

March 26, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session March 26, 2009, at the Hi-Liner Activity Center, to discuss potential flooding with residents of the Kathryn Road. Discussed were the subdivisions south of Woodland Park in case of high water, with a possible impact of 60 homes. Rich Schueneman, Corps of Engineers Baldhill Dam resource manager, reported a current dam release of 2400 cfs, with plans to keep it at that level for several days and eventually increasing to 4000 cfs. He also discussed the problems of ice jams and debris on the river. Mr. Schueneman stated Woodland Park could be eligible for help with a dike increase because the area is tied into city sewer and power, making it public infrastructure. Commissioner Schwehr noted that the other subdivisions also utilize city power. Jim Jung explained maps showing the flood plain. He discussed overland flooding and ice breakup to the south, which he stated will be a significant factor. Mr. Schueneman discussed a second crest prediction of 18 feet in about 10 days and planned releases from the dam. Also discussed were a timeline for the Woodland Park dike extension and danger to access to Sheyenne Valley Estates.

March 31, 2009

Rich Schueneman discussed Woodland Park easements needed, with a target project start date of April 4. Gary Yanish, assistant highway superintendent, discussed work on Fingal-area roads that had washed out earlier and stated the bridge a mile north of Kathryn would likely go under. Dave Loken of Columbia Grain reported the elevator had filled with water over the weekend and grain had been damaged.

April 1, 2009

Gary Yanish reported high water at the Skorpin Bridge. Dave Loken reported electrical and structural damages at Columbia Grain, besides grain damages, and the assessment was still underway. Rich Schueneman offered a pump available at the dam. Gene Bjerke, Sheriff, reported on new road closures.

April 8, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 8, with all members present except Commissioner Weber. Also present were States Attorney Brad Cruff, City Auditor Avis Richter, several City Commissioners, and representatives from the Water Board, and Oakhill and Spring Creek townships. Discussion took place regarding a culvert concern at Clausen Springs, and whether the drain there is a natural or established drain.

Commissioner Froelich made a motion, seconded by Schwehr, that the County, Spring Creek and Oakhill townships, and the Barnes County Water Resource Board each pay 25 percent of the cost of an 84x76' culvert installation at Clausen Springs Park, contingent on agreement by all parties, and the maximum cost being no more than \$25,000.00. Upon a roll call vote with all voting "yes," motion carried.

April 9, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 9, with all members present except Commissioner Weber. Also present were Bobby Koeplin, Kerry Johnson, Kim Franklin, Gene Bjerke, Rich Schueneman, Monty Pederson, Theresa Will, Mary Lee Nielson, Steve Browne, Dean Ross, Major Lein of the National Guard, Jim Jung and Steve Urness. Mr. Schueneman stated the Dam output will go to 6,600 cfs by April 13-14. Mr. Johnson discussed a Maryvale evacuation, stating only high-risk residents be moved. Commissioner Schwehr stated that Hi-Soaring Eagle Ranch is considering evacuation. Major Lien provided an overview on National Guard help available, which must be requested by Emergency Management. Discussion was held regarding bridges, which will likely be closed by Saturday. Police Chief Ross stated that line additions to 911 would take about 12 days, but they could go to roll over call for up to 10 phones. Discussion also took place concerning evacuation equipment and available assets lists.

April 10, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 10, with all members present. Rich Schueneman reported current dam output at 5,000 cfs, and increasing tomorrow to 5500. Sheriff Bjerke stated availability of an air boat, and that the highway patrol has three troopers working this area. Theresa Will reported that the Vet's Home is evacuating to Legacy Place.

April 11, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 11, with all members present except Commissioner Opdahl. Rep. Earl Pomeroy was in attendance. Rich Schueneman predicted dam output to 6,000 cfs, with river level at 20.2 feet, possibly for three weeks. Many township roads are reported inundated. Jeff McMillan of the Water Board discussed a drain that needed

releasing. Rep. Pomeroy discussed stimulus money. The Commission requested 20 troops and a hummer from the National Guard.

April 12, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 12, with all members present. Rich Schueneman stated dam output was at 5700 cfs, river at 19.65. Kerry Johnson reported two more roads out, and Sheriff Bjerke stated some alternate routes were looking bad. He also reported problems with sightseers. Discussion took place on getting more pumps from Grand Forks. The Guard will provide help preventing the public from going around road barricades. Bjerke reported the air boat is ready. Froelich stressed the need to keep some township roads open for county road access.

