

The Barnes County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, September 16, 2014 with Phil Leitner, Eldred Knutson, John Froelich, and Rodger Berntson present. Cindy Schwehr was unable to attend. Chairman Knutson called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the Agenda was reviewed.

#### **Highway Department – Interstate 94 Project**

Kerry Johnson, Highway Superintendent, and John Thompson, ND Department of Transportation, asked for Commission input regarding the DOT's planned work on the west-bound lane of I-94 east of Valley City from Valley City to Tower City in 2017. The plan is to leave the Peak and Oriska exits open, and to close the rest area and the north side on and off ramps at the Cuba exit for most of the summer of 2017. Closing the Cuba exit (north side only) would result in \$550,000 cost savings. They are looking at doing the east-bound lane in 2020. The Commission suggested holding a public meeting and being in contact with the local businesses that may be impacted.

John Froelich asked what is holding up the McDonald's storm water permit application. Mr. Thompson indicated that their permit has been approved, that there is a second application from the City of Valley City requesting to send water in that same direction, and that it is really an issue between McDonalds and Valley City. Eldred Knutson expressed concerns about the DOT's approaches along County Road #21 south of town that cause some drainage issues, and it was suggested that the parties involved work together to resolve the issues.

Kerry Johnson and Shawn Mayfield presented the federal aid and House Bill projects that will be proposed for next year:

- County Road #21 mill and overlay from Getchell School north to ND #26. This project has an estimated cost of \$2,070,000 with the State paying \$1,863,000.
- County Road #34 at Fingal, from ND #32 east to the County line and from ND #32 south to Fingal, including a culvert repair similar to what was done on CR #21 North, except on a smaller scale. This project would have a total cost of \$1,240,000 and \$1,116,000 would be reimbursed by the State.
- County Road #38 from ND #1 to Litchville. This project would have a total cost of \$852,500 and a reimbursement from the State of \$767,250.
- County Road #11 from ND #46 to Litchville. This project would have a total cost of \$310,000 and a reimbursement from the State of \$279,000.
- County Road #22 from ND #1 to Eckelson. This project would have a total cost of 1,007,000, with \$52,687 funded by the State, and the remainder funded locally. Also planned is County Road #11 from County Road #22 north through Sanborn 1 mile.

Rodger Berntson moved to accept the Federal Aid projects proposed; John Froelich seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll-call vote, with all members voting "yes".

Eldred Knutson asked for an update on the proposal for a gated crossing near Barnes County North. Mr. Johnson indicated that a cost-share might be proposed among the parties involved in order to get things moving.

#### **Bjornson Golf Course – Bank Stability Project**

Madeline Luke, on behalf of the Park Board, and Tyler Jacobson, Valley City Parks & Recreation Director, requested a Letter of Support from the Commission. They are looking into a project to stabilize the riverbank at the Bjornson Public Golf Course with a proposal to stabilize the bank and encourage re-growth of the bank, utilizing Section 319 funds (Clean Water Act), Heritage Fund dollars, and Devils Lake mitigation money. Rodger Berntson stated that he couldn't support this. Eldred Knutson echoed this sentiment, stating that once you start supporting these projects, where will it end, however, this is only a Letter of Support. John Froelich moved to write a Letter of Support for this project; Phil Leitner seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll-call vote, with Rodger Berntson voting "no".

#### **Planning & Zoning – Variance**

Beth Didier, Auditor, on behalf of the Tax Director's office, presented an application for a Variance - Setback from Charles L Pederson (Weimer Township, SW ¼ 24-141-56). John Froelich moved to approve the application; Phil Leitner seconded the motion. Because there are already existing mature trees that are closer to the road than the proposed building, the township officers approved the application, and there was no objection from the general public, the motion carried upon roll-call vote, with all members voting "yes".

### **Auditor – Minutes/Miscellaneous**

Phil Leitner moved to approve the 9/2/2014 minutes with corrections; John Froelich seconded the motion. Motion carried. Phil Leitner moved to approve the 9/2/2014 Special Budget minutes; Rodger Berntson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Emergency Management – Communications Tower / 911 Update**

Kim Franklin, Emergency Manager, informed the Commission that the proposed joint venture with the Corps of Engineers would provide the best tower coverage possible in the northern part of the county. The Corps will develop a Memorandum of Understanding to present to the Commission. The cost for tear-down of the old and installation of the new 180' tower through Jamestown Communications is \$85,442. The cost for the repeater and associated programming of radios is \$35,274. Also, Cass County Electric Cooperative is interested in renting space on the tower. Rodger Berntson moved to accept the two separate quotes presented; Eldred Knutson seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll-call vote with Phil Leitner voting "no". Ms. Franklin reported on the numbers of administrative-type calls that have been coming in to the 911 Dispatch Center.

