

Commissioner Meeting  
December 3, 2019

Commissioner Joel Hamar called the meeting to order at 9:00. Present were Thor Sand, Marke Roberts, Dean Simek and Chairman Joel Hamar. John Hokana was unable to attend. The media was not present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Additions to the agenda

Hiring requirements and wages at the highway department

Fall flooding issues and FEMA

Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes from November 19<sup>th</sup> with corrections. Sand seconded. Motion carried.

Sand made a motion to approve the vouchers. Simek seconded. Motion carried.

Hamar updated the Commission on the hiring of another full-time custodian. The position has been filled by Dan Blondo. Blondo will start December 19<sup>th</sup> and will start at Step 3 on the County pay scale.

County Agent Administrative Assistant Shirlene Wagner and Family and Community Wellness Agent Danielle Dinger joined the meeting at 9:30. Dinger's official start date was December 2<sup>nd</sup> for the position of Family and Community Wellness.

Administrative Assistant Andrea Masse and Sheriff Chris Estes joined the meeting at 9:28.

Commission discussed job requirements of the highway employees, specifically the need for a GED or high school graduation. After some discussion, Sand made a motion to remove the GED requirement in the job application and change the wording to be preferred. Commission would encourage department heads to consider the job requirements when reviewing this requirement on all job postings. Roberts seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion followed on snow plow operators and the process of calling employees on weekends. After some discussion, a decision was made to wait to discuss the issue with Highway Superintendent Jeff Hagen.

Simek made a motion to open the bid hearing to tear down the house at 221 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North, Ellendale. Sand seconded. Motion carried.

A bid was received from Thorpe Excavating in the amount of \$3,850. All required paperwork was included. No other bids were received. Roberts made a motion to accept the bid from Thorpe Excavating in the amount of \$3,850.00. Simek seconded. Motion carried. Sheppard stated the inspection has been done for asbestos in the house, but the report has not been received at this time.

Simek made a motion to close the hearing. Sand seconded. Motion carried.

Estes stated the signs are being put in place at river crossings on the James River today advising on activity on the river for this winter season. Estes stated there have been several break-ins, with guns as the item of interest. Estes strongly suggest that residents record the serial numbers and models of their guns in case of a burglary. A picture of the gun would also be helpful. This information could assist in locating the gun(s) if stolen so it can be returned to the rightful owner.

DES/911 Coordinator Charlie Russell and Highway Superintendent Jeff Hagen joined the meeting at 10:35. -

The meeting went into recess at 10:46 and returned at 11:00.

Hagen stated that ND DOT would like a final decision on the bridges that are part of the Garrison Diversion project in Oakes. After some discussion, Roberts made a motion to accept the ownership of those bridges based on original agreement, with the responsibility of channel maintenance to continue to be the responsibility of Garrison Diversion. Sand seconded. Motion carried.

Commission discussed the issue of highway employees being called out on Saturday, Sunday, or holidays to clear roads. Discussion followed on how other counties handle this. Sand made a motion to

pay the highway employees a flat \$100 plus the number of hours worked when the employees are called out by the Highway Superintendent on weekends or holiday. This would have a sunset clause of May 1, 2020 and will be reevaluated at that time. Roberts seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion followed concerning the current starting salary for an equipment operator for the Highway department. Hagen stated that anyone he speaks with concerning the job states the pay is too low and that they can't come to work for that amount of money. After some discussion, Sand made a motion to increase the salary schedule line of equipment/blade operator by \$1.25 per hour effective December 16<sup>th</sup>. After some discussion the motion was rescinded. Sand made a motion to increase the salary schedule line of equipment/blade operator by \$1.00. per hour. This would not include the Highway Superintendent, Road Forman, or the Road Bookkeeper. Simek seconded. Motion carried.

Hamar stated he had received a phone call from DES employee Cody Schulz in Bismarck concerning the current flood disaster. Schulz is asking for damage projects from the disaster in the amount of \$20,000 or greater. Discussion followed concerning County Road 10 north of Highway 11, as well as an issue on County Road 14. Russell will discuss with Schulz the issues on these two roads.

Tax Director Don Flaherty joined the meeting at 12:20 to review the letter he is proposing to send out to all farmers concerning the change in the law concerning farm residency exemption. Commission took a few items out of the letter after some discussion.

Roberts made a motion to adjourn at 1:05.