April 13, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 13, with all members present. County Road 38 is closed, due to being out in two places, as is North Valley Bridge. A conference call with the National Weather Service was held. They offered to help in any way they could. Some precipitation was forecast. Binghampton was reported to have only one road access, and that road has water running over it.

April 14, 2009 - 7:30 a.m.

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 14, with all members present. Discussion was held concerning the predicted high water and the possibility of at least a partial city evacuation. Locations for a Red Cross shelter were discussed, including Jefferson School, the sports complex, and airport hangars, if the Eagles is not a long-term possibility.

Commissioner Schwehr made a motion, seconded by Opdahl, that the County emergency operations center be moved to the Highway Department permanently, and that the phone lines be set up there as soon as possible. Upon a roll call vote with all voting yes, motion carried.

It was decided that all Courthouse offices would be notified of a possible basement inundation and that all papers still there should be moved. Mr. Johnson updated the Commission on more roads out.

April 14, 2009 - Noon

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 15, with all members present except Commissioner Opdahl. Kim Franklin reported the Red Cross is placing a shelter in the Oriska school. Jason Thiel reported Qwest will set up emergency numbers at the Highway Department. Kerry Johnson reported roads rapidly washing out, with 60 "roads closed" signs out in the past 24 hours. The Guard reported they cannot send a civilian EMT on the helicopter but would have to work with the Coast Guard.

Commissioner Froelich made a motion, seconded by Schwehr, to allow County employees until Thursday morning to comply with flood plain evacuation order. If not possible, employees are to work with their department head. Upon a roll call vote with all present voting yes, motion carried.

April 15, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 15, with Weber, Schwehr, and Berntson present, Opdahl and Froelich absent. The National Weather Service forecast no significant precipitation for the weekend. Discussion was held regarding the Clausen Springs Dam failure and subsequent Kathryn evacuation. Sandbags will be dropped to divert the water from cutting back on the dam. Theresa Will will contact on the shelter to check on Kathryn evacuation. Commissioners expressed concern about burning in the county. Installation of two floating bridges, north and south, was discussed.

April 16, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 16, with all members present. Police Chief Dean Ross relayed concern about available 911 phone lines. Kerry Johnson reported they have the Clausen Dam situation under control. Opdahl requested someone to check on the Stony Slough drain, since he thought every culvert was out. The floating bridge idea was again discussed. Cass County Electric reported no shutdowns in the county currently. John Deere Co. is recycling their water and hauling it out, keeping it out of the city's sewer system. TransCanada has donated \$25,000.00 to the Red Cross for Barnes County.

April 17, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session Friday, April 17, with all members present.

Commissioner Froelich made a motion, seconded by Opdahl, to close the Courthouse for the afternoon of Friday, April 17, in view of the city's sewer system failure that morning, and open again Monday, April 20, as usual. Upon a roll call vote with Berntson, Opdahl, and Froelich voting "yes," and Weber and Schwehr voting "no," motion carried.

Kerry Johnson discussed Old Hwy. 10 and reported Co. Rd. 22 is still open but may close soon. He stated more than 100 one-ton sandbags and foundation blocks have been placed in

Clausen to hold erosion down. Kathryn residents may not return to their homes as yet; this will be put on the radio. Jason Thiel reported the phone lines at the EOC are functional. Discussion was held regarding the 12 prisoners currently in the jail. Theresa Will reported on the flood hotline. Schwehr thanked the Guard on behalf of the Commission for their help on the Clausen Dam problem.

