**RANSOM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Regular Meeting – May 19, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 9:23 a.m. by Chairman Neil Olerud. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members present Neil Olerud, Norm Hansen, Connie Gilbert, George Bunn, and Steve Dick.

The agenda was reviewed. Nicole Gentzkow asked to add Fox Farm Bridge to the agenda, for discussion. Gilbert moved, seconded by Hansen to approve the agenda with the addition. All aye, motion carried.

Bills and payroll were then considered. Bunn moved, seconded by Hansen to approve bills and payroll. All aye. Motion carried.

State’s attorney Fallon Kelly joined the call.

Kirsten Gilbert – emergency manager appeared before the board to give an update on FEMA. All documentation from the spring melt and flood damage is due to the State by the end of the week. Gilbert stated eleven townships had turned in paperwork reporting damages. Gilbert asked the board to back her on the state deadline. Any township who does not turn in by the deadline will not be included in the spring flood declaration. The board agreed everything needed to be turned in by the state deadline or they would not be included.

Ransom County Fair Board joined the call, they would like to have some culverts put in. Dick motioned, seconded by Hansen, for Ransom County to provide the culverts to the fair board, and they will do the work to install them.

Paulette Laudert joined the call to ask about the fair board budget for 2020. The fair board will be making their decision on having a fair the second week of July. However, if they don’t have a fair this year, there are still some bills, and repairs they would like to do. Laurdert said they fair board would keep track of repairs, and cost, and submit a summary to the county. Hansen moved, seconded by Gilbert to pay for the culverts for the fair board out of the county general fund. All aye. Motion carried. The fair board will be in touch with Nicole Gentzkow to get the funds they will need, depending on the decisions made regarding the fair.

Fallon Kelly – states attorney appeared before the board to discuss the forfeiture fund and procedure resolution. The resolution would allow a committee to be formed, the committee would be the auditor, states attorney, and sheriff. Together they would decide what to do with forfeitures. Gilbert moved, seconded by Hansen, to pass the resolution, allowing a committee to be formed, and procedures to be in place. All aye. Motion carried.

The park board budget was discussed. The past few years, Dawn Bentten has done the Ransom County Park Board budget. There are some pending charges currently against her with the City of Lisbon Park Board. Fallon Kelly asked the board to please consider not reappointing Bentten to the Ransom County Park Board. Discussion was had. The board ask Nicole Gentzkow Auditor to advertise the park board position in the paper. They also asked that a letter be sent to Bentten notifying her she is no longer on the Ransom County Park Board. The board is requesting any park board documents be returned to the county. Bunn moved, seconded by Hansen, to send a letter to Bentten per Fallon Kelly’s instructions to remove her from the park board. All aye. Motion carried.

Scott Smyth with KLJ appeared before the board to give some updates. Smyth informed the board the State Water Commission has agreed to fifty percent cost share for the design portion of the project on the Virgil Schultz Bridge. They need the permits in place before committing the fifty percent cost share for the construction part of the project. They will amend the agreement to include the construction when the permits are in place. Concerning the Maple River Bridge just north of the sunflower plant the State Water Commission also agreed to fifty percent cost share for the design and construction portions of the project. Smyth recommends starting with the Maple River Bridge this year. Gilbert moved, seconded by Hansen, to sign both agreements for the State Water Commission. All aye. Motion carried. Bunn moved, seconded by Hansen, to get started on the Maple River Bridge, and get permits for the Virgil Schultz Bridge. All aye. Motion carried.

Jeff “Ivan” Hopkins – road superintendent appeared before the board to give an update on the pumping project near Ballinger corner. Galen Dick said The State Water Commission is expected to have permits around the first of June. No pumping can take place until the permits have been issued.

Hopkins said he plans to pick up the county’s new bobcat this week. Since it is a new style, the price this year for the trade is $5,500. In the future it shouldn’t be as much.

Gilbert and the board thanked Hopkins and his crew for the hard work and long hours they have been putting in to get the roads back in shape.

Nicole Gentzkow – auditor, gave an update on Discovery flex spending benefits. Each month an employee has x amount of dollars taken out of there paycheck, and put into the discovery benefit account. If an employee were to max out their full annual amount of flex spending before they had that much in their account, Discovery would then take the money out of the county’s bank account. Which would cause an accounting nightmare for the auditor’s and treasurer’s office. The only way of preventing Discovery Benefits from randomly taking money out of the county’s account, to cover the employees spending is by having a “bank” of money with Discovery. If the bank of money runs below twenty percent, Discovery will ask for more money. It will all come out in the wash, at the end of the twelve months. Gilbert moved, seconded by Hansen, to have a bank of money with Discovery benefits. All aye. Motion carried.

Nicole Gentzkow also asked permission to purchase and additional Microsoft Surface. It will make assisting the commissioners easier if she also has one. Gilbert moved, seconded by Dick to allow the purchase of an additional Microsoft Surface.

Gentzkow gave an update on election, Governor Doug Burgum announced at one of his press conferences that if counties would like to open up polls for the Primary Election they may. Gentzkow asked the board to leave Ransom County vote by mail for the Primary. There isn’t enough time to find election workers, or get programming and equipment ready for the June election in person. Gilbert moved, seconded by Dick, to stay with vote by mail only for the June Primary Election. All aye. Motion carried. Gentzkow read off the list of election board workers she had for the Primary, for the board to approve. Gilbert moved, Seconded by Bunn, to approve the election workers, and allow for two extra clerks this election. All aye. Motion carried. Pay for election workers was discussed. Employees who are working the election will get paid as usual, and any overtime or extra expenses will come out of the election budget. Election workers who are not employees will receive two hundred dollars.

Nicole Gentzkow brought up motor vehicle for Suzanne Anderson. Anderson informed Gentzkow Ransom County is one of four motor vehicle divisions in the state currently not open. She would like to see the board allow her to open, by appointment only in the near future. She has taken all precautionary measures to protect her and the employees. Anderson will offer appointments every thirty minutes, customers will be required to wear mask, all surfaces will be sanitized between each appointment. They also have installed a protective barrier, between employees and customers. The board discussed and would like the courthouse to open to the public June 1st by appointment only. Kirsten Gilbert has assembled a list of guidelines for employees and customers, which will be distributed to all employees. Gilbert will also post it in the Ransom County Gazette and Enderlin Independent.

Scott Gilbert asked Connie Gilbert to ask how to get a road where the Fox Farm Bridge is. Currently the bridge is too old and dangerous for them to get farming equipment over it. Hansen would like to see the township involved in these conversations. Fox Farm Bridge will be added to the agenda on June 16, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss with the township, ransom county commission, and Fallon Kelly.

North Dakota Republican Party submitted a gaming permit and the appropriate fee. Bunn moved, seconded by Hansen, to approve the permit pending Fallon Kelly’s approval. All in favor – Hansen, Bunn, Olerud, and Gilbert. Opposed – Dick. Motion carried.

Gentzkow presented a deed to the board for the three lots the City of Sheldon had purchased from the county. Gilbert moved, seconded by Dick, for Chairman Olerud to sign the deed. All aye. Motion carried.

There being nothing further to come before the board, Chairman Olerud adjourned he meeting at 12:00 p.m.

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Nicole Gentzkow Neil Olerud, Chairman

Ransom County Auditor Ransom County Commission