RANSOM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Budget Meeting – August 4, 2021 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Joe Mathern. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members present: Connie Gilbert, Neil Olerud, Greg Schwab, and Joe Mathern. Absent: Norm Hansen. Also in attendance was Kirsten Gilbert, Jeff Hopkins, Kirstie Reinke, and Shelly Schwab.

The agenda was then reviewed. Kirsten Gilbert and Jeff Hopkins had been requested at the last budget meeting to attend this budget meeting to discuss road department account numbers, they were added to the agenda. Kristie Reinke asked to be added to the agenda to discuss the pay study the board had completed. Connie Gilbert moved, seconded by Schwab to approve the agenda with the additions. All aye. Motion carried.

The road department account numbers were discussed. Every year at budget time the road department budget consumes a lot of time discussing what is the accurate amount of money to put in each line item. Or what is the correct way to budget for equipment. In 2020 Kirsten Gilbert, Nicole Gentzkow, Neil Olerud, Norm Hansen, and Jeff Hopkins, sat down and reorganized the account numbers. They eliminated old equipment that had account numbers that was no longer owned by the county, that was being budgeted for. However, the question still stands of what is the best way to budget for unexpected repairs, and how should it get billed to be tracked? Discussion was had. Schwab moved to have Hopkins assign anything over $100 value to a unit # for tracking purpose. Olerud seconded the motion. All aye. Motion carried. Discussion was also had on setting up new account numbers for construction projects, so the board could easily identify how much a project had cost the county. Olerud moved for Hopkins to go to Gentzkow to have account numbers set up for new construction projects as needed. Schwab seconded the motion. All aye. Motion carried.

Kristie Reinke – tax director appeared before the board and passed out a hand-out showing what percent of market value employees were being paid at. Reinke stated she had spoken to employees and they would like to see the board give employees at least ninety percent market value. It is also very important to the employees she spoke to that no benefits be cut. Reinke requested that the board meet with department heads to hear their concerns regarding the salary survey and benefits. Gentzkow advised the board and Reinke that the preliminary budget was due by August 10, 2021 which meant we didn’t have much time to work with. Gentzkow asked Reinke what she thought employees biggest concern was if the board were to consider implementing the salary survey. Reinke stated she and the employees she spoke to, did not want to see any benefits cut that the county is currently offering, and would take lower pay.

Gentzkow asked the board for a new portfolio holder due to lack of communication from the auditor’s office current holder. Employee discussion has been had in the past and portfolio holders have been asked to check in to the offices they represent on a regular basis to handle any and all concerns and keep an open line of communication. Gentzkow stated to the board that this is the second time in a calendar year that there has been an employee issue, and this commissioner has avoided dealing with. The board decided a new portfolio holder would be assigned at the next meeting. The board agreed things were not handled well at the commission meeting and it will be addressed at the next meeting. During the discussion Gentzkow asked the board to consider zooming commission meetings going forward to keep employees and the public more informed about what happens during commission meetings. It would allow both employees and the public to listen to the meeting without having to attend in person if they chose to. Schwab moved to allow zoom into commission and budget meetings going forward. Olerud seconded the motion. All aye. Motion carried.

The board discussed the salary study. Gilbert - would like more time to study it. Olerud - thinks it is time to pay our employees what they are worth. Schwab – thinks the county can make it happen if they make it a priority. Mathern- thinks it is time to get the pay study done, and move on to job descriptions, and the employee handbook. Mathern would also like to see monthly department head meetings held and continuing education or training for employees.

Cost of living was discussed if an employee’s currently at or above the market value, should they get a cost-of-living increase. The board discussed different options.

Schwab moved to pay all employees, except commissioners at one hundred percent market value out of the first round of covid 19 funds to offset property taxes. Olerud seconded the motion. Gilbert opposed the motion. Motion passed with a three to one vote. Olerud then moved to give a five percent cost of living raise to all employees based off of their 2021 salary, seconded by Schwab. All aye. Motion carried.

The next budget meeting was scheduled for Thursday August 5, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Being nothing further to come before the board, Vice Chairman Mathern adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Nicole Gentzkow Joe Mathern, Vice Chairman

Ransom County Auditor Ransom County Commission