### **Extension - Overtime**

Randy Grueneich, Extension Agent, requested approval of approximately 83 hours of overtime pay for Tammy Jacobson, mostly due to staffing changes. He doesn't anticipate that it happening in the future. John Froelich moved to pay out the overtime of approximately \$1,326; Rodger Berntson seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll-call vote, with all members voting "yes".

### **Sheriff – CAD System Training**

Randy McClafin, Sheriff, updated the Commission on the training attended by some Sheriff's Office, Corrections, and Dispatch personnel last week. On October 31<sup>st</sup>, the CAD trainers will be here to work with the rest of the employees who will be using the CAD system. The switchover to the new system will occur November 6 – 8, 2014. Also discussed was BEK's proposal to place a secure fiber line between the Courthouse and the Sheriff's Department, for a fee of \$99 for the hook-up and a 3 year contract; Mr. McClafin would consider it if they waived the fee and eliminated the 3-year contract requirement, and will follow up.

### **Commission Discussion**

The Commission discussed the Courthouse patio stair repair and what the intention is. Rodger Berntson will ask Stan Horst to get estimates for all three sets of steps on the south side, and to consider moving the handrails, as they are currently too low. It was the consensus of the Commission to continue with the steps repair project, although, at this point, the cost has not yet been determined. The Auditor will follow up with the State Historical Society to ensure that their requirements are met.

Eldred Knutson presented the following for discussion: The appraisal for the Tax Deed Sale properties will be conducted at the next regular meeting. Karen Duffy will be attending the Affordable Care Act seminar coming up. The Recorder's office is confident that they will be ready to go with passport processing by January 1, 2015; the Clerk of Court's office indicated that they did not feel the transition would take place by then. An informational letter regarding the Court Facilities Improvement grants available was received; no improvements are needed at this time. The problem dike south of Valley City has been cleaned out, so that issue appears to be taken care of. The Tax Director's office is closed today, as they are gone to a meeting. Barnes County Planning & Zoning isn't receiving minutes from the Valley City Planning & Zoning meetings; John Froelich will follow up with the City. Eldred Knutson mentioned that he didn't realize that the County was picking up the tab for the employee picnic last Thursday.

Rodger Berntson asked whether the State is proposing State takeover of Social Services, as they did with the Clerk of Court. Phil Leitner informed the Commission that the regional meeting being hosted by the East Central County Commissioners will be held on Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. Eldred Knutson mentioned BEK's open house tomorrow. He will also be attending the Sheyenne James RC&D meeting. The next Hazard Mitigation meeting is on 9/22. Eldred Knutson will be giving the Chamber a County update at their meeting on 9/26.

### **VC-BC Development Corporation – CCHD Flex-Pace Grant**

Jennifer Feist, Executive Director, Valley City Barnes County Development Corporation, and Theresa Will, Director, City-County Health District, requested approval of a maximum of \$33,333 as a grant funded through the Barnes County economic development mill levy fund for City-County Health District to reduce the interest rate for CCHD's loan for 9 of the 10 year loan term from 4.5% down to 1%. Phil Leitner wasn't in favor of buying the building or putting money into it, but is in favor of this proposal, even though it effectively shifts the burden of paying for the interest onto other people. John Froelich stated that he has always been opposed to it, but now that we're on the hook for it, he will support this. Rodger Berntson moved to approve the request; Phil Leitner seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll-call vote, with all members voting "yes".

### **Budget Discussion**

John Froelich indicated that he is not in support of any new employees for the Tax Director's office or 911, and would not be supportive of filling a potential vacancy in the Auditor's office. Rodger Berntson indicated that Planning & Zoning has put an overload on the Tax Director's office. Eldred Knutson stated that, until additional contracts for 911 are added, adding staff in that department is not justified and the part-timers can cover vacations, etc. The Commission agreed that the fourth employee's position in the Clerk of Court needs to be eliminated prior to the end of the year.

Phil Leitner proposed a 1.5% increase in salaries, or 50¢, whichever is greater. John Froelich proposed a 2% increase. Rodger Berntson mentioned that a percentage increase is not fair to those in the lower ranks. Eldred Knutson indicated a desire to reduce the levy for the General Fund, Economic Development, Water Resources and Veterans Services. John Froelich felt that the General Fund, City-County Health District, and Extension levies could be reduced, which Phil Leitner suggested that the levy for Social Services could be decreased.

With no further business, Phil Leitner made a motion, seconded by John Froelich, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

---

Beth M Didier  
Barnes County Auditor

---

Eldred Knutson, Chairman  
Barnes County Commission