydam informed the board that he received notice that the February meeting of the McLean-Mercer Regional Library Board has been rescheduled for March due to a medical emergency.

There being no further business, the chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 9:11 a.m. until the next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. The commission minutes and agenda can be found on the county website at <http://www.mcleancountynd.gov>.

Barry Suydam, Chairperson

Lori A Foss, Chief Deputy Auditor