RANSOM COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – January 21, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Greg Schwab. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members present: Todd Anderson, Neil Olerud, Sye Olson, Kevin Bishop, and Greg Schwab. Along with Auditor Nicole Gentzkow and Lynn Kaspari from Ransom County Gazette. Also joining the meeting via Microsoft teams: Shelly Schwab, Maria Langland, Nickela Runck, Heidi Enquist, Kathy Gallagher, Micheal Briss, Kathie Erickson, Betsy Greenley, and Teresa Haecherl.

Agenda was reviewed. Bishop moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Olerud. All aye. Motion carried.

Minutes from the previous regular scheduled commission meeting on January 7, 2024 were reviewed. Olerud moved, seconded by Bishop to approve the minutes with corrections. All aye. Motion carried.

Commission Audit Lising in the amount of $148,230.74 were reviewed. Olerud moved, seconded by Anderson to approve the commission audit listing in the amount of $148,230.74. All aye. Motion carried.

Randy Gallagher appeared before the board to ask what the plan for Jeff Mangin was. Gallagher let the board know Mangin roughly works 15 – 17 hours per week cleaning the Public Health building and the social service building. Mangin would like to continue cleaning just those two buildings. Gallagher asked if Mangin could check in with Brenna Welton for his time card going forward. The board discussed and decided at this time there would be no changes to Jeff Mangins job description and he could check in with Welton. Gallagher also handed out his job description from when he was hired and an updated one from 2019, including a job description for risk manager. Gallagher explained the LMS and CEG program, which includes the yearly safety inspections.

Luke Muller joined via Teams, and Kirsten Gilbert in person at 9:45 a.m.

Kirsten Gilbert, emergency manager discussed the requirement from the state to update the multi hazard mitigation plan. This is required to be updated every five years so the county, cities, and townships can receive FEMA benefits. Gilbert is required to get three bids; she will reach out and start getting them. The board then will decide who they would like to go with to write the multi hazard mitigation plan. Kirsten Gilbert brought a letter of participation to the board which would give the county a grant which would pay for 75% of the multi hazard mitigation cost, the county would be obligated for 25%. The county could pay the 25% in cash or “in kind” Gilbert explained “in kind” is the more people they get to participate; the county will earn money. Bishop moved, seconded by Olerud to have Chair Schwab sign the grant application for the multi hazard mitigation. All aye. Motion carried.

NFIP – national flood insurance policy was discussed. A few years back multiple townships got together and discussed if they would want to join the national flood insurance policy through the county, or individually as a township. Only seven townships are in the flood plain and need flood insurance. Townships who attended the meetings like to have local control and did not want to go through the county. Island Park township did the work and joined on their own. If further discussions are going to be had regarding NFIP Kirsten Gilbert and Fallon Kelly would like to be present.

Mitch Calkins via teams and Rick Mairs in person appeared before the board on behalf of Lake Agassiz along with Todd Kayes, Ryan Hartley, Luke Muller, Amy Arnold, and Kelli Henricks all with First District to discuss animal feeding operations. First District analysis regional livestock development sites within the county to see where the best, better, and good sites are for livestock. First District will provide a copy of the report to the county early to mid-February when the report is complete.

Chelsey Jones from public health appeared before the board to ask if they could hire a high school co-op student and if there was money in the budget to pay the student. Discussion was had. Nickela Runck suggested if she and most all other employees are expected to take on more due to saving money then maybe co-op students should be cut. Jones agreed with Runck and let the board know the student interested in learning from public health is willing to do it without pay. WSI will cover up to twenty volunteers per calendar year, so co – op students are covered. Olerud moved, seconded by Anderson to allow public health to hire a co-op student and pay her out of public health funds. All aye. Motion carried.

Schwab called for a short recess at 11:20 a.m.

The meeting was back in session at 11:27 a.m.

Scott Smyth and Adam Schultz arrived at the meeting.

Scott Smyth with KLJ appeared before the board to present a change order for the old existing abutment no one knew about under the Anslem Bridge. The total Anslem Bridge cost 2.5 million dollars the county had state funding for the bridge up to 1.25 million. The additional 1.75 million would be county funds. Bishop moved, seconded by Olerud to accept the change order. All Aye. Motion carried. Smyth let him know he researched the Hock Bridge; the county had looked into replacing it in the past but due to cost they didn’t take any action on that. The board asked Smyth what KLJ would charge to look into it again. Smyth said he could make some phone calls and it wouldn’t cost much for a little research. Smyth also let the board know the county had looked into having the Martinson Bridge restored through the historical society and it was roughly $500,000 twenty years ago to rehab it. Smyth can look into it again to see if the historical society can assist.

Sheriff Darren Benneweis and Kevin Bishop made a trip out to Bismarck to visit with the historical society to see what grants are all available and what they all do. A list of grants available was sent to Benneweis and Bishop.

Adam Schultz – Schwab asked Adam Schultz if he had job descriptions for the guys working at the highway department. Schultz will look into that and get back to the individuals at the shop and the board. Performance evaluations were discussed. Schultz would like to see performance reviews given to all employees. Schultz is still working on getting quotes for the county shops for Sheldon and Fort Ransom. Some ARPA funds have been set aside for replacement of county shops, Gentzkow has the guidelines on ARPA funds.

Gentzkow let the board know she reached out to Fallon Kelly to see how many commissioners can meet or sit on a committee. Gentzkow has not heard back yet.

A local gaming permit along with the appropriate fee was submitted by Anslem Lutheran Church of Sheldon, ND. Bishop moved to approve the local permit, seconded by Anderson. All aye. Motion carried.

Anslem Trinity Lutheran Women (WOW) submitted a local gaming permit, check was mailed on Friday January 17. Bishop moved, seconded by Olson to approve the permit pending the arrival of the check. All aye. Motion carried.

Liq’r Pigs submitted a local gaming permit along with the appropriate fee for a raffle being held in February. Olerud moved, seconded by Anderson to approve the permit. All aye. Motion carried.

Liq’r Pigs submitted a second local gaming permit along with the appropriate fee for a raffle being held in July 2025. Olerud moved, seconded by Olson to approve the permit. All aye. Motion carried.

Good Shepherd submitted a local gaming permit along with the appropriate fee. Olerud moved, seconded by Bishop to approve the permit. All aye. Motion carried.

Gentzkow was asked to see what kind of classes Tanya Weiler and the Village offers. The county gets two classes per year through the Village with the employee assistance program.

The Barnes County jailing contract was reviewed. Olerud moved, seconded by Bishop to sign the Barnes County jailing contract for 2025 per Sheriff Darren Benneweis request. All aye. Motion carried.

The head maintenance position was discussed. Olerud moved, seconded by Olson to advertise for a part time person to replace Gallagher. All aye. Motion carried.

Overtime in the sheriff’s department was discussed. The sheriff’s department is required to work 84 hours every two weeks, in a 28-day work cycle anything over 171 hours is calculated at time and a half. Schwab asked Benneweis how much training the guys are going to and suggested maybe they need to just do the minimum number of hours per year to save on cost. Olerud let Benneweis know that Jorge Gonzalez is welcome to go up to Fargo to train with his son Elliot Olerud and his K9. The board asked Benneweis if he thought another officer was needed. Benneweis asked the board one more year to get overtime figured out.

Performance evaluations were discussed. Along with job descriptions for all positions. Bishop moved, seconded by Anderson to have all department heads start doing performance evaluations twice a year. All aye. Motion carried.

Gentzkow will look into getting a standard performance evaluation form for all department heads to use.

With nothing further to come before the board Bishop moved, seconded by Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m. All aye. Motion carried.