April 18, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 18, with all members present. Kim Franklin reported a quiet night. Kerry Johnson reported County Rd 22 had water over it and would need to be closed for a few days. Berntson discussed Tomahawk Dam, stating it is a US Fish & Wildlife structure and whose position is no immediate threat exists, that no rock should go in, but they will continue to monitor it. Jeff McMillan said the Guard is watching it 24 hours a day. Berntson said the Corps cut the flow in response, as a precautionary measure. Discussion of threat potential followed, and it was decided the Guard should continue monitoring. Mr. McMillan said the rock would be left there through the weekend. Rich Schueneman reported pool elevation at 66.75 feet, an output of 6000 cfs, but said local flows should start falling off between Baldhill and Valley City, which should provide some relief for Valley City. River level is at 20.48. No return to Kathryn is yet recommended. Theresa Will stated anyone dealing with sewage in their basements should have tetanus shots. She expressed concern about elderly getting to portapotties, and discussed welfare checks in the county. Schwehr reported some south of town had no phone service. Jason Thiel said he would check on a portable Verizon tower. Police Chief Ross requested road report updates for dispatch. FEMA personnel reiterated the need for welfare checks on the river, and commended Kim Franklin for doing a good job. John Froelich reported jail inmates had been transferred to Cass County.

April 19, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 19, with all members present. Dwight Stewart of state emergency services reported that Clausen Dam had slowed to a trickle, the National Guard had been removed from the area, and he felt it safe for Kathryn residents to return. At Tomahawk Dam, Fish & Wildlife reported more erosion. Guard soldiers and rock had been requested. The city administrator had requested mobile showers for the city. More pumps had to be taken to the Peanut Bar. Sibley may face sewer problems also. Jeff McMillan stated the Corps' position was to let Tomahawk Dam go, that it would take out two roads, and the Guard is sending two pumps there. Discussion was held concerning access, whose responsibility it would be to fix the roads. The consensus of the Commission was to allow the pumps to work. Berntson reiterated that Kathryn residents may return, and the Guard may be removed from there. Theresa Will discussed an upcoming conference call concerning restaurant closings when no sewer system. Sheriff Bjerke said his office is working on contacts as to who needs welfare checks. Berntson said the sewer problem may be long term. Mr. Stewart said correctional officers will staff the EOC overnight. He stated Kim Franklin was well prepared for the flooding and doing a good job. FEMA reps stated they are doing photography and video of the flooding and will put on the county website, requested ideas on what the Commission would like documented. Berntson stated he would like the county areas included. Plans were to start in the county the following day, with FEMA photographers working with Kerry Johnson, Ken Reid, and Gene Bjerke as to what will be photographed. Ed Conley of FEMA suggested the Commission decide a distribution process for any donations that may come in from the national attention the flooding has drawn. Theresa Will said the Red Cross was distributing cleanup kits at Washington School.

April 20, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 20, with all members present. Kerry Johnson reported that Tomahawk Dam has decreased two feet, and two township roads immediately downstream were washing out. He stated they were starting to move into the road fixing stage, but most would be temporary repairs to get traffic moving and permanent repairs would be done later. Kim Franklin stated only six people were at the Oriska shelter and the Red Cross would relocate those people and close the shelter. A building to locate a FEMA center was discussed. Chad from the USFW stated Tomahawk had breached in the night and the Guard had been requested to bring in rip-rap. He would work with the township on fixing roads below the dam. Dwight Stewart reported the EOC had been working well and suggested winding it down from 24 hours to 16-18 hours. Jason Thiel was given permission to find out about a mobile cell tower for south of town. Heather Pautz, Social Service Director, stated she had been receiving calls concerning unemployment due to the mandatory business closures. FEMA stated unemployment assistance had been signed by the governor and provided other information. Mr. Stewart said the problems in Sibley had been solved but water was still very high on the dike. Theresa Will reported a busy flood hotline. The WIC office closed as non-essential, but the services would continue

through CCHD. Mary Lee Nielson, Mayor, addressed the Commission on the mandatory closure of non-essential businesses. Discussion was held concerning Courthouse closing.

April 22, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 22, with all members present. Kim Franklin addressed sandbag disposal. Kerry Johnson discussed Keystone Pipeline's request to haul on roads still under load restrictions. He said there is still runover at the blinking light on Old 10. He gave a progress report on road openings. Discussion was held on activities at Tomahawk. Theresa Will stated the hotline was still receiving calls, many concerning FEMA or evacuees returning to Valley City. Jason Thiel reported he had moved the polycom system from the DES room to the Health Tracks room while FEMA works in the Courthouse basement.

April 23, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 23, with all members present except Commissioner Schwehr. Major General David Sprynczynatyk of the National Guard was in attendance. Kim Franklin reported 1061 repair sites on roads with 6 townships still not reporting. Sandbag and levy removal was discussed. She recommended the EOC could close down. Gen. Sprynczynatyk introduced officials, and stated currently 300 National Guard troops in Valley City. He discussed the recovery aspect, damages to non-federal roads due to snow, and that he expected to meet the threshold for the 90-10 cost share, with 6 percent local. He recommended taking photos before and after, invoicing everything, and documenting well. Kerry Johnson reported that 34 east of Fingal is open, Skorpion Bridge is being inspected, and 21N is being worked on. Water is off the road at Faust Dam. He requested the Highway Department to go to five 10-hour days. Theresa Will reported the flood hotline would ring into the CCHD office, but would keep it going as long as needed. She stated the vulnerable population was not encouraged to return as yet. Tito Hernandez, state FEMA director, thanked the County for the basement space and stated this was the most active and busy center in the state, and that it would be available as long as necessary.

April 24, 2009 - Noon

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 24, with all members present. Kim Franklin reported a sand dumping site had been chosen, and that contaminated material needs to be separated from non-contaminated. Cities and FEMA representatives will be invited to the Township Officers meeting to be held Tuesday, April 28, at the VFW. Kerry Johnson reported Hwy. 21 is now open, and water was off the Miller Bridge. He estimated the Larson Bridge would open by next week, but the bridge north of Kathryn would take significant work. Road conditions for school buses were discussed. Sheriff Bjerke reported on two fires had occurred in the county; a county burning ban was discussed but it was the consensus of the Commission to provide information on refraining from burning to the press. Theresa Will talked about the flood hotline. Dean Ihla, Chamber president, reported on funds and distribution options, suggesting a committee form as a means to collect donations. The Commission gave the go-ahead with County input on the committee. A FEMA representative urged wider FEMA registration to help with damages. So far, 330 Valley City and 282 county residents had registered. It was decided to meet Monday at noon to wrap up the flood meetings.

April 24, 2009 - 4:15 p.m.

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 24, with all members present. Attending were U.S. Senators Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad and other officials. Sen. Conrad stated with much recovery ahead, he wanted to ensure all available help. Sen. Dorgan said he was impressed with the early preparations and praised the Corps of Engineers, FEMA, and the National Guard for their help. Berntson described the large number of damaged roads in the county. Conrad discussed federal disaster and individual assistance, and reaching the threshold for getting a 90 percent share of federal funding. Opdahl stressed the need to prevent future flooding. Conrad suggested statewide flood summits to develop a strategy for every watershed. Valley City Mayor Mary Lee Nielson said she felt strongly about keeping the city's original dike system until permanent flood control system is in place. Dorgan responded that discussion with the Corps of Engineers would be facilitated and Mayor Nielson would be included in that. Schwehr discussed how to get through bureaucracy to get help; for instance, in the Tomahawk Dam incident, and the different entities managing the water. Conrad reiterated that the flood summits would provide a forum to share experiences and develop answers. Berntson described the problems south of Valley City with water backing up causing major ice jams. A FEMA representative stated the second part of the declaration has been approved, making all forms of public assistance available. Jennifer Feist expressed frustration on the part of city businesses which suffered due to mandatory closures. She had urged people to check insurance policies for language relating to damages due to civil authority. She also requested a reduced or no-interest rate for SBA loans.

April 27, 2009

The Barnes County Commission met in special session April 27, with all members present. Kim Franklin reported she has fielded many questions from residents about buyouts. She stated it is the County's decision. Berntson discussed whether to separate city/county in buyouts, and urged caution if buyouts are done. Ms. Franklin also reported dump sites are being organized for sandbags and materials, and community service people will process the sand. Sheriff Bjerke reported the inmates returned to the jail today. He also reported the jail car was damaged by a road washout while responding to a fire. The portfolio holders will look into the matter. He also reported the Miller Bridge is now open. Theresa Will stated a church group donated a truckload of cleanup supplies. She said they planned to have the floodline open for this week, and then decide whether to continue. Ms. Franklin discussed whether the EOC should be moved to the Highway Department permanently.

It was the consensus of the Commission to suspend the daily flood emergency meetings unless it becomes necessary again.

Edward R. McGough
Barnes County Auditor

Rodger Berntson, Chairman
Barnes County Commission